

know: rational argument and empirical evidence. Within the Church these are tacitly accepted as sources of knowledge, sometimes even of religious knowledge. For example, after reviewing the traditional arguments for the existence of God, James E. Talmage observed that some were “at least strongly corroborative” of God’s existence (*AF*, p. 29).

However, there is a continuing tradition, based on the scriptures and reinforced by modern Church leaders, that specifically religious knowledge requires a different and distinctively spiritual source. “We believe that no man can know that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Ghost. We believe in [the gift of the Holy Ghost] in all its fulness, and power, and greatness, and glory” (*TPJS*, p. 243; D&C 76:114–16). It is widely accepted by Latter-day Saints that gospel knowledge must ultimately be obtained by spiritual rather than exclusively rational or empirical means (e.g., 1 Cor. 12:3). Thus, in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, there is no clear counterpart to the Roman Catholic tradition of natural theology.

One of the most suggestive and frequently cited scriptures in LDS teaching makes the point: “And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moro. 10:4–5). This scripture is usually taken to apply to all knowledge. This suggests that both rational argument and empirical evidence, the two traditional approaches to knowledge, can be either supplanted by or encompassed within spiritual knowledge. Of course, the scripture does not say that knowledge comes only by the Holy Ghost. Yet, within the Church, it is often held that what might be thought of as secular learning, for example, modern scientific knowledge, is directly associated with the RESTORATION of the gospel and is rooted in divine inspiration throughout the world.

[See also Faith in Jesus Christ; Prophets; Reason and Revelation; Science and Religion.]

K. CODELL CARTER

EQUALITY

Equality among persons is understood by Latter-day Saints as essential to divine LOVE, which explains and justifies all other ethical virtues and

principles (Matt. 22:37–40). All persons are of equal value in the sight of God. Each person (of every nation and every race) is as precious to him as another (2 Ne. 26:33; Alma 26:37). From God all people will receive equivalent opportunities through Jesus Christ to attain ETERNAL LIFE, his greatest blessing (1 Ne. 17:33–35; Hel. 14:17; D&C 18:10–12). All who are worthy to become HEIRS of Christ will enjoy equality with him and with each other in the CELESTIAL KINGDOM (D&C 88:106–107).

Latter-day Saints believe that when people love as God requires them to love (John 15:9–12), having full and equal regard for one another, they can form a ZION society as directed by the Lord and enjoy in this world the type of equality that defines relations between persons in the celestial world (D&C 78:4–8; 105:4–5). References to equality in latter-day SCRIPTURES primarily concern the building of Zion and living according to celestial LAW. In Zion the people have “all things common among them” (3 Ne. 26:19; 4 Ne. 1:3; cf. D&C 82:17–18; 104:70). They have equal chances to develop their abilities and equal opportunity to realize them in the work of Zion, all contributing according to their individual strengths and talents (D&C 82:17–18; Alma 1:26). A Zion people labor together as equals by organizing themselves according to the principle of “equal power” (D&C 76:94–95; 78:5–7; 105:4–6). For example, on the local level “all things” are done according to the “counsel” and “consent” of the community (D&C 104:21). Each member has an equal role in giving counsel and an equal vote in giving consent (see COMMON CONSENT). But equality of power also defines the relations between members so that each is the center of decision and action in performing an individual stewardship within the community (D&C 82:17; 104:70–76).

Celestial law also requires that persons receive as equals that which is essential to survival and contributes to well-being. Consequently, in Zion there are “no poor among them” (Moses 7:18; 4 Ne. 1:3). This does not mean that every person receives the same amount. The “needs,” “wants,” and “circumstances” of individuals vary so that treatment of them must also vary to be equal in effect (D&C 51:3, 8; 42:33). Still, it is “not given that one should possess that which is above another.” When such inequality exists, “the world lieth in sin” (D&C 49:20; cf. Alma 5:53–54), and

“the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit [are] withheld” (D&C 70:14).

A. D. SORENSEN

ETERNAL LIFE

The scriptures clearly state that eternal life comes from God through his son Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 14:6; Heb. 5:9; 2 Ne. 31:20–21; Alma 11:40; Ether 3:14; D&C 45:8), and is the “greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7; *see also* EXALTATION; GODHOOD). To Latter-day Saints the phrase “eternal life” refers not only to everlasting life but also and more particularly to the quality of life God lives. Eternal life is available to all people who have lived on earth who accept this gift by their obedience to God’s laws and ordinances.

God’s work, and the source of his glory, is bringing to pass “the immortality and eternal life” of his children (Moses 1:39). In other words, God works to enable his children’s return to his presence so that they may both live with him and live as he lives.

So allied is Christ with the Father that the scriptures sometimes define eternal life as “knowing” them: “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3; D&C 132:24).

Knowing Christ in this world comes by receiving him and his law (D&C 132:23–24). Jeremiah spoke for the Lord: “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. . . . And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour . . . saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me” (Jer. 31:33–34). As stated in the Gospel of John, one begins to know Christ and his will by searching the scriptures, for, as Jesus affirmed, “they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).

Having the law written in one’s heart implies an acceptance that prompts action; indeed, the scriptures mention many actions that one must take in order to receive the gift of eternal life. To enter the path leading toward eternal life, one must exercise faith in Christ (John 3:36; 6:47; Moro. 7:41), repent, be baptized for the remission of one’s sins (2 Ne. 31:17–18), and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The scriptures state that once on the path, the believer must strive to keep the

COMMANDMENTS (2 Ne. 31:19–20; Alma 7:15–16)—that is, to do the works of RIGHTEOUSNESS (D&C 59:23), primary among which is charity (1 Cor. 13; Matt. 25:34–36). The believer must also ENDURE TO THE END (2 Ne. 31:20–21; D&C 50:5; cf. Paul’s phrase “patient continuance in well doing,” Rom. 2:7), and make covenants in connection with TEMPLE ORDINANCES (D&C 124:55; 128:12).

While in mortality, individuals may come to a stage of knowing the Father and the Son that allows the Lord to promise them eternal life. This occurrence is described in scripture as receiving the HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE (D&C 88:3–4) and the Second Comforter (John 14:16; D&C 88:2–4; *see also* JESUS CHRIST, SECOND COMFORTER); having the more sure word of prophecy (D&C 131:5); and having one’s CALLING AND ELECTION made sure (2 Pet. 1:10; D&C 131:5).

God invites all people to seek and ask earnestly for eternal life, and reassures all who do so that they will not be given a stone (cf. Matt. 7:7–11). They are promised “revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge,” which brings an understanding of “peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal” (D&C 42:61). Those who will receive eternal life in its fullest come forth in the first RESURRECTION (Mosiah 15:21–25) and inherit the highest degree of glory in the CELESTIAL KINGDOM (D&C 76:50–59; 88:4; 101:65).

The Prophet Joseph Smith was at a loss for words to capture the eternal splendor of God the Father and of his son Jesus Christ, “whose brightness and glory defy all description” (JS—H 1:17). Language can describe the glories of eternal life only inadequately through metaphors of overwhelmingly bright light or fire (Ex. 24:17; Acts 26:13–15; Rev. 21:23; 1 Ne. 1:8–10; D&C 110:1–4; cf. “shine as the brightness of the firmament,” Dan. 12:3); pure truth (John 14:6; Ether 4:12; D&C 84:45–48; 93:36; Moses 7:29–40); glass or crystal (Rev. 4:6; D&C 130:9); and timelessness (Ps. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8; Rev. 10:6; Alma 40:8; D&C 88:110). Paul points out how far eternal life exceeds the descriptive ability of language when he says, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

[*See also* Immortality and Eternal Life.]