

Sons and Daughters of God

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Zanakalahy sy zanakavavin' Andriamanitra

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Ao amin'ny Fitopololahy

October 2024 general conference

We truly believe that we are all literally the children of God, and because of that, we have the potential to become like Him.

Today I would like to address one of the most joyful, glorious, and powerful gospel truths that God has revealed. At the same time, it is ironically one for which we have been criticized. An experience I had some years ago profoundly deepened my appreciation for this gospel truth.

As a representative of the Church, I was once invited to a religious conference where it was announced that from that moment on they would recognize as valid all baptisms performed by almost all other Christian churches, as long as the ordinance was done with water and in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Then it was explained that this policy did not apply to baptisms performed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

After the conference I was able to delve deeper into the reasons for that exception with the leader in charge of the announcement. We had a wonderful and insightful conversation.

In short, he explained to me that that exception had primarily to do with our particular beliefs about the Godhead, which other Christian denominations often refer to as the Trinity. I expressed my appreciation for him taking the time to explain to me his beliefs and the policy

Mino marina tokoa isika fa isika rehetra dia zanak' Andriamanitra ara-bakiteny, ary manana fahafahana ny ho tonga tahaka Azy isika noho izany antony izany.

Anio aho dia te hiresaka momba ny iray amin'ireo fahamarinana ao amin'ny filazantsara izay mitondra fifaliana sy be voninahitra ary mahery vaika indrindra izay nambaran' Andriamanitra. Etsy andanin'izany anefa dia mahatsikaiky fa iray amin'ireo zavatra nitsikerana antsika matetika izany. Nampitombo lalina ny fankasitra-hako an'io fahamarinana ao amin'ny filazantsara io ny zavatra niainako taona vitsivitsy lasa izay.

Tamin'ny naha-solontenan'ny Fiangonana ahy, dia nasaina nanatrika fihaonambe ara-pinoana iray aho indray mandeha, izay nanambarana fa nanomboka tamin'izay fotoana izay dia neken'izy ireo ho manan-kery ny batisa rehetra izay saika ataon'ny fiangonana Kristiana hafa rehetra, raha toa ka natao tamin'ny rano sy tamin'ny anaran'ny Ray sy ny Zanaka ary ny Fanahy Masina ilay ôrdônansy. Avy eo dia nohazavaina fa io fitsipika io dia tsy mihatra amin'ny batisa izay ataon' Ny Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy ho an'ny Olomasin'ny Andro Farany.

Taorian'ilay fihaonambe dia afaka nandini-ka lalindalina kokoa ny anton'izany fanavahana izany niaraka tamin'ilay mpitarika niandraikitra an'ilay filazana aho. Nahafinaritra sy nitondra hevi-baovao tsara ny resakay.

Raha atao amin'ny teny fohy dia nohazavainy tamiko fa izany fanavahana izany dia mifandray indrindra amin'ny finoantsika manokana momba Ny Andriamanitra, izay antsoin'ny antokom-pinoana Kristiana hafa hoe ny Trinité. Naneho fankasitrahana azy aho noho izy nanokana fotoa-

of his church. At the end of our conversation, we hugged and then said goodbye.

As I later contemplated our discussion, what this leader said about Latter-day Saints not understanding what he called the “mystery of the Trinity” stayed in my mind. What was he referring to? Well, it had to do with our understanding of the nature of God. We believe that God the Father “is an exalted man” with a glorified “body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; [and] the Son also.” Thus, every time we talk about the nature of God, in some way, somehow, we are also talking about our own nature.

And this is true not only because we all were made “in [His] image, after [His] likeness,” but also because, as the Psalmist recorded, God said, “Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.” This is for us a precious doctrine now recovered with the advent of the Restoration. In summary, it is nothing more or less than what our missionaries teach as the first lesson, first paragraph, first line: “God is our Heavenly Father, and we are His children.”

Now, you might say, “But many people believe we are children of God.” Yes, that is true, but their understanding may be a little different from the implication of its deeper meaning that we affirm. For Latter-day Saints, this teaching is not metaphorical. Rather, we truly believe that we are all literally the children of God. He is “the Father of [our] spirits,” and because of that, we have the potential to become like Him, which seems to be inconceivable to some.

It has now been over 200 years since the First Vision opened the doors to the Restoration. At the time, young Joseph Smith sought guidance from heaven to know what church to join. Through the revelation he received that day, and in later revelations given to him, the Prophet Joseph obtained knowledge about the nature of God and our relationship to Him as His children.

na hanazavana amiko ireo zavatra inoany sy ny fitsipiky ny fiangonany. Nifamihina izahay rehefa tapitra ny resakay ary nifanao veloma.

Rehefa nisaintsaina ny fifanakalozan-kevitray aho taty aoriana dia niraikitra tao an-tsaiko ny zavatra nolazain’ity mpitarika ity momba ny tsy fahatakarany Olomasin’ny Andro Farany an’izay nantsoiny hoe ny “misterin’ny Trinité” izay. Inona no tiany nolazaina? Eny, nisy ifandraisany tamin’ny fahatakarantsika ny toetoetran’ Andriamanitra izany. Mino isika fa Andriamanitra Ray dia “lehilahy efa nahazo fisandratana” manana “vatana nofo sy taolana be voninahitra azo tsapain-tanana toy ny an’ny olona; [ary] ny Zanaka koa.” Noho izany isaky ny miresaka momba ny toetoetran’ Andriamanitra isika, amin’ny lafiny iray, dia toa miresaka momba ny toetoetrantsika manokana ihany koa.

Ary marina izany satria tsy hoe isika rehetra dia natao “tahaka ny endri[ny], araka ny tarehi[ny]” fotsiny, fa satria koa, araka ny nosoratan’ny mpanao Salamo, dia nilaza Andriamanitra hoe: “Andriamanitra hianareo; ary zanaky ny Avo indrindra hianareo rehetra.” Fotopampianarana sarobidy ho antsika izany izay tafaverina niaraka tamin’ny fahatongavan’ny Famerenana amin’ny laoniny. Raha fintinina dia tsy mihoatra na latsaky ny zavatra ampianarin’ny misiônerantsika amin’ny lesona voalohany, andiam-pehezan-teny voalohany, andalana voalohany izany, izay manao hoe: “Andriamanitra no Raintsika any An-danitra ary zanany isika.”

Mety hilaza ianao izao “fa olona maro no mino fa zanak’ Andriamanitra isika.” Eny, marina izany, saingy ny fahatakarany izy ireo dia mety ho hafa kely amin’ny vokatry ny heviny lalina kokoa izay hamafisintsika. Ho an’ny Olomasin’ny Andro Farany, ity fampianarana ity dia tsy fanoharana. Mino kosa isika fa tena zanak’ Andriamanitra ara-bakiteny isika rehetra. Izy no “Rain’ny fana-hin[tsika],” ary noho izany dia manana fahafahana ho tonga tahaka Azy isika, izay toa tsy eken’ny sain’ny sasany.

Efa 200 taona mahery izao no nanokafan’ny Fahitana Voalohany ny varavaran’ny Famerenana amin’ny laoniny. Tamin’izany fotoana izany dia nikatsaka fitarihana avy any an-danitra i Joseph Smith izay mbola tanora mba hahafantarana izay fiangonana hidirana ho mpikambana. Tamin’ny alalan’ny fanambarana azony tamin’izany andro izany, sy tamin’ireo fanambarana taty aoriana nomena azy, dia nahazo fahalalana momba ny

Because of that, we learn more clearly that our Heavenly Father has taught this precious doctrine from the very beginning. Allow me to cite at least two accounts from the scriptures to illustrate this.

You might remember God's instructions to Moses as recorded in the Pearl of Great Price.

We read that "God spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name." In other words, Moses, I want you to know who I am. Then He added, "And, behold, thou art my son." Later he said, "And I have a work for thee, Moses, my son; and thou art in the similitude of mine Only Begotten." And then finally, He ended with, "And now, behold, this one thing I show unto thee, Moses, my son."

It appears that God was determined to teach Moses at least one lesson: "You are my child," which He repeated at least three times. He could not even mention the name of Moses without immediately adding that he was His son.

However, after Moses was left alone, he felt weak because he was no longer in the presence of God. That is when Satan came to tempt him. Can you see a pattern here? The first thing he said was, "Moses, son of man, worship me."

In this context, Satan's request to worship him may have been only a distraction. A significant temptation for Moses in that moment of weakness was to become confused and believe that he was only a "son of man," rather than a child of God.

"And it came to pass that Moses looked upon Satan and said: Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten." Fortunately, Moses was not confused and did not allow himself to become distracted. He had learned the lesson of who he really was.

The next account is found in Matthew 4. Scholars have entitled this "the three temptations

toetoetran' Andriamanitra sy ny fifandraisantsika Aminy amin'ny maha-zanany antsika ny Mpaminany Joseph.

Noho izany dia mianatra mazava kokoa isika fa ny Raintsika any An-danitra dia nampianatra io fotopampianarana sarobidy io hatrany am-piandohana. Mamelà ahy hilaza tantara roa, farafahakeliny, avy ao amin'ny soratra masina mba hanehoana izany.

Mety ho tsaroanareo ny torolalan' Andriamanitra ho an'i Mosesy izay voarakitra ao amin'ny Voahangy Lafo Vidy.

Mamaky isika fa "niteny tamin'i Mosesy Andriamanitra, nanao hoe: Indro, Izaho no Tompo Andriamanitra Tsitoha ary Tsisy Fiafarana no anarako." Raha lazaina amin'ny teny hafa, ry Mosesy, tiako ho fantatrao hoe iza aho. Avy eo dia nampiany hoe: "Ary indro, zanakalahiko ianao." Taty aoriana dia nilaza Izy: "Ary manana asa ho anao Aho ry Mosesy zanakalahiko; ary ianao dia natao araka ny endriky ny Zanaka Lahitokako." Ary farany dia nilaza Izy hoe, "Ary ankehitriny indro, izao zavatra iray izao no asehoko anaory Mosesy zanakalahiko."

Mibaribary fa tapa-kevitra Andriamanitra ny hampianatra an'i Mosesy farafaharatsiny lesona anankiray: "Zanako ianao", izay naveriny intelo, farafahakeliny. Tsy mba nanonona ny anaran'i Mosesy akory Izy raha tsy nampiany avy hatrany fa zanany izy.

Na izany aza anefa, nony navela ho irery i Mosesy, dia nahatsiaro ho osa izy satria tsy teo anatrehan' Andriamanitra intsony. Tamin'izay fotoana izay i Satana no tonga naka fanahy azy. Mahita lamina iray ve ianareo eto? Ny zavatra voalohany nolazainy dia hoe, "Ry Mosesy, zanakolona, miderà ahy."

Amin'io toe-javatra io, ny fangatahan'i Satana hidera azy dia mety ho fandrebirebena fotsiny. Ny fakam-panahy lehibe iray ho an'i Mosesy tamin'io fotoanan'ny fahalemena io dia ny ho lasa hisavoritaka sy ny hino fa "zanakolona" fotsiny ihany izy fa tsy zanak' Andriamanitra.

"Ary ny zava-nitranga dia nijery an'i Satana i Mosesy ary nanao hoe: Iza moa ianao? Fa indro, izaho dia zanak' Andriamanitra, manahaka ny endriky ny Zanaka Lahitokany." Soa ihany fa tsy nisavorovoro i Mosesy ary tsy namela ny tenany ho voarebireby. Nandray lesona izy momba ny hoe iza marina moa izy.

Hita ao amin'ny Matio 4 ny tantara manaraka. Nantsoin'ny avara-pianarana hoe "ireo

of Jesus,” as if the Lord was tempted only three times, which of course is not the case.

Hundreds of gallons of ink have been used to explain the meaning and content of these temptations. As we know, the chapter begins by explaining that Jesus had gone into the desert, “and when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.”

Satan’s first temptation apparently had only to do with satisfying the Lord’s physical needs. “Command that these stones be made bread,” he challenged the Savior.

A second enticement may have had to do with tempting God: “Cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee.”

Finally, Satan’s third temptation referred to the aspirations and glory of the world. After Jesus had been shown “all the kingdoms of the world, ... [Satan] saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”

In truth, Satan’s ultimate temptation may have had less to do with those three specific provocations and more to do with tempting Jesus Christ to question His divine nature. At least twice, the enticement was preceded by the challenging accusation from Satan: “If thou be the Son of God”—if you really believe it, then do this or that.

Please notice what had happened immediately before Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray: we find the account of Christ’s baptism. And when He had come out of the water, there came “a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Do we see the connection? Can we recognize a pattern here?

It is no wonder that every time we are taught about our divine nature and destiny, the adversary of all righteousness tempts us to call them into question.

How different our decisions would be if we really knew who we really are.

fakam-panahy telon’i Jesoa” izany, toy ireny hoe in-telo ihany ny Tompontsika no nalaina fanahy, izay mazava ho azy tsy izay mihitsy ilay izy.

Ranomainty an-jato litatra maro no nampiasaina hanazavana ny dikany sy ny votoatin’ireo fakam-panahy ireo. Araka ny fantatsika, ilay toko dia manomboka amin’ny fanazavana fa nankany an’efitra i Jesoa: “ary nifady hanina efapolo andro sy efapolo alina Izy, koa nony afaka izany, dia noana.”

Hita taratra fa ny fakam-panahy voalohany nataon’i Satana dia nifandray tamin’ny fanomezana fahafaham-po ny filan’ny Tompo ara-batana ihany. “Teneno ho tonga mofo ireto vato ireto,” hoy izy naninana ny Tompo.

Ny fitaomana faharoa dia mety ho nisy ifandraisany tamin’ny fakana fanahy an’ Andriamanitra: “Mianjerà any ambany any: fa voasoratra hoe: Izy handidy ny anjeliny ny aminao.”

Farany, ny fakam-panahy fahatelo nataon’i Satana dia momba ny faniriana sy ny voninahitr’izao tontolo izao. Rehefa avy naseho an’i Jesoa “ny fanjakana rehetra amin’izao tontolo izao, ... dia nanao taminy hoe [i Satana]: izao rehetra izao dia homeko Anao, raha hiankohoka eto anatrehako Hianao.”

Raha ny marina, ny fakam-panahy faratampony nataon’i Satana dia mety tsy dia nisy ifandraisany loatra tamin’ireo fihantsiana manokana telo ireo fa niompana kokoa tamin’ny fakana fanahy an’i Jesoa Kristy mbahanana fanahiana momba ny maha-Andriamanitra Azy. Farafahakeliny indroa ilay fakana fanahy no natombok’i Satana tamin’ny hoe “Raha Zanak’ Andriamanitra Ianao”—raha tena mino izany ianao dia ataovy izao na izao.

Mariho ny zavatra nitranga avy hatrany talohan’ny nandehanan’i Jesoa tany an’efitra mba hifady hanina sy hivavaka: hitantsika ny tantaran’ny batisan’i Kristy. Dia niakatra avy hatrany avy teo amin’ny rano Izy, ary indro “reny ny feo avy tany an-danitra nanao hoe: Ity no Zanako malalakoizay ao Aminy no tena sitrako.”

Hitantsika ve ny fifandraisany? Afaka miaiky fisiana lamina iray ve isika eto?

Tsy mahagaga raha isaky ny ampianarina momba ny toetra maha-Andriamanitra antsika sy ny anjarantsika masina isika, dia maka fanahy antsika ny fahavalon’ny fahamarinana rehetra mba hampisalasala antsika ny amin’izany.

Ho hafa mihitsy ny fanapahan-kevitra no raisintsika raha tena fantatsika hoe iza marina

We live in a challenging world, a world of increasing commotion, where honorable people strive to at least emphasize our human dignity, while we belong to a church and embrace a gospel that lift our vision and invite us into the divine.

Jesus's commandment to be "perfect, even as [our] Father which is in heaven is perfect" is a clear reflection of His high expectations and our eternal possibilities. Now, none of this will happen overnight. In the words of President Jeffrey R. Holland, it will happen "eventually." But the promise is that if we "come unto Christ," we will "be perfected in him." That requires a lot of work—not just any work, but a divine work. His work!

Now, the good news is that it is precisely our Father in Heaven who has said, "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."

President Russell M. Nelson's invitation to "think celestial" implies a wonderful reminder of our divine nature, origin, and potential destination. We can obtain the celestial only through Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice.

Perhaps that is why Satan enticed Jesus with the very same temptation from the beginning to the end of His earthly ministry. Matthew recorded that while Jesus hung on the cross, those "that passed by reviled him, ... saying, ... If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Glory be to God that He did not hearken but instead provided the way for us to receive all celestial blessings.

Let us always remember, there was a great price paid for our happiness.

I testify as with the Apostle Paul that "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." In the name of Jesus

isika.

Miaina ao anatina tontolo feno fanamby isika, tontolo misy korontana tsy mitsahatra mitombo, izay ahitana olona manan-kaja miezaka mba hanantitrantitra farafaharatsiny ny fahamendrehantsika amin'ny maha-olombelona, raha etsy ankilany isika dia mpikambana amina fiangonana iray ary mandray ny filazantsara izay manandratra ny fomba fijerintsika sy manasa antsika ho any amin'ilay masina.

Ny didin'i Jesoa mba "ho tanteraka toy ny fahatanterahan'ny Rai[ntsika] izay any an-danitra" dia taratra mazavan'ny fanantenany avo dia avo sy ny fahafahana ao amintsika mandrakizay. Noho izany, tsy hitranga izany androany sy rahampitso. Araka ny tenin'ny Filoha Jeffrey R. Holland dia hitranga izany "amin'ny farany." Saingy ny fampanantenana dia hoe: raha "manatona an'i Kristy" isika dia "hatao tanteraka ao Aminy." Mitaky asa be dia be izany—tsy asa toy ny mahazatra fotsiny, fa asa masina. Asany!

Fa izao, ny vaovao mahafaly dia ny Raintsika any An-danitra mihitsy no nanambara hoe: "Fa indro, izao noasakosy voninahitra—dia ny manatanteraka ny tsy fahafatesana sy ny fiainana mandrakizain'ny olona."

Ny fanasan'ny Filoha Nelson mba "[hisaina] amin'ny fomba selestialy" dia midika fampahatsiahivana mahafinaritra momba ny toetra masina sy ny fiavantsika masina ary ny toerana masina azontsika haleha. Amin'ny alalan'ny sorompanavotan'i Jesoa Kristy ihany no ahafahantsika mahazo ny selestialy.

Angamba izany no nahatonga an'i Satana nitaona an'i Jesoa tamin'ny fakam-panahy tena mitovy hatrany am-piandohana ka hatramin'ny faran'ny fanompoany teto an-tany. Noraketin'i Matio fa raha mbola nihantona teo amin'ny hazofijaliana i Jesoa dia "niteny ratsy Azy ireo izay nandalo, ... nanao hoe, ... Raha Zanak' Andriamanitra Hianao, midina hiala amin'ny hazofijaliana." Voninahitra anie ho an' Andriamanitra fa tsy nihaino Izy fa nanome ny lalana ahafahantsika mahazo ny fitahiana selestialy rehetra.

Aoka hotsaroantsika mandrakariva fa nisy sarany lehibe naloa ho an'ny fahasambarantsika.

Mijoro ho vavolombelona toy ny miaraka amin'ny Apôstôly Paoly aho fa "ny Fanahy dia miara-milaza amin'ny fanahintsika fa zanak' Andriamanitra isika: Ary raha zanaka, dia mpan-dova; eny, sady mpandova an' Andriamanitra no mpiray lova amin'i Kristy koa; raha miara-miar-

Christ, amen.

itra aminy isika mba hira-manam-boninahitra
amin'ny anaran'i Jesoa Kristy, amena.