



**By President
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(1910–2008)**
Fifteenth President of
the Church

THE DIVINE GODHEAD

Our belief in God the Eternal Father; in His Son, Jesus Christ; and in the Holy Ghost is the pivotal position of our religion.

Gordon B. Hinckley, 15th president of the Church, was born on June 23, 1910. He was ordained an Apostle on October 5, 1961, at age 51, and on March 12, 1995, he was sustained as President of the Church.

In setting forth the primary elements of our doctrine, the Prophet Joseph put this number one:

“We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost” (Articles of Faith 1:1).

[The Prophet also taught]: “It is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God” (*History of the Church*, 6:305).

These tremendously significant and overarching declarations are in harmony with the words of the Lord . . . : “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). . . .

God the Eternal Father

I believe without equivocation or reservation in God, the Eternal Father.

He is my Father, the Father of my spirit, and the Father of the spirits of all men. He is the great Creator, the Ruler of the Universe. . . . In His image man was created. He is personal. He is real. He is individual. He has “a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s” (D&C 130:22).

In the account of the creation of the earth, “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26).

Could any language be more explicit? Does it demean God, as some would have us believe, that man was created in His express image? Rather, it should stir within the heart of every man and woman a greater appreciation for himself or herself as a son or daughter of God. . . .

. . . As a missionary, I was speaking [in London, England, when a heckler interrupted], “Why don’t you stay with the doctrine of the Bible which says in John (4:24), ‘God is a Spirit?’”

I opened my Bible to the verse he had quoted and read to him the entire verse: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

I said, “Of course God is a spirit, and so are you, in the combination of spirit and body that makes of you a living being, and so am I.”

Each of us is a dual being of spiritual

entity and physical entity. All know of the reality of death . . . , and each of us also knows that the spirit lives on as an individual entity and that at some time, under the divine plan made possible by the sacrifice of the Son of God, there will be a reunion of spirit and body. Jesus’s declaration that God is a spirit no more denies that He has a body than does the statement that I am a spirit while also having a body.

I do not equate my body with His in its refinement, in its capacity, in its beauty and radiance. His is eternal. Mine is mortal. But that only increases my reverence for Him. . . . I seek to love Him with all my heart, might, mind, and strength. His wisdom is greater than the wisdom of all men. . . . His love encompasses all of His children, and it is His work and His glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His sons and daughters . . . (see Moses 1:39). . . .

The Lord Jesus Christ

I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the eternal, living God. I believe in Him as the Firstborn of the Father and the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. I believe in Him as an individual, separate and distinct from His Father. . . .

I believe that in His mortal life He was the one perfect man to walk the



earth. I believe that in His words are to be found that light and truth which, if observed, would save the world and bring exaltation to mankind. I believe that in His priesthood rests divine authority—the power to bless, the power to heal, the power to govern in the earthly affairs of God, the power to bind in the heavens that which is bound upon the earth.

I believe that through His atoning sacrifice, the offering of His life on Calvary's hill, He expiated the sins of mankind, relieving us from the burden of sin if we will forsake evil and follow Him. I believe in the reality and the power of His Resurrection. . . . I believe that through His Atonement, . . . each of us is offered the gift of resurrection from the dead. I believe

further that through that sacrifice there is extended to every man and woman, every son and daughter of God, the opportunity for eternal life and exaltation in our Father's kingdom, as we . . . obey His commandments.

None so great has ever walked the earth. None other has made a comparable sacrifice or granted a comparable blessing. He is the Savior and the Redeemer of the world. I believe in Him. I declare His divinity . . . I love Him. I speak His name in reverence and wonder. . . .

. . . Scripture tells of [those] to whom He showed Himself and with whom He spoke as the living, resurrected Son of God. Likewise in this dispensation He has appeared, and those who saw Him declared:

“And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that 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” (D&C 76:22–24).

This is the Christ in whom I believe and of whom I testify.

The Holy Ghost

That knowledge comes from the word of scripture, and that testimony comes by the power of the Holy Ghost.

It is a gift, sacred and wonderful, borne by revelation from the third member of the Godhead. I believe in the Holy Ghost as a personage of spirit who occupies a place with the Father and the Son, these three composing the divine Godhead. . . .

That the Holy Ghost was recognized in ancient times as a member of the Godhead is evident from the conversation between Peter and Ananias when the latter held back a part of the price received from the sale of a piece of land.

“But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost . . . ?

“. . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God” (Acts 5:3–4).

The Holy Ghost [is] the Comforter promised by the Savior who would teach His followers all things and bring all things to their remembrance . . . (see John 14:26).

The Holy Ghost is the Testifier of Truth, who can teach men things they cannot teach one another. . . . A knowledge of the truth of the Book of Mormon is promised “by the power of the Holy Ghost.” Moroni then declares, “And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:4–5).

I believe this power, this gift, is available to us today.



Real and Individual

. . . I believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

I was baptized in the name of these three. I was married in the name of these three. I have no question concerning their reality and their individuality. That individuality was made apparent when Jesus was baptized by John in Jordan. There in the water stood the Son of God. His Father’s voice was heard declaring His divine sonship, and the Holy Ghost was manifest in the form of a dove (see Matthew 3:16–17).

I am aware that Jesus said that they who had seen Him had seen the Father [see John 14:9]. Could not the same be said by many a son who resembles his parent?

When Jesus prayed to the Father, certainly He was not praying to Himself!

Perfectly United

They are distinct beings, but they are one in purpose and effort. They are united as one in bringing to pass the grand, divine plan for the salvation and exaltation of the children of God.

. . . Christ pleaded with His Father concerning the Apostles, whom He loved, saying:

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

“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 17:20–21).

It is that perfect unity between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost that binds these three into the oneness of the divine Godhead. ■

From “The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” Ensign, Nov. 1986, 49–51; capitalization and punctuation standardized.