OUR BELIEF IN THE HOLY GHOST

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SCRIPTURE READING: John 14:15-18
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 forever; 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 in you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless.

John 16:12,14; 16:7; and 14:25, 26
I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.
It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.....
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, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

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"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."

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, Counsellor, 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 will, 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

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personality. It has, and is, intelligence, mind, will. It speaks to men; it can be grieved, offended, and drive 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.

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 water, which brought about the creation of all things. It was the power by which Jesus was conceived. Our book of 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 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 electricity which are called protons, electrons, and neutrons. Of these tenuous building blocks all the material of the universe is made -- therefore in 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." (D.C. 83:7) "The Spirit of Truth is of God." (D.C. 90:4) "My voice is Spirit; my Spirit is Truth." (D.C. 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.

Now let us trun 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...." Jesus had taught the apostles as much as they could learn in the short ti e 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 -- not only from his word, but from 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 what for, that their prayer may be in harmony with God's will, and therefore may be fully answered. "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom. 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,

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to Christ and to all good. 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 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 conselled 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 talk a language of their own, which is apt to be unintelligible to plumbers and 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 that is in him." 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 the hidden mysteries of the things he has prepared for us, by his Spirit; 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 w ord "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 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 the other personages of the Godhead. In carrying out this function, it judges, reproves, 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 -- for 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.

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....." Paul speaks of the

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Spirit as the "earnest" of our inheritance -- that is, the down payment, or advance token, in promise of the greater inheritance to come. (Rom. 8:16, 17) 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." (Gal. 5:22, 23)

Latter Day Saints believe that the Holy Spirit is conferred by the laying on of the 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 re-baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus, "then Paul laid his hands on them and they received the gift of the Holy Ghost." (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, but it might be said to be the exception which proves the 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, Counsellor, 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.

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