

President Marion G. Romney

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

My beloved brothers and sisters, wherever you are and whoever you are, I invite you to join in the request made in the opening prayer that the Spirit of the Lord will be with us during this meeting. Because of the subject I have chosen to speak about, it must be with us while I speak or my words will be but an exercise in futility.

First Article of Faith

The first Article of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reads: "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost."

A year ago we spoke of God, the Eternal Father. Six months later our theme was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Today we shall call attention to some divinely revealed truths concerning the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost

The scriptures all teach about the Holy Ghost. They frequently refer to him as the Comforter, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, or the Spirit of the Lord.

According to these scriptures the Holy Ghost is a person.

"The Father," said the Prophet Joseph Smith, "has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. . . ." (D&C 130:22.)

Jesus referred to the Holy Ghost as a male person. Speaking to his disciples, he said:

" . . . It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send *him* unto you." (John 16:7. Italics added.)

And further,

" . . . when *he*, the Spirit of truth, is come, *he* will guide you into all truth: for *he* shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever *he* shall hear, *that* shall *he* speak: and *he* will shew you things to come.

"*He* shall glorify me: for *he* shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you." (John 16:13-14. Italics added.)

"That the [Holy Ghost] is capable of manifesting Himself in the form and figure of man," wrote Dr. James E. Talmage, "is indicated by the wonderful interview between the Spirit and Nephi, in which He revealed Himself to the prophet, questioned him concerning his desires and belief, instructed him in the things of God, speaking face to face with the man. 'I spake unto him,' says Nephi, '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.'" (*Discourses on the Holy Ghost*, comp. N. B. Lundwall, Bookcraft, Inc., 1959, p. 13.)

Unity of Godhead

" . . . there are three," says John the Beloved, "that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (1 John 5:7), signifying, of course, they are one in understanding and purpose. Of them the Prophet Joseph said:

" . . . these three are one; or, in other words, these three constitute the great, matchless, governing and supreme power over all things; by whom all things were created and made . . . , and these three constitute the Godhead, and are one." (Quoted in Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., Bookcraft, Inc., 1966, p. 320.)

As a member of the Godhead, and being one with the Father and the Son, the Holy Ghost is, as are the Father and

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the Son, omniscient. He comprehends all truth having a "knowledge of [all] things." (D&C 93:24.)

Power of Holy Ghost

As the light of Christ "proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space" (D&C 88:12), so the influence, power, and gifts of the Holy Ghost may be manifest everywhere at the same time.

Statements in the scriptures such as "the Holy Ghost fell on [him]" (Acts 11:15), "filled with the Holy Ghost" (Luke 1:15), "the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38), "receive . . . the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22), baptized by "fire and the Holy Ghost" (D&C 20:41) do not always refer to his person, but to his power, influence, and gifts.

One of the most important functions of the Holy Ghost is to testify of the Father and the Son. In the very day that the angel told Adam that the sacrifice he was offering was "a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, . . . the *Holy Ghost* fell upon Adam" testifying to him of the Father and the Son. (Moses 5:7, 9. Italics added.)

Witness from Holy Ghost

At the baptism of Jesus, the Holy Ghost bore witness to his divinity by "descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." (Matt. 3:16.)

Every person who knows or has ever known that Jesus is the Christ has received that witness from the Holy Ghost.

"Wherefore I give you to understand," wrote Paul to the Corinthians, "that no man speaking by the Spirit of God . . . can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. 12:3.)

Jesus implied this when responding to Peter's declaration, ". . . Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He said:

" . . . Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-

jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 16:16-17.)

The Holy Ghost not only bears witness to the divinity of the Father and the Son; he also bears witness to truth, particularly to gospel truths.

". . . when ye shall read these things [speaking of the gospel truths contained in the Book of Mormon], . . . I would exhort you," wrote Moroni, "that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost." (Moro. 10:3-4.)

And then he adds this great promise:

"And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things." (Moro. 10:5.)

Hundreds and thousands of people have accepted and acted upon this challenge and thereafter borne witness, by the power of the Holy Ghost, to its truth.

Revealer of truth

The Holy Ghost is not only a witness to the truth; he is also a great revealer and teacher of truth.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15), said the Savior to his disciples.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, . . . which is the Holy Ghost, . . . [and] he shall *teach* you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:16, 26. Italics added.)

"And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, . . . take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

"For the Holy Ghost shall *teach* you in the same hour what ye ought to say." (Luke 12:11-12. Italics added.)

"Now we have received, not the

spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God," wrote Paul to the Corinthians, "that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which *the Holy Ghost teacheth*; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (1 Cor. 2:12-13. Italics added.)

The spirit of prophecy

To the Holy Ghost we are indebted for our scriptures. Not only did he reveal the gospel truths they contain; he it was who gave the prophets the spirit of prophecy.

"... no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation", said Peter.

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:20-21.)

The record says that in the very beginning "the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, . . .

"[And he] blessed God and was filled [with the Holy Ghost], and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, . . ." (Moses 5:9-10.)

So it has ever been. Luke notes that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, "was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied, . . ." (Luke 1:67.)

The promise of the Lord in this last dispensation that "God shall give unto you knowledge . . . by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost" (D&C 121:26) poses the question as to the manner in which one may receive this unspeakable gift.

Bestowal of Holy Ghost

The prescribed manner is by the laying on of hands following *faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ, *repentance* from sin, and *baptism* by immersion for the remission of sins.

This was the way the Holy Ghost was bestowed in the apostolic church.

"... when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

"Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

"(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

"Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." (Acts 8:14-17.)

When Paul came to Ephesus and found certain disciples there, "He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

"And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

"Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

"When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." (Acts 19:2-6.)

In prescribing the duties of elders in his latter-day church, the Lord said, among other things, that they were "to confirm those who are baptized into the church, by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, according to the scriptures." (D&C 20:41.)

In calling several of the brethren to do missionary service, he said:

"... I give unto you a commandment that ye go among this people, and say unto them, like unto mine apostle of old, whose name was Peter:

"Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus. . . .

"Repent and be baptized in the

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name of Jesus Christ, according to the holy commandment, for the remission of sins;

"And whoso doeth this shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of the hands of the elders of the church." (D&C 49:11-14.)

Gift of the Holy Ghost

The gift of the Holy Ghost is an endowment which gives one the right to enjoy the enlightenment, companionship, and guidance of the Spirit and the influence of the Holy Spirit as long as he complies with the commandments of God.

The importance of receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost is beyond expression. It is the baptism of fire referred to by John. (See Luke 3:16.) It is the "spirit" birth of which Jesus spoke to Nicodemus:

"... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.)

Receiving the Holy Ghost is the therapy which effects forgiveness and heals the sin-sick soul.

Distinguishing hallmark

The hallmark of the church of Christ, distinguishing it from all other churches and forms of worship, has ever been the receiving of the gift of the Holy Ghost by the membership of the Church.

This is what distinguishes The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from all other organizations.

Following an interview with President Van Buren, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Elias Higbee wrote in 1839 from Washington, D.C., a letter to Hyrum Smith, in which they said:

"In our interview with the President, he interrogated us wherein we differed in our religion from the other religions of the day. Brother Joseph said we differed in mode of baptism,

and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. We considered that all other considerations were contained in the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . ." (*Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 4, p. 42.)

And so it is, because the Holy Ghost is a revelator. The gift of the Holy Ghost "is the spirit of revelation; . . . [it] is," said the Lord, "the spirit by which Moses brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground." (D&C 8:3.)

It is the witness given by the Holy Ghost to the individual members of the Church that God lives; that Jesus Christ his son, is our Savior and Redeemer; that his gospel is the plan of salvation and the way to eternal life; and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is his church, possessing authority to preach the gospel and administer the saving ordinances thereof, which give vitality, strength, and power to the Church.

Personal witness

I bear to you, my brothers and sisters and friends, whoever you are and wherever you are, my personal witness to the truth of all these things to which I have called your attention.

The Holy Ghost has revealed to me that they are true. By his power I know that God lives; that we are his offspring; that Christ lives; that his gospel is true; that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is his church; that President Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet called by the Lord to preside over his church; that the Holy Ghost is a revealer of and a witness to these things; and that by his power each of us may, as Moroni declared, "know the truth of all things." (Moro. 10:5.)

I humbly and sincerely invite all of you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, to repent and be baptized in his name, and receive the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of the hands of the elders of his

Church; and I invite you to thereafter follow his guidance.

Preparation for great day

All who do this shall be prepared to meet the Savior when he comes, for he has said:

“. . . at that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins.

“For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day.

“And the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance; and they shall multiply and wax strong, and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation.

“For the Lord shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon them, and he will be their king and their law-giver.” (D&C 45:56-59.)

That we may all, through following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, be prepared to “abide” that great day, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the song, “I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes,” at the conclusion of President Romney’s talk.

President Spencer W. Kimball

We have heard from President Marion G. Romney, second counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing “I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes.”

Many on television and radio have just tuned in on this conference, and we wish to extend to them our sincere greetings.

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Of the Council of the Twelve

I have been inspired, as you have I am sure, by the words of our beloved President Romney as he opened the revelations to us this morning on the subject of the Holy Ghost.

Flow of revelation

In a world that is unsteady, I thank God for the constant flow of revelation to the Church. We have, in this conference, sustained a new prophet, seer, and revelator. I am so grateful that we have a prophet authorized to receive revelation from God.

I am grateful, too, that revelation is not confined to the prophet. It is shared by the General Authorities.

And across the world, local leaders constantly report of the guidance that they receive when they have decisions to make or when needing further light and knowledge.

Fathers and mothers also may receive inspiration, revelation, indeed, through that agency that Brother Romney has reported, to help guide their families. And of course each of us, if we will live for it, may be the recipient of spiritual communications for our own personal guidance.

Books of scripture

The prophets of the past have recorded their revelations. And to-