The Textual Development of D&C 130:22 and the Embodiment of the Holy Ghost

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The Father 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. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us. (D&C 130:22)
The Christian debate over the nature of Christ’s body began in the first century A.D. Although the focus of this debate was the issue of monotheism versus polytheism, it also included the corporeal versus incorporeal nature of God. An example that epitomizes this portion of the debate can be found in the statement of Cerinthus, a man trained in Egypt who propounded that the man Jesus and the divine Christ were two separate entities. He taught that the Christ, or the divine spirit, descended upon Jesus in “bodily shape” (Luke 3:22) after he was baptized. The spirit of the divine Christ thus gave the mortal Jesus the power of God to perform miracles and to declare the will of the Father. In regard to the sufferings of the Atonement, Cerinthus taught that the Christ left the mortal Jesus before the Passion. Therefore, it was the mortal Jesus who suffered and died. Meanwhile, the Christ remained untouched by the mortal suffering recorded in the Gospels.

Another school of thought was that of the Docetists. They believed that physical matter was inherently evil and that Christ was a divine being; therefore, Jesus only “appeared” to have a mortal body, for it was an illusion. As historian Craig Ostler has noted, “These explanations were not made by apostles but by theologians who used the philosophies of Greece, mingled with apostolic teachings.”1 To resolve the dispute over the nature of the Godhead, Constantine was instrumental in

Several years ago, while poring over *The Words of Joseph Smith* by Ehat and Cook, I discovered discrepancies between the text of what eventually became D&C 130:22, as recorded by William Clayton and transmitted by Willard Richards, and the canonized text in the Doctrine and Covenants. Since this pertained to something as foundational to our doctrine as the way the nature of one member of the Godhead was understood, I couldn’t help but wonder how the transformation had occurred. After I asked members of the Joseph Smith Papers Project who were working on these texts about these changes, I still had questions about the processes involved in these revisions, and so I presented my inquiry to one of the editors of *Words of Joseph Smith*, Andrew F. Ehat. He assured me that he knew from a personal communication between himself and Elder Bruce R. McConkie that members of the Scripture Committee responsible for the 1981 edition of the scriptures were aware of these discrepancies, but there had been a decision to leave the text as it had been canonized in the D&C (obviously). While I accepted these various responses to my inquiries, my mind still raced to understand the complexities of the transformation of the text from its original recording to its present state. In response to a call for papers for the 2011 Mormon Scholars in the Humanities Conference regarding “embodiment,” I decided to research and write a paper on the LDS conception of the embodiment of the Holy Ghost as it related to the original and revised text of D&C 130:22. The result was the forerunner to this paper. When Professor John W. Welch heard my paper, he invited me to submit it for publication to *BYU Studies Quarterly*. The project involved two years of trips to the archives in the LDS Church History Library, much research, and multiple revisions. I hope the reader will enjoy traveling along this path of discovery with me.
calling the Council of Nicaea, the first of the great ecumenical councils, in AD 325. The creeds that emerged from this and subsequent councils resulted in the ecumenical doctrine of the Trinity. These creeds attempted to establish monotheism and the incorporeal nature of the Godhead as standardized Christian doctrine, which they have been from the fourth century to present. Most interestingly, despite the many differences between various Christian denominations, the doctrine of the Trinity is the point upon which many of them agree.

In contrast, one of the most distinguishing characteristics of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been its rejection of this ideology of Christianity. In fact, on June 16, 1844, just eleven days before his martyrdom, Joseph Smith pointedly declared, “I have always and in all congregations when I have preached it has been the plurality of Gods. It has been preached for 15 years. I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods.”

Despite the fact the Joseph Smith boldly asserted that this concept of the Godhead was what he had “always and in all congregations . . . preached for 15 years,” the debate among LDS scholars regarding when and how this doctrine was known and accepted by early Latter-day Saints has gone on for decades. Rather than continue that debate, this paper will

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2. Joseph Smith, Address, June 16, 1844, Thomas Bullock report, in The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph, comp. and ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980; Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1991), 378, spelling and punctuation corrected; citations refer to the Grandin edition. The uncorrected text reads, “I have allways—& in all congregats. when I have preached it has been the plurality of Gods it has been preached 15 years—I have always decld. God to be a distinct personage—J.C. a sep. & distinct pers from God the Far. the H.G. was a distinct personage & or Sp & these 3 constit. 3 distinct personages & 3 Gods.”

focus primarily on the historical development of the actual canonization of these doctrines as found in Doctrine and Covenants section 130, verse 22—with particular regard to the embodiment of the Holy Ghost. Unfortunately, there is a paucity of recorded teachings regarding the embodiment of the Holy Ghost prior to the Nauvoo era, excepting the single Book of Mormon inference in 1 Nephi 11:11, denoting the anthropomorphic nature of the spirit body of the Holy Ghost.4

While Joseph’s teachings regarding the embodiment of the Father and the Son have drawn criticism from Christians who base their perceptions of the embodiment of the Godhead on the creeds, the idea that the Father and the Son have tangible bodies of flesh and bone is still less enigmatic than the description of the embodiment of the Holy Ghost. The text of D&C 130 is relatively congruent regarding the embodiment of the Father and the Son when considering verse 3, which explicitly states that “the idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man’s heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false,” thus emphasizing the idea in verse 22 that they have tangible bodies of flesh and bone, and therefore would not be able to dwell in a man’s heart. However, verse 22 goes on to state that the Holy Ghost is also “a personage,” but “of Spirit,” and his not having a tangible body of flesh and bones like the Father and the Son enables him to dwell “in us.” This notion of the embodiment of the Holy Ghost is further complicated when we consider Joseph’s later teachings

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4. It is important to note that there is not universal agreement on the interpretation of 1 Nephi 11:11. For example, James E. Talmage interprets the “Spirit of the Lord” as the Holy Ghost in Articles of Faith (Salt Lake City: LDS Church, 1952), 159–60. Of this, Sidney B. Sperry noted that while there is not agreement on whether or not the phrase “Spirit of the Lord” refers to the premortal Christ or the Holy Ghost, he indicated that he not only agreed with Elder Talmage but wished he could convince others to as well, explaining his position and giving an explanation for the opposing sentiment in Sidney B. Sperry, Book of Mormon Compendium (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968), 117–18.
that “there is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes” (D&C 131:7), suggesting that while the Holy Ghost’s body is not comprised of flesh and bones, it is still composed of tangible matter. Therefore, it is not surprising that since the 1850s, this enigmatic phraseology has led to general disagreement among LDS Church leaders and scholars regarding the exact meaning of the final sentence of D&C 130:22, “Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.” What makes this even more interesting is the fact that the portion of the canonized text in D&C 130:22 describing the embodiment of the Holy Ghost has undergone multiple revisions from its inception, which are depicted in the chart below.

In this paper, I will examine the historical development of these textual modifications and will argue that each stage of the formulation of the final text brought it into more complete conformity with other scriptural passages in the LDS canon. Furthermore, despite the general disagreement among LDS Church leaders and scholars regarding the literal or figurative interpretation of that last sentence, the revised text still retains Joseph Smith’s original teachings to Orson Hyde on April 2, 1843, regarding the nature of the embodiment of the Holy Ghost.

**Textual Development of D&C 130:22**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date text was recorded or published</th>
<th>Persons responsible for text or modifications to text</th>
<th>Text (modifications in bold)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2, 1843</td>
<td>Text: Joseph Smith Clerk: William Clayton</td>
<td>“The Holy Ghost is a personage, and a person cannot have the personage of the H. G. in his heart.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sometimes between April 2, 1843, and February 4, 1846</td>
<td>Clerk: Willard Richards</td>
<td>“the Father has a body of flesh &amp; bones as tangible as mans the Son also, but the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit, —and a person cannot have the personage of the H. G. in his heart.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 27, 1854</td>
<td>Text: George A. Smith Clerk: Thomas Bullock Approved: Brigham Young and Jedediah M. Grant</td>
<td>“The Father has a body of flesh &amp; bones as tangible as man’s; The Son also; but The Holy Ghost is a personage of Spirit, &amp; a person cannot have the personage of the H. G. in his heart.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 31, 1854</td>
<td>Clerk: Leo Hawkins</td>
<td>“The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; The Son also; but the Holy Ghost is a personage of Spirit;” <em>(the rest of what he wrote on July 31 was erased on August 3)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 3, 1854</td>
<td>Text: Brigham Young, Jedediah M. Grant, and George A. Smith Clerk: Leo Hawkins</td>
<td>“The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost <strong>has not a body of flesh and bones but</strong> is a personage of Spirit; <strong>were it not so the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.</strong>”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 9, 1856</td>
<td>Deseret News Copy Editor</td>
<td>“The Father 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: <strong>were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.</strong>”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 13, 1858</td>
<td>Millennial Star Copy Editor</td>
<td>“The Father 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. <strong>Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.</strong>”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876 and 1879 editions of the Doctrine and Covenants</td>
<td>Orson Pratt</td>
<td>“The Father 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. <strong>Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.</strong>” <em>(No modifications)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921 and later editions of the Doctrine and Covenants</td>
<td>Heber J. Grant and a committee of six members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles</td>
<td>“The Father 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. <strong>Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.</strong>”</td>
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Early converts’ understandings of the embodiment of the Godhead varied from the canonized text of D&C 130:22, primarily because their paradigm of the nature of the Godhead was likely the result of their Protestant roots, which were typically connected to creedal pronouncements. This provided ample teaching opportunities for the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was in one such setting that the revelation now known as Doctrine and Covenants 130:22 was originally given. The historical development of this text can be more easily understood if the processes involved in those changes are examined chronologically.

1. **April 2, 1843.** Joseph Smith was in Ramus, Illinois, presiding at a stake conference. He was accompanied by his scribe, William Clayton, and Apostle Orson Hyde. During his morning address, Elder Hyde taught that “it is our privilege to have the Father and Son dwelling in our hearts.” In between conference sessions Joseph said, “Elder Hyde I am going to offer some corrections to you,” to which Elder Hyde replied, “They shall be thankfully received.” William Clayton was present to hear Joseph’s corrections of Elder Hyde’s scriptural commentary and recorded them in his journal: “In correcting two points in Er Hydes discourse [Joseph] observed as follows, . . . ‘When the savior appears we shall see that he is a man like unto ourselves. . . . Also the appearing of the father and the son in John c 14 v 23 is a personal appearing and the idea that they will dwell in a mans heart is a sectarian doctrine and is false.’” Clayton also noted that Joseph said the following in reference to the third member of the Godhead: “The Holy Ghost is a personage, and a person cannot have the personage of the H. G. in his heart.”

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8. Two different transcriptions of William Clayton’s diary entry for April 2, 1843, one by James B. Allen and the other by Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, agree precisely: “The Holy Ghost is a personage, and a person cannot have the personage of the H. G. in his heart.” Although Allen sometimes rephrased Clayton’s diary entries in his own words, in this instance it is apparent that he did not, in that both of these transcriptions are exactly the same and both are in quotation marks. See James B. Allen, *Trials of Discipleship: The Story of William Clayton* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 122; and
2. Sometime between April 2, 1843, and February 4, 1846. Willard Richards, who was not present, later recorded the following text (fig. 1) into the diary he was keeping for Joseph Smith, apparently utilizing William Clayton’s diary as source material: “the Father has a body of flesh & bones as tangible as mans the Son also, but the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit,—and a person cannot have the personage of the H. G. in his heart.” The first phrase is not in any of the three transcript copies of William Clayton’s diary and was added either by Richards, possibly


9. Joseph began dictating this history to his scribes on June 11, 1839. By the time of his death, a draft of his history was completed up to August 5, 1838, and by the time Willard Richards and his clerk Thomas Bullock packaged the historical documents in their possession on February 4, 1846, in preparation to leave Nauvoo, the draft manuscript was 1,485 pages in length and included the Prophet’s history up to March 1, 1843, just one month short of the D&C 130 material under consideration, which was dated April 2, 1843. For an accurate and thorough review of the chronology of these events, see Howard C. Searle, “Authorship of the History of Joseph Smith,” BYU Studies 21, no. 1 (1981): 114–17.

10. Joseph Smith, Address, April 2, 1843, Joseph Smith Diary kept by Willard Richards, in Ehat and Cook, Words of Joseph Smith, 173. This is not the only instance of Joseph Smith’s words, as originally recorded in diaries or manuscript books, being revised later. For example, the revelations now published as Doctrine and Covenants sections 24–27, 68, 83, and 107 all underwent major textual revisions between the time of original recording and later publication in the Book of Commandments or subsequent editions of the Doctrine and Covenants. For details regarding these textual changes see Lyndon W. Cook, The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985); Kurt Eliason, Historical Context of the Doctrine and Covenants and Other Modern Scriptures, Volume 1 (Dallas: Kurt Eliason, 2011); or Stephen E. Robinson and H. Dean Garrett, A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005). All of these changes were directed by Joseph Smith. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not Joseph directed the addition of the line “the Father has a body of flesh & bones as tangible as mans the Son also, but” afterward when Willard Richards was transferring the contents of William Clayton’s diary to the journal he was keeping for Joseph Smith.

11. See note 8.
in collaboration with Clayton,\textsuperscript{12} or under the direction of Joseph Smith, or was missed when Clayton was copying from his notes into his diary. Importantly, neither the William Clayton Diary nor the Joseph Smith Diary kept by Willard Richard implies the current phrasing of D&C

\textsuperscript{12} I am indebted to Andrew F. Ehat, who discovered that William Clayton may have shared Joseph’s corrections of Elder Hyde’s address with Willard Richards on April 5, 1843. Ehat has formulated the hypothesis that Clayton and Richards may have even collaborated on the construction of the additional statement “the Father has a body of flesh & bones as tangible as mans the Son also,” based on William Clayton’s recollections of Joseph Smith’s teachings, while he was sharing the April 2, 1843, diary entries with Richards. This supposition is based on an entry in the William Clayton Diary, dated April 5, 1843 (Wednesday), which states, “At the office near the temple also at prest. Josephs office, looking at a lot for Adam Lightner and giving Dr Richards history.” Ehat’s unpublished notes in possession of author.
130:22: “Were it not so [that the Holy Ghost is a spirit], the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.”

3. **July 27, 1854.** By this date, more than a decade later, Willard Richards had passed on, the Saints had relocated to the Salt Lake Valley, and George A. Smith had been called to replace Richards as the Church Historian, with the charge to continue assembling, editing, and eventually publishing *The History of Joseph Smith.* Subsequently, the remainder of Joseph Smith’s history of the Church was completed under the direction of George A. Smith with the help of several clerks, as well as Wilford Woodruff, who was called as Assistant Church Historian in 1856. The Church Historian’s Office Journal indicates that on July 27, 1854, the portion of the draft that included the text that would eventually become D&C 130:22 was recorded by Thomas Bullock as dictated by George A. Smith and was later heard and read by Brigham Young the same day. The text that emerged (fig. 2), with slight variations, reflects the union of the text from the Clayton and Richards diaries:


14. Initially, George A. Smith, with the help of his clerks, collected various documents from which the history would be drawn; these were assembled into scrapbook form. See Church Historian’s Office Journal, vol. 17, CR 100 1, pp. 17, 22, 62, and insert 1-8, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Church Historian’s Office Journal). Thomas Bullock kept this journal, however, and at the request of the senior Brethren, he was absent from the Church Historian’s Office May 4–June 2, 1854, while attending them on an excursion to “the south” part of the territory. His responsibilities on this trip were keeping the camp journal and detailed odometer readings. As a result, he took the Church Historian’s Office Journal with him, and it actually includes these details of the trip instead of the occurrences in the Church Historian’s Office during this time period (see Church Historian’s Office Journal, vol. 17, 22–57). In his absence, one of the other clerks kept records of the happenings in the Church Historian’s Office, and these eight pages were inserted in the Church Historian’s Office Journal between pages 24 and 25 of volume 17. According to the composite journal kept by Thomas Bullock and the inserted pages, work on the scrapbook, which was commissioned by George A. Smith on April 28, 1854, was conducted on the following dates: May 3, 5, 9, 11, 13, 16–20, 22–31, and June 1, 2, and 6, 1854.


16. Church Historian’s Office Journal, 112. This is an extremely important page in the Church Historian’s Office Journal, because it is the only entry indicating that they worked on the “history for April [18]43," as well as recording that “President Young calls at noon and hears and read history.”
“The Father has a body of flesh & bones as tangible as man's; The Son also; but The Holy Ghost is a personage of Spirit, & a person cannot have the personage of the H. G. in his heart.” Importantly, the source of this document appears to be the Clayton diary, in that the words “The Father has a body of flesh & bones as tangible as man's; The Son also; but”—which, as has been shown, find their origin in Joseph Smith’s diary kept by Willard Richards—were inserted above the wording contained in the Clayton diary, “The Holy Ghost is a personage of Spirit, & a person cannot have the personage of the H. G. in his heart.”17

4. July 31, 1854. On July 1, 1854, Leo Hawkins began copying draft manuscript pages 1486 through 1547, as they were approved by members of the First Presidency, into Manuscript Book D-1. Although he was able to do the actual copying in twelve working days, he did not finish it until August 21, 1854—fifty-two calendar days after he began. Hawkins’s typical working hours were from about 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and he copied on average five pages per day. At this rate, the D&C 130:22 text was likely recorded on working day six, which would have been July 31, 1854, four days after it was approved by the First Presidency. On this day, Hawkins apparently copied the text directly from the draft manuscript, making only one change—replacing an ampersand (which looks more like a simple “+” sign in the draft manuscript) with “and.”18

17. History of the Church, Draft Manuscript, Church History Library.
5. **August 3, 1854.** Three days later, on August 3, the Church Historian’s Office Journal indicates, “Thomas Bullock and Leo Hawkins examining Manuscript D history. George A. Smith hearing it. Jedediah M. Grant in office in forenoon hearing history read for publication. George A. Smith revising. President Young in office from 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. hearing history read and felt satisfied with our labors.” It is likely that this is the day this portion of Manuscript Book D-1 was read, heard, and revised with two members of the First Presidency, because it is the only day Leo Hawkins, whose handwriting reflects the changes, was also present when members of the First Presidency were in the office for that purpose. The revised text as it appears in its final form in Manuscript Book D-1 (fig. 3) is markedly different from the William Clayton Diary, the Joseph Smith Diary kept by Willard Richards, and the previously approved draft manuscript. It reads, “The Father 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; were it not so the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.” It is apparent, from close examination of this page of Manuscript Book D-1, that Leo Hawkins originally recorded the text in accordance with the approved draft and then inserted the words “has not a body of flesh and bones, but” in between the words “Holy Ghost” and “is a personage of Spirit.” He then erased the words “a person


20. The only other day on which portions of Manuscript Book D-1 might have been read to Presidents Young and Grant was August 13, 1854; however, the journal does not specifically indicate that those portions read were from Manuscript Book D-1 (although it is likely). Importantly, the journal does specifically indicate that Leo Hawkins was sick at home with a toothache that day, and since the D&C 130:22 portion of Manuscript D-1, as well as the corrections that were made to it, are in the handwriting of Leo Hawkins, the possibility of the changes being on this day are effectively eliminated. See Church Historian’s Office Journal, 130.

21. The author was not able to obtain images of the William Clayton journal but has images of the Willard Richards journal in his possession. Copies of these images have been provided for examination.
cannot have the personage of the Holy Ghost in his heart,” replacing them with “were it not so the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.” The erasure is confirmed by the visible smudges and the fact that the blue lines he was writing on are no longer there.22

6. **July 9, 1856.** The revised text first appeared in print form, with only slight variations, on page 1 of the July 9, 1856, edition of the *Deseret News* under the title of “History of Joseph Smith. April 1843.” It reads, “The Father 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: were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.” The only variations in this text from Manuscript Book D-1 are the lowercase *t* in “the Son,” a comma added after “bones,” and the colons that replace the last two semicolons after the words “Son also” and “personage of Spirit.”

7. **November 13, 1858.** This text next appeared in print form in the November 13, 1858, edition of the *Millennial Star,* also under the title “History of Joseph Smith,” this time with a significant variation in punctuation. It reads, “The Father 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. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.” This text retains the colon that replaced the semicolon after the words “the Son also,” as in the *Deseret News* version; however, it replaces the colon that appeared in the *Deseret News* version after the words “personage of Spirit” with a period, making the phrase “Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us” a separate sentence. The 1876 and 1879 editions of the Doctrine and Covenants retained this exact wording, spelling, and punctuation.

8. **1921 Edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.** While this version retained the same wording and spelling, the colon after the words “Son also” was replaced by a semicolon, as it was in Manuscript Book D-1; however, this text retained other changes made later in the *Millennial Star* and the 1876 and 1879 editions of the Doctrine and Covenants.

**Historical Context of Textual Modifcations**

While it is difficult to ascertain exactly why the changes noted above were made, it is important to place these textual variants, which likely

22. History of the Church, August 3, 1854, Manuscript Book D-1, 1511, Church History Library.
occurred between July 31 and August 3, 1854, in an accurate historical context. What possible insights into this question might be gleaned from attempting to ascertain the understanding of Church leaders, particularly members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, regarding the nature of the embodiment of the Holy Ghost during the decade of the 1850s when these changes were directed? The following is a summary of some of their key published teachings, in an effort to reconstruct, if possible, their individual and collective understandings.

On January 16, 1853, eighteen months prior to directing the changes in the text of what would eventually become D&C 130:22, Brigham Young is reported to have given an address in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, indicating his understanding and thinking regarding the embodiment and “indwelling” of the Holy Ghost:

We are the temples of God, but when we are overcome of evil by yielding to temptation, we deprive ourselves of the privilege of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, taking up their abode and dwelling with us. . . . Let me ask, what is there to prevent any person in this congregation from being so blessed, and becoming a holy temple fit for the in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost? . . . I would to God that every soul who professes to be a Latter-day Saint was of that character, a holy temple for the in-dwelling of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but it is not so.23

While it is impossible to know exactly what Brigham Young meant by this statement, it is somewhat reflective of Orson Hyde’s sermon that Joseph Smith corrected on April 2, 1843. What is known, however, is that Brigham Young was not in Ramus on April 2, 1843, when Joseph gave those corrections to Orson Hyde’s sermon, and therefore we can conjecture that the only way he could have known about Joseph’s corrections to Orson Hyde’s sermon (according to the chart and timeline above) is if Orson Hyde or someone else present that day had shared Joseph’s corrections to that sermon with Brigham prior to this address in the Salt Lake Tabernacle in 1853. If Brigham Young was aware of Joseph’s corrections to Orson Hyde’s sermon, his teachings quoted above are figurative. If he had not yet been made aware of Joseph’s corrections to this notion, his teachings may have been based on his understanding as of that date.

Interestingly, on February 18, 1855, just six months after Brigham Young directed the changes in the text of what has now become D&C 130:22 and seventeen months prior to the revised text being published in

the *Deseret News*, another interesting discourse on the embodiment and indwelling of the Holy Ghost was given by one of the Twelve. Speaking in the open air on the Temple Block in Salt Lake City, Orson Pratt taught that he was not aware of any revelation stating whether or not the Holy Ghost was a personal being. He stated:

I am inclined to think, from some things in the revelations, that there is such a being as a personal Holy Ghost, but it is not set forth as a positive fact, and the Lord has never given me any revelation upon the subject, and consequently I cannot fully make up my mind one way or the other. . . . Consequently we are left to our own conjecture respecting there being a personal Holy Spirit; but one thing is certain, whether there is personal Holy Spirit or not, there is an inexhaustible quantity of that Spirit that is not a person. This is revealed; this is a fact. And it is just as probable to my mind, that there should be a portion of it organized into a person, as that it should exist universally diffused among all the materials in space.24

In the same sermon he also asserted that the persons of Heavenly Father and Jesus could not be in more than one place at a time because of their embodiment, but in regards to the Holy Ghost, he said that the “Holy Spirit ‘is in all things, and round about all things,’ holding all things together in every place and part of the earth, and in all the vast creations of the Almighty,”25 and that is how God could be omnipresent. It is clear from his remarks that (a) he was unsure whether or not the Holy Ghost was a personage of Spirit—a personal being, and (b) this allowed him to see the Holy Ghost, as a member of the Godhead, as a fluid spiritual substance dwelling in all things:

But I will not say that the Holy Ghost is a personage, the same as the Father and Son. When I speak of the Holy Spirit, I speak of it as being a substance that is precisely the same in its attributes as those of the Father and Son; I speak of it as a substance that is diffused throughout space, the same as oxygen is in pure water or air, and as being cognizant of every day’s events. And wherever this Holy Spirit is, it possesses the same attributes and the same kind of qualities that the personages of the Father and the Son are possessed of; consequently, the oneness that is here spoken of, must be applied to the attributes, and not to the persons themselves.26

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During the next nineteen months, from August 1856 (one month after the text in question was published for the first time in the *Deseret News*) through March 1857, Orson Pratt published eight pamphlets on the first principles of the gospel while he was serving as president of the European Mission. One of them, titled “The Holy Spirit,” continued on the theme of the previous discourse given at the Temple Block in 1855, complete with detailed descriptions of the fluid nature of the Holy Ghost’s body, which allowed for his literal indwelling in the Saints. However, by this time he had come into contact with the revised text of what would become D&C 130:22, since it had been published in the *Deseret News*, and he made reference to it, without changing his assertions regarding the fluid nature of the embodiment and literal indwelling of the Holy Ghost:

It has been supposed by some, that the Holy Spirit exists only as a personage in the likeness and form of the personal spirits of the Father and Son, or in the image of the spirits of men which resemble the human tabernacle in shape and magnitude. That such a personal Holy Spirit exists, there can be but little doubt; but to suppose that such person is alone called the Holy Spirit, or that there is not a widely-diffused substance, also called the Holy Spirit, is evidently erroneous, and contrary to what is revealed in the divine oracles.

One personage of the Holy Spirit could not be in two or more places at the same instant; for such a condition is absolutely impossible, for any one person, being, or particle. Therefore, one personage, called the Holy Ghost, could not dwell at the same instant in two or more Saints. If He were in one, He would most certainly be absent from all others. To be in millions of Saints, would require millions of personages of the Holy Ghost, provided that He only exists in the personal form.

But there are many expressions in Scripture which plainly show that the Holy Ghost exists, not only as a person, but as a diffused fluid substance. John the Baptist, in speaking of Jesus, says, “God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.” (John iii. 34.) If the Holy Spirit, which Jesus is represented as not receiving by measure, were a personage, His presence in Jesus could not be considered a greater measure, than His presence in the Saints; but being a fluid substance, a greater quantity or fulness of it was given to Jesus than what was measured out to his disciples. Let it be remembered that the Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit represent the same Holy Substance or Fluid, being two different names for the same thing.

But does not that portion of the substance of the Holy Spirit which dwells in each humble servant of God, assume a personal form while in such tabernacle? Or is it limited in its locality to some particular part of the tabernacle, as the brain or the heart? We answer, that as the gift of the Holy Spirit is, in Scripture, called a *baptism*, there is no doubt, but that the whole...
“inner man” is immersed in this holy Substance: this is still more evident from the scriptural expressions which often represent the disciples of Jesus, as “being full of the Holy Ghost;” these expressions convey the idea that the Holy Ghost, not only dwelt in the brain or in the heart, but in and throughout the whole tabernacle, quickening the human spirit in every limb and joint from the head to the feet: or, in other words, the body which is the temple of the Holy Ghost, was full of this holy Fluid, even as the temple of Solomon was full of the glory of God, when the cloud and fire descended upon it.

But if the body of each Saint is full of the Holy Ghost, it is evident that this holy Substance dwelling in each temple must assume the same shape and magnitude as the temple which it fills. If any one should, by vision, behold the tabernacle of man, filled throughout with this Substance, he would perceive it existing in a personal form of the same size and shape as the human spirit or tabernacle.

But does the Holy Ghost ever exist in or assume a personal form, when separate from the tabernacles of men? We answer, there remains but little doubt, as to the existence also of a personal Being, called the Holy Ghost.

Joseph Smith, the Prophet, says, “The Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a PERSONAGE of Spirit.”— (See History of Joseph Smith, “Deseret News,” Vol. vi. No. 18, p. 137.)

So, while he resolved to his satisfaction the issue of whether the Holy Ghost is a personage of Spirit, quoting the revised text of what eventually became D&C 130:22, he did not change his position on the fluidity of that embodiment or the literal indwelling and omnipresence of that same being. This might be due to the fact that he was not aware of Joseph’s original statement, “a person cannot have the personage of the Holy Ghost in his heart,” because it was replaced in the Deseret News with the revised text “Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.”

From Brigham Young’s and Orson Pratt’s statements herein quoted, it becomes apparent that these two leaders (particularly Orson Pratt), who were both instrumental in the production of what eventually became Doctrine and Covenants 130:22, may have been able to accommodate the notion of the literal indwelling of the Holy Ghost, despite Joseph Smith’s

April 2, 1843, statement that “the Holy Ghost is a personage, and a person cannot have the personage of the Holy Ghost in his heart.”

It is important to note that several other General Authorities, some of whom were contemporaries of Orson Pratt, as well as those Church leaders who were present when the changes were made, namely Brigham Young, Jedediah M. Grant, and George A. Smith, also understood the phrase “were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us” as figurative and may not have agreed on its meaning. Although possibly Brigham Young, but most assuredly Orson Pratt, may have believed and taught the literal indwelling of the Holy Ghost, it appears that as Joseph Smith’s teachings regarding the Holy Ghost being a “personage of Spirit” were published and then became more well known, the difficulty surrounding the indwelling of a “personage of Spirit” began to be understood in a different way, thus compelling some to believe the statement “were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us” was referring to the spiritual influence that radiates from the Holy Ghost, or administered through the medium of the Light of Christ by the Holy Ghost.

Exegesis of Textual Modifications

I have been unable to locate any extant historical evidence that Joseph Smith ever deviated from teaching the plural and anthropomorphic nature of all three members of the Godhead. Thankfully, before his death, he was able to amplify and clarify his teachings regarding not only the literal embodiment of the Father and the Son, but also the nature and status of the Holy Ghost. Regarding the Holy Ghost, Joseph Smith was reported to have taught that “the Holy Ghost is now in a state of Probation” and that he “is yet a Spiritual body and waiting to take to

28. See, for example, Joseph F. Smith, Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith, comp. John A. Widtsoe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977), 60–61; and George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, Commentary on the Book of Mormon, 7 vols., ed. Philip C. Reynolds (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1956), 2:169. Admittedly, Joseph F. Smith did not serve as a counselor to Brigham Young when the changes occurred, but he was a counselor in the First Presidency when section 130 was published in the 1876 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, and he was retained as a counselor to John Taylor when this section was canonized in 1880.

himself a body, as the Savior did or as god did or the gods before them took bodies.”

Importantly, the text that emerges from the revisions of Joseph Smith’s recorded statements given at Ramus, Illinois, on April 2, 1843, not only retained his original teaching regarding the embodiment of the Holy Ghost as a personage of Spirit but accentuated the difference between the Holy Ghost’s body and the bodies of the Father and the Son. In addition, the final portion of the revision, “Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us,” although enigmatic, actually improved upon the Clayton and Richards diary entries in that it brought these teachings into conformity with other scriptural passages from the New Testament and the Book of Mormon that assert the Holy Ghost dwells in us (for example, see 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; and Hel. 4:24).

A proper exegesis of Paul’s teaching that “ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you,” demonstrates how closely this final revision complies with biblical teachings. The Greek word that has been translated as ye in 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19 is ἐστέ (estè), which is plural. As a result, LDS scholars almost universally agree that the word “temple” referred to in these and other New Testament scriptures referred to a body of believers, or church members as a group, not an individual (hence the use of the plural “ye”). Similarly, just as the

31. See David Paulsen’s excellent treatment of the word “personage” in David L. Paulsen, “The Doctrine of Divine Embodiment: Restoration, Judeo-Christian, and Philosophical Perspectives,” BYU Studies 35, no. 4 (1995–96): 25–27. It is important to note his treatment of the embodiment of the Holy Ghost (pages 17–19 of the same article), but only that his spirit was anthropomorphic and not in regards to the indwelling treated in this article.
32. Even though the scriptural eisegesis or personal application of these teachings has almost universally referred to one’s body, Richard Lloyd Anderson argued, “The King James Version is archaic but often helpful in its precision. In expressing a subject of a sentence, today’s English uses ‘you’ for one person or for many, whereas, ‘ye are the temple of God’ translates the Greek plural form; the Corinthians collectively were referred to as God’s temple here. This is not the analogy of the body as a temple.” Richard Lloyd Anderson, Guide to Acts and the Apostles’ Letters (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), 39. He also noted, “Usually the Church is the temple of God. The members (‘ye’, older plural English for the plural Greek) are ‘God’s building’ (1 Cor. 3:9), with Christ its foundation (1 Cor. 3:11), or in summary, ‘the Temple of God’ (1 Cor. 3:16).” Richard Lloyd Anderson, Understanding Paul (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 86. Comparable
“Ye” evoked by Paul is plural and the word “temple” refers to a body of believers, the word “us” in D&C 130:22 is also plural—suggesting that the Holy Ghost dwells in “us” as a body of believers, not in our individual temples, or bodies. Significantly, this retains Joseph Smith’s original correction to Orson Hyde regarding the embodiment of the three members of the Godhead, which meant not only that “a person cannot have the personage of the [Holy Ghost] in his heart,” but also that “the idea that [the Father and the Son] will dwell in a man’s heart is . . . false.”

Although it is not possible to know if this interpretation is what was originally intended by those making the revisions to Joseph Smith’s teachings of April 2, 1843, it does illustrate how these changes helped bring those teachings in line with other scriptures, while still retaining the original intent of the corrections Joseph Smith made to Orson Hyde’s sermon on April 2, 1843. In other words, this exegesis shows that the phrase “Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us” rather than referring to the literal indwelling of the Holy Ghost in each individual Saint, which Joseph Smith’s teachings indicate is not possible, actually refers to the fact that the Holy Ghost dwells in “us” as a body of Saints, or in the Church membership as a whole.

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