

ARTICLES WRITTEN

**“TO THE CONVINCING OF THE JEW AND
GENTILE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE
ETERNAL GOD, MANIFESTING HIMSELF
UNTO ALL NATIONS.”**

Title Page – Book of Mormon.

by



1872

CHARLES FRY

1969

INDEX OF CONTENTS

NO. 1. THE CHOICE SEER: WHO IS HE? -----	Page 4.
NO. 2. THE CHOICE SEER: MORE LIGHT -----	Page 19.
NO. 3. THE PERSONALITY OF GOD - (In 6 parts) -----	Page 39.
No. 1. There is One God. -----	Page 39.
No. 2. God is Christ and Savior -----	Page 45.
No. 3. Christ is God -----	Page 50.
No. 4. God and Christ are One -----	Page 58.
No. 5. Jesus Christ – His Sonship -----	Page 65.
No. 6. The Holy Spirit -----	Page 91.

Published by LatterDayTruth.org

2014

A WORD ABOUT THE WRITER, Charles Fry
By Francis T. Schrunk

I became closely associated with Elder Charles Fry in pastoral work in 1935, when he was sent to Lincoln, Nebraska while under General Church appointment for The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. I have never known a more studious man of the three standard books. He inspired me as no other person to study for myself the scriptures as found in those books.

It was during his stay in Lincoln, some five years, that he wrote the article on "*The Personality of God.*" Many times when he came to church his face would be radiant with the light of Christ from his study of the scriptures and the inspiration that he had received while writing on this article.

I trust that you as the reader will carefully and prayerfully study these articles, and that the good Spirit will confirm the divinity of the message.

It was always his desire that these articles and other writings of his could have been gotten before the people of the church. His age does not permit him to continue in this effort, but he has given me permission to continue on for him. I commend these to you for I am sure they will strengthen your faith in the Restoration movement. "*...whoso readeth it let him understand, for the Spirit manifesteth truth; and whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom; and whoso receiveth not by the Spirit, cannot be benefited;*" (Doctrine and Covenants 88:1d).

Francis T. Schrunk
600 E. Linwood
Independence, MO 64053

Note: All Bible references are from the Inspired Version.

THE CHOICE SEER: WHO IS HE?

by Charles Fry

The Inspired Version of the Bible contains a remarkable prophecy uttered by Joseph of Egypt dealing with his posterity. Having spoken of a prophet (Moses) whom the Lord would raise up to deliver his people Israel from Egypt and from bondage, he said that they should be scattered again, but that at the time of their scattering “...*a branch shall be broken off, and shall be carried into a far country;*” (Genesis 50:25). This branch was to be of the seed of Joseph, and notwithstanding their separation from the rest of the house of Israel “...*they shall be remembered in the covenants of the Lord, when the Messiah cometh...*” (Genesis 50:25).

Latter Day Saints, in the light of the Book of Mormon revelations, hold that this “*branch*” of the house of Joseph is the one described in that book as being planted by Lehi upon the American continent, grew into a great people, and which after centuries of enlightenment and civilization, fell into spiritual and national decay, and became a darkened people.

In harmony with the covenants made to his fathers, Joseph prophesied of this benighted branch that “...*the Messiah should be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing of them out of...captivity unto freedom.*” (II Nephi 2:9). This does not mean that the Lord will appear in person at this time as he did in former days, but that by the power of his Spirit, Christ and his gospel would be revealed to them to their restoration.

A SEER TO BE RAISED UP

The performance of this great work was to be affected by a “*Seer*” whom the Lord would raise up and empower. Joseph’s prophecy continues: “*A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins. Thus saith the Lord God of my*

fathers unto me, A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins, and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren. And he shall bring them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers; and he shall do whatsoever work I shall command him.” (Genesis 50:26-28).

So far this prophecy deals solely with the “*branch*” which was to be broken off, except for an incidental reference to Moses and the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and it distinctly shows that the work of this seer would be in behalf of this branch.

THIS SEER TO BE GREAT

The seer whom the Lord would raise up in the latter days is to be of great importance in the Lord’s work, in turning a great people to their God, a people probably comprising many nations and kindreds. The prophecy indicates that this people—a branch from Joseph—would be in spiritual darkness and spiritual bondage. No ordinary man can turn a nation, but this man is to turn from darkness into light, and from captivity unto freedom, a great people, more than a nation. To do this he must be made mighty and strong by the power of God. So the Lord has said:

“And I will make him great in mine eyes, for he shall do my work; and he shall be great like unto him whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel, out of the land of Egypt;” (Genesis 50:29). *“And out of weakness shall he be made strong, in that day when my work shall go forth among all my people, which shall restore them, who are of the house of Israel, in the last days.”* (Genesis 50:32).

This man is referred to as “*a choice seer*” (Genesis 50:27) and he is to be “*esteemed highly*” (Genesis 50:27) by his people. The Lord says that that seer he will bless, and that he “*...shall bring my people unto salvation.*” (Genesis 50:33). Such expressions reveal the greatness of

this prophet, and the magnitude of his work. Moses delivered ancient Israel by the power of God, when a small people, from political and religious bondage, but this prophet to come will bring a far greater people “...to a knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.” (Genesis 50:31). No prophet of the past has ever accomplished so great and important a work as this one is destined to do. He will be great indeed.

TO BE OF THE LINEAGE OF JOSEPH

The choice seer was to be raised up from Joseph’s line of posterity, for Joseph prophesied, “*Thus saith the Lord God of my fathers unto me, A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins...*” (Genesis 50:27). Joseph’s posterity became great; his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, becoming the heads of two great tribes in Israel. The branch which was “*broken off*” and came to America was but a small part of the tribe of Manasseh—in fact, but one or two families—but it grew into a great people, which in time extended over the entire Western Hemisphere. Undoubtedly there are other portions of the posterity of Joseph in other parts of the world, but the seer who is to be of the seed of Joseph is prophesied of only in connection with this branch. He is to be of the branch in America.

THIS SEER’S WORK TO BE IN BEHALF OF JOSEPH’S POSTERITY

The seer that God is to raise up “...*out of the fruit of thy loins, (i.e. Joseph’s)...*” (Genesis 50:27) is to work with his own people. “...*and unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren. And he shall bring them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers;*” (Genesis 50:27-28). “...*and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins;*” (Genesis 50:30). His mission is primarily to his own

people, though his work may later be extended to other portions of Israel.

WHAT THE SEER IS TO ACCOMPLISH

Speaking of the Messiah and that part of his own posterity which should be broken off, Joseph wrote: *“That the Messiah should be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing of them out of darkness unto light; yea, out of hidden darkness and out of captivity unto freedom.”* (II Nephi 2:9). Such a work could be done only through some human agent. All such works God accomplishes through men raised up empowered of God. This is just what he has said he would do in bringing this branch of Joseph out of darkness into light in the latter days, for the prophecy goes on to say, *“A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins.”* (II Nephi 2:10). God is to manifest his power through a prophet, or a seer, for a seer is a prophet, and more. (see Mosiah 5:76).

One part of the mission of this seer is to bring forth the word of God to his people. *“and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins;”* (II Nephi 2:17). This probably refers to the bringing forth of ancient scriptures which have been hidden in the earth awaiting God’s time for their revealment. The fact that a seer is constituted of one, who of God is given possession of the Urim and Thummim, and the gift of God belonging therewith to use them in the translating of unknown languages, and other purposes, sustains this idea (see Mosiah 5:72-85). This man’s work as a seer is to bring forth, translate and publish the word of God, and that in addition to what the people may already have. Undoubtedly this will be the beginning of the great work which this man is to do, for there is more spoken of.

“And not to the bringing forth my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them.” (II Nephi 2:18). This suggests great power as a prophet

and leader, in which regard he will be like John the Baptist who turned many to salvation. This seer is to bring his people “...*out of darkness unto light;*” and “...*out of captivity unto freedom.*” (II Nephi 2:9). It is not impossible that this deliverance out of captivity unto freedom is political as well as spiritual, in which case he would be also a political leader.

And still the prophecy goes on in describing the work of this man, declaring that he shall bring his people “...*to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; And also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.*” (II Nephi 2:22-23). If these people who for generations have been left in darkness and ignorance are to be given a knowledge of their fathers through the word which this man is to bring forth, then this revealed word must be a historical record of the ancestors of these people. And furthermore, if it is to reveal to them the covenants of the Lord, then it must of necessity be also a sacred record, or Scripture. By his work as a seer in bringing forth this word, and by his ministry in convincing his people of its truth and divinity, he will turn them to God. “*for the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand...shall bring my people unto salvation;*” (II Nephi 2:30).

Thus is shown somewhat the scope of this man’s work in the latter days.

WHO IS THIS SEER?

The view has become current in the church that this choice seer was Joseph Smith, Jr., who by means of the Urim and Thummim translated the Book of Mormon, a historical and sacred record dealing with the people of the “*branch*” which was broken off from the family of Joseph. This view, apart from one or two similarities in the work of these two men, is based mainly upon one statement of the prophecy which by many is considered to be conclusive. It is that “...*his name shall be called Joseph, and it shall be after the name of his father;*” (Genesis 50:33). It so happens that the name of Joseph Smith, Jr., who

was named after his father, corresponds to this part of the prophecy. However, the writer has long since reached a conclusion quite different.

Notwithstanding the correspondence in names with the prophecy, Joseph Smith, Jr., did by no means fulfill the prophecy as a whole. In fact there is but little in the mission of Joseph Smith that does correspond with the work of this seer. This will be clearly seen in the light of the following points:

1. The man spoken of in the prophecy is to be a seer to the seed of Joseph of Egypt. Joseph Smith Jr.'s work was to the gentiles.
2. The seer was to be esteemed highly among Joseph's seed. Joseph Smith, Jr., never was, for the evident reason that he was not known to them.
3. The Lord has said that he would give unto this seer a commandment to do a work for the fruit of the loins of Joseph: Joseph Smith, Jr., received no such commandment, nor did any particular work for the fruit of the loins of Joseph.
4. The seer is to bring his people, the branch, to a knowledge of the covenants God made with Joseph's father, Jacob. This Joseph Smith, Jr., did not do.
5. This seer is to be great like unto Moses. Joseph Smith, Jr., did the work appointed him of God, and it was great, but not comparable to that of Moses.
6. The "word" which the seer is to bring forth is unto "... *the fruit (seed) of the loins of Joseph.*" (Jacob 2:34), referring to the branch which was broken off. The word brought forth by Joseph Smith, Jr., was primarily to the gentiles, though it may go in time to the seed of Joseph.
7. The seer of the prophecy is to convince the seed of Joseph of the truth of the word which had already gone among them (the Bible). Joseph Smith, Jr., did not do this.

8. Nor did Joseph Smith confound false doctrines, stop contentions, and establish peace among the fruit of the loins of Joseph, as the choice seer is to do.
9. The branch that was broken off was to be brought by this seer to a knowledge of their fathers. This was not done by Joseph Smith, Jr.
10. This seer is to be “...*made strong, in that day when my work shall go forth (commence) among all my people...*” (Genesis 50:32 & II Nephi 2:24). Since that work has not yet gone among “*all my people,*” it is yet future, and could not have been done by Joseph Smith, Jr.
11. The work to be done by the seer is to accomplish the restoration of Israel. Joseph Smith, Jr., was a prophet of the gentiles and to the gentiles, and his work did not extend directly to Israel.
12. The seer was to be divinely preserved, “*And they that seek to destroy him, shall be confounded:*” (II Nephi 2:26). Joseph Smith, Jr., was persecuted, imprisoned, and put to death by his enemies, and they were not confounded.

On the other hand these are the points of correspondence between the work of Joseph Smith and that of the seer which we also notice:

1. Joseph Smith, Jr., was a seer as well as a prophet.
2. He brought forth the word of the Lord, by the Urim and Thummim, which was the writing in small part of the fruit of the loins of Joseph.
3. His name was Joseph, and it was after the name of his father.

These three points however, in the light of the twelve points previously noted, do not establish Joseph Smith, Jr. as the choice seer of the prophecy. There have been many seers and there may be many yet to come, so that it is easily possible that some other than the prophet to the gentiles may fulfill the prophecy. The Book of Mormon brought

forth by Joseph Smith, Jr., itself shows that there are greater and far more important records that God holds in reserve but which are to come forth in due time. And as to the name, correspondence with the prophecy in this particular proves nothing unless there is correspondence in all other points also, which, as we have seen, there is not.

BOOK OF MORMON EVIDENCES ON IDENTITY OF THE SEER

The identity of the choice seer is more fully revealed by the Book of Mormon, evidences being supplied confirming those given in Genesis, and which are more clear, more specific, and which to the writer make utterly impossible any application of the prophecy to any other than a prophet who is to arise from the remnants of the land who are descended from Lehi. We now examine these evidences as found in II Nephi, chapter two.

The Book of Mormon as a whole gives the history of a colony of Manassehites whom the Lord led out of Jerusalem shortly before its final destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, and brought to the land of America where they grew into a great people. Notwithstanding they were blessed with the gospel, and with prophets, and with the Holy Spirit, a portion of the people rebelled and they became a divided people, one portion continuing in unbelief and wickedness, and the other fluctuating between a high state of righteousness and civilization to varying degrees of low estate, until nearly a thousand years had passed, when through great wickedness the government was destroyed and the nation fell into anarchy and spiritual darkness. They degenerated into heathendom toward the close of the fourth century A. D. It is understood that the Native American races are the remnants of this people.

Thus the so-called Indian races of North, South, and Central America today, whose number is estimated between ten and fifteen million, comprising many nations and tribes, and who have lost the knowledge of their own identity, remain the “...*fruit of the loins of*

Joseph.” (Jacob 2:34) for (making allowance for some mixture of other tribes of Israel) they are of the lineage of Joseph through Manasseh and Lehi. They are the branch which was broken off, and it is specifically with this people that the prophecy of Joseph deals; it is from them that the choice seer is to come, and it is to them that his work will be directed, as we shall see.

THE PROPHECY OF LEHI

Lehi was the head of the little group of two families and one extra man which left Jerusalem in 600 B. C. He was a prophet and priest, and received divine direction in his journeying. When he had become old in the new land of America and was about to die, he gave his last instruction and blessing to his posterity. He had become familiar with the prophecy of Joseph for it was written in the sacred record, known as the plates of brass, which he had brought from Jerusalem, and with the Spirit of prophecy resting upon him he quoted this prophecy with slight variation, and applied it to his own people. He held them to be the branch broken off from the seed of Joseph, and from which the Lord, in the latter days, would raise up a righteous branch.

Lehi clearly indicates that the choice seer whom God will raise up in the latter days will be of the loins of Joseph through this branch, and that his work would be among the seed of the loins of Joseph. Lehi had finished quoting Joseph’s prophecy and now proceeds to declare his own prophecy by the Spirit of God. He said:

“And the Lord said unto me also, I will raise up unto the fruit of thy loins: and I will make for him a spokesman. And I, behold, I will give unto him, that he shall write the writing of the fruit of thy loins, unto the fruit of thy loins; and the spokesman of thy loins shall declare it.” (II Nephi 2:36-37).

This man who is to be raised up from the loins of Lehi is not a different seer from the one spoken of in the prophecy of Joseph. He is to *“...write the writing of the fruit of thy loins...”* (II Nephi 2:37) that is, to

translate for his people the record of their fathers which they had lost when they went into sin and darkness, which is the same work of which Joseph prophesied when he said, “...unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins;” (II Nephi 2:17). Lehi goes on to say, “And it shall be as if the fruit of thy loins had cried unto them from the dust; And they shall cry from the dust; yea, even repentance unto their brethren, even after many generations have gone by them.” (II Nephi 2:39-40). The posterity of Lehi were to write the sacred truth, and after many generations had passed, and their children had dwindled in spiritual darkness, these writings were to come to their benighted posterity in the latter days. A seer would be raised up to bring them forth.

THE SEER TO BE THROUGH JOSEPH THE SON OF LEHI

Lehi not only states that this seer is to be of his own lineage, but that he will come through the line of his youngest son whom he had named Joseph.

Before quoting Lehi upon this point it is necessary to remind the reader that the patriarchal Lehi had been blessing his sons and grandsons, as many as were willing to receive his blessing, and he had now come to the last one, his youngest son who was but a lad. It was while blessing this boy, Joseph, perhaps with his hands upon his head, that he said to him, “...the Lord bless thee for ever, for thy seed shall not utterly be destroyed.” (II Nephi 2:4). He was speaking under the indictment of the Holy Spirit. Coupling himself and his son with Joseph of Egypt from whom they were descended, and also with the prophecy of Joseph concerning the righteous branch, he introduces his prophecy regarding his son with these words:

“For behold, thou art the fruit of my loins; and I am a descendant of Joseph, who was carried captive into Egypt. And great were the covenants of the Lord, which he made unto Joseph; wherefore, Joseph truly saw our day. And he obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of

the fruit of his loins, the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel;” (II Nephi 2:5-7).

What occasion had Lehi to introduce this prophecy of Joseph of Egypt into the blessing of his son unless it had some special application there? In bringing it in there must have been some purpose in view: there must have been some connection between the prophecy and the boy or its use at that time would have been most inappropriate and inconsistent. As it was, this whole prophecy of ancient date as quoted by Lehi, was a part of the blessing pronounced upon the head of little Joseph. Its significance was that it was to have its fulfillment through this boy in one of his posterity down in the latter days. In other words, the choice seer of whom Joseph of Egypt prophesied was to come of the lineage of Lehi through his son Joseph. Lehi says just this in his own prophecy over the boy:

“And now, behold, my son Joseph, after this manner did my father of old prophecy. Wherefore, because of this covenant thou are blessed: for thy seed shall not be destroyed, for they shall hearken unto the words of the book. And there shall raise up one mighty among them, who shall do much good, both in word and in deed, being an instrument in the hands of God, with exceeding faith. To work mighty wonders, and do that thing which is great in the sight of God, unto the bringing to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren. And now, blessed art thou, Joseph.” (II Nephi 2:44-48).

Thus the prophecy of Joseph was brought over and placed upon the head of Joseph, the young son of Lehi, through whom it was to have its fulfillment as pertaining to the raising up of the choice seer, the “*one mighty*” (II Nephi 2:46). No wonder that Lehi ended his blessing with the words, “*And now, blessed art thou, Joseph.*” (II Nephi 2:48).

Our application of those prophecies of both Joseph and Lehi to Joseph Smith, Jr. is a mistake. In no possible way did Joseph Smith, Jr. fulfill them. They are yet future. These prophecies deal with the restoration of Israel which begins with the raising up of a mighty prophet, a seer who shall first restore the lost record of the branch of

Joseph, and by the great power of God which he shall receive, turn his benighted people to the Lord and to salvation. This movement is to spread to all parts of the house of Israel wherever found upon the earth.

THE RECORD THAT IS TO BE BROUGHT FORTH

There are two principal records kept by the house of Joseph: first, a record begun probably by Joseph himself in Egypt, and kept by a succession of inspired men of his family line through Manasseh to Laban, 600 B. C., from whom they passed by divine intervention because he had become corrupted; to Lehi, a righteous prophet whom the Lord was leading at the head of the colony to America, and who was in all probability a younger brother of Laban, holding the right of succession when Laban proved unworthy. This record came to an end at this time but was preserved and published to the Nephite people, serving a most important purpose in giving to them a knowledge of God and his law. It was their Scripture. Second, a record begun by Nephi, son of Lehi, upon plates of gold, referred to modernly as the “first plates of Nephi,” and continued by a line of successors, all of Nephi’s descent, from about 600 B. C., to 384 A. D., when Mormon at a time of national destruction deposited them in the Hill Cumorah, their present hiding place. They may be considered a continuation of the record upon the plates of brass, for the two give an unbroken history from Joseph to Mormon, a period of over 2,000 years.

The Book of Mormon which was brought to light in 1827 through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith, Jr. is a small abridgement of the record kept upon the plates of Nephi, made by Mormon before placing them in the earth. Moroni his son wrote the final chapters and deposited the abridgement in the earth, presumably in New York where they were revealed to Joseph Smith, Jr. This work is quite incidental to the greater record upon the plates of Nephi, and was designed primarily for the gentiles, from whom it will eventually go to the remnants of Joseph.

THE PLATES OF BRASS

Of the plates of brass, Lehi prophesied *“that these plates of brass (i. e., the record upon them) should go forth unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, who were of his seed.”* (I Nephi 1:169). They are not to go to the gentiles.

And showing that this record will be brought to light by the seer we note the following prophecies, which have particular reference to the promises and covenants God made to Jacob and Joseph, and which are written upon the plates of brass, which covenants and promises are to be brought to the knowledge of his people by the seer.

“And he shall bring them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers (Jacob)...” (Genesis 50:28).

“And now I, Nephi, speak concerning the prophecies of which my father hath spoken, concerning Joseph, who was carried into Egypt: For behold, he truly prophesied concerning all his seed. And the prophecies which he wrote, there are not many greater. And he prophesied concerning us, and our future generations; And they are written upon the plates of brass.” (II Nephi 3:1-5).

“...the prophet Zenos...and also Zenock...testified particular concerning us, who are the remnant of their seed. Behold our father Jacob also testified concerning a remnant of the seed of Joseph. And behold, are not we a remnant of the seed of Joseph? And these things which testify of us, are they not written upon the plates of brass which our father Lehi brought out of Jerusalem?” (III Nephi 4:71-73).

These statements show that Jacob and Joseph, and also Zenos and Zenock who were prophets in the line of descent between Joseph and Lehi, all spoke of their posterity, the remnant, which both Nephi and Mormon say means “us,” the Nephites. It is these prophecies containing the promises and covenants of God which the seer is to bring to the knowledge of his people. Since they are written upon the plates of brass it means that that record is one to be brought forth by the hand of the seer.

THE PLATES OF NEPHI

When Ammoron, in 320 A. D., buried these plates with others during a time of civil war and destruction, Mormon says that he hid them up unto the Lord, “...*that they might come again unto the remnant of the house of Jacob, according to the prophecies and the promises of the Lord.*” (IV Nephi 1:59).

Mormon says that “...*there can not be written in this book (Book of Mormon), even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach unto the people; but behold the plates of Nephi do contain the more part of the things which he taught the people; And these things have I written, which are a lesser part...that they may be brought again unto this people, from the Gentiles...And when they shall have received this...if it shall so be that they shall believe these things (in the Book of Mormon), then shall the greater things (the first plates of Nephi) be made manifest unto them.*” (III Nephi 12:1-3).

These statements point to the publication of the record upon the first plates of Nephi to the remnants of the Nephites in the latter days. Whether this record will be brought forth by the seer is not clear though it is not improbable that it will.

OTHER POINTS OF IDENTITY

Thus the Book of Mormon testimony confirms the Bible as showing the identity of the choice seer. To the twelve points already set forth from the Bible account showing the non-application of the prophecies to Joseph Smith, Jr., we are now able to add three others from the Book of Mormon:

13. Lehi definitely shows that the prophecy regarding the seer is to be fulfilled in the lineage of his son Joseph. Joseph Smith, Jr. was not of that lineage.

14. The choice seer is to bring forth the plates of brass and translate them for the benefit of his people. Joseph Smith, Jr. brought forth the abridged record upon the plates of Mormon but not the brass plates.
15. Bringing forth of the national record of the Nephites from the first plates of Nephi seems also to be a part of the work of the seer. Joseph Smith did not translate this work.

Joseph Smith, Jr. as a prophet and seer accomplished the work God destined him to do. He occupied in his own place and fulfilled his divinely appointed mission, and it is not necessary to credit him with any work belonging to another. The mission of the “*choice seer*” is one yet to be performed in the raising up of a righteous branch from among the posterity of Lehi, the aborigines of America. That mission is to be performed by the seer prophesied of by Joseph and by Lehi, and who is to arise from their posterity through the line of Joseph the son of Lehi. He will come from the Indian race.

The preceding article is an exact reproduction, by stencil and mimeograph machine, by Francis T. Schrunk, of one printed in the Saints Herald of January 2, 1937. It received such a response that Brother Fry wrote the following one on “THE CHOICE SEER: MORE LIGHT.” It being not printed, I now give it as he gave it to me. I feel it should be a part of the preceding article.

Francis T. Schrunk.

THE CHOICE SEER: MORE LIGHT

by Charles Fry

The present day world is approaching, if not already entering, a period of transition in which there will occur a series of related events and developments of great moment and of a magnitude far exceeding what the ages have revealed since the time of the deluge. Changes of most outstanding importance and effect which are now unthought-of will take place making the world of tomorrow vastly different from that of today.

GOVERNMENTAL, RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL CHANGES

These changes will include a transfer of world dominion from the present set up of kingdoms and empires to other and unexpected groups of people. They will include a complete change of religious philosophy and organization, the present perverted, devitalized and impotent forms of Christianity, as well as the non-Christian religions, gradually yielding to the true gospel and the actual kingdom of God pushed forward by divine power. Under the new dominion and the true Christianity social and economic changes will come bringing equity and justice with peace and goodwill to the world.

FULFILLING OF GENTILE TIMES

The gentile times, which began more than twenty-five centuries ago with the final downfall of the Jewish kingdom and the rise of Nebuchadnezzar as a world emperor, are drawing to a close. The ending will be marked by wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation, with famines, pestilences, and other perplexities, the whole world being in commotion. (see Matthew 24:29-30; Doctrine and Covenants 45:4). The gentiles “...*shall war among themselves, and the sword of their own hands shall fall upon their own heads, and they shall be drunken with*

their own blood.” (I Nephi 7:27). These things will result in what is called “the fall of Babylon.”

RISING UP OF ISRAEL

With the decline and fall of the gentile power, upon benighted Israel, who during the time of the gentile domination have been the outcasts and down-trodden, “...*shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;*” (Malachi 4:2). While Israel includes those who are commonly known as Jews it includes vastly more, for the Jews are but a remnant of Israel. The people of the ancient nation were scattered to all parts of the earth, some as groups to form nations and others to mix with their gentile neighbors and become lost. Their own transgressions and departure from God, and the oppression of the gentiles, have combined to degrade and defile until they can no longer be recognized as belonging to the family of Jacob or as being the chosen people of God. They, some of them, consist of nations, even “...*heathen nations...*” (Doctrine and Covenants 87:3d).

It is just these down-trodden and despised peoples of Israel whom God has decreed to recover. Socially and spiritually their estate is parallel with that to which they were brought in Egypt, and as he raised up a Moses to deliver them from Egypt, so will he raise up another like unto Moses to deliver them in the latter days. “...*the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people,...and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.*” (Isaiah 11:11-12). “*And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good; for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers;*” (Deuteronomy 30:9). They will build up upon the ruins of gentile civilization.

DETERMINED OF GOD

These changes and developments have been determined of God. He has declared them from most ancient times. Like a battery of searchlights playing upon the Washington Monument, so the many prophets have focused the light of prophecy upon this most remarkable period.

This period is the time of the world's climax; the culminations of past developments; the world's harvest time. (Matthew 13:36-45). It is "*...the dispensation of the fullness of times...*" when God shall "*...gather together in one all things in Christ...*" (Ephesians 1:10). "*...the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*" (Acts 3:21). It is the day of Zion's redemption. (Psalms 14:7; Doctrine and Covenants 98:4; III Nephi 10:2; Ether 6:8).

RESTORATION TO BEGIN WITH REMNANT IN AMERICA

In our previous article (The Saints Herald, January 2, 1937) the coming of a branch of Joseph, the son of Israel, to America in 600 B.C., was pointed out. This branch soon divided, one faction called Lamanites rebelling against God and the gospel, and becoming most wicked and corrupt, and cursed with a darkened skin; the other called Nephites wavered between high and low degrees of righteousness until the fourth century A.D. when by dissensions and wars they were destroyed as a separate people. Both became one. They continued in a state of unbelief and idolatry until discovered by Columbus, and are known as the Indian races of America today. Numerous prophecies point to their restoration to God in the latter days.

In a parable of an olive tree Zenos outlines the history of Israel. When the tree began to decay the Lord took branches and planted them in distant parts of the earth. The third and last planting is readily recognized as applying to this branch in America. But in the last days

after all the branches had become corrupted, and the Lord sought to save them by re-grafting them onto the original stock, he said to his servant, “*Graft in the branches; begin at the last, that they may be first...*” (Jacob 3:127). This statement showing that the branch in America will be the first of Israel to be restored to the ancient covenant in the last days is supported by many others.

Jacob prophesied to his son Joseph in reference to his posterity: “*For thou shalt be a light unto my people, to deliver them in the days of their captivity, from bondage; and to bring salvation unto them, when they are altogether bowed down under sin.*” (Genesis 48:11). It is through this branch in America that this prophecy will have its fulfillment and the rest of Israel will be shown the light and saved.

Jesus taught the Nephites: “... *then shall the work of the Father commence, at that day even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. Verily, I say unto you, At that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people;*” (III Nephi 10:4-5; see also III Nephi 7:28-29).

PRELIMINARY WORK AMONG GENTILES

The Lord regards all men of every nation and seeks their salvation. The choosing of ancient Israel was not that he might give exclusive advantages and blessings to them, but that he might develop “...*a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.*” (Exodus 19:6) by whom the gifts and blessings of God might be ministered to all men to their salvation. But Israel in their weakness and folly mistook the divine favors to be for themselves alone to the overlooking of their responsibilities, and despised others than themselves, until the Lord said, “...*I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me;*” (Hosea 4:6).

So it was that in the days of the apostles the gospel was sent to the gentile nations where it found acceptance by many. It was sent to them, not by Israel as a nation, but by individuals raised up of God. It is well

known that through the centuries of the Christian era Christianity suffered severe perversion, until in recent times the trend of the gentile world is away from Christ and the gospel and toward the things which history shows lead to downfall.

But God could not permit the gentiles to fall without renewing to them the opportunity of the gospel in its purity and fullness. Thus it was that early in the nineteenth century the Lord restored his work among them, raising up a prophet of their own number, and restoring the gospel in its fullness. His truth was given anew in the Book of Mormon as revealed by the angel. The priesthood was restored by angelic hands by which the gospel and its ordinances might be authoritatively administered, and the church of Jesus Christ organized after the divine pattern, and conducted to the divine purposes under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

For this work the Lord raised up a new prophet, Joseph Smith, Jr., by whom the Book of Mormon was translated by the power of God, saying to him, among other things, “...*this generation shall have my word through you;*” (Doctrine and Covenants 5:3a) and that the Book of Mormon “...*contains the truth and the word of God. which is my word to the Gentiles, that soon it may go to the Jew, of whom the Lamanites are a remnant...*” (Doctrine and Covenants 18:3b & c). The gospel has been generally preached to the gentile people of North America, and to a somewhat lesser extent to some of the nations of Europe, though it will undoubtedly go to them more fully. They must have their opportunity, and God must be justified if they fall. Thus by the prophet of the nineteenth century, raised up from among the gentiles, and whose mission was to the gentiles, this people have been or will be given their opportunity.

TRANSFER FROM GENTILES TO ISRAEL

Various prophecies indicate that the gentiles generally would reject the gospel when it should be offered to them. After sufficient

opportunity had been given, the gospel would be withdrawn and then sent to Israel, beginning with the American remnant. Jesus said that if the gentiles sinned against his gospel and drifted into iniquity, “...*I will bring the fullness of my gospel from among them; And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them;*” (III Nephi 7:35-36; see also I Nephi 3:19; 4:16; Doctrine and Covenants 87:3; 58:3).

BEGINNING THE WORK AMONG ISRAEL

The divine gifts given to the gentiles through the restoration of the gospel will not have been in vain. Many of the gentiles will believe and come in to be numbered with the covenant people of God, and become Israel by adoption. By them the gospel will be carried first to the remnant of Joseph. This is the most logical procedure since the gospel has come to the gentiles in America and since the remnant is also found upon this land. They, of all Israel, are nearest at hand.

Speaking of that time, Nephi says “...*then shall the fullness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles unto the remnant of our seed;*” (I Nephi 4:16) and “...*it shall come by way of the Gentiles...*” (I Nephi 4:27). Jesus said that his teachings to the Nephites would be manifested to the gentiles, “...*that through the fullness of the Gentiles, the remnant of their seed who shall be scattered forth upon the face of the earth...may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer.*” (III Nephi 7:28).

This church among the gentiles in due time will extend the gospel work to this remnant. But the Lord says first to the gentiles, and then to Israel. The Book of Mormon showing the identity of the American Indians will be carried to them giving them a knowledge of their fathers and of the gospel covenant.

TO BE A DAY OF POWER

The Lord represents the dispensation of the gospel to nations, both the Gentiles and Israel, by a parable of a great feast or supper. To this supper are invited “*Firstly, the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble;*” (Doctrine and Covenants 58:3e) or in other words, the Gentiles. The next statement is most significant: “...and after that cometh the day of my power; then shall the poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, come in unto the marriage of the Lamb, and partake of the supper of the Lord, prepared for the great day to come.” (Doctrine and Covenants 58:3e & f). The day of God’s power is after the gospel has been offered to the Gentiles and when it goes to Israel.

Joseph of Egypt makes it clear that this day of power is when the branch of his house which was broken off, (the American branch), shall be remembered of the Lord, and says the Messiah “...*shall be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the Spirit of power;*” (Genesis 50:25). Jesus told the Nephites that “...*the powers of heaven shall be in the midst of this people; yea, even I will be in the midst of you.*” (III Nephi 9:59). “*For in that day, for my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall be a great and a marvelous work among them;*” (III Nephi 9:95). Joseph Smith also wrote, “...*then cometh the day when the arm of the Lord shall be revealed in power in convincing the nations, the heathen nations, the house of Joseph, of the gospel of their salvation...every man shall hear the fullness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language, through those who are ordained unto this power...*” (Doctrine and Covenants 87:3d & 4).

All these statements concerning the day of power, except that in the parable, are spoken with express reference to the remnant of Joseph in America, and the time is when the gospel goes to them.

THE PLACE OF THE CHOICE SEER

We have presented this historical and prophetic background in order to show the specific place in the course of world events where the choice seer comes in. Just as prophecy has pointed out to Latter Day Saints the exact spot where the Zion of God will stand, so it has pointed out with equal precision the time when the choice seer will occupy. It is in the period of transition when God again shall turn his face toward Israel, the time of restitution, the dispensation of the fullness of times.

No point of time in thousands of years has been of greater concern, or more far reaching in its immediate effects upon the world, than this day will be. History reveals no time when the power of God has been displayed so mightily, and when its accomplishments have been so great as at that time.

The restoration of the gospel through Joseph Smith, Jr. was indeed a great work, but hardly comparable to the vastly greater work to be done by the later prophet whom the Lord will raise up to Israel. To say that Joseph Smith, Jr. performed the work of the choice seer is to put him in a generation other than his own. Joseph Smith, Jr. completed his work before his death in 1844, which work, whatever may grow out of it in the future, was to all intents and purposes to the gentiles and for the gentiles.

God raises up men whom are adapted to the needs of the occasion and the day when he sends them. Had Washington and Lincoln been reversed in their time and place, both would have been unsuited to their times. Each prophet is the man God knew as best suited to the particular work he had for him to do. Joseph Smith, Jr. was the man for his day and none other could have fitted in so well. But in the great day of transition conditions and requirements will be altogether different. A particular type of man, different from all others, and adapted to his own times will be required. God has such a man in reserve.

Many prophecies tell of such a man for that day, one prophet emphasizing one phase of his personality or work and another, another.

Since his work is directly to the remnant of Joseph he is described as of that people. He is to be sent of God and endowed with divine power adequate to the demands. He is to bring to light many hidden scriptures. He is to restore many things to the house of Israel and restore Israel to God, in consequence of which he is a restorer. He is to be a leader to lead Israel out of bondage and sin, and hence is said to be like unto Moses. He is to break down idolatry and false worship and establish the true worship of God for which he is called Elijah or Elias. He is to faithfully do the work which God requires of him and so is called “*my servant.*”

No man stands out so prominently in prophecy. From earliest dawn to modern times God has spoken to him. But let us look at these remarkable prophecies.

THE PROPHECY OF JOSEPH

Joseph spoke of a righteous branch which the Lord would raise up of his posterity. This refers not to the people of Lehi who were broken off 600 B. C. and who were a branch of Joseph, but to a later branch which would be raised up from the descendants of Lehi in the latter days, of whom he said, “*...they shall be remembered in the covenants of the Lord, when the Messiah cometh, for he shall be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the Spirit of power; and shall bring them out of darkness into light; out of hidden darkness, and out of captivity unto freedom.*” (Genesis 50:25).

It is in connection with the raising up of this righteous branch of the house of Joseph that the choice seer is to be raised up, for he is the Lord’s instrument to accomplish this very work. “*...A choice seer will I raise up out of thy loins...And he shall bring them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers...And out of weakness shall he be made strong, in that day when my work shall go forth among all my people, which shall restore them, who are of the house of Israel, in the last days.*” (Genesis 50:27, 28, 32).

The work of this seer is to begin with the posterity of Joseph, (not with the gentiles), from which a righteous branch will be raised up, and then extend to other parts of Israel.

Notwithstanding the Bible and the Book of Mormon will come into the possession of this remnant, Joseph assures us that other scriptures will be brought forth to them, and that by the hand of the seer. “...*a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins, and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins; and not to the bringing forth of my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them in the last days;*” (Genesis 50:30).

In our former article was shown that this seer would bring forth the record upon the plates of brass, and also upon the plates of Nephi. But there is still more of God’s word to come forth unto his people as we shall see.

THE PROPHECY OF LEHI

Lehi, a descendant of Joseph, in blessing his own son Joseph in America, quotes the whole prophecy of his ancestor including the promise of a choice seer, and declares that it would have its fulfillment in his own posterity in a later time, and that the choice seer should come through the lineage of his own son Joseph. “*And the Lord said unto me also, I will raise up unto the fruit of thy loins: and I will make for him a spokesman...he shall write the writing of the fruit of thy loins, unto the fruit of thy loins; and the spokesman of thy loins shall declare it. And the words which he shall write, shall be the words which are expedient in my wisdom should go forth unto the fruit of thy loins.*” (II Nephi 2:36-38) This is not to the Gentiles.

Going on in his prophecy Lehi tells his son concerning his posterity, “...*there shall raise up one mighty among them, who shall do much good, both in word and in deed, being an instrument in the hands of God, with exceeding faith. To work mighty wonders, and do that*

thing which is great in the sight of God, unto the bringing to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel and unto the seed of thy brethren.” (II Nephi 2:46-47).

Clearly, the work outlined by Lehi has not yet been done but is to be done by one whom God is to raise up from the posterity of Joseph, the son of Lehi. This man’s life and work are placed at the time when God begins his work of restoring the remnant of Israel upon this land.

This seer from Lehi’s line is to “...*write the writing of the fruit of thy loins...*” (II Nephi 2:37). Strange expression, yet literally true when we learn from other sources that the brass plates and the plates of Nephi, both containing the writings of the seed of Joseph, have for centuries been hidden away in the earth, but are to be brought to light and translated for his people by this seer. This part of the prophecy also establishes beyond question the fact that this seer is to bring forth the plates of Nephi for they are the “...*writing of the fruit of thy (Lehi’s) loins...*” (II Nephi 2:37). The Book of Mormon is only an abridgment of this record, and can hardly fulfill this prophecy. (For further evidence showing that the plates of Nephi will come forth to the house of Jacob, see IV Nephi 1:59.)

PROPHECY OF ZENOS

By a parable of an olive tree, Zenos, an ancient prophet of the lineage of Joseph, outlined the history of Israel from the beginning to the end. According to this parable the scattered groups or branches of Israel were to be grafted back into the original stock of Israel in the latter days, beginning with the last one broken off, which is the one in America. It is at this time that “...*the Lord of the vineyard sent his servant;*” who “...*brought other servants;*” (Jacob 3:136) saying, “...*Go to, and labor in the vineyard, with your mights. For behold, this is the last time that I shall nourish my vineyard; for the end is nigh at hand...*” (Jacob 3:137-138).

The Lord of the vineyard is to send “...*his servant...*” (Jacob 3:136) by whom the work of re-grafting or bringing in this branch, the American Indians, into Israel is to be accomplished. Since Joseph and Lehi have told us that this particular work is to be done by the choice seer it is apparent that the servant and the choice seer are one and the same.

PROPHECY OF MOSES

The Lord revealed to Moses that the scriptures which he should write would be perverted by men, especially by taking away from his book many things. But he gave him this promise: “*And in a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught, and take many of them from the book which you shall write, behold I will raise up another like unto you, and they shall be had again among the children of men, among even as many as shall believe.*” (Doctrine and Covenants 22:24b).

To say that the emendations and additions made in the Inspired Version by Joseph Smith, Jr. are the fulfillment of Moses’ prophecy is to put small things for greater ones. The prophecy covers much more. Nephi says that the scriptures contained in the Bible are not so many as those contained on the plates of brass (I Nephi 3:163). The plates contained the writings of Moses and the prophets, but contained much more than our Bible. The work of Joseph Smith, Jr. as pertaining to the Bible was not to supply the larger portion which had by unknown means been omitted and lost to that book, but rather to correct errors and add such minor items as would make the book more fully representative of the mind of God.

This prophecy says that the man whom God will raise up to restore the lost scripture will be like unto Moses. Joseph states that the choice seer is the man like unto Moses, and Lehi indorses it. Joseph Smith, Jr. is never referred to in the scriptures as being like unto Moses. The

choice seer too is to “...bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins;” (II Nephi 2:17), which is in harmony with Moses’ prophecy.

The scripture which this man like unto Moses is to restore is to be had “...among even as many as shall believe.” (Doctrine and Covenants 22:24b). It is not to be had by the unbelieving, and like some other scriptures is not to come forth in the days of wickedness. The Inspired Version of the Bible has been published and is available to all men both righteous and unrighteous which makes it quite certain that the work of Joseph Smith, Jr. is not the work of the man like unto Moses, for the latter’s work will go only to those who are willing to receive it.

The prophecy may have its fulfillment in one or both of two records, the brass plates and the sealed part of the Book of Mormon plates. The first contain the five books of Moses and must have been written either in the lifetime of Moses or soon after, and most likely follows Moses’ original copy. (Nephi says that the record upon the brass plates is larger than that contained in the Bible as had by the gentiles.) The seer is to bring these plates forth. The second or sealed part contains another record of the same events recorded by the Brother of Jared which is also to be brought to light, and which will supply lost information concerning most ancient times and the gospel of that day. This work of restoring many scriptures which are still lost belongs to the choice seer of a future day.

THE PROPHECY OF MALACHI

The book of Malachi is a prophecy of latter days. It has to do with restoring Israel to an observance of the law of God, and to righteousness. It talks of the priesthood and their purification. It speaks of the temple and the coming of the Lord, and the removal of the curse from the land, and of the prosperity of restored Israel. It declares that the Sun of righteousness shall arise upon Israel with healing in his wings, and they shall grow up as calves of the stall, while the wicked will be ashes under

the soles of their feet. It is a prophecy of Israel in the last days. (Malachi 4:1-6).

But this great prophecy of benighted Israel rising to righteousness and glory, and to ascendancy, is to be brought about by one whom God will send. *“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me;”* (Malachi 3:1).

The work outlined for this messenger of God is a tremendous work. It is greater than that of John the Baptist who prepared the way for Christ’s first coming; greater than that of Elijah who broke down idolatry and revived the true worship of God in ancient Israel; greater than that of Moses who by the power of God delivered Israel from Egyptian slavery and degradation, and gave them the true religion and nationality. The work of this messenger will be well nigh worldwide. It requires a most unusual man, a man equipped with the power of God in mighty degree. He will be the greatest prophet the world has known.

The prophecy speaks of judgment upon the Gentiles, a day of burning when they will be like stubble. But the gentile’s fall marks the time of Israel’s rising, the day when the Sun of righteousness will arise upon them, and they shall return to God, for it goes on to say, *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”* (Malachi 4:5-6).

The work of this messenger who is here called Elijah, whom the Lord will send to save Israel from the judgments which will fall upon the wicked, and to turn them to God and to their fathers, is exactly the work of the choice seer whom we have seen was to bring his people to a knowledge of their fathers, and to a knowledge of the covenants which God had made with their father Jacob as stated by Joseph. This Elijah and the seer are both appointed to come at the same time; their work is the same. There is no other conclusion than that they are one and the same man.

There is a most remarkable fact about this prophecy which is worthy of notice. It was written after the Babylonian captivity, a hundred years or more after the Nephites left Jerusalem, so that they did not have it in their scriptures. Jesus, when teaching the Nephite people saw some good reason for their having it. Commanding them to write his words, he quoted for them the last two chapters of the book, and expounded them to them. His teaching was also recorded. These things were written upon the plates of Nephi, but unfortunately for us Mormon did not include Christ's explanation in his book. (III Nephi 11:22-29).

Why did Jesus give this scripture to the Nephites? It was not so much of immediate concern to his hearers. He tells us: “...*These scriptures which ye had not with you, the Father commanded that I should give unto you, for it was wisdom in him that they should be given unto future generations.*” (III Nephi 11:29).

In this statement we discover that the Lord gave this prophecy of Malachi for the express benefit of future generations. It has its application at a later time, and since it is recorded together with his exposition of it upon the plates of Nephi, and these plates are to come to the remnant of those people in latter days, we can only conclude that it was for this remnant that the Lord gave it. Christ applied the prophecy to the remnant of Joseph at the time of their recovery in the last days, at the very time when the choice seer is to arise to restore these teachings. It has to do with this choice seer and his work.

Other prophecies tell of the rising up of a choice seer who will bring forth the word of God to this remnant of Joseph, and who will bring them to a knowledge of their fathers and restore them to God; but this prophecy tells of the coming of a messenger to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord, an Elijah who is to turn Israel. Can we not see in this Elijah the choice seer for the work which they are to do is one and the same? It is this remnant who is first to be brought in; it is among them that the righteousness of God is to be established and the Zion of God built; it is this people who will first be turned to their fathers with other portions of Israel to follow. They may have the prophecy of

Malachi in the Bible and in the Book of Mormon which will come to them from the gentiles, but through the ministry of the seer they will come to have not only the prophecy but the Lord's instructions regarding it also. It will mean much to them.

THE PROPHECY OF JESUS

(Matthew 17:9-14)

When Jesus and the three disciples came down from the mount of transfiguration, the disciples asked, "*Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?*" (Matthew 17:9). The idea of the coming Elias must have been found by the Scribes in Malachi, the only book mentioning it. In answer Jesus speaks of two men who belonged under that title; first, one who was yet to "*...come, and restore all things, as the prophets have written.*" (Matthew 17:10), (this must particularly include Malachi) and second, John the Baptist who had already come.

Ascribing the name Elijah or Elias, (Elias is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Elijah, and is used in the New Testament, the Hebrew form being used in the Old Testament) to these two men did not imply that that would be their actual name. This is clear in the case of John, and we may safely assume it will be so in the case of the other who is yet to come. What the Lord meant is made clear in Doctrine and Covenants 26:2, where it states that the angel Elias or Elijah, who appeared to Zacharias, gave promise that he should have a son, and that "*...he should be filled with the spirit of Elias.*" (Doctrine and Covenants 26:2c). "*And he shall go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias...*" (Luke 1:17). Elijah, with the Spirit of God burning in his soul, transformed ancient Israel from a most degrading idolatry to the worship of the true God. It was in this Spirit that John the Baptist came, turning many of his generation to salvation; and it is in this Spirit that the future Eliases to come to latter day Israel, "*...to deliver them in the days of their captivity, from bondage; and to bring salvation unto them, when they are altogether bowed down under sin.*" (Genesis 48:11).

Jesus adds another important thought which coincides with many other prophecies regarding the work of the choice seer. Of the coming Elias, he should come and restore all things, as it is written by the prophets (Doctrine and Covenants 26:2b). The Spirit of Elias is the spirit of restoration, and the Elias is a restorer. But that is just what other prophets have said regarding the choice seer as we have already observed. Lehi said of him that he should bring to pass “...*much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren.*” (II Nephi 2:47).

The meaning of the name Elijah as given by Dr. Young is my God is Jah or Jehovah. It fittingly applies to any man in whom the Spirit and power of God moves to the breaking down of idolatry and sin and the setting up of the true faith to the turning of a people to their God. Such was the work of Elijah, and of John, and such will be the work of the coming seer the Elias, the restorer. Referring to him as Elijah is most appropriate though that may not be his personal name.

THE PROPHECY OF JOSEPH SMITH, JR.

Last but perhaps not least of all the prophecies touching the choice seer, who is to be like unto Moses, is that given by Joseph Smith, Jr. This latter day prophet never claimed for himself that he was that man, neither do the revelations he received so teach, but joining in the prophetic chorus he does declare that this man is yet to come.

“Behold, I say unto you, The redemption of Zion must needs come by power; therefore I will raise up unto my people a man, who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel, for ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham; and ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched out arm; and as your fathers were led at the first, even so shall the redemption of Zion be.” (Doctrine and Covenants 100:3d & e)

How like the other prophecies! A man comparable to Moses; a man of power leading the people as Moses led their fathers with

miracles and wonders; a man who will bring about the Zion of God, even as Moses sought to do but failed because of the rebellion of the people. How like the prophecy of Joseph concerning the choice seer!

Another prophecy given by Joseph Smith, Jr. and practically universally accepted as divine by Latter Day Saints, is found in RLDS Church History volume 1 page 260; it is not in the scriptures:

“...yea, thus saith the still small voice, which whispereth through and pierceth all things, and oftentimes it maketh my bones to quake, while it maketh manifest, saying: ‘And it shall come to pass that I the Lord God will send one mighty and strong, holding the sceptre of power in his hand, clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, eternal words, while his bowels shall be a fountain of truth, to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints whose names are found, and the names of their fathers, and of their children, enrolled in the book of the law of God;” (RLDS Church History 1:260).

Joseph Smith, Jr. gave another prophecy relating to this important matter as found in Doctrine and Covenants 98:6-8. At the time the vineyard was broken down and destroyed, which is yet future, the lord will call upon one of his servants to go and redeem Zion. He is to destroy the power of the enemy, and after many days complete the work. This servant seems to fit in with the choice seer.

In Doctrine and Covenants 100:4, the Lord says the servant spoken of in the parable and who is to redeem Zion is Baurak Ale (pseudonym). Doctrine and Covenants 102:5 seems to raise a little doubt as to the above interpretation.

Joseph Smith, Jr. agrees with the other prophets. He did not appropriate to himself the credit or honor of any work that did not belong to him for which he did not perform, and it would be folly for us to attribute such to him. He would be the last man to accept of such misplaced honors.

With the several prophecies presented herein may be added another given by Jesus in the 9th chapter of III Nephi, and coupled with the 52nd chapter of Isaiah, where much of the work of the choice seer is detailed, along with related events taking place at the same time. Note particularly emphasis upon “...*a great and a marvelous work...*” (III Nephi 9:95) as well as this people (Israel, beginning with the remnant in this land) will be “...*established in this land.*” (America) (III Nephi 9:89).

TO MARK THE DAY

In view of the historical and prophetical background presented here, together with the testimony of the prophets including that of Joseph Smith, Jr., the relative time of the coming of the choice seer is definitely determined to be in the great transition period when the gospel work closes among the gentiles and opens to scattered Israel, beginning with the remnant in America, which is yet future.

It is altogether impossible that Joseph Smith, Jr., whose mission was to the gentiles, and who finished his work and passed on to his reward nearly a hundred years ago, should have been that seer. Joseph Smith, Jr. was a seer by virtue of his divine calling and gifts, but he was not and could not have been the “*choice seer*” prophesied of by Joseph and Lehi, and who has been spoken of by many other prophets under different appellations.

The voice of prophecy has been heard, telling of the consummation of God’s long wrought purposes in one sublime world finale, when his power will be displayed to the downfall of Babylon and its wickedness, and the lifting up of down-trodden Israel to the bringing in of righteousness, the establishing of Zion, the bringing in of peace, and the preparing a people to receive the Lord at his glorious coming.

From times ancient and modern; from Egypt and Arabia, from Canaan and from Mexico and the United States, have come the voices of the prophets declaring the rising up of a man, who will be mighty and

strong by the power of God, and who shall lead in these great events. The times are moving on and the signs already indicate that the day of Israel's redemption is drawing nigh. The rise of the choice seer will mark the day, and his appearing will signify the ushering in of the new dispensation.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

by Charles Fry

No. 1. THERE IS ONE GOD

*“Jehovah is the Sovereign God,
The Universal King.”* Isaac Watts.

God is the universal, independent, and self-existent Being; eternal, without beginning or ending; in whom and of whom all things have their origin, by whom all things are sustained and governed, and in whom they are dissolved; filling the universe, being in and around all things; the light, life, and power by which all things subsist; discerning all things, being infinite in knowledge, wisdom, and justice, and judgment; manifesting himself through all his works, and revealing himself in various ways, to man upon whom he created a free agent, adapting his revelation always as to content and method to man’s limited capacity; the greatest revelation of all being the manifestation of himself in human flesh, the Son of a virgin, having been quickened by the Spirit of God in consequence of which he was called the Son of God, through which Son he gives to mankind redemption and the means of attaining perfect and everlasting happiness in his glorious presence.

THERE IS ONE GOD

The idolatrous worship of many gods by all the nations neighboring upon ancient Israel, and the constant infiltration of such worship into the kingdom of Israel, gave occasion to the God of Jacob to repeatedly declare and emphasize through his prophets his singularity, that he was the only God, and that the gods of the nations were “...*no gods.*” (Jeremiah 2:11). Early in Israel’s history he said, “...*the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him.*” (Deuteronomy 4:35).

And later:

“O Lord, there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee...” (I Chronicles 17:20).

And Isaiah at a still later date wrote:

“...before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Savior.” (Isaiah 43:10-11).

This idea of one God was so emphasized that notwithstanding the yielding of the people to other objects of worship it became generally fixed in the Hebrew mind, and has continued among the Jews to the present day.

The New Testament is no less specific in holding this doctrine, where God is always referred to in the singular number. There is no latitude given for more than one God. Jesus quotes him as saying:

“I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” (Matthew 22:31). He is *“...the God of our fathers...”* (Acts 3:13) he is the God of the Old Testament, and the *“...Lord God of Israel;”* (Luke 1:67). He says he is *“...the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”* (Luke 4:8).

But Jesus goes farther than to refer to God as the God of the ancients and says, *“The Lord our God is one Lord;”* (Mark 12:34). Paul also says, *“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all,”* (Ephesians 4:6) the same *“God that made the world and all things therein...”* and who *“...giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;”* (Acts 17:24-25).

“...we know that an idol is nothing, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things...” (I Corinthians 8:4-6).

THE BOOK OF MORMON ON THE ONE GOD

The Book of Mormon follows the same line of teaching, holding out always the idea of one God only. The following from a partial dialogue between Amulek who was filled with the Holy Ghost, and Zeezrom, a hypocritical lawyer, is representative:

“And Zeezrom said unto him, Thou sayest there is a true and living God?”

“...Yea, there is a true and living God.”

“...Is there more than one God?”

“...No.”

“...How knowest thou these things?”

“...An angel hath made them known unto me.” (Alma 8:79-84).

AND THE BOOK OF DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

One statement from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants is sufficient to show the position set forth in that book:

“By these things we know that there is a God in heaven who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth and all things which are in them, and that he created man male and female; after his own image and in his own likeness created he them, and gave unto them commandments that they should love and serve him the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship.” (Doctrine & Covenants 17:4a-b).

DOCTRINE OF ONE GOD VERSUS DOCTRINE OF TRINITY

We have presented here though briefly this scriptural teaching of the singularity of God because it is fundamental in helping to a proper understanding of his personality. It is the basis of the present treatise. Probably all will agree in what has been so far presented, and yet under

the teaching to which we have been accustomed from our infancy, we have acquired a conception of God, (vague though it is) of three persons constituting what is usually termed a “Godhead,” or as many think of it, a kind of “presiding council” in the heavens which rules over the universe. Acceptance of this tri-personal idea of god was, so utterly in conflict with the basic teachings of the scriptures, that it had to be explained in some acceptable way by those who gave it to the world. Hence it was that the idea of “three in one” was evolved. The Catholic Encyclopedia gives a clear and concise statement of the doctrine, as follows:

“The Trinity is the term employed to signify the central doctrine of the Christian religion – the truth that in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, these three persons being truly distinct one from another. Thus in the words of the Athanasian Creed: The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God.” (Article Trinity).

The plain straightforward declarations of scripture affirming but one God are quite in contrast with the statement of the Athanasian Creed, and almost every other creed of later date, which affirm that there are three persons constituting God. We shall see that the latter doctrine is not found in the scriptures.

GOD WANTS MEN TO UNDERSTAND HIM CORRECTLY

The difficulty of gaining any satisfactory understanding of God is indeed great, but this fact should not justify complete indifference to higher available knowledge, or passive acquiescence in what we think we know and which we have only heard from others. This knowledge will not be found without diligent research and study which God has commanded us to give. He evidently desires us to learn about him beyond what we already know, for in his later revelations he has given much new information concerning himself, regarding which he has said:

“I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fullness, for if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fullness and be glorified in me as I am in the Father:” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:3b-c).

A misconception of him will only lead us astray.

We can approach God only by knowing him rightly. We cannot find him through error. The writer has long since learned that one false idea in his mind blinds him to a world of truth, and stops progress until it is removed. He has learned too, that many such errors were learned in childhood under what was counted Christian teaching. Such ideas are usually held tenaciously with the result that whatever does not conform to them is rejected as untrue. Thus truth is barred from the mind. In some instances when progress has been held in check by some error, it has taken the immediate revelation of the Spirit to remove that error and clear the way to higher knowledge.

NOT TO FOLLOW THE CREEDS

Men are prone to adhere most tenaciously to the “faith of their Fathers” which was taught them in their childhood, and that without personal examination as to its correctness, forgetting that many things in that faith had their up-springing during the dark ages. The adversary has ever been busy sowing tares, seeds of error, in the field of truth, and because they have grown up under the name “Christian,” many are inclined to accept them without question. It is a fact that should be carefully considered by Latter Day Saints that Christian doctrine, as it has come down through the centuries, has been perverted by error, the truth having been intricately blended with the false until the two cannot be separated except under the light of the Holy Spirit.

One of the first statements of revelation, under what we call the restoration of the gospel in latter days, was regarding the formulated doctrines of the various churches, that “...all their creeds were an

abomination in his sight;” (RLDS Church History volume 1, page 9). Truth they may have contained but they were saturated with error, and the Lord had occasion to warn his people against them, and remove them once and for all from the faith and doctrine of his church. Yet how much of them have we clung to, failing to look for the greater light which he has given us.

Practically all the creeds contained the doctrine of the Trinity, that there were three persons “truly distinct one from another,” in the Godhead, a doctrine which, to say the least, has a very uncertain foundation in the Bible. The World Book says:

“The doctrine (of the Trinity) is a development of Christian theology not being taught in the Old Testament, but capable of being deduced from passages in the New Testament.”

Unitarian writers and other liberal Protestants urge that the doctrine is not to be found in the New Testament. Even the Catholic Encyclopedia admits relative to the origin of the word “Trinity,” that “The word trias (Greek) (of which the Latin trinitas is a translation) is first found in Theophilus of Antioch about A. D. 180. He speaks of the Trinity of God...shortly afterward it appears in its Latin form of trinitas in Turtulian. In the next century the word is in general use.” The best that can be said for the doctrine is that it was found by deduction. There is no direct affirmation of it in the scriptures.

RE-INVESTIGATION OF SCRIPTURE TEACHING SHOULD BE MADE

Latter Day Saints need to reconsider, or should we say to consider, the doctrine of God, and definitely determine just what our own inspired scriptures do teach regarding Him, for in our Inspired Version of the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants are to be found new and most vital evidences describing God, which we can by no means afford to neglect.

In the articles following it is not our purpose to enter into an extended discussion of controverted points, but to present as briefly as possible the outstanding teachings of the three books regarding God, submitting them to the reader for his own consideration and conclusion.

No. 2. GOD IS CHRIST AND SAVIOR

“...thou shalt know no god but me; for there is no Savior beside me.” (Hosea 13:4)

GOD THE ONLY SAVIOR

There are many statements of scripture which refer to God as being Christ or Savior, nor do such statements carry any implication that the term “*God*” refers to what is frequently spoken of (not in the scriptures) as “*God the Son*,” for such an expression is entirely unknown to the three books. “*God the Savior is the Jehovah of the ancients, the Mighty One of Jacob*,” the only God. He spoke through Enoch, revealing himself relative to the human nature which he would take upon himself:

“Behold, I am God; Man of Holiness is my name; Man of Counsel is my name; and Endless and Eternal is my name also. Wherefore I can stretch forth my hands and hold all the creations which I have made, and mine eye can pierce them also.” (Genesis 7:42).

He spoke through Isaiah:

“...there is no god else beside me; a just God, and a Savior; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.” (Isaiah 45:21-22).

“For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior...I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no savior. Yea, before the day was I am he...Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel...I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.” (Isaiah 43:3, 11, 13-15).

That this God is the one who came into the world through the virgin birth is apparent from the following:

Zacharias, upon the occasion of the birth of his son, John the Baptist, being filled with the Holy Ghost, prophesied:

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.” (Luke 1:67).

With these Paul also agrees:

“...we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men...” (I Timothy 4:10).

“...feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28).

“...the house of God, which is the church of the living God. The pillar and ground of the truth is, (and without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness,) God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” (I Timothy 3:15-16).

All of these scriptures from both the Old and the New Testaments, (and there are many others), reveal God, not God the Son, but the only God which the scriptures at all reveal, as the Savior of men, who came into the world in human flesh, whose name was called Emmanuel, *“God with us.”* (Matthew 2:6).

STILL MORE STRONGLY STATED

But turning to the Book of Mormon to see what its teaching are upon this matter, we find an exact agreement with the Bible, though the view is more strongly stated. Nearly six hundred years before Christ came, Nephi, a prophet, wrote:

“Yea, even the very God of Israel, do men trample under their feet; (I Nephi 5:233). And behold, he cometh according to the words of the angel, in six hundred years from the time my father left Jerusalem. And the world, because of their iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of nought; wherefore, they scourge him, and he suffereth it; and they smite him, and he suffereth it. (I Nephi 5:236-237). And the God of our fathers, who {our fathers} were led out of Egypt, out of bondage, and

also were preserved in the wilderness by him; yea, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, yieldeth himself according to the words of the angel, as a man, into the hands of wicked men, to be lifted up according to the words of Zenock, (I Nephi 5:239-240). And because of the groanings of the earth, many of the kings of the isles of the sea shall be wrought upon by the Spirit of God, to exclaim, The God of nature suffers. And as for those who are at Jerusalem, saith the prophet, they shall be scourged by all people, because they crucify the God of Israel... ” (I Nephi 5:250-251).

NEPHI HELD IDEA OF A SINGLE DIETY

There is no other God revealed in the Old Testament than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God of Israel. Yet Nephi who came from Jerusalem, and who was a close student of the Hebrew scriptures, most explicitly affirms that it was this God who was to come down and be crucified. There is not a hint of a “second person in the Godhead” who should come for that purpose, but he is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Again Nephi writes:

“Nevertheless, in our bodies we shall see God. Yea, I know that ye know, that in the body he shall show himself unto those at Jerusalem, from whence we came; For it behoveth the great Creator that he suffereth himself to become subject unto man in the flesh, and die for all men, that all men might become subject unto him.” (II Nephi 6:7, 8, 10).

This view of the divine person is carried all through the two books of Nephi, many of the important statements being too lengthy, or too much combined with other matter, to quote. Nor can we take space to use all the specific statements though we give one or two more:

“O how great the holiness of our God! For he knoweth all things...And he cometh into the world that he may save all men...” (II Nephi 6:44-45).

“But behold, thus saith the Lord God: When the day cometh that they shall believe in me, that I am Christ...” (II Nephi 7:12).

“But there is a God, and he is Christ;” (II Nephi 8:14).

It is clearly apparent from these utterance of Nephi that he had no other idea than that of a single person in the Deity, which idea he maintains throughout his writings. More than four hundred years later, the prophet-king Benjamin, taught his people:

“For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven, among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things, from the beginning;” (Mosiah 1:97, 102).

ABINADI’S PROPHECY

A still later prophet raised up from obscurity and sent of God to declare his word to, and warn a most rebellious group, spoke by the authority of the Holy Ghost in presenting the testimony of the ancient prophets said:

“Have they not said that God himself should come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of a man, and go forth in mighty power upon the face of the earth?” (Mosiah 8:13).

Alma discussing with his son Corianton, the great plan of redemption, said:

“And now the plan of mercy could not be brought about, except an atonement should be made; therefore God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also.” (Alma 19:97).

Moroni, the last prophet of the Nephite nation, writing of the experience of the Brother of Jared, who came with the people from

Babel to the western continent, and to whom God revealed his purposes regarding this land, records:

“And he had sworn in his wrath unto the Brother of Jared, that whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fullness of his wrath should come upon them. Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it, shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ who hath been manifested by the things which we have written.” (Ether 1:30, 35).

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS REVEALS THE GREAT I AM AS CHRIST

Having found, so far, that the Bible and the Book of Mormon are in absolute agreement in affirming that God was the person revealed in Jesus Christ, we turn to the Book of the Doctrine and Covenants and note its teachings. The references to this point in this book are numerous and we can use but a few. In the first chapter or section of the book it is said incidentally:

“...that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world;” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:4c).

“Behold, I am God, and give heed to my word,...believing in the power of Jesus Christ, or in my power which speaketh unto thee; for, behold it is I that speak; Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” (Doctrine and Covenants 10:1b, 5a, 5b, 12a).

“...I, God, have suffered these things for all,...which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and Spirit,...I am Jesus Christ; I came by the will of the Father...” (Doctrine & Covenants 18:2h, 2i, 2o).

“Thus saith the Lord your God, even Jesus Christ, the great I AM, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven, before the world was made; the same which knoweth all things, for all things are present before mine eyes: I am the same which spake and the world was made, and all things came by me:...I am Christ...” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:1a, 1b, 1c).

The God set forth in these passages is the great I AM who spake to Moses in the burning bush, he who encompasses the universe, and is omniscient, the Creator of the world and all things, the beginning and the end. There is no other God revealed in the Doctrine and Covenants. It is this God who declares himself to be the Savior of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ, he who suffered in the flesh. How like the Bible! And how like the Book of Mormon! All three books agree.

No. 3. CHRIST IS GOD

“...I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth...” –
{ words of Jesus }, (III Nephi 5:14)

CHRIST NOT A SECOND PERSON

Not only do the scriptures teach that God is Christ, but reversing the order they also show that Christ is God, not “God the Son,” or a second person in a trinity, but God – the only God revealed in the scriptures. The evidences we shall present may seem somewhat a duplication of those previously noted, but the matter is of sufficient importance to justify looking at it both ways. In not one instance do our three books say, or even intimate, that the God, whom Christ is, is a second person in a Godhead. But always he is God; he is the Father, the Creator, the very eternal Father, the Lord God Omnipotent, the Most High God, of whom we have already seen there is only one.

CHRIST'S OWN CLAIMS

Jesus, while upon the earth, gave out this view of himself though necessarily and wisely with considerable reserve. Before and after his coming he declared it directly and without reserve. The Pharisees clearly caught the idea as shown by their statement when they threatened to stone him that they did it “...because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” (John 10:33). When speaking to his disciples of the Father, Philip asked, “...Lord, show us the Father...” (John 14:8). The answer is significant: “...Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?” (John 14:9).

Christ could not have referred here to his mere physical form, but to his indwelling Spirit which was God, so that had Philip discerned the inner Christ he would thereby have discerned God:

“If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; (John 14:7). *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?...but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me;*” (John 14:10-11).

We observe here that the Spirit which constituted the real Christ, was not human, nor created as were the spirits of men, but that it was the Spirit of the universal God. This is why Jesus was able to say, “...the Father...dwelleth in me...” (John 14:10). This indwelling of the eternal Spirit in Jesus was not after the same manner that it came to dwell in the disciples. There were not two spirits in him but one. God was that Spirit.

Paul evidently understood that Christ was the embodiment of the very person of God in the light of the above, when he said, “...God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself...” (II Corinthians 5:19). And Thomas, upon seeing Jesus after his resurrection, exclaimed, “...My Lord, and my God.” (John 20:28). This idea of his being God must have been instilled into the minds of the disciples by Jesus. But one more statement of Christ:

“For he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God, for God giveth him not the Spirit by measure, for he dwelleth in him, even the fullness.” (John 3:34).

The Spirit was not given to Christ as it is given to the disciples, but he was the Spirit itself in human flesh.

CHRIST IS GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH

In harmony with the above we have other statements by Paul:

“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell;” (Colossians 1:19).

“For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (Colossians 2:9).

In Jesus dwelt the fullness of God. He was the Spirit of God revealed in bodily form. He was *“...God...manifest in the flesh...”* (I Timothy 3:16). Turning to the Old Testament we find Isaiah prophesying:

“For unto us a child is born...and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6).

“For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.” (Isaiah 54:5).

These Bible affirmations that Christ is God have further support in the Book of Mormon. Nor does it seem possible to interpret these statements to mean that he is “God the Son,” or a second person with the Father. They are direct, positive, unequivocal.

“...it must needs be that the Gentiles be convinced also, that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God;” (II Nephi 11:78).

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON TO SHOW THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE ETERNAL GOD

When the sacred record known as the Book of Mormon was first revealed the Lord spoke by revelation concerning it, saying:

“...I will also bring to light my gospel, which was ministered unto them (the ancient Nephites), and, behold, they (referring to the metallic plates upon which this record was inscribed) shall not deny that which you have received (the Bible), but they shall build it up, and shall bring to light the true points of my doctrine; yea, and the only doctrine which is in me; and this I do, that I may establish my gospel, that there may not be so much contention; yea, Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention, concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the Scriptures, and do not understand them.” (Doctrine and Covenants 3:15b, 15c, 15d).

The question of the personality of God, with the relation of Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, became a point of controversy in the Christian Church in the beginning of the fourth century. Constantine had become Emperor about A. D. 312, at which time he outwardly accepted the Christian faith, following which “the growing differences in Christian opinion issued swiftly in a conflict of sects so fierce and deadly as to demand the intervention of the Emperor himself.” (History of Creeds, by William A. Curtis, page 66). He called a council of the bishops to the number of 318, who met at Nicea, in A. D. 325. The meetings were “the occasions not seldom of disgraceful tumult and faction, of arrogant presumption, of gross uncharitableness.” (Ibid page 67). Of this and other councils of that period, Bishop Gregory wrote, “I have never seen that a synod has come to a good end, or that the evils of the church have been removed instead of being increased; for indescribable quarreling and rivalry reign there.” (Ibid page 67).

It was under these conditions that the doctrine of the Trinity had its birth, and it was under similar continued conditions that it had its development. Through this controversy the church was divided, and

found its bitterest foes in the Arians who resisted the doctrine. For more than sixteen centuries the controversy has continued with more or less bitterness. No other doctrine has been the occasion for so much dissent and trouble, or has continued so long a time as a disturbing influence. Even modern Protestantism has been divided by it into the Trinitarian and the Unitarian groups.

We have digressed a little in presenting this bit of history because it is essential to a full understanding of the Lord's statement in the revelation as quoted above. Is it not probable that the Lord had this doctrine, which has been the most controversial of the ages, in mind, when he said that the purpose of giving the Book of Mormon was to "*...bring to light the true points of my doctrine;...that there may not be so much contention;*" (Doctrine and Covenants 3:15b, 15c)? When we open the Book of Mormon and find it sets forth clearly and definitely throughout its pages. Beginning with the inspired preface, a view of the Deity which sets aside both the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity, and the equally confused and confusing Arian doctrine which in part denies the Deity of Christ, it becomes apparent that this very doctrine is exactly the one that the Lord did have in mind when he uttered the above words.

Another point raised in the revelation quoted, and also in the history of the councils which set up the doctrine of the Trinity, is that of contention. This doctrine had its formulation and adoption in bitter controversy, and had added to its creedal form an anathema against all those who believed otherwise, thus showing the venom of bitterness against the defeated party. Truth is not usually arrived at under such conditions, or by such methods. The Book of Mormon was given that God's truth might be made known, and that contention might cease. In that book he has said, "*...He that hath the spirit of contention, is not of me, but is of the devil...*" (III Nephi 5:30).

Opening the Book of Mormon we find on the title page written by its ancient author, Moroni, that one of the purposes of the book is "*...to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God...*" (Book of Mormon Title Page). The implication is that

neither the Gentiles nor the Jews are believing that “...*Jesus is the Christ, the eternal God...*” (Book of Mormon Title Page). By this book (the Book of Mormon) God seeks to correct erroneous conceptions and set people aright.

“...*there shall be no other name given, nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.*” (Mosiah 1:116).

“*Teach them that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord, who is the very eternal Father.*” (Mosiah 8:91).

“...*Jesus whom they slew, was the very Christ, and the very God;*” (Mormon 1:88).

CHRIST REVEALED HIMSELF AS GOD BEFORE HE CAME IN THE FLESH

To the Brother of Jared appeared Jesus in the Spirit, though in human form, many centuries before he came in the flesh, and talked with him as one man talks with another, giving him much information, much of it too advanced for the people of the time in their wickedness. Moroni says of this ministration:

“*And he ministered unto him, even as he ministered unto the Nephites; and all this, that this man knew that he was God...*” (Ether 1:83).

When Christ ministered unto the Nephites in America after his crucifixion in Jerusalem, and they wondered what he would do with the law of Moses, which had been given to Israel of God on Mount Sinai, we have the following:

“...*Marvel not that I said unto you, that old things had passed away, and that all things had become new. Behold, I am he that gave the law...*” (III Nephi 7:4, 6).

ADINADI A MARTYR TO THIS DOCTRINE

Abinadi declared the doctrine that Christ was God to the people of his day, in the face of threatening opposition, and as a consequence suffered a martyr's death by fire. Moreover he had been sent of God to declare the message including this doctrine, which with the further fact that God permitted him to suffer a martyr's death, indicates the importance of it. The perpetual welfare of any people is dependent upon their having a right conception of God. A wrong conception leaves them forever in the wrong. The record states:

“And because he said unto them, that Christ was the God, the Father of all things, and said that he should take upon him the image of man, and it should be the image after which man was created in the beginning; Or in other words, he said that man was created after the image of God, and that God should come down among the children of men, and take upon him flesh and blood, and go forth upon the face of the earth; and now because he said this, they did put him to death;” (Mosiah 5:44-46).

We shall have more from Abinadi in a subsequent article, but this clearly sets forth the point of Christ being God. Abinadi's discussion of the personality of God offered him a splendid opportunity to have explained that God was tri-personal, if such were true, but he gave not a hint of it. The same might be said of Christ himself in his appearance to the Brother of Jared, when there was given the greatest revelation of his person of which we have record, yet not a hint of a duality, or a trinity of persons in a Godhead. Rather the oneness of God is affirmed. Christ was simply God manifesting himself in human flesh.

CHRIST HELD HIMSELF AS GOD AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

After his resurrection Jesus Christ appeared to the Nephite people in America, who were part of the house of Israel. Prophets and ministers had long told of his coming declaring that God himself should

come down and take upon him a human form, but the people had been unbelieving, so that the Lord's first need in his teaching was to establish his own identity. Hence his words:

"...Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands, and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world. And when they had all gone forth, and had witnessed for themselves, they did cry out with one accord, saying, Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him." (III Nephi 5:14, 17).

We have seen in previous articles that God wants man to know and understand him, and he has revealed many things to that end. If Jesus had wanted his people to understand that there was a trinity of persons in one God, and that he was one of them, this occasion of establishing his identity with the Nephite nation, and that for generations to come, even down to the last days, was a most propitious occasion for declaring it. But not one word did he utter savoring of that idea, but on the other hand declared that *"...I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth..."* (III Nephi 5:14), and accepted that plaudits of the people calling him *"...the Most High God!"* (III Nephi 5:17) and also their worship. He evidently held himself to be the God of the Old Testament, of which that book repeatedly says there is only one.

Whether in his precarnate state, living in human flesh upon earth, or in his resurrected state, Jesus bears the same testimony. *"I am God."*

LATTER DAY REVELATION HOLDS CHRIST AS GOD

The Book of Doctrine and Covenants is not silent upon this matter. Many times the Lord declares himself to be Jesus Christ, and then goes on to say: *"Behold, I am God,"* or vice versa.

"I am Alpha and Omega, Christ the Lord; yea, even I am He, the beginning and the end, the Redeemer of the world: I having

accomplished and finished the will of him whose I am, even the Father, concerning me;...for I God am endless;” (Doctrine and Covenants 18:1a, 1b, 1d).

“Behold, I am God...Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” (Doctrine and Covenants 10:1b & 12a; 3:18; 15:3c; 16:5e, 7e; 26:1a; 75:1a).

“Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the great I AM, whose arm of mercy hath atoned for your sins...I, the Lord God...” (Doctrine and Covenants 28:1a, 5a).

This last quotation identifies the speaker with the God of the Old Testament, the Great I AM who appeared to Moses in the bush.

Again we find complete agreement between these evidences from the Doctrine and Covenants and others which we have introduced.

No. 4. GOD AND CHRIST ARE ONE

“I and My Father are one.” (John 10:30)

NEVER SAID TO BE TWO

The many scriptural evidences already set forth showing the oneness of God and Christ are further strengthened by a series of texts which are still more direct and positive. These texts definitely affirm that God and Christ are one. It is a striking fact also, that nowhere in all the scriptures is there to be found any direct affirmation that they are two. The scriptures do speak separately of God and of Christ, of the Father and of the Son, but wherever the question of personality or relationship is involved they are defined as one, never as two. The conception of two is evidently reached by deduction and that based upon partial, inadequate, and misunderstood evidences.

After speaking to the Jews of his Father, Jesus explains that *“I and my Father are one.”* (John 10:30). How often is his statement interpreted to mean one in nature and purpose; one in power and influence. They are one in this way, but is that what Jesus meant? That

kind of oneness stands out in all his teachings and works, and there was little need for him to state it specifically. If this were the only statement of the kind, and if there were other statements affirming a duality of persons in Father and Son, then the interpretation just mentioned might have some justification; but as it is, it is only an evasion of the direct, positive teaching of the Lord.

Some other statements of Jesus while upon earth harmonize with this view:

“...if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.” (John 8:19).

“...the Father is in me, and I in him.” (John 10:38; 14:10).

“And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.” (John 12:45).

“And all mine are thine, and thine are mine;” (John 17:10; 16:15).

In speaking to the Nephites in America Jesus was just as specific and plain:

“...I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one.” (III Nephi 5:27).

This bars a dual personality. Christ is the Father and the Father is the Son. Jesus himself interprets the first words by saying, *“...the Father and I are one.”* (III Nephi 5:27).

“...all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Father; and the Father and I are one.” (III Nephi 9:73; 13:22).

Before Christ came Abinadi taught that *“...they are one God, yea, the very eternal Father of heaven and of earth;”* (Mosiah 8:31), and in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants we find the Lord declaring:

“and the Father and I are one; I am in the Father and the Father in me;” (Doctrine and Covenants 50:8f; 90:1b).

“...the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him.” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:2d).

CHRIST IS BOTH FATHER AND SON

But the Lord goes further in showing what he meant when he said, *“I and my Father are one.”* His explanations never suggest that they are one merely in influence or power, but affirms that they are actually one:

“Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son.” (Ether 1:77).

Abinadi, at the height of inspirational light and power, speaking of *“...God himself who shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people;”* (Mosiah 8:28) says further:

“And because he dwelleth in flesh, he shall be called the Son of God; and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son; the Father because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and the Son: And they are one God, yea, the very eternal Father of heaven and of earth.” (Mosiah 8:29-31).

Moroni held the same view as others before him held, for in writing to the Gentiles of the present day he says:

“And because of the fall of man, came Jesus Christ, even the Father and the Son;” (Mormon 4:71).

KNOWLEDGE OF THE MYSTERY OF GOD POSSIBLE ONLY BY REVELMENT

Such teachings as we have considered must be taken into consideration in any proper attempt to understand God and Christ. They were not lightly uttered, but are the solemn words of the Son of God, and of holy men who spoke from spiritually enlightened minds. Words cannot convey a perfect knowledge of things beyond our experience, yet they do give us basic facts upon which we may proceed to a more nearly perfect knowledge. The mysteries of God are not to be understood by the carnal mind with its ordinary processes, but only by the quickening

powers of the Holy Spirit. The prophets whose testimonies we have used knew only in this way.

Jesus himself was fully conscious of this great fact of his oneness with God. In him dwelt a fullness of God. He had absolute knowledge of the things whereof he spoke. He also knew that it was impossible for the human mind of itself alone to know or comprehend this fact of divine oneness without divine quickening. It could be known only by the revealment of the Son. But how many times gave he promise of the unfoldment of divine mysteries to his disciples! Here is one touching his point which is most explicit:

“All things are delivered to me of my Father; and no man knoweth that the Son is the Father, and the Father is the Son, but him to whom the Son will reveal it.” (Luke 10:23).

While, as we have seen, the fact of the Father and Son being one has been many times declared, it has not been explained. It cannot be understood by men except through divine revealment. It is one of those mysteries surrounding the personality of God which lies beyond our experience, and beyond our present natural powers of perception. But by the quickening of mind which comes of the Holy Spirit, and its power of revealment, men have known this truth and have declared it, and no other view than this has been revealed of which we have record.

Such knowledge is still possible to others by the same method as stated by Jesus. If this truth is difficult to understand it is no more so than the doctrine of three persons in one and one in three which is admitted generally by those who hold it to be “an ineffable mystery.” But Jesus has here declared that truth of divine oneness, and given assurance that men may come to know of this truth by his revealing it to them. He has made no such declaration or promise regarding the doctrine of the Trinity. The mystery of God’s oneness has been and may be revealed; the mystery of the Trinity never has been revealed, and there is no promise that it ever will be.

If this statement of Jesus were the only one we had touching the singularity of Father and Son, it should be sufficient to establish the

truth, coming as it does from the Son of God himself. It is of further significance that the rendering here given is a correction from the common versions of the Bible and given by the “Spirit of Revelation.” Or in other words, the Lord took particular concern to change this passage from what is found in other versions of the Bible, where the essential truth is clouded or lost, to form in which the singularity of Father and Son is positively declared, together with a promise of personal revelation of its truth. Does this fact mean nothing to us?

FATHER AND SON SPEAK AS ONE

There is yet another class of scripture references touching the relation of God and Christ which should be considered, though because of their peculiar setting in the record, running through whole chapters as they do, we will not be able to quote except in small part. But we shall point them out that the reader may see them for himself.

In a number of instances where the Lord is speaking, in conversation especially, he speaks as both Father and Son. In both roles he speaks as one person. One striking instance is in conversation with Enoch. Enoch on the other hand, standing in the presence of God, addressed him, sometimes in the same sentence, as both Father and Son, and that without indicating any change of persons. An instance of this is found in the following:

“...he called unto the Lord, saying, Wilt thou not come again upon the earth? for inasmuch as thou art God, and I know thee, and thou hast sworn unto me, and commanded me that I should ask in the name of thine Only Begotten; thou hast made me, and given unto me a right to thy throne, and not of myself, but through thine own grace; wherefore I ask thee if thou wilt not come again on the earth?” (Genesis 7:66).

After speaking as Father and making oath to Enoch as recorded in verse 58 of this chapter, the Lord continues, and in verse 67 speaks as Son, telling of the day when he would come upon the earth. The latter part of the chapter indicates the Son as speaker yet in verse 69 he says

that “...*truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten;*” (Genesis 7:69). A careful study of this chapter will reveal a single personality in God, even though both roles of Father and Son are interchangeably used.

GOD AND CHRIST SPEAK AS ONE IN THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

This alternating of speaker between God and Christ is found also in the Doctrine and Covenants. The most outstanding instance is in section 28. The listing of some of the expressions will show what we mean:

“*Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the great I AM...*” (Doctrine and Covenants 28:1a).

“*...I will burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts...*” (Doctrine and Covenants 28:2e).

“*...I am in your midst, and am your advocate with the Father;*” (Doctrine and Covenants 28:2b).

“*...I, the Lord God, will send forth flies...*” (Doctrine and Covenants 28:5a).

“*...my blood shall not cleanse them if they hear me not.*” (Doctrine and Covenants 28:4c).

“*...the Devil was before Adam, for he rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine honor, which is my power;*” (Doctrine and Covenants 28:10a, 10b – This refers to the Father as definitely shown in Genesis 3:1-4).

“*...I, the Lord God, gave unto Adam and unto his seed, that they should not die as to the temporal death, until I, the Lord God, should send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption through faith on the name of mine only begotten Son;*” (Doctrine and Covenants 28:12a).

“*...little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world, through mine Only Begotten;*” (Doctrine and Covenants 28:13a).

In this revelation the Revealer speaks as Son and then as Father, and that without indicating any change of person.

The concept of Father and Son is one that belongs to man only. Christ is Son “...*because of the flesh;*” (Mosiah 8:30) and because of this world. As to the universe there is no such relationship.

In Doctrine and Covenants section 85 there seems to be a union of personality. In paragraph two Christ is the light which is in all things, while paragraph three says this light proceedeth from the presence of God. Paragraph three shows that all life comes from God who sitteth upon his throne, and yet paragraph four states that it is Christ who quickeneth all things. Paragraph three points out that the light which emanates from God is the law by which all things are governed, and yet paragraph five reveals Christ as the author of the law. In paragraph two it is Christ who comprehendeth all things, and is in all and through all things, and in paragraph ten it is God who sitteth upon the throne, who comprehendeth all things, and who is in all things. Likewise both Father and Son are referred to as Creator.

This seeming conflict is not real. Its explanation is to be found in what has been shown, viz., that God and Christ are but a single personality though manifested in different relations.

In the multitude of these evidences we are led to see the truth of Christ's words, “*I and my Father are one.*” (John 10:30). The testimony of the three standard books of scripture agree, and the evidences are many and varied. Other evidences will be presented in their place showing the oneness of Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

No. 5. JESUS CHRIST – HIS SONSHIP

“...I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning...”-
(Genesis 4:9)

CHRIST ETERNAL AND UNCREATED

Before considering the Sonship of Jesus Christ it is necessary to notice specifically a fundamental truth as abundantly set forth in the scriptures, viz., the eternity of his Being. Any student of our three books must recognize this truth for it runs through them all. We quote but a few:

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting.” (Micah 5:2).

“...the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven, among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay,” (Mosiah 1:97).

“Hearken and listen to the voice of him who is from all eternity to all eternity, the great I AM, even Jesus Christ, the light and the life of the world;” (Doctrine and Covenants 39:1a).

Eternal Being makes impossible any thought of creation in Jesus Christ. He was formed out of an assemblage of various elements into a composite image or form, and started out as a new creation, without experience, and without knowledge, as was man, yet, as we shall see, there was a change, for he could not have existed eternally as the Son, for Sonship involves generation and beginning. His coming into the world to dwell in human flesh we know was a change for him, and the fact of one change shows the possibility of a previous one. There was a pervious one which had to do somewhat with his Sonship, which we shall show.

SONSHIP INVOLVES GENERATION

Fatherhood and Sonship are related terms. We know what they mean as to earthly relationship, and while they are applied to God and Christ we must recognize that they do not mean exactly the same thing as when applied to men. In dealing with the things of God we have no earthly parallels, but no doubt the terms Father and Son are such as most nearly convey the idea of the divine relationship of Father and Son to each other, to us, yet we cannot attach to God and Christ all the conditions belonging to earthly father and sonship.

Whatever else Sonship may mean in Christ it must mean this: that at some time there was brought about a change; as a Son he was something that he was not before becoming a Son. As a Father, God had brought forth something that was in some respects or in some relations different from what had previously existed. By that change God became Father and Christ became a Son.

IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD

The scriptures speak of "*the beginning*," sometimes rather indefinitely, and in slightly different relations. In some cases the expression refers to the actual beginning of the divine processes preparatory to the creation of the world and man, and in others to the period between the time of the spiritual creation and the physical creation of man. We use the expression here in the former relation.

Beginning: (Doctrine and Covenants 90:4)

"...*I was in the beginning with the Father...*" (Doctrine and Covenants 90:4a). "*Ye were also in the beginning with the Father;*" (Doctrine and Covenants 90:4b). "...*that wicked one, who was a liar from the beginning.*" (Doctrine and Covenants 90:4b). Note the different meaning in these three uses of this word.

Christ was in the beginning with God. John says, "*In the beginning...the Son was with God...The same was in the beginning with*

God.” (John 1:1-2). The Lord said to Adam, “...*I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning...*” (Genesis 4:9). To our mind the beginning means more than the pre-carnate state. It carries us back into the eternity of the past before man existed at all, when the infinite God conceived and determined the creation of this world, or as stated in Genesis 1:1, “...*this heaven and this earth;*” which probably means the solar system, and all of its living forms including man, and devised his method of procedure through to the end when his purposes therein should have been reached.

At this time of beginning, and prior thereto, Christ could not have existed as Son, for it was then that he “...*came out from God.*” (John 16:27). In this relation his being “*with God*” means more than merely being in association with him. It can mean no less than that he was in God, without separate existence, being one with God, at which time there was nothing relating to the Divine Being which was in the least suggestive of two personalities.

“...*the triumph and the glory of the Lamb, who was slain, who was in the bosom of the Father before the worlds were made.*” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:4f).

“...*I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn;*” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:4a). Christ was the firstborn, the only-begotten Son of God from the beginning. As Son Christ had a beginning.

There was then a beginning to Christ’s Sonship. There was something attaching to Christ which was not eternal, just as when he came into this world and took upon him human flesh, he possessed something which had not before attached to him, and as he again by his resurrection took upon him a glorified body which constituted a change in His Being. By assuming a fleshly body he assumed that which made him different from what he had ever been before. Such a change shows the possibility of previous change “*in the beginning,*” at which time he took on himself form. The Spirit of God assumed form and became a pattern for the creation of man.

CHRIST CAME OUT FROM GOD

John says “...*the Son was of God.*” (John 1:1). He was of his Being, of his nature, and his person; but he “...*came out from God.*” (John 16:27). This was the change of which he spoke, a change which took place in the beginning, before the world was made, and before man was created. It was evidently a change, a development, in preparation for the vast work of creation, which God had designed to accomplish relative to mankind who as yet did not exist. Our scriptures reveal that the whole solar system was designed to meet the requirements of man and that more planets than the earth are and will be the places of abode of the human creation. This change, involving the coming out of Christ from God, is vitally important, and we shall give the scripture references:

Jesus while teaching the Jews said, “...*I proceeded forth and came from God;*” (John 8:42). By no reasonable interpretation can these words be made to mean that Christ, as an eternally separate person who was in the association of God, merely left that association to come to earth. The term “...*proceeded forth and came from...*” suggest an outcoming of the actual essence of God, a forming of something of God with a degree of separateness which had not before existed. That something Jesus called “*I.*” “...*I proceeded forth and came from God;*” He was given and assumed some of the characteristics of a separate personality (as we commonly think of personality), yet retained all the qualities and powers of his original Being, which was God, and also retained perfect communion, or oneness with God. The coming out did not involve a separation of personality which remained One as it always had been and always must be.

Jesus so taught his disciples that they believed that he came out from God, for which belief they were commended, and in commending them he states the matter in direct words:

“For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world;” (John 16:27-28).

And in further confirmation of this teaching Jesus in his prayer says: *“...I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee...”* (John 17:8).

There is another significant statement, the words of Jesus in latter day revelation:

“The Spirit of truth is of God. I am the Spirit of truth.” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:4c).

“Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.” (John 6:46).

Jesus was not talking of his physical life in these utterances, but of his Spirit Being. He is the Spirit of truth, which is of God. It was that Spirit which, *“in the beginning”* came out from God, being resolved into a form, and so became the *“Only Begotten Son.”* There had been a *“proceeding from,”* a *“coming out of,”* something akin to generation, or having been begotten. As Son he had origin in the Father.

THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD

From present knowledge we cannot think of God, the universal Being, as being in anywise limited to a form like that of man. He fills the heavens and the earth, and is in and through all things. He is the eternal Spirit. But to this view objection is urged that he in person sits down upon his throne in human form from whence he sends out his power and influence to rule the universe. But the scriptures do not so present him: it is he himself that is omnipresent.

One passage more than all others is probably the cause of the anthropomorphic view of God:

“And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;” (Genesis 1:27).

From this the idea of God being in the form of a man can be drawn only by inference. This inference is more or less common, but is it correct? In the absence of any specific revelation that God has such a form, is it either safe or wise to make such an inference from such meager and uncertain evidence? Is it justified?

In the light of what has been presented, with other matter to follow, it is our conception that this *“image”* is none other than the form into which the Spirit of truth, which was of God, was resolved in the beginning, when God conceived the great plan of creation and redemption of man, and having determined in his infinite mind the form in which he would make man, resolved from himself a corresponding form or *“image,”* which was to become the pattern for all others. This was the Only Begotten Son. Not only was the Son a pattern, but it was to be the medium through whom the whole work of creation and of redemption was to be effected. He was to be the life-giver to the world of living forms which he should create including man, both in the spirit or pre-carnate world and in the present world.

It is well to consider that Divine activity is in constant change of movement, in new creations, dissolving old creations which have served their purpose. *“...my works are without end, and also my words, for they never cease;”* (Doctrine and Covenants 22:3b).

There is no stagnation in God’s universe. His works change but not his nature or purpose.

Christ’s repeated statement *“...I am in the Father, and the Father in me;”* (John 14:11) is most certainly an affirmation of the oneness of personality, and the absence of any actual separation between Father and Son. When an earthly son is born of an earthly father they become two absolutely separate persons, no more capable of reunion. But no such separation divided Christ and the Father-God. Christ, the Son remained in one indissoluble union with the Father, and the Father remained

inseparable from the Son. They were one. Jesus said “*I and my Father are one.*” (John 10:30). This was not said as some have urged, that they were one in purpose and character, but the teaching of Jesus here, was dealing directly with personality rather than with unity of mind and heart, as referred to on another occasion when praying for his disciples “*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us;*” (John 17:21). “*...I am in the Father, and the Father in me;*” (John 14:11).

Can two personalities, which are separate and distinct, even though they be alike in character, be so described? Can two personalities, even so blended into one that they exist as one? Can God be revealed as two Gods acting as one, or as triune in person yet one in saying to the Brother of Jared “*I am the Father and the Son.*” (Ether 1:77)? Jesus did not say, “I am two persons acting in two capacities.”

Perhaps the fact of the Son taking form constituted the main, if not the sole measure of separation or of distinction between him and the Father.

It is not strange then that God should say to this Only Begotten Son, who was of himself, and who had come out from him, and assumed a form with a measure of separateness, a form from which was to be evolved the myriads of human spirits of like pattern; “*...Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;*” (Genesis 1:27). This image was the one which God had designed and formed of himself in the divine process of generation. It was the Son, the Only Begotten Son and there was no other.

“*And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him;*” (Genesis 1:29).

The latter clause seems to be explanatory of the first and follows the idea we have already expressed, or presented. The meaning is made somewhat clear by Paul’s expression concerning Christ “*Who is the image of the invisible God...*” (Colossians 1:15) which neither says nor implies that God is in the form of man, but rather that as universal Spirit, God being without form is invisible, that is un-discernable to man except

through the image of himself as revealed in the form of Jesus Christ. Nor does this image refer to Christ's physical body for he had this image or form in the Spirit, and so appeared many times before his incarnation. As we have previously explained, it was this form of the Only Begotten Son which was revealed to the ancients as Jehovah and God.

In Doctrine and Covenants 22:8, Moses makes a statement to Satan, "...*behold I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten;*" (Doctrine and Covenants 22:8b). Here Moses speaks of being created after the image "...*of his Only Begotten;*" that is in the form of God; in the image and likeness of the Son. Then Moses adds, "*For, behold, I could not look upon God...*" (Doctrine and Covenants 22:8c). It was in this form or image that Christ appeared to the Brother of Jared more than two thousand years before he came in the flesh, the account of which is so clear and pertinent that we quote therefrom:

"...behold the Lord shewed himself unto him, and said, Because thou knowest these things, ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I shew myself unto you. Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. (Ether 1:76-77). Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning, after mine own image. Behold this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit, will I appear unto my people in the flesh." (Ether 1:80-81).

In the explanation of this revelation, Moroni, a prophet and historian adds:

"...Jesus shewed himself unto this man in the spirit, even after the manner and in the likeness of the same body, even as he shewed himself unto the Nephites...and all this, that this man knew that he was God..." (Ether 1:82-83).

In dealing with man from the beginning God was under the necessity of adapting himself to man's measure of capacity. Is it not

evident that Jesus Christ as the “*Only Begotten Son*” in the beginning, as well as in his physical earth life was the manifestation of God in this limited form adapted to human capacity to comprehend?

Here is God revealing himself to man in human form, but that form was Jesus Christ, the only human form in which God ever has been revealed to man, for the scriptures abundantly show that the divine image seen by the ancients was always Christ. Here is Christ revealing himself in “*the body of my Spirit,*” apparently using the word “*body*” in the sense of form, and saying that that was the image after which all men were created. Notice his statement further: “*...man have I created after the body of my Spirit;*” (Ether 1:81). And in this very connection he also says, “*I am the Father and the Son.*” (Ether 1:77). There were not two images of God, but “*our image.*” That image was Christ’s. It was Christ who created man, and it was his own form that supplied the pattern.

“*...the body of my Spirit;*” (Ether 1:81) here suggests a form into which the Spirit of God had been resolved, or which had been resolved out of the Spirit of God which otherwise existed as the universal Spirit without form or limitation. It was a form derived from God enfolding the divine personality and nature, becoming the pattern for the creation of man, spirit and body, and becoming to them the representation of God in human form.

The bringing into existence of this “*...body of my Spirit;*” (Ether 1:81) cannot be classed as a creation in any such sense as the word is used in relation to man and all material things. Men were created “*in the beginning,*” as it is written, “*And I, the Lord God, had created all the children of men...in heaven created I them, and there was not yet flesh upon the earth...*” (Genesis 2:6). Christ was not created but “*...came out from God.*” (John 16:27) though the form which he assumed at that time, as we have seen, was resolved of himself. It was the eternal Spirit of Truth resolving of itself a form, without however changing or losing any of its essential characteristics or powers. This

form continued in oneness with the universal Spirit. The separation being seeming only and not absolute.

Illustrations which can be used to represent divinity are few and none of them are altogether fitting. We can not represent infinite things by finite, yet there may be illustrations that will help. But sometimes an illustration will represent a single idea which is helpful. It is with this thought that we notice the distinction between the making of a bronze statue which is strictly the work of creation, and the producing of a marble statue which is strictly a forming, or bringing forth out of a pre-existing body. The marble statue always existed, since the creation of the earth, in the mass of marble, but by the skill of the sculptor it “came out of” that mass, and became something which it was not before, yet retaining its original nature. It is still marble identical with the mass from which it was taken. If we can carry this idea into the realm of spirit, recognizing some measure of a parallel with spiritual things, and forgetting material things we may be able to catch the idea of Christ coming out from God, yet retaining the same nature and character belonging to God.

Though our illustration is imperfect and only partially fitting, yet it represents the idea of Christ coming out from God and still retaining the divine nature and personality. The illustration ends there. It is on the basis of those retained qualities, powers, and personality, and the fact of continuing communion in the fullest degree with God, that Jesus Christ can consistently speak of being eternal, of knowing all things, of having all power, etc., and it is upon this basis, and upon this basis only, that he can say, “*I am the Father and the Son.*” (Ether 1:77).

CHRIST PREPARED FROM THE BEGINNING

There are some other scriptures which deal with this marvelous event “*in the beginning,*” and which we must consider in order that the wonderful story shall be complete in our minds. They have to do with Christ’s preparation. They are scriptures which we have largely if not

entirely overlooked in our study of God and Christ. This preparation points to the great purpose in the mind of God which gave occasion for him to “...*come [came] out from God,*” (John 16:27) for it points to the great mission of the Son. We present here some of these scriptures:

“...*they would not hearken unto his voice, nor believe on his Only Begotten Son, even him whom he declared should come in the meridian of time; who was prepared from before the foundation of the world.*” (Genesis 5:43).

“*Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people.*” (Ether 1:77).

Christ did not design to do all that was requisite in the redemption of man without enlisting willing and qualified men to assist. Alma speaking of such men whom God calls to the high priesthood as his representatives in this world, affirms that this priesthood was “...*after the order of his Son...*” (Alma 9:63) and that men called were chosen from the foundation of the world, and prepared for this ministry. It is in this connection that he says that Christ was prepared:

“...*thus this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the only begotten Son, who was prepared;*” (Alma 9:68).

“...*grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world.*” (Mosiah 9:44).

The preparation of Christ differed from that of men chosen for the high priesthood, the latter being by development, training and experience; but Christ being Divine needed no such preparation. His preparation must have consisted only in the matter of the Divine Spirit assuming a form, not to encompass the universal Spirit of God, but sufficient to occupy in that form for the purpose of acting in a special and limited capacity, while preserving oneness of person. It was this coming out from God which constituted the begetting by which Christ became the “*Only Begotten Son,*” thereby preparing him to be the

“*mediator*” between God and man, and to deal with man on man’s own level.

Christ’s preparation was with a definite purpose, and though that purpose involved his giving his life for the world, yet that was but an incidental part of the whole; it included the entire work of redemption which would not reach its end until the earth and as many of its inhabitants as would were glorified in God. His preparation was accompanied by a choosing, a foreordaining of him, for this age-long task, as may be seen in the following:

“...ye were not redeemed with corruptible things...But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,” (I Peter 1:18-20).

“...those things which were from the beginning before the world was, which were ordained of the Father, through his only begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, even from the beginning...he is the Only Begotten of the Father; that by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created; and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:3b, 3h).

“...I (John) saw his glory that he was in the beginning before the world was; therefore in the beginning the Word was; for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation, the light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world because the world was made by him; and in him was the life of men and the light of men.” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:1d, 1e).

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ephesians 3:9, 11).

The Only Begotten Son was prepared for a specific work, being given a commission to create man in his own image. The worlds needed by and for man in the great process of developing and bringing him to

“...immortality, and eternal life...” (Doctrine and Covenants 22:23b) encompassing the solar system, and in redeeming man to become sons of God. With Christ in God and God in Christ and the oft repeated statement that they are one, we cannot think of absolute separation insomuch that they constituted two personalities. They remain one in their eternal nature. There is “...one Spirit...” (I Corinthians 12:13) says Paul. That same Spirit constitutes God and constitutes Christ. There are not two Spirits making two persons.

That age-long task included the creation of the earth and its attendant solar system, and the bringing of the human race to sonship in God. He who had this great task was the “...Word, even the messenger of salvation...” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:1d) which makes him the revealer of God and his truth to men. He was to be the purveyor of light and life to the world. The work of redemption necessitated his being a Restorer also, even to the raising of the dead. These are some of the details in the vast work for which Christ was prepared at the beginning.

Just what this change was as expressed in the words “...was prepared...” (Genesis 5:43) is not revealed, but of this it must be certain that there was a change so that Christ became what he had not been before. The various statements that originally he was “...with God...” (John 1:1) and “...proceeded forth and came from God;” (John 8:42) together with the further statement that “...the Son was of God.” (John 1:1) i.e., of the essence or personality of God, suggest that he is a manifestation of God, though that manifestation was definite enough to be expressed in a Spirit form before the world was made. Or to be more specific, prior to this change, Christ was in the absolute degree one with God, having no image or form, or separateness of Being, and through the change was resolved from the very Being of God into a Spirit form, not created in any such sense as man was created, but coming out from God, and yet retaining the fullness of the nature of God, and also absolute and unrestricted communion with God. He was God expressing himself in that particular form.

This preparation was in view of the great work contemplated in the mind of the infinite God, which included the creation of worlds and their inhabitants, and the developing of them by age-long processes to perfection, and to such a likeness with God that they would be capable of dwelling in his glorious presence, in a state so much higher that the present world gives but the faintest conception of it. Can we not see in this preparation an adaption upon the part of God to the particular conditions and needs involved in this work? An adaption of his person in Christ to the particular form and personality of man whose creation was then in contemplation?

This preparation of the Son may be better understood by considering briefly that with infinite foreknowledge God laid out the whole plan relative to the creation and development of man from the beginning to the end, making provision for every detail of human need both in the spirit and in the flesh. It was then that the gospel was conceived, so that it was no new thing when it was revealed to Adam, much less when it was restored through John the Baptist and Jesus. Christ was made the Word, the messenger of salvation in the beginning. *“In him was the gospel, and the gospel was the life...”* (John 1:4).

“...thus God bringeth about his great and eternal purposes, which were prepared from the foundation of the world.” (Alma 19:108).

“Now if it had not been for the plan of redemption, which was laid from the foundation of the world, there could have been no resurrection of the dead; But there was a plan of redemption laid, which shall bring to pass the resurrection of the dead...” (Alma 9:42-43).

The universality of this plan of redemption is shown in the following:

“...this is the man who receiveth salvation, through the atonement which was prepared from the foundation of the world, for all mankind, which ever were, ever since the fall of Adam, or who are or ever shall be, even unto the end of the world;” (Mosiah 2:11).

“...our understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God; even those things which were from the

beginning before the world was, which were ordained of the Father, through his only begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, even from the beginning...” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:3a, 3b).

“...the works of God were prepared, (or finished,) from the foundation of the world.” (Hebrews 4:3).

Thus we find that the full plan of the gospel was foreordained from the beginning. The works that Christ was to perform were predetermined, including his death and resurrection, not, as some suppose that God predetermined, and made it personally obligatory, that certain persons should crucify the Son of God; but that knowing beforehand what men would do under given circumstances, he permitted this sinful act and made use of it to the fulfilling of his own purposes. Other acts of sin upon the part of all men made necessary the death of Christ and his resurrection that his work of redemption might be made complete. This was in the designs of God in the beginning:

“...I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me; And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross;” (III Nephi 12:25-26).

“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world...” (I Peter 1:19-20).

Both the plan of redemption and the personal Redeemer were prepared in the beginning.

CHRIST MADE A MEDIATOR

We are inclined to think of the mediatorship of Christ from the human side, which is more in the nature of an intercessor. He is our representative before the Father, and pleads our cause. But we wish to look at it from the other side, and consider him as God’s mediator to man.

As before expressed God is the “*invisible*” (Colossians 1:15) Being, to whom man cannot directly approach. Nor could God

immediately make himself approachable, or comprehensible to man. To establish contact with man and make possible mutual relations he must “*prepare*” a “*mediator*,” in whom his own nature and character shall be embodied, and through whom his whole purpose regarding man shall be wrought out. This mediator must be able to interpret and reveal God to man within man’s extremely limited capacity. He must, in a sense adapt God to man’s measure of understanding. He must even assume the form of man, and be able to condescend to walk and talk with men (like a professor adapting himself to his two or three year old child), and show himself to them, that they may know God thereby, and learn of his purposes and requirements. These are some of the characteristics of Christ’s mediatorship. These he did as the Son of God.

The idea of Christ possessing “...*all the fullness of the Godhead...*” (Colossians 2:9) and at the same time adapting himself to man’s small capacity, is like (to use another single idea illustration), a transformer on an electric line, which receives current of high voltage as it comes from the great dynamo, and reduces it to low voltage whereby it is adapted to the various electrical apparatus in our homes. To turn 25,000 volts into our household motors and lamps would destroy us. Lines running out of the power houses at Boulder Dam carry as high as 220,000 volts but by transformers patrons receive the power at 112 volts.

Christ receives of the fullness of God. His oneness with the Father leaves the stream of divinity flowing unrestricted to him. But in ministering to man that fullness flows only in such measure as is adapted to man’s capacity to receive and power to use. Moses was permitted to see the Lord with but a portion of his glory, but even then, not until he had been himself quickened by a portion of that glory, and his capability greatly enlarged. Moses realized that what he had seen was with “...*not mine natural but my spiritual eyes, for mine natural eyes could not have beheld, for I should have withered and died in his presence; but his glory was upon me, and I beheld his face, for I was transfigured before him.*” (Doctrine and Covenants 22:7b, 7c). The Lord also said to him,

“...no man can behold all my glory, and afterwards remain in the flesh, on the earth.” (Doctrine and Covenants 22:3d).

Man receives only such portion of the things of God as his condition will admit.

The scriptural use of the word “*mediator*” as applying to Christ, refers to his representing God to man rather than man to God. He is the “*...Mediator between God and man;*” (I Timothy 2:4) of “*...the new covenant;*” the “*...mediator of life;*” (Galatians 3:20).

All God’s dealings with man are mediated through his Son Jesus Christ, who is the “*...one mediator between God and men...*” (I Timothy 2:5). He is the “*...Only Begotten...*” (I Timothy 2:4). On the other hand, man’s approach to God can be only through Christ, who is “*...an advocate with the Father...*” (I John 2:1). “*...no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*” (John 14:6). As mediator, Christ “*...hath power over all men.*” (I Timothy 2:4) for the Father has “*...given him power over all flesh...*” (John 17:2). Again we are told that “*...the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;*” (John 5:22). Christ’s position as Mediator is absolute; “*The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands.*” (John 3:35).

(In adapting himself to man’s limited capacity he must bring himself within the reach of man’s senses – the physical senses, with such spiritual sense as he possesses.

Man sees with eyes. God must assume a limited form if man is to see him. Hence the image of God resolved from his own Spirit, and called the Son; that image having been “*begotten*” in the beginning, that is in the beginning of God’s processes looking toward the creation and the perfection of man.

Man hears with physical ears. God must speak to him in such a way that those physical ears can hear him. Hence the form or image of God in Christ the Son, who both in the Spirit and in the flesh has spoken with man “*...face to face;*” and “*...even as a man talketh one with another...*” (Genesis 7:4).

Man feels not only by the sense of touch in his fingers but in his inner emotions. With Christ there is the physical touch and the spiritual touch and man's emotional feelings are susceptible of being touched by the Spirit of Christ. Through Christ man can come into contact with God and feel him.)

CHRIST'S SONSHIP IN THE FLESH

Christ's Sonship is primarily of the Spirit; that is, in his Spirit form, which he assumed in the beginning. He was then the Only Begotten, "...*the Son of God which was from before the foundation of the world.*" (Genesis 14:31). Long before he came into the world he said to the Brother of Jared, "*I am the Father and the Son.*" (Ether 1:77). It was necessary therefore, that in coming into the world the vital fact of his Sonship should be extended to the flesh, and that he should be born of a virgin by the Holy Spirit in this world. He was not the Son of God so much because of the manner of his birth, but rather that his being already the Son of God made necessary, and determined, the manner of his birth in the flesh. He was already the Son of God begotten before the foundation of the world, and it was necessary and consistent that that relation of Sonship should be extended to the flesh, thereby revealing in the flesh the great spiritual fact of his spiritual Sonship.

Christ's Sonship in the Spirit did not reach its finality, or fulfill its purpose, until he had become a Son in the flesh also. His Spiritual Sonship had that end in view, and had he not been born the Son of God into the world there would have been no occasion for his being "*prepared*" as the "*Only Begotten Son*" in the Spirit. A denial of his divine Sonship in the flesh is a denial of his divine Sonship in the Spirit, and of the whole scheme of redemption. The failure of men to recognize the fact of Christ's Sonship in the Spirit tends to and makes easy their failure to recognize or to deny his Sonship in the flesh. The whole purpose of God concerning man, and the gospel of salvation, rest upon one basic fact, viz., the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ in both Spirit and

body. To deny this great basic fact is to deny all, and to take away the hope of mankind.

In the face of growing disbelief in, and of insistent denial of, the divine Sonship of Jesus in these modern times, comes to Latter Day Saints the added and confirmatory witness of the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. In them the testimony of the Bible regarding the virgin birth is more clearly and more directly affirmed. God has “...*left not himself without witness...*” (Acts 14:17) upon this vital truth in these difficult times, but has given much new light.

THE NATURE OF PERSONALITY

In considering the evidences heretofore set forth regarding the singularity of God and Christ, the reader may still be puzzled because of the persistency of the thought of two personalities. We recognize the difficulty of understanding the fundamental fact of that singularity, but our chief fault is in our failure to understand the nature of God, or more specifically, the nature of personality.

Our whole conception of personality has been gained from our knowledge of human persons, all of whom have form like our own, from which we have easily assumed that form and personality are inseparably connected, and that neither can exist without the other. Having believed that God is in the form of a man, and that Christ is in “...*the express image...*” of God (Hebrews 1:3), we inevitably reach the conclusion that they are two separate and distinct personalities.

In attributing to God a form with which his personality is bound up we become involved in another error, viz., the limiting of that personality in its expression to that particular form. God is in no such way so restricted, but finds free expression for his Being in the universal Spirit which he is.

The Spirit which fills all space, and is in and through all things, the power by which all things are created, maintained and governed, the universal invisible and incomprehensible God.

His activities are manifest in an infinite number of ways regardless of any bodily form, though it is by no means impossible for him to provide a form in which his personality may have expression in some particular way.

It must be remembered that God's revelations to man cover only a part from a few basic principles or attributes of his character, his work pertaining to this world, or at most, "...*this heaven and this earth*;" (Genesis 1:1). And of matters relating to other worlds or systems he says (see revelation to Moses; Doctrine and Covenants Section 22), that for wise reasons this knowledge "...*remaineth in me*." (Doctrine and Covenants 22:21a). It is enough for man to know himself and his earthly environment and the purpose of his being.

Personality in this connection is nicely set forth in the following;

"What is the essence, the essential idea, of personality? It is not outline, it is not limitation, it is not location in space. John Locke, the English philosopher, says that the central idea of personality is thought and intelligence. Hermann Lotze, one of the foremost scientific philosophers of the world, asserts the same. Conscious selfhood, he says, is the essence of personality. And so we may assert and believe that God is personal, while we eliminate from the definition of that word all that limits, all that locates, all that cripples, all that hampers personality, as we are acquainted with it in ourselves and in each other. And we may rightly, I believe carefully defining terms and understanding what they mean, assert of God that he is the infinite person." (Belief in God by M. J. Savage, page 74).

Albert C. Knudson defines a person as "one who thinks and feels and wills," and that "personality in its essence means self-hood, self-knowledge and self-direction." He says further:

"But while personality must be construed in psychological terms, it does not necessarily imply limitations and imperfections such as those

incident to the growth and development of the human spirit.” (The Doctrine of God, pages 399, 297 and 396 respectively).

God is a person but not necessarily a form. It is his universal and all-pervading Spirit which is possessed of intelligence, of feeling and of will. His intelligence and power are everywhere manifest, and that without any bodily presence. God is essentially Spirit.

These qualities, or in other words, his personality is, and may be, manifest in every part of his being in every place wherever God is. Where a portion of his Spirit is resident in a human soul, there God is in all the qualities and powers of his being his personality is there manifest. This condition may exist in thousands or millions of souls at the same time, yet it is the same personality in all.

The personality of God is manifested in and through Jesus Christ, who is possessed of a form. Because of that form we have erroneously supposed that he is another person. Such supposition does not rest upon any sound basis. The very universality of God as the Spirit, makes possible the manifesting of his personality in any way, in any place, in any form which he may choose, or sometimes independently of any form. But such manifestation in a form does not constitute a separate personality, any more than would his varied manifestations independently of a form constitute separate personalities.

When a man is born of the Spirit and the Spirit takes its abode within his soul that man is in communion with God; he has contact with the divine personality. Paul refers to this relation as “...*Christ in you...*” (Colossians 1:27). The man discerns and thinks the thoughts of God (within bounds); he feels and partakes of the Divine nature. The Divine personality is within him. That Spirit may speak as God to him. It may reveal deep mysteries and exalted truths. There is no limit to its possibilities though there may be limits to the man’s power of reception. The personality of God there is without limitation. But here is another man having possession of the Spirit of God; two men; ten thousand men, in every one of whom the person of God dwells; he hears petition and answers; he speaks and reveals, counsels or directs in every one.

Are we so simple as to believe because of this distribution and separate activity of the Spirit of God in ten thousand persons, that the Spirit is divided into ten thousand separate entities? Paul says there is “...*one Spirit...One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*” (Ephesians 4:4, 6). There are many different ministrations yet “...*all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*” (I Corinthians 12:11).

If when the Spirit of God can dwell in many persons without dividing its personality, remaining all the time one and the same Spirit, cannot then the Spirit of God dwell in a greater degree in Jesus Christ, without dividing the personality, remaining one with God? The indwelling presence of the Spirit of God in the form of Christ the Son (and Jesus possessed no other Spirit apart from the Spirit of God), need not and did not reveal a personality separate or distinct from God. Jesus confesses his identity with the Father, not only in such expressions as “*I and my Father are one.*” (John 10:30) but in “...*if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.*” (John 8:19); “...*he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;*” (John 14:9) and “...*the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.*” (John 14:10).

In dealing with this creation, involving the human race, God chose to manifest himself through a form which was specifically “*prepared*” for the particular purpose, and through whom his whole work of creation, development, redemption and perfection, could be executed, and whom he designated “*Mine Only Begotten Son.*” In other words, Christ is God’s medium of expression and of operation to the human race, and, so far as we know, to the human race only. He is not necessarily a Messiah and a Savior to other worlds, unless the other planets of our solar system are included in the scope of his particular work as suggested by “...*this heaven and this earth;*” in Genesis 1:1. There is no evidence that the Son’s work as Mediator and his mission as Redeemer extend to the whole universe. He is mediator between God and Man, and the Redeemer of the world. The purpose of his

preparation stated by himself, “...*I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people.*” (Ether 1:77). This with its correlated work is the only reason for Christ coming out in his separateness in a definite form. For this purpose and this purpose only, did he come out from God, and became the Only Begotten Son, and was prepared and became the Mediator between God and man.

Christ has declared the eternity of his being. However, especially since he says “*I am the Spirit of truth.*” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:4c) so that he is essentially Spirit, it does not follow that Christ existed eternally in human form. It was his form which was prepared from the beginning and which constituted his Sonship. It had a beginning. As Spirit he was eternal but as to his form that originated when he came out from God and became “*the Only Begotten Son.*” His personality always existed but in the beginning when he “*was prepared,*” he became a form, that personality was associated with that form, though by no means confined to it solely. Since Christ ascended into the heavens after his resurrection, his Spirit is shed abroad, or in other words, his personality, into the hearts of his people, showing that personality is not limited to form.

In the matter of Christ coming out from God and assuming an apparently separate identity, while still retaining complete unity with God, we have no earthly parallel, and can offer but little in the way of illustration. However the following may give some little measure of help.

A man builds up four walls and upon them constructs a roof and calls the enclosure “The Auditorium.” But what has he done? Just this: he has enclosed a little bit of the universal space by four artificial walls and a roof, and given that space an individuality and a name, which individuality is designed for a specific purpose different from that of the whole universe of space. It becomes known by its individual form and name, and stands out as a thing in and of itself, and apart from other space, and having a separate identity. But while he has done all this, that space known as The Auditorium still remains absolutely a part of

the universal space: it is not even detached. The separation is seeming rather than real, the walls which suggest separateness being artificial, and may be removed at any time, leaving what had been the enclosed space, just what it had always been – a part of the universe. Whether enclosed or unenclosed, that space always possessed all the properties of and remained as one with universal space.

To personify space: that portion enclosed by the walls of The Auditorium, speaking from the standpoint of universality, could correctly say, “I am the universe speaking; I am universal space;” and from the standpoint of its enclosure, “I am also The Auditorium.” It could correctly say, “I am both universal and local.” “I am God and man.”

In taking that space, known as The Auditorium, out of the universal space, it was given a form which universal space did not have. Universal space and form are contrary terms for form means limitation. Infinity cannot be confined within limits, though a form may be included in infinity, even as the Son is included in the infinite God. While the space in The Auditorium is the express likeness of universal space, that is not to say that universal space is in any sense limited to the same form and proportion.

The personified auditorium space could speak as universal space and it could speak as The Auditorium. It could describe or define its infiniteness or its finiteness. That is just what Christ did. He spoke as God the infinite One, and he spoke as the limited and finite “...*Son of man...*” (Genesis 6:60). He spoke sometimes as Father and sometimes as Son. While speaking as Son he could say “...*my Father is greater than I.*” (John 14:28). In speaking as Father he could say “*I am...the Almighty God.*” (Genesis 1:2). He could say, “*I am the Father...*” (Ether 1:77) and he could say, “...*I am the Son...*” (Doctrine and Covenants 68:1d).

In somewhat similar manner we conceive of Christ. Insofar as he was the Son he was “of God” (see John 16:27), and in coming out from God (whatever that process was) acquired a separate identity, and

individuality, which established a point of partial distinction between him and God, which distinction, however, or separateness, like The Auditorium in relation to space, was purely artificial, and which in no sense destroyed his absolute unity with God or changed his universal nature. It did not give him a separate personality – it did not constitute him a separate person. Under no other way would he be justified in saying, “*I am the Father and the Son.*” (Ether 1:77). In no other way would he be justified in saying, “*...I am God,*” (Doctrine and Covenants 6:1b, 10a) and I am “*...from all eternity to all eternity, the great I AM...*” (Doctrine and Covenants 39:1).

In the flesh Christ’s personality was limited most extremely in its expression and operation. So far as that personality was manifested in the flesh, it revealed God, though that revelation was incomplete. It should be observed that his fleshly nature was of the earth, and tainted with the evil that is common to man which rendered him susceptible to temptation and weakness. His physical conditions were no different from those of other men; he hungered and thirsted, and became weary; he collapsed under extreme mental and physical strain; his Spirit could act only through the limited powers of the physical body.

Christ voluntarily assumed these limitations of the flesh and while in his earth life kept within those limits. By the exercise of his Spirit power he could have made for himself bread but he suffered hunger instead. He might have smitten the rock and brought forth a stream but he thirsted. He might have called into operation the powers of the universe in his defense but he died; all just the same as other men, because he had assumed to become a man. He was a man.

It was because of these conditions that he had need to pray, for he prayed out of his weak humanity. The barrier of carnal flesh placed his divine Spirit under such restraint that the universal Spirit – the Father – was at times hidden from his view. It was at such a time that he cried out, “*...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” (Matthew 27:50). As man, Jesus had need of the inflow of divine light and power the same as other men. It was his life struggle to bring his carnal nature

into conformity with his divine Spirit and thus produce “...*one new man...*” (Ephesians 2:15) which should become the pattern for all men.

As man Jesus did have need to pray to his Father, and the Father found it necessary to commune with him, as if they were distinct persons, just the same (if in imagination we again personify space) the enclosed space of the auditorium might commune with universal space, and vice versa, and that without giving us occasion to assume that there were two universal spaces.

AS TO GOD’S PERSONALITY

Enoch looked upon the earth, and he heard a voice from the bowels thereof, saying, “...*Woe! woe is me, the mother of men! I am pained, I am weary, because of the wickedness of my children!*” (Genesis 7:55).

Here the universal Spirit which pervades all things, speaks from the earth, as if of the earth, and as if limited to the earth. To put it differently; that portion of the Spirit of God resident in the earth assumes some characteristics of a separate personality and speaks as if it were a separate entity. It is the Spirit within the earth which suffers, and complains of the wickedness of men. Yet no one would assume from this that the Spirit of God resident in the earth was a separate person.

This is a similar condition to the Spirit of God coming into a human soul where it assumes the characteristics of an individual person, communing with that soul, revealing truth, speaking as a man. It rejoices with the joyous and mourns with the sad, and grieves in the transgressor. Yet that Spirit is one with the Spirit which may be in other souls. While rejoicing in one, it mourns in another, and weeps in another. It reveals varied emotions of personality, but not a multiple of personalities. The personality it reveals is God’s, the same personality the Spirit always reveals, and the same which Christ revealed.

“And it came to pass that there was a voice heard among all the inhabitants of the earth upon all the face of this land, crying, Wo, wo,

wo unto this people; wo unto the inhabitants of the whole earth, except they shall repent,” (III Nephi 4:26).

This is Christ’s utterance to the Nephites from heaven, in America, after his crucifixion in Jerusalem, and before he appeared unto them. It is not a physical voice. This was the Spiritual Christ – not a separate personality. He was moved by the actions of men.

No. 6. THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Therefore it is given to abide in you, the record of heaven, the Comforter, the peaceable things of immortal glory, the truth of all things, that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things, that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice and judgment.” (Genesis 6:64).

THE PERSONALITY OF THE SPIRIT

The oneness of God, as already considered, renders it obvious that it is his personality which is manifest in all phases of his Being, and as we have seen that it was manifest in Jesus Christ, so shall we find it manifest in the Holy Spirit; which is but another phase of the infinite One. We do not conceive of the Holy Spirit as being a person in any measure separate and distinct from God, but that it is God in the vastness of his Being.

The Holy Spirit does show the essential elements of personality, as is indicated in the quotation at the head of this article, but they belong to God. It is his personality which it reveals, for it is many times repeated that it is to “...*bear record of the Father...*” (III Nephi 5:33). The voice of the Spirit is the voice of God; the mind of the Spirit is the mind of God; the power of the Spirit is the power of God; all that the Spirit is and has is God’s. It is God “...*moving in his majesty and power.*” (Doctrine and Covenants 85:12c).

“Do not I fill heaven and earth? (Jeremiah 23:24). “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.” (Psalms 139:7-10).

“...he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things...” (Doctrine and Covenants 85:2b).

“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:” (Doctrine and Covenants 85:10c).

John 1:9 and Doctrine and Covenants 90:1a reveals Christ as *“...the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world;”* showing that Christ in his Spirit is in contact with every man, with his thoughts, his desires, his motives. *“...God knoweth your hearts;” (Luke 16:15).*

Modern science has brought the atom within the range of human knowledge in which wisdom and power of the Creator are more clearly revealed than in all other things. God is in the atom. His power is there. *“The elements are the tabernacle of God;” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:5f).*

The scriptures are void of any direct evidence showing a separate personality to the Spirit. The nearest approach is found in the Book of Mormon (which by the way is the strongest of our three books of scripture, in support of the singularity of God), where Nephi speaks of being *“...caught away in the Spirit of the Lord...” (I Nephi 3:38)* into a mountain, and of the conversation had between him and the Spirit. He goes on to say:

“For I spake unto him as a man speaketh; for I beheld that he was in the form of a man; yet, nevertheless, I knew that it was the Spirit of the Lord: and he spake unto me as a man speaketh with another.” (I Nephi 3:50).

A superficial reading of this scripture might lead to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit had the form of a man, and consequently a distinct person in the Godhead. But farther on in this account Nephi refers to the Spirit, as “...*the angel of the Lord...*” (I Nephi 3:91). When we consider this expression, “*angel of the Lord,*” in the light of the previous description of the Spirit being in the form of a man, we can only conclude that the word angel is here used in the sense of form, and that referring to the Spirit form of Jesus Christ. This view is made certain by Nephi’s subsequent statement, evidently referring to this incident, that “...*he (Isaiah) verily saw my Redeemer, even as I have seen him.*” (II Nephi 8:3). We have a similar reference to Christ in the statement that “...*the angel of his presence saved them;*” (Doctrine and Covenants 108:10b) speaking of the exodus of Israel from Egypt.

“*And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them;*” (Exodus 14:19).

“...*the presence of the Lord appeared unto him, in a flame of fire in the midst of a bush...And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.*” (Exodus 3:2, 6; see also Isaiah 63:9; Acts 7:30).

GOD AND THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE ONE

Running throughout our three books of scripture are to be found numerous passages which present God, or the Father, and the Holy Ghost as one and the same, at least as pertaining to their personality. Many of these passages are not in convenient form for quoting but are nevertheless clear and positive. One outstanding example is relative to the birth of Christ. Passages defining him as the Son of God are so numerous and familiar that we need not quote them, yet in a number of others he is said to have been conceived by the Holy Ghost. No distinction is here made between the Father and the Holy Ghost. Jesus was born of the Holy Ghost and was the Son of God.

Another instance is concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit which in many instances refers to the recipient as having been “...*born*

of God...” (I John 3:9) and in as many others as having been “...born of the Spirit...” (Genesis 6:68). Alma’s experience is to the point, “...I am born of the Spirit...I am born of God;” (Mosiah 11:186, 190). To him they were the same. Jesus also says, “...they shall be born of me...” (Doctrine and Covenants 5:3e).

Paul writes that “...ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (I Corinthians 3:16) showing that in his mind he held no distinction between God and the Spirit of God. Again he writes, “One God and Father of all, who is...in you all.” (Ephesians 4:6). It is the Spirit that dwells in the disciples but that Spirit is God.

Ammon, a mighty man of God, at the time of King Lamoni’s conversion, spoke from the same viewpoint as shown above. We give their conversation in part:

“...Believest thou that there is a God?”

And he answered, and said unto him, I do not know what that meaneth.

And then Ammon said, Believest thou that there is a Great Spirit?

And he said, Yea.

And Ammon said, This is God.” (Alma 12:101-105).

Aaron, another servant of God, expressed a similar view of God, saying “...he is that Great Spirit...” (Alma 13:42). To these men God is the Great Spirit and the Great Spirit is God.

“...If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” (John 14:23).

“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.” (I John 2:23).

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.” (II John 9).

These preceding texts show that it is the Father that dwells in the disciples. A careful study of all these texts, together with many others

will show that no distinction of personality can be made between God and the Holy Spirit.

CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE ONE

The scriptures also contain many teaching which when put together point to the conclusion that no distinction of personality can be made between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The personality which we recognize as belonging to Christ is not restricted to the form of his Being. This is shown by the fact that Christ dwells in the hearts of his people, not as to form, but in that mysterious nature which is so little understood, and which we call Spirit. A thousand and more persons may have that Spirit dwelling so definitely within them at the same time, working with them, speaking with them, and otherwise manifesting itself as the personal Christ. Yet no one would say that Christ is constituted of a thousand or more persons, nor that his Spirit form is present in each. (see I Peter 1:11).

In all his teachings the fact of Christ's form, either in Spirit or in body is not emphasized, but rather does he emphasize the universal and eternal nature. "*...I am the living bread which came down from heaven;*" (John 6:51) refers to that diffused Spirit of which men partake. "*I am the Spirit of truth.*" (Doctrine and covenants 90:4c) is Christ in the universality of his Being, even the Spirit which he said "*...shall be in you.*" (John 14:17). When Jesus said, "*...If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*" (John 14:23) he was not referring to himself as a bodily shape but as eternal Spirit, in which reference also he included the Father, indicating not only his own oneness with the Spirit but the oneness of all three.

That the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which was promised to the disciples was none other than the essential Christ is further shown by Jesus' statement after making the promise, "*I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. At that day ye shall know that I am in*

my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” (John 14:18, 20). The Comforter, which Christ called “*I*”, was to be in them.

Jesus Christ is “...*the Spirit of truth.*” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:4c) which Spirit is diffusive in the world. He, or it, is the “...*light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world;*” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:1a) which light is “...*the light of truth...*” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:5a).

John wrote of him:

“...I saw his glory that he was in the beginning before the world was; therefore, in the beginning the Word was; for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation, the light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world because the world was made by him; and in him was the life of men and the light of men.” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:1d, 1e).

From before the creation of the world Christ was “*the Spirit of truth...*” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:1e) “...*even the Spirit of truth which came and dwelt in the flesh, and dwelt among us.*” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:1g). This clearly identifies Christ and the Spirit as one and the same. Christ had a form before he came into the world, but he as more than form, for, as Spirit, he was “...*in all and through all things, the light of truth, which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ.*” (Doctrine and Covenants 85:2b). And to be still more explicit, “...*he is in the sun...he is in the moon...*” (Doctrine and Covenants 85:2c, 2d). Jesus confirms this point directly when he said:

“The Spirit of truth is of God. I am the Spirit of truth.” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:4c).

These words can mean nothing less than that Jesus Christ is primarily and essentially Spirit, and that without reference to any form which he may have assumed in order to render himself comprehensible to created man. By his Spirit he works in the souls of men and in all things to bring to pass his eternal purposes in the end of man.

Nephi says: “...*it must needs be that the Gentiles be convinced also, that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God; and that he manifesteth*

himself unto all those who believe in him by the power of the Holy Ghost.” (II Nephi 11:78). Here Nephi not only affirms that Christ is God, but only a little less directly that Christ is the Holy Ghost. Christ manifests himself by or in the Holy Ghost. That which moves in the soul of man as the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Spirit, to enlighten, and quicken, and strengthen is none other than the Christ, the Eternal God. Here there are not two persons, nor three, but one divine personality manifesting itself in different ways.

Not only do we have Jesus testifying to his being the Spirit, but the Holy Spirit also testifies reversely:

“And in that day, the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying, I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and for ever; that, as thou hast fallen, thou mayest be redeemed...” (Genesis 4:9).

The Holy Ghost is the Only Begotten always. There are two ways of revelation but only one personality.

Paul speaks frequently in a way to show the oneness of Christ and the Holy Spirit. After writing of the Spirit of God, he says:

“Now the Lord is that Spirit;” (II Corinthians 3:17).

He tells of *“...Christ speaking in me...”* (II Corinthians 13:3) and *“...Christ in you...”* (Colossians 1:27). He says that *“...God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts...”* (Galatians 4:6). He pleads for the saints that they may *“...be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;”* (Ephesians 3:16-17). According to Paul all that the saints anticipate of future joy is dependent upon Christ being in them, *“...Christ in you, the hope of glory;”* (Colossians 1:27). The apostle was by no means using metaphorical language in these statements. It is literally the Christ in his universal Spiritual nature who becomes indwelling in his children.

John’s view expressed in his gospel and epistles agrees with this:

“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” (I John 3:24).

The indwelling is mutual: God's children dwell in him, and he in them. This is possible only by the Spirit of Christ which may be both within and around all things. When John said, "*He that hath the Son hath life;*" (I John 5:12) he could have referred to nothing else than the indwelling Spirit of Christ, which Jesus said is "*...the Spirit that quickeneth;*" (John 6:63). And again, "*He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son...*" (II John 1:9) which assumes the unity or oneness of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Peter strengthens this when he says that the ancient prophets:

"...inquired and searched diligently; Searching what time, and what manner of salvation the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ..." (I Peter 1:10-11).

These evidences point to a unity and oneness in Christ and the Holy Spirit which the doctrine of the Trinity makes impossible. These teachings do not show them as distinct persons intimately related, but a single personality revealing itself by different means and methods. There are "*...differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.*" (I Corinthians 12:5-6) is the way Paul looked at it, and that is the exact principle applying to the work of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

THE FATHER, SON AND HOLY GHOST ARE ONE GOD

The Bible contains no specific statement that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one God, unless we consider I John 5:7-8, which is held to be of doubtful authenticity, but which having been retained in the Inspired Version leaves us to assume it has the divine endorsement. This passage does affirm that the three are one, yet, strangely perhaps, it has been used from quite early times in the long-drawn controversy over the personality of God, as the principle support for the doctrine of the Trinity.

It reads: “*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.*” (I John 5:7).

To interpret this passage to mean that there are three distinct persons constituting God, it is necessary to assume that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are each a distinct person, the very thing which the passage denies. The names, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, are used here, as they are used throughout the scriptures, as different appellations of one and the same Being, as we have already abundantly shown. John in no way defines these three as persons, but having named them says they are one.

That these names, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, instead of being names of three separate persons, are but different names for one and the same person, is further established by indubitable evidence – the statement of Jesus Christ. As Jesus taught the Nephite people to whom he appeared after his resurrection, he instituted the ordinance of baptism, giving instruction to his chosen disciples as to manner of performance, we quote:

“And he said unto them, On this wise shall ye baptize; and there shall be no disputations...whoso repenteth of his sins...and desireth to be baptized in my name, on this wise shall ye baptize them:...and in my name shall ye baptize...these are the words that ye shall say, calling them by name, saying: Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And after this manner shall ye baptize in my name, for behold, verily I say unto you, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one.” (III Nephi 5:23-25, 27).

A critical examination of this statement will show that the officiating minister was to baptize “...in my name...” (III Nephi 5:24) that is Christ’s name; that in baptizing he was to do so in the name, not names, of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And that Jesus then adds that “...after this manner shall ye baptize in my name...” (III Nephi 5:27) showing that Jesus claimed all these names as applying to himself

– to the one divine person. Because of its connection the last clause of the quotation carries superior weight beyond any other similar statement in the Scriptures. It is more than an affirmation of the oneness of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for it also affirms that the oneness of Being is revealed in Jesus Christ; and that the terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are but definitive terms belonging to his own person, which is God.

Need we repeat again other words of the Lord to make still more clear what he meant here? These names were not assumed by him loosely but with strict application. They are all names of the One and Only God. Notice then the particular claims of Jesus: “...*I am the Father...*” (Ether 1:108), “...*I am Jesus Christ the son of God.*” (III Nephi 4:44) and “*I am the Spirit of truth.*” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:4c). These three are one. It is the same “*I*” in all three. There is one personality. There is one God.

God is universal, all-pervasive Spirit. His personality is co-extensive with his Being, and is restricted neither to anything like a human form, nor to any particular mode of operation. What the world long thought to be three distinct things – power, light and heat – we have come to learn are but one things, viz., universal energy having different manifestations. So while God is manifest as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he is nevertheless One. His modes of operation are many. “...*there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.*” (I Corinthians 12:6).

Different manifestations of God do not destroy the oneness of God. He remains one forever. Note other statements in the Book of Mormon on this point:

“...*the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end.*” (II Nephi 13:32).

“*And shall be brought and be arraigned before the bar of Christ the Son, and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which is one eternal God, to be judged according to their works...*” (Alma 8:104).

“...*for the Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost, are one.*” (III Nephi 5:38).

“...it [is] given unto him to dwell in the presence of God...to sing ceaseless praises...unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, which are one God...” (Mormon 3:29).

The three witnesses, to whom were shown the original gold plates upon which was engraved the Book of Mormon, by the angel, and who heard the voice from heaven certifying that it had been translated by the power of God, and commanding them to bear witness of it, concluding their testimony thusly:

“And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the holy Ghost, which is one God.” (The Testimony of Three Witnesses, Book of Mormon).

Turning to the Book of Doctrine and Covenants we find the same statement affirming the oneness of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and so confirming the many other evidences previously presented:

“...the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of the Father, and of the Son, which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God, infinite and eternal, without end.” (Doctrine and Covenants 17:5g, 5h).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

What do all these things mean? Wherever the voice of inspiration or of revelation is heard, upon the eastern or upon the western hemisphere, in ancient or in modern times, it always testifies of one divine personality, of one divine person. Our feeble conceptions have led us astray into believing that there are two or three divine persons, and to harmonize that belief with all apparent teachings of one God, we conceived the ineffable, illogical, and impossible doctrine of “three in one.”

There is One God, infinite and eternal, upon which point the scriptures are definite and positive. Infinity implies and necessitates singularity. To think of two or more infinities is to think in contradiction and in impossibilities. To think of Father and Son as co-existent and eternal in their separateness is to think of something which

the very terms – Father and Son – contradict and deny, for the terms involve generation or beginning. Nevertheless God, because of his infinity, is able to express himself in various ways, or in various forms, as he might need or choose according to his purposes.

The scriptures offer no suggestion of a triune God. Never is it said that there are two person, or three persons in God, but they do assert there is but one, and in most numerous and varied ways maintain the principle of divine singularity. Even the early church fathers, who conceived and established the doctrine of the Trinity, did not claim that this doctrine was found in the Bible. Freeman Clarke says:

“But the Fathers do no treat this doctrine merely as a revealed mystery, still less as something which complicates the simple teaching of monotheism, but as the condition of rationally holding the Unity of God.” (Ten Great Religions, volume 2, page 92).

It is worthy of observation that our strongest evidences pointing to the singularity of God are to be found in latter day revelation, viz., the Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants, as if the Lord, in giving this later revelations, purposely emphasized this truth in order to correct our erroneous conception which has come down to us from the dark ages. As previously stated, this book was given to support and build up the teachings of the Bible that the errors which cause contentions might be removed. The Inspired Version also adds confirmatory evidences.

The Lord gave commandment, and gave power by the Spirit of revelation, for the revision of the Bible to be made. It was done by the Spirit of God. It is most striking that changes made in the text, and additions also, have presented, and have tended to clarify the teaching concerning God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. These texts are to be found in the foregoing articles. The changes in the Inspired Version point altogether away from the commonly accepted idea of the Trinity, and toward the singularity of God.

Christ, as the embodiment of the divine personality, and of the divine nature, is the way, and the form, in which God’s purpose is revealed to, and wrought out in behalf of, the human race. He is the

Mediator between God and man, being the only channel of divine revelation, and the only approach for man to God. *“...I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* (John 14:6). He is the *“Word.”*

(The word “monotheism” has been avoided somewhat in this article, as also the word “unity” because of their association with Arianism which rejects the Deity of Christ.)

(Editor’s note July 2014: Changes have been made to correct spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. The format has been changed from the original in that all scripture quotations have been placed in italics as well as referenced. There were some differences in the scriptures between the original and the 1908 edition of the Book of Mormon; therefore this has also been corrected. For other writings by Charles Fry, please visit www.LatterDayTruth.org)

NOTES:

NOTES:

NOTES: