

THE FATHER IN HEAVEN WAS LITERALLY THE FATHER OF JESUS CHRIST

President Joseph F. Smith

I feel very humble this morning as well as very grateful to have the privilege of meeting with such a large number of good people and the dear little children of these good people who are striving to build up Zion and who are doing all they can, all that is in their power, to bring up their little children in the way they should go, that when they get old they will not depart from the right way.

I commend the remarks of George Albert Smith, and I want to tell these little folks who George Albert is. He is the son of John Henry Smith, who is the son of George A. Smith, who was the son of John Smith, who was a brother of Joseph Smith, Sr., who was the father of the prophet, so you can account for the spirit and the feeling and the testimony that dwells in the heart of this good boy who has spoken to us here this morning, and why he is so earnest and so interested in the well-being of the children of Zion.

Some of the things that have been mentioned this morning have touched the sensitive part of my soul, and I possess that degree of human weakness that I cannot help being affected by the sentiment that has been expressed, not only in relation to the Prophet and his brother, but related to the Master, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

We are all sons and daughters of God, and I want the little folks to hear what I am going to tell you. I am going to tell you a simple truth, yet it is one of the greatest truths and one of the most simple facts ever revealed to the children of men. Yet it is one that has been mystified and philisophied by men, more perhaps, than another. If I talk to the little folks so they understand, the parents and teachers will be able to understand.

Now in the first book in the Bible - and the bible has been the standard of the Christian faith for nineteen centuries, yet nearly all the Christian believers and advocates of the Bible throughout the world have seemed to ignore one of the great truths that is taken from this book - we read: "in the beginning God created man in His own image, and in His own likeness, male and female." Right on the face of this great and yet simple truth that is revealed in Genesis, the Christian world has formulated a God that is incomprehensible. One of the greatest syndicates of learned men known in history were once chosen to determine the definition of the being called God, and after deliberating over it for months, rendered the decision that "God was incomprehensible," and that "to comprehend God would be to destroy Him!" Yet he said He created man in His own image, then God is in the image of man. Little children, can you not see that? If man is made in the likeness of God, then He is like God, and God is like man.

The Savior, Jesus Christ, begotten of God, was in the likeness of His Father, resembling Him so nearly that He said on one occasion that, "He that has seen me has seen the Father." I see a little boy. He has hair, he has eyes and he has a face which resembles his father's. Perfect is the resemblance between the boy and his father. The boy looks like the father and the father looks like the boy. Of course, you can tell that father from the boy because he is a little older than his son. Jesus Christ was created just like His father, had the same features, same form, same kind of body, and was so like Him that when you saw him you saw an exact likeness of similitude of His Father.

You all know that your fathers are indeed your fathers and that your mothers are indeed your mothers. You all know that don't you? You cannot deny it. Now we are told in the scriptures that Jesus Christ is the only begotten son of God in the flesh. Well, not for the benefit of the older ones, how are children begotten? I answer, just as Jesus Christ was begotten of his Father. The Christian denominations believe that Christ was not begotten of God, but of the spirit that overshadowed His mother. This is nonsense. Why will not the world receive the truth? Why will they not believe the Father when He says that Jesus Christ is His only begotten Son? Why will they try to explain this truth away and make mystery of it?

Now if God is a man, a glorious perfect man - that is, perfect in all the glorious attributes, and infinite in power, there never will come a time when God the Father will not have power to extend His dominion and His glory. He is the maker of heaven and earth on which we dwell, for He made this earth by His word and by His power. How did he make it? He called the elements that are invisible to our eyes. He formed the earth on which we dwell, and has formed millions of worlds, and they are peopled with his children, for there is no end to His dominion, and the world that he has created cannot be numbered unto man.

Now, little boys and girls, when you are confronted by infidels in the world who know nothing of how Christ was begotten, you can say he was born just as an infidel was begotten and born, so was Christ begotten by His father who is also our father - the Father of our spirits - and he was born of His mother, Mary.

The difference between Jesus Christ and men is this: our fathers in the flesh are mortal men who are subject unto death, but the Father of Jesus Christ in the flesh is the God of Heaven. Therefore, Jesus, as declared, received the power of life from his Father and was never subject unto death but had life in Himself as His Father had life in Himself. Because of His power He overcame death and the grave and became Master of the resurrection and the means of salvation to us all.

Shall we as Latter-day Saints deny the truth and then claim that God made man in His likeness in the beginning? Shall we come under the impression that God possesses the power of creation and yet did not literally create? His is not without His companion any more than I am without my companion, the mother of my children.

These are truths and I wish they could be instilled into the hearts of these little children so that they will not be tossed about by every wind of doctrine and be confused by the teachers of atheism. Now, by and by, you will be able to understand this better far more than you can today. Some of us grandparents find it difficult to conceive the truth - we want to think something marvelous. We want to try to make it appear that God does not do things in the right way, or that He has another way of doing things than what we know, we must come down to the simple fact that God almighty was the Father of his Son, Jesus Christ. Mary, the virgin girl, who had never known mortal man, was his mother. God by her, begot His son, Jesus Christ and He was born into the world with power and intelligence like that of His father.

He was God with us, He was indeed Immanuel, for He came for a purpose and possessed power that no human being possessed. He had power to lay down His life and take it up again. He had power to resist His murderers; if He had willed it they never could have taken His life. He came for a purpose- what was it? To redeem man from death. Life ever-lasting came into the world by the death and sacrifice of this one man.

He went to the spirits in prison to proclaim liberty to them. As Jesus Christ proclaimed liberty to the living so also he proclaimed liberty to the dead for He had passed from mortality to immortality. To make the proclamation to the dead as He had to those in mortal life that all must obtain salvation through obedience to the simple ordinances of the gospel.

I was so impressed to hear these little boys sing as they did. Their beautiful voices were so harmonious with each other. All that has been sung has been pleasing to hear. I glory in the son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, the Babe of Bethlehem, having power to redeem all mankind from all their sins. You must understand that it is said here in the Doctrine and Covenants that God cannot look on sin with any degree of allowance. (D&C 1:31)

Now my little friends, I will repeat again in words as simple as I can, and you talk to your parents about it, that God, the Eternal Father is literally the father of Jesus Christ. Mary was married to Joseph for time. No man could take her from eternity because she belonged to the Father of her Divine son. In the revelations that have come through Joseph Smith, we learn that it is the Eternal purpose of God that man and woman should be joined together by the power of God here on earth for time and eternity.

If a man and woman should be joined together who are incompatible to each other, it would be a mercy to them to be separated that they might have a chance to find other spirits that will be congenial to them. We will be loosed in Heaven. I would like teachers of the Sunday School to take these simple facts and teach them to the children so that they may understand the truth, that their faith may be founded in fact and in truth, for nothing that is not built on truth will stand. That will endure. Now my brothers and sisters and the Sunday School workers, we want you to teach the children the truth and nothing but the truth.

Stake Conference Address printed in the *Box Elder Times*, Sept. 22, 1914.
Also found in "Messages of the First Presidency," vol. 4, pp. 327-332.