It is the Sabbath day, and outside is such a glorious day that all nature seems to bespeak the works of God. I can’t refrain from saying with the poet:

O suns and skies and clouds of June,
And flowers of June together,
Ye cannot rival for one hour
October’s bright blue weather.
(Helen Hunt Jackson, “October’s Bright Blue Weather.”)

I desire to share a few thoughts about a basic doctrine of the Church.

What I say is based on these convictions:

First: instruction vital to our salvation is not hidden in an obscure verse or phrase in the scriptures. To the contrary, essential truths are repeated over and over again.

Second: every verse, whether oft-quoted or obscure, must be measured against other verses. There are complementary and tempering teachings in the scriptures which bring a balanced knowledge of truth.

Next: there is a consistency in what the Lord says and what He does, that is evident in all creation. Nature can teach valuable lessons about spiritual and doctrinal matters. The Lord drew lessons from flowers and foxes, from seeds and salt, and sparrows and sunsets.

Fourth: not all that God has said is in the Bible. Other scriptures—the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price—have equal validity, and they sustain one another.

Fifth: while much must be taken on faith alone, there is individual revelation through which we may know the truth. “There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.” (Job 32:8.) What may be obscure in the scriptures can be made plain through the gift of the Holy Ghost. We can have as full an understanding of spiritual things as we are willing to earn.

And I add one more conviction: there is an adversary who has his own channels of spiritual communication. He confuses the careless and prompts those who serve him to devise deceptive, counterfeit doctrine, carefully contrived to appear genuine.

I mention this because now, as always, there are self-appointed spokesmen who scoff at what we believe and misrepresent what we teach.

Go to His Friends

As a young seminary teacher, I learned a valuable lesson from our principal, Able S. Rich. He told me, “If you really want to know what a man is, and what he believes, do not go to his enemies. Go to the man himself or to his friends. He does not confide the thoughts of his heart to his enemies. His friends know him best; they know his strengths and his weaknesses. They will represent him fairly. His enemies will misrepresent him.”

The doctrine I wish to discuss concerns the nature of man and of God.

The Question

There is a question in both the Old and the New Testaments: “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Ps. 8:4; see also Heb. 2:5–7.)

The answer is taught most simply in the song we sang together at the intermission of the meeting:

I am a child of God,
And He has sent me here,
Has given me an earthly home
With parents kind and dear. …
If am a child of God,
Rich blessings are in store;
If I but learn to do his will
I’ll live with him once more.
(Sing with Me, B-76.)

Children of God

Those lyrics teach a basic doctrine of the Church. We are the children of God. That doctrine is not hidden away in an obscure verse. It is taught over and over again in scripture. These clear examples are from the Bible:

“All of you are children of the most High.” (Ps. 82:6.)

And: “We are the offspring of God.” (Acts 17:29.)

Doctrinal truths are interrelated. There is an old saying that if you pick up one end of a stick, you pick up the other end as well.

If you concede that we are His [page 67] children,
you must allow that God is our Father.

God, Our Father

That, too, is repeated over and over again in the
scriptures. There are so many references that I could not
even begin to read them to you.

But I make this point: Christ did not speak only of
the Father, or my Father; He spoke of your Father, and
our Father. He even put them together in one sentence,
saying, “Your Father, and your God, and my God.”
(D&C 88:75; italics added.) God is addressed universally
in the Christian world as Father. Were we not
commanded to pray “Our Father which art in heaven”?
(Matt. 6:9.)

You may respond, “Every Christian knows that.”
Perhaps every Christian does, but so-called Christians,
with the help of clergymen, belittle in most unchristian
ways our teaching that we are the literal sons and
daughters of God.

Other ideals flow from that great truth. Once you
know that, you know that all men are brothers. That
realization changes you. Thereafter you cannot willingly
injure another. You could not transgress against them in
any way.

Self-respect

That simple, profound doctrine is worth knowing for
another reason as well. It brings a feeling of self-worth,
dignity, self-respect. Then self-pity and depression fade
away. We then can yield to the discipline of a loving
Father and accept even the very hard lessons of life.

Christ taught us to be “perfect, even as your Father
which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48), to take on
His attributes, to follow the pattern of our parentage.

A little girl taught me a profound lesson on this
subject. Surely you are not above learning from little
children. Much of what I know that really matters I have
learned from being a father.

The Chicks

Some years ago I returned home to find our little
children were waiting in the driveway. They had
discovered some newly hatched chicks under the manger
in the barn. When they reached for them, a protective
hen rebuffed them. So they came for reinforcements.

I soon gathered a handful of little chicks for them to
see and touch.

As our little girl held one of them, I said in a teasing
way, “That will make a nice watchdog when it grows up,
won’t it?” She shook her head, “No, Daddy.” Then I
added, “It will be a nice riding horse.”

She wrinkled up her nose and gave me that “Oh, Dad!” look. For even a four-year-old knows that a chick
will not be a dog, nor a horse, nor even a turkey. It will
be a chicken. It will follow the pattern of its parentage.
She knew that without having had a course in genetics,
without a lesson or a lecture.

After Their Own Kind

No lesson is more manifest in nature than that all
living things do as the Lord commanded in the Creation.
They reproduce “after their own kind.” (See Moses 2:12,
24.) They follow the pattern of their parentage. Everyone
knows that; every four-year-old knows that! A bird will
not become an animal nor a fish. A mammal will not
beget reptiles, nor “do men gather … figs of thistles.”
(Matt. 7:16.)

In the countless billions of opportunities in the
reproduction of living things, one kind does not beget
another. If a species ever does cross, the offspring cannot
reproduce. The pattern for all life is the pattern of the
parentage.

This is demonstrated in so many obvious ways, even
an ordinary mind should understand it. Surely no one
with reverence for God could believe that His children
evolved from slime or from reptiles. (Although one can
easily imagine that those who accept the theory of
evolution don’t show much enthusiasm for genealogical
research!) The theory of evolution, and it is a theory, will
have an entirely different dimension when the workings
of God in creation are fully revealed.

Since every living thing follows the pattern of its
parentage, are we to suppose that God had some other
[pag...8] strange pattern in mind for His offspring?
Surely we, His children, are not, in the language of
science, a different species than He is?

Like God

What is in error, then, when we use the term
Godhood to describe the ultimate destiny of mankind?
We may now be young in our progression—juvenile,
even infantile, compared with Him. Nevertheless, in the
eternities to come, if we are worthy, we may be like unto
Him, enter His presence, “see as [we] are seen, and know
as [we] are known,” and receive a “fulness.” (D&C
76:94.)

This doctrine is not at variance with the scriptures.
Nevertheless, it is easy to understand why some
Christians reject it, because it introduces the possibility
that man may achieve Godhood.
**One God**

Their concern centers on certain verses of scripture, for there are many references (at least twenty in the Bible alone) which speak of one God. For example, Eph. 4:6: There is “one God and Father of all.”

But if you hold strictly to a too rigid interpretation of those verses, you create serious theological problems for yourself.

**Plural Terms**

There are many other verses of scripture, at least an equal number in the Bible, that speak in plural terms of “lords” and “gods.” The first chapter of Genesis states:

“All and God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” (Gen. 1:26; italics added.)

Such references are found from Genesis to Revelation. (See Rev. 1:6.)

The strongest one was given by Christ Himself when He quoted that very clear verse from the Eighty-second Psalm:

“Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? [See Ps. 82:6.]

“If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

“Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (John 10:34–36; italics added.)

The acceptance of this truth does not mean accepting the multiple gods of mythology nor the polytheism of the pagans, which was so roundly condemned by Isaiah and the other prophets.

There is one God, the Father of all. This we accept as fundamental doctrine.

There is only one Redeemer, Mediator, Savior. This we know.

There is one Holy Ghost, a personage of spirit, who completes the Godhead.

I have emphasized the word one, in each sentence, but I have used it three times. Three is plural.

Paul used the plural many and the singular one in the same verse:

“For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many.)

“But to us there is but one God, the Father.” (1 Cor. 8:5–6.)

Anyone who believes and teaches of God the Father, and accepts the divinity of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, teaches a plurality of Gods.

Relying on Reason

When the early Apostles were gone, those who assumed the leadership of the Church forsook revelation and relied on reason. The idea of three separate Gods offended them, for it appeared to contravene those scriptures which refer to one God.

To reconcile that problem, they took verses here and there and ignored all else that bears on the subject. They tried to stir the three ones together into some mysterious kind of a composite one. They came up with creeds which cannot be squared with the scriptures. And they were left with a philosophy which opposes all we know of creation, of the laws of nature. And that, interestingly enough, defies the very reason upon which they came to depend.

The Apostle Paul understood this doctrine and wrote to the Philippians:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” (Philip. 2:5–6.)

Lorenzo Snow, a modern Apostle, wrote a poem to his ancient counterpart Paul, from which I quote only one verse:

A Son of God, like God to be,  
Would not be robbing Deity,  
And he who has this hope within,  
Will purify himself from sin.  

(Improvement Era, June 1919, p. 661.)

Purity

What could inspire one to purity and worthiness more than to possess a spiritual confirmation that we are the children of God? What could inspire a more lofty regard for oneself, or engender more love for mankind?

This thought does not fill me with arrogance. It fills me with overwhelming humility. Nor does it sponsor any inclination to worship oneself or any man.

The doctrine we teach has no provision for lying or stealing, for pornography, immoralities, for child abuse, for abortion, or murder. We are bound by the laws of His church, as sons and daughters of God, to avoid all of these and every other unholy or impure practice.

We did not invent this doctrine. Much of it was preserved in the Bible as it was revealed to prophets in ancient times. And as they foretold, further light and knowledge was revealed.

With the restoration of the fulness of the gospel came the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ. Other revelations were given and continue to be given, and verses which seemed to oppose one another.
have harmony.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the Character of God.” *(Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co. 1938, p. 345.)

And that knowledge is given us.

The Father is the one true God. This thing is certain: no one will ever ascend above Him; no one will ever replace Him. Nor will anything ever change the relationship that we, His literal offspring, have with Him. He is Eloheim, the Father. He is God. Of Him there is only one. We revere our Father and our God; we worship Him.

There is only one Christ, one Redeemer. We accept the divinity of the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh. We accept the promise that we may become joint heirs with Him. Paul wrote to the Romans:

“The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” *(Rom. 8:16–17.)*

There are those who mock our beliefs in the most uncharitable ways. And we will bear what they do with long-suffering, for it does not change truth. And in their own way they move our work along a little faster. We will send our missionaries abroad to teach that we are the literal sons and daughters of God.

We will strive with every exertion to teach what Christ taught, to live as He lived, to endure as He endured.

We began with this question: “What is man that thou art mindful of him?” Christ, our Redeemer, our Elder Brother, asked, “What manner of men ought ye to be?” And then He answered, “Verily I say unto you, even as I am.” *(3 Ne. 27:27.)*

I bear solemn witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh; that He is our Redeemer, our Savior; that God is our Father. This we know through the gift of the Holy Ghost. And I humbly but resolutely affirm that we will not, we cannot, stray from this doctrine. On this fundamental truth we will never yield! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.
Parentage definition: Your parentage is the identity and origins of your parents. For example, if you are of mixed parentage (English and Jamaican). We are all the result of our parentage and upbringing. Synonyms: family, birth, origin, descent More Synonyms of parentage. COBUILD Advanced English Dictionary. This pattern is an example of a complex sentence with a dependent marker. Independent clause dependent marker dependent clause [. ] Examples of dependent markers are as follows: because, before, since, while, although, if, until, when, after, as, as if. Pattern Seven. This pattern includes an independent clause with an embedded non-essential clause or phrase. First part of an independent clause [, ] non-essential clause or phrase, rest of the independent clause [. ] A non-essential clause or phrase is one that can be removed without changing the meaning of the sentence or making it ungrammatical. In other words, the non-essential clause or phrase gives additional information, but the sentence can stand alone without it.