

nity of those who have accepted the name of Christ through baptism and are bound to him by covenant, is the foundation of the spiritual and emotional life, as well as the practical daily life, of the Latter-day Saint.

[See also Civic Duties; Community; Enduring to the End; Family Life; Individuality; Joining the Church; Lay Participation and Leadership; “Peculiar” People; Self-sufficiency.]

JAROLDEEN EDWARDS

LIGHT OF CHRIST

The light of Christ refers to the spiritual power that emanates from God to fill the immensity of space and enlightens every man, woman, and child. Other terms sometimes used to denote this same phenomenon are HOLY SPIRIT, “Spirit of the Lord,” and “Spirit of Truth,” but it is different from the HOLY GHOST. The scriptures are not always precise in the use of such terminology, and several attempts have been made to describe the various aspects of this important manifestation of God’s goodness and being.

Jesus Christ is the light and life of the world (John 8:12; 3 Ne. 15:9). This light is described in the Doctrine and Covenants as “the same light that quickeneth your understandings; which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things (D&C 88:11–13). B. H. Roberts, a seventy, interpreted this to mean that the light of Christ is a creative power, a governing power, a life-giving power, and an “intelligence-inspiring power” (Roberts, 2:7–8).

This light manifests itself in different ways and degrees. In its “less refined existence,” wrote Parley P. Pratt, it is visible as sunlight. It is also the refined “intellectual light of our inward and spiritual organs, by which we reason, discern, judge, compare, comprehend, and remember the subjects within our reach.” It is revealed as instinct in animals, reason in man, and vision in the prophets (p. 25).

John A. Widtsoe gave this general description of the emanation of God’s power: “God is a per-

sonal being of body—a body limited in extent. He cannot, therefore, at a given moment be personally everywhere. . . . By his power, will and word, [he] is everywhere present. . . . The holy spirit permeates all the things of the universe, material and spiritual” (Widtsoe, pp. 68–69).

Since God possesses a fulness of this power and man only a small portion, it becomes a goal of Latter-day Saints to receive more of this light, which for the faithful grows “brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24). Initially, this “Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world” (D&C 84:46; see also John 1:9; Moro. 7:16). It equips all people with a basic discernment of good and evil, which Latter-day Saints often equate with conscience. By listening to the promptings of the Spirit one is led via faith and baptism to a higher spiritual blessing called the GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST, “a greater and higher endowment of the same Spirit which enlightens every man that comes into the world” (C. W. Penrose, *JD* 23:350). Continued progression will eventually lead to a fulness of the Spirit, or glorification in the CELESTIAL KINGDOM.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Pratt, Parley P. *Key to the Science of Theology*. Salt Lake City, 1979.
- Roberts, B. H. *Seventy’s Course in Theology*, 5 vols. Salt Lake City, 1907–1912; Vol. 3 on the doctrine of deity and Vol. 5 on divine immanence.
- Smith, Joseph Fielding. *DS*, Vol. 1, pp. 49–54.
- Widtsoe, John A. *A Rational Theology*. Salt Lake City, 1915.

C. KENT DUNFORD

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Many juxtapositions of light and darkness are identifiable in latter-day scripture. Darkness was apparently the primeval condition (Gen. 1:2; Moses 2:2; Abr. 4:2). Light was introduced by the divine word: “Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen. 1:3; Moses 2:3; Abr. 4:3). It was decreed “good” and was divided from the darkness, light being known as “day” and darkness as “night” (Gen. 1:4–5; Moses 2:4–5; Abr. 4:4–5). The account in Abraham adds that “they (the gods) comprehended the light, for it was bright” (Abr. 4:4; see also GODHEAD; CREATION AND CREATION ACCOUNTS).