

"I rejoice in hearing the testimony of my aged friends. You don't know me; you never knew my heart. No man knows my history, I cannot tell it: I shall never undertake it. I don't blame anyone for not believing my history. If I had not experienced what I have, I would not have believed it myself.

- 'King Follett Address'
(Joseph Smith, April 7, 1844)

29. HOLY GHOST

CHAPTER CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	353
JOSEPH SMITH AS THE HOLY GHOST	354
QUESTIONS	355
QUESTION 1	355
QUESTION 2	356
QUESTION 3	358
QUESTION 4	358
QUESTION 5	359
QUESTION 6	359
QUESTION 7	360
QUESTION 8	360
QUESTION 9	360
QUESTION(S) 10	360
QUESTION 11	361
QUESTION 12	361
QUESTION 13	362
QUESTION 14	362
QUESTION 15	363
CONCLUSION	363

INTRODUCTION:

The Holy Ghost. We talked briefly about him in the first fascicle, and other places in passing. We need to fix him properly somewhere in this model. He somehow is a member of the troika, the omnipotent triumvirate which oversees the operations of our universe. He is bewildering.

SMD offers no information about who this entity is, nor does it even convincingly demonstrate that it is a "who" rather than a "something".^[1] This is interesting and adds greatly to his aura of exoticness. Here we have the third member of the Godhead who possesses the most unusual characteristics of them all, who has seemingly the most intimate role to play in the lives of us mortals. Yet there is little information to explain it (him/her?).^[2]

SMD simply assures us that he has no body, and then explains that this is because he needs to be everywhere on the earth at once^[3] and that a body would limit his ability to do that^[4]. That way he can touch the hearts of all people whenever they are worthy of and need such inspiration. A physical body would get in his way of this sort of extracurricular activity, would limit him, intones SMD.^[5] Operationally, that really is all we need to know about

¹ True, there are some who have commented on the meaning of the "Sign of the Dove" and the like, but such elaborations beg the question of just WHO is this person or thing. Joseph Smith made a few comments about this matter, but outside of addressing what appears to be more of an etymological than a theological issue, his comments don't really shed any light on the identity of this entity.

The fact that there is a sign, rather than a human form, used to represent the Holy Ghost leaves the question open as to whether or not the Holy Ghost is even a human. The D&C refers to it as a 'personage of spirit' but what does that mean?

² The issue of its gender cannot be discussed because there is nothing to discuss beyond what was presented above in Chapter 21. MALE AND FEMALE CREATED HE THEM... Given the dearth of females in the non-mortal phases, at least insofar as the pronouncements of the canon go, there is nothing to indicate whether or not the Holy Ghost might be female.

³ This is another of those straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel deals. At times SMD seems to ridicule the dogma of other Christian religions that hold God to be a spirit which fills the immensity of space, yet is small enough to dwell in a person's heart. I personally think they just ascribed those attributes to the wrong member of the Godhead! That's what SMD says of the holy ghost.

However, it is noteworthy that SLC soft pedals this point today. This may be in the manner of a generous ecumenical spirit which realizes the unworthiness of denigrating others beliefs. And, after all, the 11th Article of Faith ostensibly tolerates and accepts other beliefs.

⁴ The conundrum, then, -if you believe the Father interacts with mortals all over the globe- is to explain how it is that He can be everywhere at once **with** a body. To the logical mind it seems that if the Holy Ghost lacks a body to allow him to be everywhere that the Father's body would restrict Him. Or if the Father can somehow read all of us all of the time, then the explanation of omnipresence as the explanation for no body for the Holy Ghost is not a true explanation.

We find it easy to believe that the Father can see all of us all of the time if he is in a 3rd dimensioned world and see no conflict with His body. So we are puzzled about lack of body and omniscience.

The reason we find it easy to believe He can see all at once is explained in Rucker's works (see bibliography for citations).

⁵ Let's look at this little problem some more. It is a pervasive example in SMD of unthinking acceptance of a peculiar doctrine and a related facile rationalization. After SMD asserts that the holy ghost doesn't have a body because he needs to be everywhere at once, mainstream members nod knowingly and go on. But someone should say, "Wait a minute! Isn't the influence of God also everywhere at once? Isn't His influence

the identity or nature of the Holy Ghost, but he's a fascinating topic. He is the most interesting member of the godhead.

JOSEPH SMITH AS THE HOLY GHOST:

The quote on the chapter title page raises an interesting possibility.^[6] In the King Follett Address, Joseph Smith

generated through the priesthood which is capable of extraordinarily extra-ordinary accomplishments? Isn't it possible that there could be an influence of the priesthood set up -if it doesn't already exist- through which the function of the holy ghost could be accomplished?"

I expect that you can see that I have another feverish idea: I wonder if the term "holy ghost", which we know to be a disembodied thing, though we really don't even know whether it is in the same class of beings as ourselves, is not actually a cover term for one of the laws of heaven, an aspect of the priesthood, which does in fact operate on us as suggested in the preceding question - through some sort of algorithm that takes our spirit state-of-being into account and imparts support, information, etc. to us when we are worthy and need it. In this model, this would be analogous to the conclusion that the so-called Light of Christ is not an actual entity separate from the holy ghost and separate from us. Here it is believed that the Light of Christ is actually an intrinsic part of us, either something bestowed on us through the priesthood, or something that is actually a primordial characteristic that came with us into spirithood.

In light of the awfulness of "denying the holy ghost" -see 47. AVITCHI HELL: OUTER DARKNESS- and the non-awfulness of denying the Savior, who seems like the person who really should receive our respect and obeisance, this idea of the holy ghost being an aspect of the Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God which has existed eternally, is interesting. Wouldn't it seem more reasonable to cast one into eternal darkness for knowing the reality of this aspect of the mighty power of the priesthood, and THEN denying its reality? In fact, this concept fits neatly with this mechanical model: if one truly KNEW of the power and magnitude of the eternal, almighty priesthood from personal experience, and then chose to deny it, he would be doing something so horrible that the substance of his spirit matter itself would be eternally warped. This is why he would be cast into outer darkness. If we can get away with denying and spitting on the One who personally atoned for us, then it is impossible to comprehend why denying this undescribed thing of the holy ghost is so bad, IF it is not an aspect or "entity" of the priesthood.

(I know that any of you who may have wandered this far through this morass must have sneaking suspicions about my motivations and beliefs. But I emphatically reiterate my deep faith in the truthfulness of the Gospel. I am simply brave -foolish?- enough to not be intimidated or put off by the (self-serving?) orders from SLC to not question things. I actually do that on good authority. At least the authority is good as far as I am concerned, namely Joseph and Brigham. They **both** insisted that people should discover for themselves the (un-) truthfulness of doctrines. This does not simply mean saying prayers and getting warm feelings. For an example of looking around, recall how many non-canonical books Joseph cited in his famous Lectures of Faith which were taught to the School of the Prophets itself. If he dared look deeply at things like this, then why can't we do it today? The D&C even notes that the Apocrypha contains much truth.)

⁶ It is also interesting to note that Ms. Brodie's 1974 sequel, a biography of Thomas Jefferson, was accused of shoddy scholarship by a variety of reviewers, according to an article by Louis Midgley (THE BRODIE CONNECTION: THOMAS JEFFERSON AND JOSEPH SMITH. BYU STUDIES, Vol. 20, Fall:59-67, 1979). One example of many is Holman Hamilton (book review in *Journal of Southern History*, no.1 (February 1975):108:

"...the book contains many errors of fact or of judgment involving a wide historical spectrum. These range from an unsupported statement - which would be important if true - about Abraham Lincoln (p.23) giving Jefferson Davis a strange name, "Thomas Davis" (p.469). Mrs. Brodie confuses "Light Horse Harry" Lee with Richard Henry Lee (p.125) and with "Black Horse Harry" Lee (p.444). She calls Edward M. House the "president-maker" of Woodrow Wilson (p.301). And so forth."

One of the motivations for making this point about this otherwise hard-working scholar is to point out that she has, in fact, been in error about matters that are well-documented, about which there should be no confusion. This suggests that either her scholarship is intermittently shaky or that her judgement must be taken with a modicum of salt. If she fails to accurately derive the correct facts from the published literature, then her opinions regarding matters that are not documented at all, as in the present case, might be even less dependable. We are willing to listen to her, and are intrigued by some of the things she points out and conclusions she draws, but we are not persuaded. Too much chance for gilded venom disguised under the cloak of scholarship.

One more bit of evidence for anyone who suspects me of partisan criticism of Brodie in defense of The Faith. This one is from Tom Wicker, a man likely to be construed as an objective observer of Brodie's style. In ONE OF US, Wicker notes:

"Fawn Brodie quoted Nixon's remark to Donald Jackson of *LIFE* on his war experience: 'I didn't get hit, or hit any one, all I got was a case of fungus,' and there may be, as she suggested (though Brodie invariably put the worst interpretation on Nixon's words and deeds, and sometimes tortured the record to do so), a note of regret in the words." (1991:48)

While Wicker does quote from Brodie elsewhere in his book, this quote makes two points about her:

- 1) her inveterate dislike of a person which led her to "invariably put the worst interpretation on (his) words and deeds", and
- 2) she "tortured the record" to do so.

Neither is complimentary. Unless, of course, one aspires for the front page of the NATIONAL ENQUIRER.

discussed the Holy Ghost and in the final paragraph, he said, "no man knows my history". Ms. Brodie, along with a lot of other people, took this statement as evidence that he was claiming by this phrase that he had personally served as the Holy Ghost antecedent to mortality.^[7] Given the mystery surrounding this thing, one cannot rule such a possibility out of hand, even though SMD does not appear to support such an idea. The idea is difficult to accept for most of us raised on standard Christian fare that attributes spiritness to this entity and then wanders off into a maze of mysterious manners for this being.

The obvious extension of the concept that Joseph served as the Holy Ghost, is that no single "individual" fulfills that function for the entire metamorphosis. That is obvious if he served that role and then came here. Someone had to take his place, assuming the Holy Ghost function must be active at all times during mortality. The passing on of the baton must be accomplished through priesthood ordinances, a mantle and related keys being bestowed on the successor.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HOLY GHOST:

As one looks closer into the role and function of the Holy Ghost, it become abundantly clear that there are many more questions than answers. This multitude of questions is difficult to organize tidily. So for this article, they will be presented in fairly random order, each accompanied by a few comments. Don't be

The relevance of Wicker's judgements here should be obvious. We would like to trust Brodie's statements, but given these penchants for bias and distortion, we don't know what to accept or reject in her works. The irony is obvious. She is painted with the same brush she used on Joseph and Nixon.

⁷ This peculiar doctrine is not discussed in SMD -probably because it is either not a 'proven' doctrine, or its support is too tenuous to present to the public, or perhaps is too outrageous to present- but there is an apocryphal story in circulation that reinforces it. The famous early 20th Century apologist, Talmage, purportedly wrote a paper on this topic, which paper is allegedly sequestered in the central archives of the LDS church in SLC. Whether or not it is real, remains to be seen. If it is, it is not being distributed in any fashion. The dilemma for those of us who don't have access to that archive is determining whether the story is factual or folklore. Given the propensity of LDS to perpetuate folkbeliefs, it is easy on one hand to believe that this story falls into the latter category. But it is also possible that there is in fact such a document from the pen of Talmage which, for various doctrinal reasons, is being withheld from publication. Given the remarkably conservative posture of the current dynasty in SLC, it would also be easy to believe that such an article would be withheld from the public.

Whatever the facts are, the rumor is fascinating and -unfortunately?- fits right in with this set of puzzles and speculations. The rumor is this: Talmage allegedly claims that there is actually a "calling", or position, of "holy ghost" in the priesthood, a calling parallel to that of elder or high priest or bishop or apostle. This means, then, that the position is one which can be bestowed on different individuals for whatever reasons. The calling is simply conferred through a priesthood ordinance at which time the rights, powers, authorities, keys and responsibilities are conferred on the individual. If this is true, then there could have been a variety of individuals who have served in that capacity during the history of mankind on this earth. And it would explain that arcane reference of Joseph about noone knowing his history. Such a truth would also go a long way to clearing up the confusion that is illustrated by the set of questions included in this chapter.

We had reached this conclusion before we heard the story. We are persuaded after years of putting the pieces together in different patterns that there is in fact a calling of holy ghost, just as there is a calling of patriarch. We also believe that this calling can be held by different individuals because callings are that sort of thing: passed around, shared, etc. This chapter will elaborate the arguments and indirect evidences adduced in support of this concept. We may be wrong. But we are trying.

The real question for us is this:

Given the fact that there is a third priesthood, the patriarchal priesthood, might there not be a fourth variety of priesthood termed something like the "Holy Ghost Priesthood"?

We wonder, but don't know. The D&C does note that the Holy Ghost is an "office" in the priesthood. The question remains.

surprised or distressed that some seemingly contradictory issues arise. They don't matter, ultimately, and are more than likely mere artifacts produced by 1) our feeble minds and 2) limited information about the overall business.

QUESTION 1:

Was the Holy Ghost involved in the creation of this world?

No one mentions him as being present and assisting in the creation.^[8] One might argue -convincingly- that this is because the process of creation did not require his influence. The powers of creation, or organizing matter, were perhaps the most significant keys that were needed at that time. However, if there were individuals, in addition to the Savior, who participated in the creation, might they not need the intervention of this entity to inspire and direct them? Apparently not, because he is not mentioned. Perhaps this is because the Christ was present, or perhaps it is because the creators were directly empowered by the Father for which reason no other influence was needed.

But it is difficult to see why being 'directly' empowered would have anything to do with it. One guess is that the reason the holy ghost was not operative during the creation -we are making that assumption without any foundation really that he wasn't there- is because the creators were already empowered as gods themselves, that they actually WERE gods, in which case they did not merit or need the holy ghost.

We also note that his absence from the creation stories may be due to something simpler. Perhaps the holy ghost doesn't possess any power needed during creation. If he is a Hermetic/Mercuric messenger, he hardly needs to possess the power of organizing matter. His powers are insight and persuasion.

QUESTION 2:

Was the Holy Ghost present in the pre-existence?

There does not seem to be much in the canon to suggest that he

⁸ Indeed, so far in our reading, we haven't found any cosmology that has a 'spirit' messenger who works for the gods of creation. There are messengers of sorts, basically inferior deities as far as we can see, but they are formed and shaped like the creators and head gods. These lower deities may be sent to teach mankind how to weave, built, work metal, garden, etc. But they are as substantial as the chief gods. No 'spirits'. A good example of this sort of thing comes from the BABYLONIAN GENESIS of Heidel:

"Agilma the remover of floods..."
 "Zulum who ordains fields..."
 (Heidel 1942:42)

This list could be multiplied many-fold. The Babylonians and Sumerians, the latter lending much to the former, possessed a plethoric pantheon of powers, principles, princes and peoples, who were responsible for controlling all things.

was.^[9] However, the lack of evidence isn't proof of the negative answer. We must account in this model for his existence and location during the creation of the earth as well as during the pre-existence.

Remember that our conception of the pre-existence is that it [is/was/will be]^[10] a formal testing period for all spirits who eventually live out a few years on this earth. The PE is simply the first of the three testing phase of the metamorphosis. While 'there', we were able to make choices and decisions. In order for those choices to be significant ones, meaning ones that somehow had value, or showed something significant about us, we had to operate in the dark, that is, without actual knowledge. Then, while we stumbled about in uncertainty, Satan had to be present with his priesthood, influencing us as best he could.^[11]

Since the Opposition Condition was operative there as well, Satan's presence entails the presence of the opposite influence. To be confronted by one force entails the existence or presence -at least potentially- of the other^[12]. In this model, we believe that the Father was not intervening in our lives during the PE, so we must postulate a surrogate that would represent His wishes. The Holy Ghost is the likely medium to serve this function.^[13] This ensures symmetry between the testing phases. The Holy Ghost operates on and provides assistance to us down here as we struggle

⁹ However, Brother Joseph stated

"The Holy Ghost is God's messenger to administer in all those priesthoods."
(D.H.C. 5:556)

Taken literally, one would assume that this being must be co-existent with these priesthoods (of which there are THREE types, not two. See chapter 9. DARTH VADER DILEMMA for details of the three.) if s/he is the messenger.

Don't be disturbed through chapter at the way we skip between references to specific individuals as the holy ghost, and references to the 'calling' of the holy ghost. That merely mirrors the confusion of SMD on this matter. There more that we don't know than we do know.

¹⁰ Wouldn't it be lovely if mortal language possessed a single 'word' that would denote that continuity which covers the spectrum of 'time'? The concept is one we can grasp intellectually as a single concept, but words cannot express it. This type of ability of our minds is suggestive of abilities of spirits, abilities which were not completely truncated during the veiling. Can't wait to solo with the the deluxe model.

¹¹ Is there a separate Satan for each testing phase or is he somehow able to handle all three at once. If he, then it seems likely that one holy ghost can also do the same. If there are alternate satans, how are they picked, how is the decision made to terminate their reight of terror, and how is the transfer of power effected?

¹² This is the key to the Buddhist conception of 'voidness' being Nirvana, a concept totally foreign to Christians. Judaeo-Christians believe in a state of perfection where there is joy and happiness. But Buddhists don't. The reasoning is that if there is joy, then its opposite is also present. So true perfection, meaning a state where evil and unhappiness aren't present, must be a state where joy and happiness aren't present either. To occidentals, this is distressing. But after getting a sort of three-dimensional view of the thing, walking around it to view it from all perspectives, it isn't so bad. At the right times, I'd trade it for the pain I struggle with here.

¹³ This is also entailed by the Symmetry Condition. See Chapter 6. METATHEORETICAL CONSTRAINTS for details about these conditions if you have forgotten them.

along. So s/he must have been operative there, as well.^[14]

However, we recognize that no Christian creation stories refer either way to him. Even when Satan tempted and confused Adam and Eve, there is nothing to suggest the holy ghost was present to help them.^[15] Was there a role for the Holy Ghost there, which role he fulfilled though he isn't mentioned? Or did the Garden, prior to its degeneration, constitute a condition where he could not be present or was not needed. Adam and Eve were being tested, at least by the Dilemma Decisions, if not by other conditions, so they had to be operating on the basis of faith.^[16] apparently not having constant contact with the Father. The Opposition Condition as we defined it requires Satan to be opposed, so as he tried to persuade Adam to eat the apple, why wasn't the Holy Ghost present? Or was he, but he was omitted from the stories? During our mortal experience, we depend on the Holy Ghost to affect us and enable us to sense inspiration, so might not the first couple have needed the same sort of assistance?

QUESTION 3:

If he wasn't present in the PE, when did the Holy Ghost start interacting with mankind?

According to one version of the apple temptation, it was Satan himself who had to tell Adam and Eve that they had done something wrong and that they had to cover themselves. One could argue that this was because they had sinned, so did not deserve the influence of the Holy Ghost, if he was even around, and that sounds plausible. But while Adam was praying at his altar, or during other times where he was being obedient, it seems reasonable to expect that he needed the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. We do, so why wouldn't he? We don't know about conditions in the Garden. In fact, Adam even said that he was waiting for information from

¹⁴ Now to one of the fun things that arise from a good theory: unattested predictions. We predict that the holy ghost, or one of his representatives, is going to exist in the post-mortal world where we will be tested as well.

We, unfortunately, have nothing in the canon to answer the questions, so Einstein's thought experiments will be the only method we have to try to deduce answers. The Symmetry Condition alone indicates s/he must be there as well.

¹⁵ This is a good example of those sneaky contradictions that creep into any theory. The contradiction here derives from our metatheory. We defined the Opposition Condition and Symmetry Condition and stated that they must be applicable in all phases of the metamorphosis. So if Satan was present with his evil power in the PE, while the Father and Christ were away on errands elsewhere, it appears these conditions were violated. Adam and Eve did not have the good forces present as well - especially if the holy ghost wasn't yet operative.

One possible explanation, for this contradiction, a legalistic, hair-splitting one to be sure, involves the notion of the metamorphosis. Definitions. Always definitions can be used to squirm out of a dilemma. We defined three testing phases for the metamorphosis: the PE, mortality and PM. The Garden of Eden was not strictly a likeness of mortality. True, A & E were being tested, but the conditions were still not those you and I live in. So we wonder whether or not this difference might explain the apparent violation of these metatheoretical conditions.

But if it does, then we are left with a tougher problem: why would the conditions apply during the PE and during mortality, but not during the interim, the sort of limbo A & E lived in pending their expulsion? We don't know. Can you help us?

¹⁶ Recall that this is a metatheoretical condition: testing entails ignorance of truth.

his Father, and did not allude to enlightenment from the Holy Ghost. He expected messengers, but the ones that appeared shook hands with him, so were not personages of spirits. That may be interpreted as evidence that the Holy Ghost wasn't there yet.

In any event, the Holy Ghost had to have been given to Adam and Eve after their expulsion. He is present today, so is part of post-Garden mortality. But there is no reference in our canon that tells us that this occurred, which must be true, or when it occurred, which is also true.^[17]

QUESTION 4:

Did the Holy Ghost of this world also live on, intervene in, interact with -or whatever terms apply- in other phases and on other worlds?

We have already alluded to the question of whether there is a holy ghost in the other two testing phases, and believe that there is. Now we ask, is s/he the same one in each phase, i.e. in the PE, in mortality and in post-mortality? Or are there three 'personages of spirit' 'called' at any particular 'time', one being assigned to each testing phase? The latter idea seems more reasonable than a single holy ghost, because it seems so extraordinary to have an entity flitting instantaneously between the three phases fast enough to deal with all of us on time.^[18] But how long does an individual serve as the holy ghost during one of the phases? Do they 'progress' from one assignment to another? etc. Bewildering stuff.

The other question about other worlds: do our holy ghosts also operate on other worlds created by Christ? Or is there a set of personages of spirit who will be tested on those worlds, who are called and set apart for the three testing phases? No guess here.

QUESTION 5:

Is the Holy Ghost "one of us"?

I suspect that if one polled LDS regarding their belief about the origin of the Holy Ghost, the majority (who had any opinion at all) would feel that he was a kindred -probably male- spirit who was created at the same time we were. He was "born" of

¹⁷ This is one of those fascinating historical problems where something terribly important was somehow overlooked. The other example that comes quickly to mind is the fact that the mighty priesthood of the Father Himself, a stupendous power indeed, was restored to the earth directly to Joseph Smith through the agency of the personal visitation of none other than the first apostles of Christ, Peter, James and John. This enabled Joseph to perform a host of marvelous things thereafter. But, somehow, Joseph forgot to write down the date of this miracle of miracles, which occurred on the banks of the Susquehanna River, even though he kept volumes and volumes of other personal records, much of it trivia. Why? What happened?

¹⁸ This comment obviously belies the limitations of my own mind and imagination perhaps more than the nature of his abilities.

intelligence just like we were. But that is not even implied by the LDS canon. I'm going to assume that he is actually one of "us", and that he is a regular disembodied spirit. But this may not be correct.

But if he isn't one of us spirits who was created in the first portion of the preexistence, before the creation, then what is he made out of? Or, where did he come from? As already noted, he may actually be an aspect of the priesthood, rather than an individual spirit created of intelligence.

{STOPPED REWORKING HERE - LOTS TO DO}

QUESTION 6:

Where did the name "Holy Ghost" arise?

It is apparently the name used in scriptures, along with reference to the 'sign of the dove'. In light of the indeterminateness of this entity, the designation "ghost" is a delightful term (even though SMD doesn't believe in ghosts otherwise). In the name given by the Lord himself, we perhaps have the actual fact and have just overlooked it because it is too out-of-harmony with the rest of the Gospel to really believe.

QUESTION 7:

When did the Holy Ghost become part of the godhead?

Perhaps another way to state this question is: where does he get his authority and assignment? Does the Father personally direct him and set him apart? And does he hold keys of the priesthood that we are otherwise ignorant of?

We have little difficulty understanding just why the Father is the principle(!) God of our universe. He created it and everything in it. And we understand that Christ earned his position in the godhead through obedience. But what empowered the Holy Ghost to be the third member of this cadre?

QUESTION 8:

How does he use the priesthood to influence us?

Must he actually be in contact with our spirits in order to influence us? Or can he exert a force field that affects those who are in a state to need and deserve such influence?

QUESTION 9:

Does he act directly on our spirit itself, or does he act directly on our mortal brain?

I tend to believe the former, but for no reason. Obviously, touching the spirit will also have an impact on the mortal brain, but it is an important distinction.

QUESTION(S) 10:

What sort of algorithm does he use to evaluate us to determine (a) whether we are worthy to receive his influence and (b) whether we are currently in need of his assistance?

The first question is significant because it actually entails some sort of judging on his part, an evaluation of our state of mind regarding need, and our worthiness. Is that really a role that SMD intends to ascribe to him? I doubt it, yet when it implies that only he, and not the Father or the Savior (who are awkwardly encumbered by resurrected bodies), can be everywhere at once to perform these services for us, then it is implying that he really does evaluate us. Of course. One could retreat the possibility that the Holy Ghost is not an entity, rather is some sort of manifestation of the priesthood. One of the benefits of this concept, in regards to this particular discussion, is that he could serve as a sort of celestial conduit through which data flowed to the Father. Then He would pass the judgment about need and worthiness, and return a message through the conduit back to the person in worthy need. This would relieve the Holy Ghost of the responsibility -that I doubt SMD really wishes to relinquish to him- of making those sorts of assessments and judgments.

An interesting question to raise here about how the Holy Ghost works involves the irregular judgments that he apparently makes every so often. Take as an example Saul. He was intending to slaughter Christians so he doesn't sound like a real candidate for the Holy Ghost to act on. Yet, the Holy Ghost DID act on him. How does he decide when to override the usual algorithm and act on an unworthy person? That suggests a rather broad range of autonomy for him? Or else it suggests a rather tight relationship with the Father who will specifically direct the Holy Ghost at a particular point to do something it normally doesn't do.

QUESTION 11:

Will the Holy Ghost continue to exist after the resurrection is completed?

And will he get a body then? And if he gets a body, whose is

it?[¹⁹] SMD makes no reference to what will happen to him after the resurrection has occurred. If he is really a non-entity, rather is an expression of the priesthood, there is no problem with the resurrection. What would happen in that case is that the aspect of the priesthood involved in this entity would cease to be operational in this particular world or domain. Obvisouly, hwoever, that aspect of the priesthood would remain in existence to act in other developmental worlds.

QUESTION 12:

Do non-human spirits have the capacity to sense and react to the Holy Ghost?

Can dogs and cats sense him? Does intelligence itself sense him? The issues of whether cats and dogs have spirits is one with rather surprising implications and the answer to that question is not readily apparent.[²⁰] The casting of evil spirits into a herd of swine after which they cast themselves off the cliff into the sea seems relevant here, but what to conclude from the story is not clear right now.

QUESTION 13:

How does baptism and confirmation act on us to enable to Holy Ghost to remain permanently with us?

SMD teaches that the "gift" of the Holy Ghost, whatever that means, can only be bestowed on a person who is at least 8 years of age, who has been baptized by immersion by a lay clergyman of the faith. Given this framework, it is apprrarent, then, that something magical happens to us at that point. And in the spirit of a mechanical model, I presume that it is possible to describe something of the change.

I presume that an 8 year old spirit clothed in a mortal body had evolved sufficiently for the priesthood to safely act on it.[²¹] It seems apparent that the spirit then will be in a condition to be susceptible to the effect of the Holy Ghost, called inspiration, but what happens in those ordinances to somehow allow

¹⁹ This is a particularly fascinating question for us that might creat discomfor when addressed to those who believe in the literal resurrection of the mortal body itself, because the holy ghost has not had a body during mortality. So where would it come from? Whose molecules would be cooked up into a body for him?

This may not be evidence to support my contention, as discussed in 56. RESURRECTION AND HOMEOSTASIS, that the mortal body is not what is resurrected. But it certainly is evidence that complicates the simple-minded belief that we just take this mortal body back up in the resurrection - after it has decomposed and been ingested by millions of insects, plants, etc. and been spread over 100 square miles.

²⁰ See 30. MICROBES, ALGAE AND LICHEN for details about these problems.

²¹ See 21. BAPTISM for details of how this may work.

him to "remain" with a person?

QUESTION 14:

Why is denial of him such a severe sin that it, and not denial of the Savior, merits banishment to this horrible place? [²²]

This is one of the major questions about the Holy Ghost. I imagine that most children of the faith who have not yet been indoctrinated, would choose denial of the Savior as a worse sin than denial of the Holy Ghost, and I trust their intuitions. But they are apparently wrong. Denial of the latter -not Him- results in expulsion to outer darkness. [²³]

QUESTION 15:

If the Holy Ghost is an emissary of the Godhead, executing its wishes, and if he is called through the priesthood, and if he does have a body that limits him from being omnipresent, which means he must act in some manner through a priesthood network, then why does the Father even need or use a Holy Ghost? He, too, holds the priesthood, even all keys, rights and authorities,, so could equally well determine when actions were necessary and implement them as appropriate?

Our explanation of the extra-worldly interventions in our lives is more abstract than a Holy Ghost. We claim that the majority of interventions are the result of the application of algorithms of the priesthood. These algorithms are designed by the Father [²⁴] and are set in motion. They monitor human activity, evaluating it some way, intervening by bestowal of influences or blessings as appropriate. The Father, too, could do the same thing, without the intervention of a holy ghost.

One possibility is that the Father is actually engaged "far away" in the creation and organization of other cosmoses so is focusing His energy and attention there. If this were the case, then the Holy Ghost would be a good backup for Him, one that He

²² See 49. AVITCHI HELL: OUTER DARKNESS for details about this matter. Evans-Wentz's TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD tells of the nine other varieties of hells and who goes to which and what type of torture and punishment is practiced in each.

²³ See 49. AVITCHI HELL: OUTER DARKNESS for details.

²⁴ Actually, we suspect that He has most likely appropriated these algorithms from prior existences and kingdoms, simply making them applicable in this world. He may have tweaked them in some manner, but they may well be algorithms that are "library functions" of the priesthood power itself.

could rely on.^[25]

CONCLUSION:

To recapitulate the essence of this chapter, we note that many of the questions posed can be resolved into a few major one:

Could it be that the Holy Ghost really is not an individual at all, rather is merely a force field created by the priesthood?

This seems possible on one hand, but the canon is so explicit about there being three 'members' of the godhead, that we feel like we must defend the position that the Holy Ghost is a 'personage of spirit' as stated in the D&C. If this were the case, this influence would be somewhat analogous to the Light of Christ which I believe is not a gift given to us at mortal birth, rather is an intrinsic "conscience" that blinks on and off, depending on what we are contemplating.^[26]

After wrestling with this set of technical details, we return to the deepest question of them all:

Why is the Holy Ghost even needed at all?

Can't the Lord Himself create force fields out of the priesthood which would "vibrate" at some frequency, or scan for certain conditions, etc., such that when His spirit children were in synch with that frequency, the related field would be triggered to respond with whatever positive effect was related to that principle of righteousness. That sounds like a rather childish analogy, but it elucidates our mechanical concept. Or -a notational variant on this theme- doesn't the priesthood already exert a "force field" on us, potentially affecting us?

Doesn't the Lord know what we think and what we need? And can't He arrange to meet our needs Himself? The answer to these two questions is self-evident: we believe that it is 'yes'. We argue, however, that His MO is to do what He, in fact, doing with the "holy GHOST". We do this on the basis of faith because we are not given the full details^[27] so don't see how all parts fit together. The Mechanics's Corollary is invoked, though its precise implication is not understood in any but a global manner.

There are other questions to ask about the Holy Ghost and his MO, but these demonstrate how he is perceived to operate within

²⁵ How is the decision made about when one person called to be the Holy Ghost is ready to be released, and allowed to proceed into his/her next phase?

²⁶ See 26. SPIRIT BIRTH ORDINANCES for a discussion of this concept.

²⁷ because it doesn't really make any difference in how we live our lives and how it works)

this hypothetical model.[²⁸]

28 At this point I will add a lengthy note that would have confused the rest of this essay. However, it is relevant to the topic of the holy ghost, and is one that deserves to be mentioned in this text that pushes a mechanical explanation for most things of this world.

The topic of the note is "inspiration" and what is said here will appear to be a repudiation of SMD. It emphatically IS NOT. This note is simply a different view or explanation of the phenomenon termed "inspiration". I have personally experienced it at various times in my life, so will give you an example to

- (1) demonstrate that I most definitely do believe in it, and
- (2) give a framework to use below.

While I worked on my dissertation at Indiana University, I found myself floundering whenever the crux of the entire thesis surfaced. I was able to distract myself most of the time with tangential problems in the verbal phonology, that did require solution, for which reason I could feel like I was progressing. But in the back of my mind the major problem loomed large: how to write a single rule that would relate the long vowels of Tubatulabal with primary and secondary stress. It would be possible to handle the problem with a pair of rules, but a pair of rules would splinter the unity I felt was there, and, worse, would be a tacit admission of failure. I had to get one rule to handle the problem. My thinking had been rigidly conditioned by the grammatical description done in 1934 (by the grand old man of anthropological linguistics, Carl Vogelin, who sat on my dissertation committee) on the language that described two processes which operated in opposite directions across words and utterances.

Then one morning it happened. I was in a carrell near one of the smoky grey outside windows of the library starting to organize my papers for another day of research. I had not yet gotten everything out of my brief case. As I leaned over to take something else out, an astonishing "thought" "occurred" to me, and in that instant I saw a shockingly simple solution to the central problem: just assign stress to long vowels after length had been assigned. I stood up, stunned, and looked out the window in a sort of beatific shock. The sun was just rising over the apartment building across the street and into this room with a bright, clear warmth. I believe that I was "inspired" in that instant. The rest of the dissertation wrote itself. I researched, wrote and defended it in 3 months, because the central problem was solved for me. (For those of you who haven't wrestled with dissertation, they can take up to seven years to research and write.)

So now what? Simply this: I alluded above to the possibility that the holy ghost is not an actual personage in the sense that you and I are persons. It might possibly be an "aspect" of the priesthood, or a logical "machine" created out of or by the priesthood. I seriously entertain this possibility, although I recognize that it may be entirely wrong.

But if there were such a thing, then the explanation for what happened to me that morning is as follows: I had paid a price in work and dedication in an effort to solve the problem. My mortal mind was hard at work, taking care of details, and hovering around the crux of the problem. As this process unfolded, apparently something in my mind -recall that our mind is a peculiar amalgam of mortal brain processes and spirit brain input- matured. I had tried and tried to derive a single rule for the solution without success. But on that particular morning, my mind was "ripe" -don't ask what that means, please- for the intervention of the holy ghost machine. And when it touched the contents of my skull, it released a blockade that usually exists between the incredible capacities of the spirit brain and the exigencies of this mortal world. After the priesthood machine opened the channels, briefly, the spirit brain derived the solution (or else it had it ready in hand), passed it across, and then the channel closed. It was the intervention of this outside priesthood force that allowed that channel to be opened for the length of time it took for the solution to be passed across. An individual cannot muster up that sort of priesthood on his/her own to open the channels, so the force must be externally applied, but he can prepare himself for it. The process was a highly profound one, and the message wasn't really as simple as I stated it above. It really was a sort of three-dimensional mind map of the solution to the entire problem, after which my job was almost boring because it basically consisted of putting into mortal words that comprehensive, abstract solution.

This is how I imagine that the majority of the 'inspiration' spoken of in the world actually occurs. I do not believe that the Lord or Christ are sitting around looking at 5 billion of us to see which ones of us are ripe for inspiration. I do not believe that They intervene in that way in our lives, although it is certainly possible. The Parsimony Principle is real I believe and the Lord devises compact, succinct algorithms out of the forces of the priesthood, and sets them to work. They are sort of perpetual motion machines that continue on their own so will pick out those cases where they should apply after which they do.

This makes the process of inspiration a fairly mechanical one, then, without the overly grand dimensions ascribed to it in testimonial meetings. When we allege the Lord's hand personally touched our lives, we are indulging in fairly egocentric behaviors. Why would the creator of the cosmos actually come down into our puny life and condescend to deal with us? He could, I know. He could. But the question is: will or does He? To which I assert that 98% of the time He doesn't. The rest of the time He does, however, and I acknowledge that readily and happily.