

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

This sermon script is furnished with
the good wishes of the Reorganized Church
of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

World Headquarters: The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri

Program Number 166

Evan A. Fry, Radio Minister
All Rights Reserved

The Sermon: ALL THINGS ARE BY HIM AND OF HIM

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 85:10

Intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light; mercy hath compassion on mercy, and claimeth her own; justice continueth its course, and claimeth its own; judgment goeth before the face of him who sitteth upon the throne, and governeth and executeth all things: he comprehendeth all things, and all things are before him, and all things are round about him; and he is above all things, and in all things, and is through all things, and is round about all things: and all things are by him and of him; even God, for ever and ever.

All things are by him and of him, even God, for ever and ever.

Sometimes a preposition can be the most significant word in a sentence. So it is in this text sentence. Notice the significance and importance of the two prepositions "by" and "of", and the contrast between the ideas they represent. This verse speaks to us of a God who in theological language is both immanent and transcendent; that is, he is in and through all his works which are of him; but he is also above, superior to, outside of, and independent of all his works, which are by him.

It is an axiom of Christian belief, and of the belief of many other great world religions as well, that God made all things: that all things are by him, the Creator. Therefore, he was before anything else was made. He is not the result of his creations, but the first great Cause, the Source from whence all life, all existence, all power, all material creation flow. If he existed before any of his creations were made, then he is not dependent on any of those creations for his existence. Paul said in Colossians 1:17 that by him all things consist. Our reading from the Doctrine and Covenants says that all things are before him, and all things are round about him; and that he is above all things and round about all things.

God is the supreme Person. He must be. It does not seem reasonable to suppose that personality evolved from inert matter, or that the personalities of men were created by a power which itself had no personality. A stream can rise no

higher than its source. It does not stand to reason that man, the creation, can be of a higher degree of intelligence of personality than the Creator. The scriptures teach us that God made man in his own image. This does not necessarily mean that God has a body like ours. It means that we are made in the image of his spiritual nature, of his personality -- not necessarily in his physical image. He undoubtedly has some means of implementing his power, his will, his personality; but one thing is certain: his spirit or personality is not and cannot be limited, restricted, or confined by the kind of physical body known to us. A person with a body like yours and mine could not have all things before him, and round about him, and at the same time be above all things, beneath all things, and round about all things, as God is.

God is the supreme Person, the Source of all things, the Creator of all things, the Ruler of all things. He is transcendent; that is, he is above and beyond and outside of and superior to his creations. He is not dependent on his creations for his existence. He existed before they were created; he will still exist unchanged when every star in the milky way has dissolved into nothingness. So great is his power, so incomprehensibly vast is his dominion, so all-inclusive is his personality, that all the sun, moon, stars, planets, universes, and galaxies of universes could disappear, and he himself would not be diminished by so much as one atom. He is superior to all his works. He rules and orders and controls

them; he is not ordered or controlled or limited by them. He is not increased if his works increase, or diminished if they diminish, but is forever the great omnipotent and eternal God. God is transcendent.

To stop here, however, would be to declare only half the truth. God is also immanent. All things are of him, as well as by him. He is in all things, and through all things. In him we live and move and have our being. All life, in last analysis, is his life. His eternal power is to be found in every proton, electron, and neutron -- every atom of matter. Paul stated God's immanence in several of his epistles. To the Romans he wrote: "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things." (11:36) To the Ephesians: "One God and Father of all, who is above all, (transcendent) and through all, and in you all (immanent)." (Ephesians 4:6)

God is in all his works. He is in all men. It is his Spirit, his life, his power which gives life to all things, and which holds the very atoms of creations together. He is to be found in the sun, the moon, the stars, the planets. He is the cohesive force which holds all matter together, which orders the stars in their orbits. He is in the laws of chemistry, of physics, of mathematics, of biology, of zoology, of botany, of psychology, and of all the arts and sciences. It is by his moral law that men grow and achieve the full measure of manhood in the highest sense of the word. It is by the laws of economics and sociology and political science that nations rise and fall. He is in every leaf, every tree, every flower, every sunset. He is in the sunshine, the clouds, the rain, the wind, the lightning. His life is in every seed. Every human love is but a feeble reflection of his love. God is immanent in all his works.

The Psalmist has poetically expressed the all-inclusiveness and the all-pervasiveness of God in these familiar verses from the 139th Psalm: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike unto thee."

It is impossible to escape from the presence of an immanent God who is in all things and through all things. It is equally impossible to escape from the presence of a transcendent God who is not dependent on his creations, but who is a-bove all things, beneath all things, and round about all things -- and whose creations are at the same time before him, beneath him, above him, and round about him, and sustained and ordered by his power.

We can begin to comprehend God only as we recognize both of these seemingly contradictory aspects of his nature -- the transcendent and the immanent. Some good people make the mistake of regarding him only as transcendent. They think of him as only a great and supreme Person, who is unknowable, aloof, apart from his creations. Man cannot approach to or know such a Creator, such a Person, and he is much too busy and important to be concerned with man, who in comparison to his other creations is hardly more important than a house fly. Such a God is far away in time and space --inaccessible to man.

Another concept of God as a Person is that as Creator he flung the stars and planets spinning into space, and ordained and established all the physical laws by which they are governed. But once his creation was finished, he sat back in complete idleness, unable to regulate or change or alter the mechanism he had created, or to suspend or influence in any way the operation of the natural laws he had established.

Against these concepts of God as a Person who is outside of, independent of, and superior to his works, we need to balance the concept of God as immanent in all his works. Not only is he a Person in the far-off realms of space, but he is not far from any one of us. "Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet." He is within us as well as around us. He is the power by which and in which all things consist. He is not a slave of a mechanistic universe which he has created, but its master.. He is a God of love who does not let a sparrow fall without his notice, and who numbers the hairs on our head. He is a God of miracles, who never violates natural law, but who because he is Master of all natural law can balance one against another to produce results which to wondering men seem miraculous.

"All things are by him and of him.." May you find him and come to know him as a Person -- a kind and loving Father, who is ever near, and whose ear is always open to your call.