

FIGURE 5-10.  
*The Holy Trinity, ca. 1408-1425*  
 Andrei Rublev, ca. 1360-70-ca. 1427-30

SEE COLOR PLATE 5-10.

*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.*<sup>1</sup> In the Orthodox Church, the icon of the three divine messengers who appeared to Abraham is used as a symbol of the oneness of the Godhead, and the “beginning of the promise of Redemption” which reached “its fulfillment on the day of the Pentecost,” binding together the Old Testament and New Testament Churches.<sup>2</sup> In LDS doctrine, the oneness of purpose and holiness attained by the Godhead is a blessing held out for all faithful disciples of Christ, as expressed in the high priestly prayer of the Lord at the Last Supper cited above. To both the head and the body of the Church, the Lord said in 1831: “...be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine.”<sup>3</sup>

With reference to accounts of visits of divine messengers to Adam and Eve, Gaskill observes that: “Peter, James, and John, whether appearing to Adam and Eve or serving as the head of the post-resurrection Church in the meridian of time, are symbols of something much greater than themselves, namely, the Godhead... as [are] all subsequent First Presidencies. Whether these three

brethren, or any set of tripartite messengers had physical contact with Adam and Eve (or any other Old Testament figure) makes no difference. What is of importance is what they brought and whom they represented.”<sup>4</sup>

“Many scholars consider Rublev’s *Trinity* the most perfect of all Russian icons and perhaps the most perfect of all the icons ever painted.”<sup>5</sup> The basic form of the icon is a circle: “Passing through the upper part of the nimbus of the central Angel and partly cutting off the bottom of the pedestals, this circle embraces all three figures, showing very faintly through their outlines... In this way the central Angel, though taller than the others, does not overwhelm or dominate them... The icon... has action, expressed in gestures, communion, expressed in the inclining of the heads and the postures of the figures, and a silent, motionless peace... [T]he gestures of the hands are directed towards the eucharistic chalice, with the head of a sacrificial animal, which stands on the white table as on an altar. Symbolizing the voluntary sacrifice of the Son of God, it draws together the gestures of the Angels, indicating the unity of will and action of the Holy Trinity, Who entered into a covenant with Abraham.” The Father, represented at left, is dressed differently than the other two. He wears “a pale pink cloak with brown and blue-green lights” of “sober and indefinite hue” that covers both shoulders. The Son, depicted in the middle, “has the customary colors of... a purple *chiton* [= a draped, belted tunic] and a blue cloak” draped over His left shoulder, the color of the cloak symbolizing incarnation.<sup>6</sup> Behind Him grows a Tree of Life, born of His sacrificial death. The “principal color” of the Holy Spirit is green, represented in the cloak draped over His right shoulder. Here, the color green “signifies ‘youth, fullness of powers.’ This specifically indicates the properties of... renewing all things and giving them life.”<sup>7</sup> The symbolism recalls the promise made to those who are to be “sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.”<sup>8</sup>

1 John 17:21.

2 L. Ouspensky, *et al.*, *Icons*, p. 200. See also G. Bunge, *Rublev Trinity*, pp. 45-57.

3 D&C 38:27.

4 A. L. Gaskill, *Lost*, p. 302. See also *ibid.*, pp. 303-306. Cf. Nibley: “When Peter spoke to Adam, which Peter was it? The Peter of Adam’s day? No, the timeless Peter” (H. W. Nibley, *Consecration*, p. 439).

5 *The Holy Trinity*.

6 W. Williams, *Shadow*.

7 L. Ouspensky, *et al.*, *Icons*, p. 202.

8 D&C 84:33.

And after a short time my mercy (will be) revealed to you: I will go down to you... For your sake, Adam, I become an infant... For your sake, Adam, I ascend the cross... For your sake, Adam, I open the tomb.”<sup>116</sup>

The set of laws and ordinances that were given to Adam and Eve is known collectively as “The New and Everlasting Covenant.”<sup>117</sup> This comprehensive covenant includes the

116 S. E. Robinson, *Testament of Adam*, 3:2-3, pp. 97, 99; cf. M. D. Gibson, *Rolls 1901*, p. 117; E. P. Sanders, *Testament of Adam 1983*, 3:2-3, p. 994. See also C. Buck, *Paradise*, p. 100.

117 H. C. Kimball, *6 January 1861*, p. 330; Book of Abraham, Facsimile 2, Figure 3.