

and contradictory collections of spiritual beliefs and practices held at one time or another by individuals are rooted in divine revelation. “Some revelations are of God,” the Prophet Joseph Smith is remembered as saying, “some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the Devil.”<sup>1582</sup> Moreover, it should not be forgotten that even authentic revelations may be “subject to misunderstanding, exaggeration, and faulty transmission.”<sup>1583</sup> Regarding religious similarities among diverse groups, many believers are prepared to accept the possibility that “authentic revelations underlie many of the major faiths.”<sup>1584</sup> Finally, with respect to the “insufficiency of all biological approaches to explaining religion, or any other aspects of human culture,” the most important consideration in Stark’s view “is that they are unnecessary! The fundamental biological basis of all culture is general intelligence, and nothing more needs to be postulated.”<sup>1585</sup>

“Thus,” writes Stark, “we reach the fundamental question: Does God exist? That is, have we discovered God? Or have we invented him? Are there so many similarities among the great religions because God is really the product of universal wish fulfillment? Did humans everywhere create supernatural beings out of their need for comfort in the face of existential tragedy and to find purpose and significance in life? Or have people in many places, to a greater and lesser degree, actually gained glimpses of God?”<sup>1586</sup> Once the possibility of authentic divine revelation is granted, attention can be turned to the “immense and humbling challenge” of determining “which ones are valid.”<sup>1587</sup>

- E-16. Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote: “For the disciple of Jesus Christ, academic scholarship is a form of worship. It is actually another dimension of consecration. Hence one who seeks to be a disciple-scholar will take both scholarship and discipleship seriously; and, likewise, gospel covenants.”<sup>1588</sup> Stott similarly concludes that “Latter-day Saint theology appears to negate the secularizing impact of education by sacralizing it.”<sup>1589</sup>
- E-17. While national data indicate that, overall, the most educated are the least religious, among some denominations—and most dramatically among Mormons—there is a strong *positive* correlation. “Highly-educated Mormons are more likely to pray frequently, to have strong religious beliefs and to attend meetings, suggesting that devotion is even more important for those with higher levels of education than those with lower educations.”<sup>1590</sup> This is due at least in part to the fact that from its very beginning, the Church has placed significant emphasis upon education. “One result of this has been a standard of educational attainment that is significantly higher than the national average... For both males and females, the percentage of Mormons who have completed post-high-school education is significantly higher than is the case for the [U.S.] population as a whole. For Mormon males, 53.5 percent have some post-high school education compared to 36.5% for the U.S. population. For females, the figures are 44.3 for Mormons and 27.7 for the U.S. population generally.”<sup>1591</sup>
- E-18 While not intending to promote “unlicensed and irresponsible speculation” or “falling in love with one’s own reason,”<sup>1592</sup> Madsen writes:<sup>1593</sup>

Some problems are 100-percent guaranteed insoluble for now. Many others, though not insoluble, are not of particular interest. But there are some mysteries, which the scriptures call “the mysteries of godliness,”<sup>1594</sup> the deeper things, the richer things, and they are of which I suspect the Prophet spoke when he said, I beseech you go forward and “search deeper and deeper into the mysteries of Godliness.”<sup>1595</sup> These are the mysteries you are to pursue.

1582 Cited in D. Whitmer, *Address*, p. 31; cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 16 May 1841, p. 189. See also B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 1:162-163, J. Smith, Jr., *Papers 2008-*, Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books, Canadian Copyright Revelation, circa early 1830, BCR 30-31, pp. 31, 33.

1583 R. Stark, *Discovering*, p. 52.

1584 *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

1585 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

1586 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

1587 *Ibid.*, p. 8. See, however, the findings of Consolmagno, who conjectured from his interviews that while younger scientists and engineers often saw religion as a source of truth, older ones, already settled in what they believe, tended to see it principally as a source of community (G. Consolmagno, *God’s Mechanics*, pp. 102-118).

1588 N. A. Maxwell, *Disciple-Scholar*, p. 7.

1589 G. Stott, *Effect*, p. 52. See also T. L. Givens, *Paradox*, pp. 65-99, 195-240; J. W. Welch, *Thy Mind*.

1590 S. L. Albrecht, *et al.*, *Secularization*, p. 308.

1591 *Ibid.*, p. 302.

1592 President Joseph F. Smith described this danger as reading “by the lamp of [our] own conceit” (J. F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 1907, p. 373; cf. Colossians 2:8).

1593 T. G. Madsen, *Nine Lessons*, p. 114.

1594 1 Timothy 3:16; D&C 19:10.

1595 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 12 May 1844, p. 366; J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 12 May 1844, 6:363. “That the mysteries

In further explanation, he continues:<sup>1596</sup>

But Joseph Smith counseled against futile and divisive speculation: “Let mysteries alone lest you be overthrown.”<sup>1597</sup> He adds: “A man can do nothing for himself unless God directs him in the right way; and the priesthood is for that purpose.”<sup>1598</sup> The context for these remarks is the temple,<sup>1599</sup> and temple learning requires more than abstract reflection. We are taught:<sup>1600</sup> “These revelations, which are reserved for and taught only to the faithful Church members in sacred temples, constituted what are called the ‘mysteries of Godliness.’<sup>1601</sup> The Lord said He had given to Joseph ‘the keys of the mysteries, and the revelations which are sealed.’<sup>1602</sup> As a reward to the faithful, the Lord promised: ‘And to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old.’<sup>1603</sup>

Nibley<sup>1604</sup> reinforces the same point:

Not everything is incomprehensible to everybody: “It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given...”<sup>1605</sup> So we see that mystery is knowledge not known to some: “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”<sup>1606</sup> “Behold my beloved brethren, I will unfold this mystery unto you”<sup>1607</sup>... A people are condemned who “will not search knowledge, nor understand great knowledge, when it is given unto them in plainness.”<sup>1608</sup> We make our own mysteries; we are not meant to be kept in darkness, and the mysteries of heaven will be unfolded to us as we make an effort to understand them.<sup>1609</sup>

**E-19.** Erich Paul draws a similar conclusion:

Although the Darwinian redefinition of humanity’s place in nature has affected all of Western thinking in deep and lasting ways, Darwinism, rather than cosmology, had a far greater impact on Protestants than on Mormons. Although mainstream Christianity eventually made peace with Darwinism, in general Christians initially responded defensively to the emergence of organic evolution, partly because cosmology was never an integral part of Protestant theology, as it was (and is) for Mormonism, but also because Protestants before Darwin interpreted mankind’s origins exclusively from a literal reading of Genesis whereas Mormons strongly augmented their views from contemporary revelation and other prophetic sources.<sup>1610</sup>

Nibley points out that to Brigham Young “it was the economic and political rather than the scientific and biological implications of natural selection that were the real danger and the most counter to the gospel.”<sup>1611</sup>

**E-20.** Of course, the various proponents of creationism vary widely in their fundamental assumptions (e.g., age of the earth, common descent) and in their stance with respect to scientific methodology. In contrast to Bailey’s view, Sherlock provides a controversial defense of the scientific viability of

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of godliness were a desirable subject of righteous pursuit is suggested by the following passages: Psalm 25:14; Daniel 2:28; Matthew 13:11; 1 Corinthians 4:1; 1 Nephi 2:16, 10:19; Alma 12:9-11; D&C 6:7, 19:8-10 (4-22), 42:61, 50:24-30, 76:5-10, 114-119, 84:19, 88:49-50, 63-69 (49-69), 93:1, 19-22, 26-28, 36-39, 107:18-19, 121:26-28, 132:23... Nevertheless, this important attribute of godliness is only part of the attribute of charity (1 Corinthians 13:2; 2 Peter 1:5-7)” (A. F. Ehat and L. W. Cook, in J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. 402 n. 3).

1596 T. G. Madsen, *Nine Lessons*, pp. 117-118.

1597 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 8 April 1843, p. 189.

1598 J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 12 May 1844, 6:363. T. Bullock’s notes vary slightly: “... the priesthood is reserved for that purpose” (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 12 May 1844, p. 366).

1599 See D&C 76:7, 128:7.

1600 H. B. Lee, *Teachings 1996*, July 1961, p. 575. Elder Lee continues: “In this sense, then, a mystery may be defined as a truth which cannot be known except by revelation.”

1601 1 Timothy 3:16, D&C 19:10.

1602 D&C 28:7.

1603 D&C 76:7.

1604 H. W. Nibley, *Assembly*, pp. 137-138.

1605 Matthew 13:11.

1606 Matthew 11:15.

1607 Jacob 4:18.

1608 2 Nephi 32:7.

1609 See H. W. Nibley, *House of Glory*, p. 330.

1610 E. R. Paul, *Science*, p. 2. For a highly readable overview on this topic from a Catholic perspective, see R. J. Clifford, *Value*.

1611 H. W. Nibley, *Work*, p. 207. See B. Young, *Knight*, 19 October 1876, p. 199.