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## *Our Belief in the Holy Ghost*

*If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.—John 14:15-18.*

WHEN Jesus had completed his earthly mission, he gathered his disciples about him and tried to prepare them for his impending death and departure. He had been with them only three short years. They were just beginning to understand him. Though they had frequently been warned of what was to come, Jesus knew that his cruel death would be a tremendous and bitter blow to their faith.

Trying to prepare them for the tragedy, Jesus explained to his disciples the necessity for his departure in order that an ever abiding Advocate, Counselor, Helper, and Comforter might come to be with them forever. *His* stay in the flesh was necessarily short. This Comforter was to stay with them *forever*, guiding them into all truth, much of which they were as yet unprepared to apprehend; teaching them all the things which he had not had time to teach, bringing to remembrance those things of his teachings which they had forgotten, directing them, inspiring them, creating new life in them and in those converted under their ministry, even to the end of the world.

We believe in the Holy Spirit (or the Holy Ghost, for the terms are synonymous) which is the other self of both

God and his Son Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit which is the mind, the strength, the force, the energy, the power, the will of the Godhead.

We shall discuss our belief in the Holy Spirit under two main headings: the nature of the Holy Spirit, and the functions of the Holy Spirit. There is some difference of opinion as to whether or not the Holy Spirit is a person, as God and Christ are persons. Certainly the Holy Spirit manifests *some* of the attributes of personality. It has, and is, intelligence, mind, will. It speaks to men; it can be grieved, offended, and driven away. As a part of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit partakes at least in part of the personality of God, who is the supreme and infinite person.

### NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the force, or energy, or power of *creation*. The Psalmist says, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! . . . Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created" (Psalm 104:24, 30). In the beginning of creation it was the Spirit of God moving (or brooding) upon the face of the waters which brought about the creation of all things. It was the power by which Jesus was conceived. Doctrine and Covenants says that the Comforter is the Light of Christ, which is in the sun, the moon, the earth, and the stars, and is the power by which they are made and sustained, that it is the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed.

The Holy Spirit is light, in the largest sense of that word; for light in its broadest meaning is far more than is seen by the human eye. Light is creative; it exists in multitudes of wave lengths, most of which are invisible to man. Modern science suggests that matter itself may be composed of pure light, or force, or energy, or mind; for it is now well established that the atom is composed not of material substance, but of positive, negative, and neutral charges of elec-

tricity which are called protons, electrons, and neutrons. Of these tenuous building blocks all the material of the universe is made; therefore in the last analysis all substance is composed of nothing more than the force, energy, mind, power, or Spirit of God, the Creator, which is *in* all things and *through* all things, *above* all things, *beneath* all things, and *round about* all things; and all things are by him and of him, even God, for ever and ever. As the power which creates and sustains all things, the Holy Spirit is omnipresent.

The Comforter is the Spirit of Truth. "Whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Doctrine and Covenants 83:7 b). "The Spirit of truth is of God" (Doctrine and Covenants 90:4 c). "My voice is Spirit; my Spirit is truth" (Doctrine and Covenants 85:17). The Holy Spirit is intelligence, knowledge, wisdom; for truth is a knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come (Doctrine and Covenants 90:4 b).

#### THE FUNCTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Now let us turn to an examination of the functions of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said: "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the *Comforter*, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things" (John 14:25, 26). Jesus had taught the apostles as much as they could learn in the short time he had with them, but near the end he said: "I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now." One function of the Holy Spirit was to continue to teach *all* things as the disciples grew in capacity to understand, to comprehend, and to use further knowledge. Not all of Jesus' wisdom, not all of his truth is to be found in the four gospels, nor yet in the epistles, nor in all of the Scriptures. The perception and apprehension of new truth was to be a continuous process under the impulsions of the Holy

Spirit which was to teach the disciples all things and guide them into all truth. The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from not only his word, but the vast reservoir of unrevealed truth which must be reserved until man has the mental, spiritual, and moral capacity and intelligence to understand and to use it.

The Holy Spirit functions to teach men how to pray, and for what to pray, that their prayer may be in harmony with God's will, and therefore may be fully answered. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).

The Holy Spirit was to guide the disciples in the daily conduct of their own affairs and the affairs of the church, and to guide all men who would follow it to Christ. The Spirit sent Philip to the side of the Ethiopian who needed help in interpreting his Scriptures. It sent Peter to the Gentile Cornelius. It guided the first council of the church as it discussed the place of the Mosaic law in the Christian church. It sent Paul and Timothy over into Macedonia. In these and many other situations, the Holy Spirit gave guidance, counsel, and advice, directing men in what to do and where to go, directing both the church as a whole and individual officers and members. The Spirit still gives such guidance today.

One of the functions of the Holy Spirit was and is to call men to priesthood responsibilities. It was the Holy Ghost that said to the church at Antioch, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2). Paul counseled the elders at Ephesus to be faithful in ministry to the flock over which the Spirit had made them overseers (Acts 20:28).

The Holy Spirit is sent to reveal to men the things of God. We are all familiar with the fact that we cannot understand each other unless we talk the same language and have a basis

of common understanding. For example, musicians use words peculiar to their profession which are apt to be unintelligible to plumbers, architects, and salesmen. In a similar way, only one who knows God can understand his language. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (I Corinthians 2:11). One function of the Holy Spirit is to make our nature like God's nature so that we may think God's thoughts, understand his promptings, and act as he would act.

God reveals by his Spirit the hidden mysteries of the things he has prepared for us, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. On special occasions, and for God's specific purposes, the Spirit of God may foretell the future.

The Holy Spirit functions to impart *power* to those who are prepared and worthy to receive it. The Comforter is etymologically "one who comes with strength," for the word "comfort" is derived from two Latin words, "cum" and "fortis," meaning "with strength." The disciples were commanded to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endowed with *power* from on high, the power of the Holy Spirit. To those who have prepared themselves to receive it, and have made themselves worthy to use it, the Holy Spirit imparts power to overcome temptations, to endure afflictions and persecutions, to accomplish tasks beyond human strength and wisdom. It gives both natural and supernatural *gifts* of knowledge, wisdom, and faith; it imparts *gifts* of healing; it makes possible the working of miracles; it gives the word of prophecy; it inspires speaking in tongues and interpretation of those tongues.

Perhaps the most important function of the Holy Spirit is to bear witness to the divinity and the resurrected and continuing life of Jesus Christ. Paul says that no man speaking by the Spirit of God can call Jesus accursed. John says that the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy. Jesus said that when the Comforter came it would testify of him. Since

the Spirit is the mind, the will, the power, the intelligence of God and Christ, it must bear witness to both personages of the Godhead. In carrying out this function, it judges, re-proves, and convicts those who receive its ministrations, and who yet continue in sin and in rebellion, refusing to obey God or to acknowledge his Son as Lord, Redeemer, Messiah, and Savior. To those who accept Christ as Lord, and give obedience to his laws and ordinances, the Holy Spirit transmits his life. The Holy Spirit is the power by which Christ arose from the grave, and it is the power which shall raise us in the resurrection.

#### THE LATTER DAY SAINT BELIEF

When the life of Christ dwells within us, the Holy Spirit gives us assurance of our adoption. By it we are taught to cry, "Abba, Father." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:16, 17). Paul speaks of the Spirit as the "earnest" of our inheritance, the down payment, or advance token, in promise of the greater inheritance to come. When the Spirit has imparted its life to man, certain fruits follow to bear witness of its abiding presence: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22, 23).

Latter Day Saints believe that the Holy Spirit is conferred by the laying on of hands of the elders of the church after the candidate has manifested his faith by repentance and baptism. The converts in Samaria had been baptized, but did not receive the Holy Spirit until Peter and John were sent to them from Jerusalem to lay hands on them (Acts 8:15-17). Certain converts at Ephesus had been baptized by one without authority. Paul rebaptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus: "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them" (Acts 19:2-6). Peter,

in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, said in answer to the query, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). There is a seeming exception to this rule. When Peter preached to Cornelius and his Gentile friends, the Holy Spirit was given to them *before* baptism as a witness to Peter that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews; but note that Peter's first command following this experience was that those who had thus been exceptionally blessed should be baptized, in the name of the Lord.

Latter Day Saints do not believe for a moment that they have a monopoly on the Spirit of God. As we have already pointed out, that Spirit is omnipresent. The Spirit enlighteneth every man who comes into the world. To *every* man is given a gift by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is given to *every* man to profit withal. But there is a special sense in which the Spirit is given as an abiding Comforter, Advocate, Counselor, Strength-giver. We believe that this gift is reserved for those who make themselves worthy through faith, repentance, and baptism followed by the laying on of hands. Rubber will not conduct electricity; neither will sinful flesh receive or conduct the Spirit. Only as sin is forgiven through repentance and an authoritatively administered baptism can man be made capable of receiving the Spirit of God. Only as the Spirit lives within us, imparting Jesus' life to us, can we continue to overcome and go on to perfection.

# 5

## Man— *His Nature and Destiny*

*O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. . . . When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth.—Psalm 8.*

**M**AN is a curious paradox, a baffling, inscrutable enigma. At his *best*, man is an exalted creature, full of love for his fellowman that makes him sacrifice his own life willingly for an ideal, for his country, for his religion, or to save the life of a friend. He is heroic, he is devoted, he is altruistic, he is noble, he is kind, he is generous, he is wise, he is godlike. He gives generously to great philanthropies; he establishes hospitals, orphanages, and homes for the aged; he sends relief to areas devastated by war, fire, plague, flood, and earthquake; he risks his life to save a stray dog or cat; he spurns the natural law of self-preservation, and puts women and children first into the lifeboats of a sinking vessel.