

We Believe in God, the Eternal Father

MARK E. PETERSEN

It surely is thrilling to meet with so many of you here tonight. It's a great privilege to be a member of the Church. It's a great privilege to meet together in such large numbers to worship the Lord, which is, of course, what we hope to do tonight. Before I begin, I would like to introduce my wife to you. Would you please come to the pulpit, Emma Marr? I'd like you to meet her. She's a wonderful lady. Many of you were raised on her books. She's written about a dozen of them for young people and for children. Yesterday and the day before and the day before that, we had a great celebration in our family. We have just completed fifty years of happy married life. And so this is our golden wedding, and what a wonderful way it is to complete our celebration of that event by coming here and joining with you in expressing our joy for each other and for the great gospel that has brought us together. Emma Marr Petersen. Would you say hello to them, Emma Marr?

[*Mrs. Petersen:* Do I have to? We're really delighted to meet with you here tonight, even if we are practically terrified. But then, we talk ourselves into it, knowing that whenever we're among Latter-day Saints we're among friends; and that thought sustains us a great deal, together with, of course, our trust in our Heavenly Father, when we try to do what we're supposed to do. We're delighted to be

here, and I ask the blessings of our Heavenly Father upon us during the remainder of this meeting, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.]

Isn't she a delightful lady? You can imagine the joy I had fifty-one years ago, when she promised to join me for the rest of my life, and then fifty years ago when, in the Salt Lake Temple, we were privileged to be sealed together for time and for all eternity. So this is a happy day for us, and we're glad that we can spend it with you here this evening.

I was here just a year ago. I don't remember what I said on that day, and I hope I won't tell you the same thing over again. But I believe I remember that I asked you to recite some of the Articles of Faith. Some of you may possibly remember, although I don't expect anybody to remember much what I say. But I'd like to talk about the Articles of Faith a little bit tonight, particularly the first article. And I wonder if you'd be willing to join with me in reciting the first Article of Faith:

Mark E. Petersen was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this fireside address was given at Brigham Young University on 2 September 1973.

We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

I would like particularly to talk about the first few words of that article. To begin with, “We believe in God.”

That’s the reason we’re here tonight, isn’t it? We believe in God. Regardless of what all the rest of the people of the world may say or do, we Latter-day Saints have a testimony that God lives, and therefore we believe in him. We have various reasons for believing in him. One of the reasons is, of course, that our prophets have actually seen him. Our prophets have seen Almighty God, and they bear testimony that he lives. We have the scriptures which bear testimony that he lives, and if we have been worthy, everyone of us as a member of the Church has received the testimony from the Holy Ghost. Every member of the Church has been given the gift of the Holy Ghost, and if we are worthy and if we seek it, that Spirit will bear testimony to our spirits that God does live. And so this is my testimony tonight; it is your testimony tonight; and that is why all together we can say, “We believe in God.”

And then the next few words: “We believe in God, the Eternal Father.” That’s what I’d like to talk about with you tonight: the fatherhood of God. God is literally our Eternal Father. You remember that when Paul was on Mars’ Hill he came to the altar marked “To the Unknown God,” and he took advantage of that great opportunity (Acts 17:19–34). He was a great salesman as well as a great preacher, and when he saw this altar marked to the unknown god, immediately he proceeded to explain to them the true God, who was unknown to them because they were worshiping idols. The true God, not being known to them, required definition, and therefore he gave it to them. You recall that when he spoke to them he said, among other things, that “we are the offspring of God.” That is the very basis of our whole religion. We are the offspring of Almighty God.

How are we the offspring of God? We are dual beings. Actually everyone of us is a spirit, and our spirit occupies a body of flesh and bone. The body is not the person at all. The spirit is the real person. I am a spirit; you are a spirit—everyone of you. Our spirit resembles our body, or rather our body was tailored to fit our spirit. The spirit bears the image and likeness of God, and the body, if it’s normal, is in the image and likeness of the spirit. And the spirit is the offspring of Almighty God. You remember that Paul said also, “We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” (Hebrews 12:9).

So we, as spirits, were begotten of Almighty God. We are his children. We are not products of creation in the usually understood sense. We obtained our being by birth and not by manufacture, if I may use that word without being misunderstood. We were born of Almighty God in the spirit, in the same sense in which our bodies were born of our parents here on the earth. As we have the blood of our earthly parents flowing through our veins, so we have divinity within us, because our eternal spirits have a divine parentage.

President Joseph Fielding Smith became the President of the Church in January of 1970. He did not actually make a public address as President until the April conference of that same year, when he made his acceptance address as President of the Church, when he was voted in as President by the members of the Church.

At that time President Smith said something very significant, and I would like to read it to you:

We believe in the divine origin of man. [He was talking about the fact that we are the offspring of God, just as Paul said. And then he continues:] *Our faith is founded on the fact that God is our Father and that we are his children. As*

members of his family, we dwelt with him before the foundations of this earth were laid [I hope you notice that he says that we are the “family” of God, because we are the offspring of God, born to him], and he ordained and established the plan of salvation, whereby we gained the privilege of advancing and progressing as we are endeavoring to do. The God we worship is a glorified being in whom all power and perfection dwell, and he has created man in his own image and likeness with those characteristics and attributes which he himself possesses.

And so our belief in the dignity and destiny of man is an essential part of our theology and of our way of life. Because God is our Father, we have a natural desire to love and serve him and to be worthy members of his family. President Smith’s father was President Joseph F. Smith, who preceded him as President of the Church by several generations of presidents. President Joseph F. Smith, on that same subject, said this:

Where did we come from? We came from God. Our spirits existed before they came to this world. They were in the councils of the heavens before the foundations of the earth were laid. We were there. We sang together with the heavenly hosts for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid, and when the plan of our existence upon this earth and redemption were mapped out. We were there. We were interested, and we took a part in this great preparation. [And then he continues:] These spirits—that is, you and I, our brothers and sisters [and don’t worry about the fact that we have so many brothers and sisters, because God had all eternity before this earth was made in which to have us, so don’t worry about that]—have been coming to this earth to take upon them tabernacles from the morn of creation until now, and will continue until the winding-up scene, until the spirits who were destined to come to this world shall have come and accomplished their mission in the flesh.

President Brigham Young talked about the same thing, and he said this:

Our Father in heaven begat all the spirits that ever were or ever will be upon this earth. [You see, we are begotten children of God.] Then the Lord, by his power and wisdom, organized the mortal tabernacle of man. We were made first spiritual, and afterward temporal.

President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote a book—he wrote many books, of course, but one of them was entitled *The Restoration of All Things*. On pages 250–51 he says this:

How uplifting and comforting is the thought that the Father of Jesus Christ is in very deed our Father, that we are in very deed his offspring. It is the teaching of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that we all lived in the world of spirits and in the presence of our Father before we came to this earth to be clothed in bodies of flesh and bones. He is our Father.

And then President Smith quotes Paul again, this time from Romans, as follows:

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. [Romans 8:16–17]

That’s a very significant expression: heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. You remember in the oath and covenant of the priesthood the same thing is expressed, that if the holders of the priesthood will honor their priesthood, “all that my Father hath shall be given unto [them]” (D&C 84:38). We inherit these things from God, providing we’re worthy, and the reason we can inherit them is that we’re his children. We have his divinity within us. That gives us the right of inheritance, and therefore we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

And then President Smith discusses another thing. We have a Father in Heaven. Can fathers reproduce themselves all by themselves? And then we have this glorious song, “O My Father.” Do you remember those words?

*In the heavens are parents single?
No; the thought makes reason stare!
Truth is reason, truth eternal
Tells me I’ve a mother there.*

And then President Smith goes on in his book:

Latter-day Saints believe not only that we have a Father in heaven but also a Mother there. Why not have a mother as well as a father? Is there any blasphemy in this teaching?

And there isn’t. It’s merely a statement of fact, because in the heavens parents are not single. “Truth is reason, truth eternal tells me I’ve a mother there.”

And so everyone of us is a child of God. That’s why we teach this doctrine, even to our little children. That’s why our Primary children sing “I Am a Child of God.” Do you know that song? How many of you know “I Am a Child of God”? Will you sing it with me, the one verse? Will you? Let’s go; I’ll pitch it for you. [Song; audience participating:]

*I am a child of God,
And he has sent me here,
Has given me an earthly home
With parents kind and dear.
Lead me, guide me, walk beside me,
Help me find the way.
Teach me all that I must do
To live with him someday.*

What a wonderful chorus. I enjoyed hearing you sing that. Being a child of God gives us a great opportunity, doesn’t it? It means that we can become like him and then live with him eternally if we will but follow his rules. This is

what Jesus taught, isn’t it? Wasn’t this the meaning that Jesus had in mind when he said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48)? And that’s our goal and our objective, and that’s what we all hope to do.

Distractions

But there are many distractions, aren’t there? Always there have been distractions, all down through the years. Do you remember the biblical account of the time of Samuel the prophet? Samuel was doing his best to preserve the kind of government among ancient Israel that God had given them, but these Israelites were looking around at the various other nations. They became jealous of these other nations, and a very foolish thought came into their minds: they wanted to become like all the other nations. So they came to Samuel and said, “Give us a king, that we may be like all the other nations” (see 1 Samuel 8:5–20). And when finally Samuel gave in and they did become like all the other nations, they became like all the other nations also in that they turned their backs on God, and they descended into slavery.

Whenever we reject the commandments we reject God to that extent, and that is a lesson that everyone of us must learn and understand. When we turn our backs upon the commandments, we turn our backs upon God. Can we afford it?

We can reject him by wanting to do as all the nations, or by being so stubborn in our own conceits that we will not listen to the still, small voice. No wonder Isaiah said, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6). Or we may be ashamed of our standards, since popularity means to be like all the nations.

Do you remember the story of Lehi’s dream? Do you remember the iron rod? And do you remember that the people were holding to the iron rod because it led them up to

salvation? But across the river were the people of the world, and they were laughing at these faithful souls holding to the iron rod, and pointed the finger of scorn at them. And many of these faithful became ashamed, because the worldly people were making fun of them and pointing their finger at them; so they let go of the iron rod and were lost.

Being ashamed of our religion puts us on the road to ruin and destruction. If we are ashamed of righteousness and godliness, then we turn to evil and all that it brings with it. Oh, if everyone of us could but remember the lesson of Lehi's dream of the iron rod. That "Iron Rod" used to be in our hymnbooks. I believe it's in the junior hymnbook now. Do you know this song, "The Iron Rod"? The chorus goes,

*Hold to the rod, the iron rod;
'Tis strong, and bright, and true;
The iron rod is the word of God,
'Twill safely guide us through.*

Do you know that? Do you know the chorus? How many of you know that? Do you? Well, then we can sing that one too, can't we? Just the chorus only. "Hold to the rod," it starts.

[*Song; audience participating.*]

Great, you're wonderful singers.

The Tyranny of an Unproven Theory

There has developed in recent years what almost amounts to a cult in certain fields. This is a cult which also points the finger of scorn at believers and would seek to make us ashamed of our faith. It is one which would have us reject the doctrine of a special creation and accept the unproven but time-worn theory that all life evolved from lower forms, that worms and microbes were our ancestors, and not God. It teaches that God is not our father, but that our first progenitors were microscopic forms which came into existence spontaneously, without cause, without reason, and without purpose. According to this theory of

primordial life, man at one time developed from an ancestor which, as one writer described him, was "a hairy, four-legged beast which had a tail and pointed ears and lived in trees." I ask you, which requires more faith, to believe that God is our father, or that some monkey-like ape gave us birth? And which would you rather have as your father, a creeping ape or Almighty God?

Our religion tells us that God is our Father. Some so-called intellectuals who point the finger at religion have become so domineering in their attitude toward those who do not believe their ghastly theories that they assume an attitude almost approaching tyranny. In some circles it has become persecution. So severe it is among some that one researcher, Dr. Thomas Dwight, was led to say,

The tyranny in the matter of evolution is overwhelming to a degree of which no outsider has any idea. How very few leaders in the field of science dare to tell the truth as to the state of their own minds. How many of them feel themselves forced in public to do lip service to a cult that they do not believe in.

But how glad we are for such men as Dr. Joseph W. Barker, former dean at Columbia University. In an address some time ago that he gave at Ripon University, he said that "some scientists have been misled by certain of their observations, and, as a result, came to conclusions which were atheistic." But now he says, and I quote him:

Even the most pragmatic materialist in the face of present-day scientific knowledge is led to the inevitable conclusion that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows of his handiwork. As the children of Israel foreswore the worship of the golden calf and returned to that faith of Jehovah, so we have foresworn the crass mechanistic materialism and returned to that faith in God of

which the psalmist of old sang, "The earth is the Lord's. . . and they that dwell therein."

So spoke Dr. Barker.

Yes, our religion tells us that God is our Father, and that we lived with him before we were born on this earth. It tells us further that every creature, microscopic and otherwise, was made by him before it lived here on the earth, and also that each one was made as a spirit before it was made in the flesh here in mortality. There were two creations, one in which God made all things in the spirit. That is, he made the real life, the real being, as a spirit, in the first creation. And then, in the second creation, he provided these mortal tabernacles in which he placed these spirits that he had created in the preexistence.

I hope you read the scriptures on this. Moses, in the book of Moses, was very specific on this subject, and I'd like to read to you what Moses had to say.

And now, behold, I say unto you, that these are the generations of the heaven and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that I, the Lord God, made the heaven and the earth;

And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. . . . in heaven created I them; and there was not yet flesh upon the earth, neither in the water, neither in the air. [Moses 3:4–5]

They're significant words, aren't they? He made all life in heaven, making them spirits, which were the real persons—or the real creatures, or whatever they were. He made them all as individual persons—or creatures, as the case may be—and they were in the spiritual creation. Then he created the mortal part of life, this earth and all mortality. But at the time he made the spirits there was no flesh, Moses says, "upon the earth, neither in the water,

neither in the air" (Moses 3:5). He hadn't even sent them here.

And then another very interesting thing in the second chapter of Moses: he says that when he did place them here on the earth, he placed within each one the seed, of reproduction with the power to reproduce after its own kind. Well, he gave human beings the power to reproduce, didn't he? We have within ourselves the seed to reproduce, but what do we reproduce? We reproduce after our own kind, don't we? The only reproduction among human beings is more human beings, isn't that right? Whoever heard of a human being bringing forth a horse or a cow or—well, excuse me for being ridiculous, but it's to the point, isn't it? Human beings can reproduce only human beings. And he put this seed in animals, likewise, so that animals can reproduce only after their own kind. So dogs will only reproduce dogs, and never cats or polliwogs. They will only reproduce after themselves. The same is true in vegetable life. An apple will only bring forth an apple, and it will not bring forth a cucumber. Now, I'm being a little extreme, but I think you get the point. God placed in everyone of his creations, as it says here in Moses 2, the seed within itself to reproduce after its own kind.

Of course it was a great discovery when the scientists discovered genes, the genes which keep the species true. And who made the genes? It was this same God, our Eternal Father, who decreed in the first place that everything would reproduce only after its own kind. Genesis sustains the Book of Moses in this, and it also says that every plant was made "before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew," and so on (Genesis 2:5). And Genesis is very specific in declaring that all life was to reproduce after its own kind. The sectarian people have a hard time understanding the idea that man is made in the image of God and that God looks like a human being. But I ask you, he having made all these

rules, he having created all things and now reproducing us after his own kind, how could we be other than the exact image and likeness of God? It had to be that way, because we're the offspring of God. And since we are the offspring of God, and since the law is that everything should reproduce after its own kind, and inasmuch as God would not break his own laws, he reproduced after his own kind and thus man looks like God and man is in the image and likeness of God.

It's a very interesting thing to read in section 77 of the Doctrine and Covenants some further information on this same subject. The Prophet Joseph Smith had great difficulty understanding the book of Revelation. The Prophet asked the Lord for some explanations, and in this section 77, certain explanations are made that have to do with this very subject. We learn from this section that in heaven beasts and fowls and creeping things exist as spirits. Then the scripture goes on: "That which is spiritual being in the likeness of that which is temporal; and that which is temporal in the likeness of that which is spiritual" (D&C 77:2). So you see, the body matches the spirit, and the spirit was made in the preexistence, so that the body that's made here fits the spirit that was made in the preexistence. Then notice this next part of this little section: "The spirit of man in the likeness of his person, as also the spirit of the beast and every other creature which God has created" (D&C 77:2). Isn't that a marvelous and an interesting scripture? Lots of people don't read that, but this is one of the most significant things in the Doctrine and Covenants, in my humble opinion. So in heaven God created the spirits of all forms of life as they appear in mortality, the mortal form being in the likeness of the spirit, with mankind being God's own offspring, his literal children, having the full capability of becoming like him.

And this brings us back to Paul's expression that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. We have inherited, by reason of our

divine birth, the capability of sometime becoming like God. And that's why there's good sense in the Savior's commandment, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Man, then, was always man, because he was made that way in the preexistence. Cows were always cows and horses were always horses, because they were made that way in the preexistence, when first they were made as spirits before they were tabernacled in flesh, since all things were made spiritually before they were temporally in the earth. Then trees were always trees, corn was always corn, cats were always cats, because they were made that way in the preexistence. Now I ask you, if God were not our father, literally, why would the Savior teach us to pray as he did in the Lord's prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven?" Would he deceive us? And why, after the resurrection, would he say to Mary, "I ascend unto my Father, and to your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17)? If it were not so, why would he have said a thing like that? Our whole religion, you see, is based upon the concept that God is our Father.

You believe in our Articles of Faith. One of them says, "We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression." Do you believe there was an Adam, described in the scripture as the first man? Do you believe there was such a thing as Adam's transgression, sometimes called the Fall? Now I ask you, can you believe in Adam and in Darwinian evolution at the same time? Our religion teaches that there was no death in the world before the Fall. Do you believe that? And if you do, how can you accept Darwinism, which says there was death before Adam—or before the first human being, as some will accept it? This then becomes one of the great hurdles for LDS anthropologists, doesn't it?

According to our doctrine, the fall of Adam and the process of death are inseparable. Death and Adam are inseparable; death and the

resurrection are inseparable; the fall of Adam and the atonement of Christ are inseparable; Adam and Christ are inseparable. If there was no Adam, there was no fall. If there was no fall of Adam there was no atonement by Christ. If there was no atonement by Christ our religion is in vain, for if there was no Adam, there was no Christ either. If there is no Christ, where are we? Are you ready to reject your inspired religion, your faith in God and Christ, to accept the questionable philosophy that may be thrust upon you by some unbelieving, even atheistic, professor of an unproved hypothesis? This is certainly a case in point where we must do as Joshua of old said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15).

One of our local newspapers ran this editorial that I'd like to read to you:

A midwestern newspaper, in its editorial columns, defined the origin of language and said that primitive man was able to communicate only through facial expressions and bodily movements. It claimed that the spoken language came much later and was part of man's evolution to his present state. This, of course, is in line with other false hypotheses being foisted upon an unwary public, many of whom are willing to believe that if we developed from lower forms of life, we also had to develop language from lower forms. They say we learned to speak as we also learned to stand erect or to think, hunt, and eventually cultivate the ground. But how foolish is this notion in the light of revelation. The first man, Adam, could speak eloquently. He could write. He could talk, not only with other men but with God, who was his teacher, who likewise gave him his language and his intelligence. The earliest men, according to the scriptures, kept books of remembrance, and they wrote the scriptures themselves, under inspiration from the Almighty. Has there ever been more beautiful language than is found in the scriptures? Has any writing been as uplifting and enduring? Language did not evolve from lowly origins. It was beautiful to begin with. It suffered from the same retrogression that centuries ago made

cavemen out of intelligent beings and turned pure religion into superstition, as early men apostatized from God.

Witnesses for Christ

The apostle Paul dealt with this subject to some extent, as you know, and he had to fight for the principle that there was a resurrection, that there was an Adam, and that there was a Christ who came forth from the grave and atoned for Adam's sin. Paul was one of the great witnesses of Christ anciently. We have many witnesses for Christ today. I am one of them, and I humbly stand before you as one of his witnesses. Today I join with the apostle Paul and give you my testimony in Paul's words, so that Paul and I bear you the same testimony as it is recorded in 1 Corinthians 15:

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. [Vv. 12–17]

Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? [V. 29]

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. [Vv. 20–22]

And then Paul continues, speaking first of the first man, Adam, who he says was a living

soul. Then he testifies again of the fact of the resurrection and says that

flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. . . .

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

. . . Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . .

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brethren [and tonight, since it's also my testimony, I add sisters as well], be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. [1 Corinthians 15:50, 53–55, 57–58]

Let us realize this great fact, that God reproduced himself and gave us birth to give us the opportunity of sometime becoming like him, and he provides the means, which is the gospel of Christ, to help us to become like him. It was not an idle statement, quoted by President Lorenzo Snow, that “as man is, God once was, and as God is, man may become.” That is why Jesus commanded us to become perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. For this reason we must follow his way of life, his plan of development, the only plan which will permit us to reach this goal. This is why we must not allow ourselves to become like all the nations, as the ancient Israelites desired. That is why we must not be like the world, even though we live in the world. That is why the apostle Peter declared that we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and holy nation, a peculiar people, that we might indeed become like God our Father.

President Tanner of the First Presidency is one of our great teachers of latter days. One of the principles that he keeps fresh in our minds he attributes to President David O. McKay: “Remember who you are, and act accordingly.” Then who are we? We are the children of God.

Do you believe it? Will you say it with me?

[*Audience: We are the children of God.*] That was kind of half-hearted, wasn't it? Can't you do better? [*Audience: We are the children of God.*] Then shall we be ashamed of this fact? [*Audience: No.*] Then shall we serve him? [*Audience: Yes.*] Shall the youth of Zion falter in defending truth and right? [*Audience: No.*]

When I was here last time, I gave you a little bit of verse that I'd like you to say again with me. You remembered it very well before. It was a little verse that I learned when I was a young missionary. It goes like this:

Dare to be a Mormon;

Dare to stand alone;

Dare to have a purpose firm;

Dare to make it known.

Let me say the first two lines, and then will you say them with me? [*Audience participation.*]

Let's say the whole thing now, shall we, the four lines? Ready. [*Audience participation.*]

Thank you.

I bear you solemn testimony tonight, my brothers and sisters, that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is true. By all that I hold sacred, I testify to you that God indeed is our Father, that we are the offspring of God, that he's the father of our spirits, and that we can become like him. By all that I hold sacred I testify to you that Jesus Christ lives, that he is the Savior of the world, and that he will save everyone of us if we will but allow him to. He has given us the gospel. If we will live it, if we will be clean and pure in our private lives, if we will have faith, if we will have believing hearts, if we will follow the prophet of God who stands at the head of this church, Jesus will bring us back into his presence and make it fully possible that we can become perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. And to this I humbly and solemnly testify, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.