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*“In Him All Things Hold Together”*

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# “In Him All Things Hold Together”

NEAL A. MAXWELL

I wish to talk about your unfinished journey. It is the journey of journeys and will be described quite differently this Easter night. It is an arduous journey. The trek awaits—whether one is rich or poor, short or tall, thin or fat, black or white or brown, old or young, shy or bold, married or single, a prodigal or an ever faithful. Compared to this journey, all other treks are but a brief walk in a mortal park or are merely time on a telestial treadmill.

## **Becoming Men and Women of Christ**

Your journey is embodied in an invitation from the resurrected Lord, who himself inquired, “What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be?” Then he directed, “Verily I say unto you, *even as I am*” (3 Nephi 27:27; emphasis added). Making this journey qualifies us eventually as the men and women of Christ.

Confirming this developmental goal, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “If you wish to go where God is, you must be like God, or possess the principles which God possesses” (*Teachings*, p. 216). Peter, likewise, spoke of the manner of persons we ought to be in all godliness (see 2 Peter 3:11).

The scriptures provide the road map for this journey because it is the word of God that

will lead the men and women of Christ in a straight and narrow course and land their immortal souls at the right hand of God (see Helaman 3:29–30).

Jesus, our guide and model, had a perfect guide and model himself:

*Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. [John 5:19]*

Just what Jesus saw “the Father do,” including premortally, we do not know, but Jesus was the perfect pupil and he had a Perfect Teacher!

Each of us is at a particular point in the journey, having “come thus far.” However, if we are deflected from this journey, we will, instead, become estranged from Christ:

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*Neal A. Maxwell 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 31 March 1991.*

*For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?* [Mosiah 5:13]

If we are not *servi*ng Jesus, and if he is not in our *thoughts* and *hearts*, then the things of the world will draw us instead to them! Moreover, the things of the world need not be sinister in order to be diverting and consuming.

For the serious disciple, the cardinal attributes exemplified by Jesus are not optional. These developmental milestones take the form of traits, traits that mark the trail to be traveled. After all, should not Latter-day Saints have a special interest in what is required to become a Saint, virtue by virtue and quality by quality? Hear the words of King Benjamin:

*And becometh a saint . . . submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him.* [Mosiah 3:19; emphasis added]

These attributes are *eternal* and *portable*! Being portable, to the degree developed, they will go with us through the veil of death, and still later they will rise with us in the Resurrection when all else stays behind. Meanwhile, so much of our time is ironically devoted to learning and marketing perishable skills that will soon become obsolete. It isn't just the morticians who will have a vocational crisis in the next world, brother and sisters. Please note several additions to these key qualities:

*And now I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; being temperate in all things.* [Alma 7:23; emphasis added]

Unsurprisingly, the disciple's way of using power and authority will reflect these same qualities, for he is to lead by *persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, love unfeigned, and*

*kindness* (see D&C 121:41–42). Such should be our leadership style. It is certainly Jesus'!

Numerous other scriptures describe the same, small cluster of spiritual qualities that the men and women of Christ are to strive to achieve in their lives. When significantly developed, these qualities will convey the added "authority of example"! When you and I have seen that authority, we are filled with admiration for it.

Since Christ also declared, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15), clear and specific obligations clearly rest upon us, especially when we ponder this next commandment, which, if we love him, we will strive to keep: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

The Greek rendering for "perfect" is, by the way, "complete, finished, fully developed." After his atonement and resurrection, Jesus included himself as our pattern. "Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (3 Nephi 12:48). One of the problems we have in the Church is that we consider perfection in abstraction, and it becomes too intimidating. But when we think of it in terms of the specific, cardinal attributes, and we strive to develop these in a steady process of self-improvement, it is quite a different matter.

Ponder this ancient self-description with its focus on attributes:

*And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.* [Exodus 34:6; emphasis added]

When Jesus visited his hometown, the people wondered at his gracious words (see Luke 4:22). What is enjoined upon us is thus very specific. The specific qualities are made clear again and again in the scriptures. So is our need to follow the developmental path:

*For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. [John 13:15]*

*And again, it showeth unto the children of men the straitness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter, he having set the example before them. [2 Nephi 31:9]*

These qualities are not only developmental destinations, but, meanwhile, if developed significantly, they also provide us with the balance urgently needed for traveling on the demanding narrow path! It is so easy to fall off one side or the other!

The divine direction is clear: “Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you” (3 Nephi 18:16).

Too often when we seek to excuse ourselves, it is, ironically, “the natural man” we are excusing. Yet scriptures inform us “the natural man” is to be “put off” (see Mosiah 3:19). “He” certainly should not be “kept on” because of a mistaken sense that the natural man constitutes our individuality.

In this process, substance and style interplay constantly—more than we realize! How, for instance, can we be like the Father and Son if we are poor listeners? How can we become “even as [Jesus] is” if we are impatient or proud?

The gospel gives proportion as to both substance and style. For example, it is far more important to be morally clean rather than to be a clean-desk individual. Similarly, it is better to “speak the truth in love,” as Paul counsels, than it is to simply speak the truth (see Ephesians 4:15).

These scriptural virtues are intertwined, interactive, and interdependent. We are to be:

1. Meek and humble—not self-concerned, dismissive, proud, seeking ascendancy. Blessed are the meek because they are not easily offended. Besides, those who “shine as lights in the world” have no need to seek the spotlight! (See Philippians 2:15.) The world’s spotlights

are not only fleeting, but they employ inferior light!

2. Patient—not hectic, hurried, pushy.

3. Full of love—not demanding, dominating, manipulative, condescending, or harsh.

4. Gentle—not coarse, brusque, and vindictive.

5. Easily entreated—not unapproachable, inaccessible, and nonlistening.

6. Long-suffering—not impatient, disinterested, curt, easily offended. There are so many people in the Church, brothers and sisters, waiting to be offended. And it doesn’t take long. If one has a chip on his or her shoulder, you can’t make it through the foyer, so to speak, without getting it knocked off.

7. Submissive to God—not resistant to the Spirit, counsel, and life’s lessons.

8. Temperate (self-restrained)—not egoistic, eager for attention and recognition, or too talkative. In your life and mine, the great moments of commendation and correction have come usually in one-liners.

9. Merciful—not judgmental and unforgiving. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall know the caress of causality as their forgiving mercy restores others to wholeness! Though God is perfected in the attributes of justice and mercy, we read that, finally, “Mercy overpowereth justice” (Alma 34:15).

10. Gracious—not tactless, easily irritated, ungenerous.

11. Holy—not worldly.

As we think about the process of becoming the men and women of Christ, questions may naturally arise, such as: “Will all the men and women of Christ be alike in every respect?” “Will there be a loss of individuality?” I think not. For instance, the quality of meekness is clearly essential, but there are many individual ways of expressing meekness. Furthermore, what we now defensively regard as constituting individuality is likely to be significantly refined.

An immense developmental clue is to be found in these next words: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me” (Matthew 11:29). By being yoked, we can best learn of Jesus’ perfected qualities, though only in our comparatively small ways. If we are meek, through our smaller but similar experiences we will come to appreciate Jesus’ perfected qualities even more. Then our *adoration* of him produces a desire for *emulation* of him.

The Prophet Joseph, whose own life was lived in a crescendo of self-improvement amid adversity, observed:

*The nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, [he] arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with Him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment.* [Teachings, p. 51]

The clearer one’s views, the more one sees “things as they really are,” the greater the happiness!

Thus, beyond the free gift of immortality, “working out our salvation” includes “working out” the development of these eternal virtues in our lives!

Given the tremendous importance of these virtues now and in the world to come, should we be surprised if, to hasten the process, the Lord gives us, individually, the relevant and necessary clinical experiences? We do not usually seek these, however. Yet they seem to come, don’t they, even when we do not remember having signed up for a particular course? Sometimes we find ourselves enrolled again in the same course. Apparently we were only auditing before; perhaps this time it can be for credit!

Emerson pleaded, “Give me truths: for I am weary of the surfaces” (“Blight,” in *The*

*Complete Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* [New York: Wm. H. Wise & Co., 1929], p. 874). While amid so much that is inane, and while surrounded by so many little and superficial things, it is only in the bright light of the restored gospel that we can see the truth as to who we really are and what our possibilities are! As Jacob wrote, we not only see things as they really are, but as they really will be (see Jacob 4:13).

The Lord loves each of us too much to merely let us go on being what we now are, for he knows what we have the possibility to become!

It is all part of the journey of going home. Developmentally, we are all prodigals. When we really “come to” ourselves, spiritually, we, too, will say with determination, “I will arise and go to my father” (Luke 15:18).

This true celebration of the risen Lord of Easter, therefore, is one of emulation as well as of adoration for him. Since he is risen from the grave, let us not be dead as to the things of the Spirit! How can we celebrate the empty tomb with empty lives? How can we celebrate his victory over death by being defeated by the world?

### **The Infinite Atonement**

May I now speak further of Jesus, of the Resurrection, and of the Atonement?

Christ’s death and resurrection were specifically foretold in a multitude of scriptures, including this from Isaiah.

*Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. . . . and the earth shall cast out the dead.* [Isaiah 26:19]

Ponder how that prophesy was later dramatically fulfilled as recorded by Matthew:

*And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,*

*And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.* [Matthew 27:52–53]

As signified by Jesus' personal resurrection and the recognition of him by friends, immortality is not merely being one droplet in some floating sea of cosmic consciousness! Resurrection is not being a mere molecule in an unremembering cloud of drifting molecules! His resurrection was personal and recognizable. So will ours be! Did not the resurrected ancients go into Jerusalem and appear unto many?

Oh, how we adore Jesus for his atonement! For his free gift of immortality to all! Consider for a moment, how would we regard Christ without the reality of his atonement and resurrection? How would we regard the Sermon on the Mount without the resurrection of the sermon giver *and* eventually all of us? Without the reality of God's plan of salvation and Jesus' atonement, how could the meek truly inherit the earth? How could the pure in heart really see God? (See Matthew 5.)

No wonder Paul wrote of Christ, "in him all things hold together" (Revised Standard Version, Colossians 1:17). When, collectively or individually, brothers and sisters, things seem to fly apart for us at times, what fitting imagery: "In him all things hold together"! Given the centrality of the doctrine of resurrection, the Restoration has as one of its main purposes to witness not only of Jesus' resurrection, but that of all mankind.

*And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men.* [Moses 7:62]

There are so many ways in which Christ holds all things together. In fact, scriptures further advise, "all things bear record of me" (Moses 6:63).

At Christmastime, for instance, we celebrate a special star that announced Jesus' birth at Bethlehem. Thus, the so-called "little star of Bethlehem" was actually very large in its declaration of divine design! It had to have been placed in its precise orbit long, long before it shone so precisely! Persuasive divine design is underscored in what the Lord has said: "All things must come to pass in their time" (D&C 64:32). His overseeing precision pertains not only to astrophysical orbits but to human orbits as well. This is such a stunning thing for us to contemplate as to our obligations to "shine as lights" within our own orbits and personal responsibilities! (See Philippians 2:15.)

In Jesus there is a unique blend of both meekness and majesty. Though the Lord of the Universe, Christ was meekly willing to live in this world, which he created under the Father's direction. In Paul's words, he agreed to reside on earth as a person of no reputation (see Philippians 2:7).

We sing of his birth, "The stars in the heavens looked down where he lay" ("Away in a Manger," *Hymns*, 1985, no. 206). The onlooking universe was apparently created by him under the Father's direction, involving "worlds without number" (Moses 1:33). Thus the meek Christ child was cradled not only in a manger but was also cradled in the midst of the majesty of his own creations! Even the least of these, when we contemplate the heavens, permits us to see God "moving in his majesty and power" (D&C 88:47). Do we not sing of "All the worlds thy hands have made"? (See "How Great Thou Art," *Hymns*, 1985, no. 86.)

In the Eastern Hemisphere, the special star that signaled his meek birth was recognized by only a few shepherds and several wise men. However, when Christ comes in majesty and power, the sign of his second coming will be such that "all people shall see it together" (D&C 88:93). He declares "all flesh shall see me together" (D&C 101:23). What an impending moment of unparalleled majesty for the

Millennial Messiah. Yet it was preceded by the meekness of his Mortal Messiahship.

He created worlds, yet he was regarded as merely being a carpenter’s son. He called and inspired Old Testament prophets. Yet Jesus was regarded by some contemporaries in the meridian of time as being less than those very prophets (see Luke 16:29; John 5:45–46; John 8:33, 37–38).

In his mortal ministry, meek Jesus spoke of how he had yet “other sheep” (John 10:16). Still later, when with those “other sheep” of the Nephite fold, he spoke of still “other sheep” (3 Nephi 16:1–3). How many folds and flocks does he have? We do not know. But there are inklings of his majesty, for “by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:24). Yet this Great and True Shepherd, in meekness, revealed to a solitary Samaritan woman that, indeed, he was the Messiah (see John 4:26; Helaman 15:13).

Because Jesus was brilliant beyond our comprehension, he knew even premortally, though intellectually, what he was volunteering to do. Yet he had to experience it all personally—especially the awful agony of Gethsemane and Calvary. He who is “more intelligent than they all” is also more meek than they all! (See Abraham 3:19.) He went meekly forward and partook of the most bitter cup—and did so without becoming bitter!

Jesus descended below all things in order to be able to comprehend all things (see D&C 88:6; 122:8). Thus he is not only a *fully atoning* Savior but is a *fully comprehending* Savior as well!

Christ somehow came to know—just as specifically prophesied—our griefs, sorrows, pains, sicknesses, afflictions, and infirmities (Isaiah 53:4; 2 Nephi 9:21; Mosiah 14:4). He did so, declared Alma, that he might know, according to the flesh, how to succor and to help us in the midst of our infirmities (see Alma 7:11–12).

Only in restoration scriptures—specifically the Book of Mormon—is Jesus’ atonement referred to as the “infinite atonement” (2 Nephi 9:7; 25:16; Alma 34:12).

It was “infinite” in several dimensions. First, in what is called the “great and last sacrifice,” the sacrifice of a mere animal or an imperfect mortal would not do. It required the sacrifice of an *infinite being*, an eternal and sinless God (see Alma 34:10). Jesus, you will recall, volunteered premortally: “Here am I, send me” (Abraham 3:27). Never has anyone offered to do so much for so many with so few words! As an infinite being, Jesus had the unique power to put down and take up his life.

Jesus’ atonement also had *infinite impact* affecting all mankind (see 2 Nephi 25:16). “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Third, his atonement involved *infinite suffering*—suffering beyond our comprehension (see D&C 19:18). I will note especially some of his suffering.

The Atonement fulfills many prophecies. Jesus was to be spat upon (see 1 Nephi 19:9), struck, scourged (see Mosiah 3:9). He would be given vinegar and gall (see Psalms 69:21). He would issue a soul cry, the very words of which were prophesied by David in a Messianic psalm (see Psalms 22:1; Matthew 27:46). None of his bones was to be broken (see Psalms 34:20).

We begin to see in the scriptures the weight of the Atonement burdening him shortly before Gethsemane and Calvary:

*Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. [John 12:27]*

The full weight fell upon him when he entered the Garden of Gethsemane, where he “fell on the ground” (Mark 14:33–36). At one point in the process an angel appeared to strengthen him (see Luke 22:43). The keenest of



all intellects to ever grace this planet endured sufferings that were worse than even he, with his unexcelled brilliance, had ever imagined. Hence he was “sore amazed” or, in the Greek, “astonished,” “awestruck” (Mark 14:33). He became “very heavy,” which, in the Greek means, “depressed and dejected.”

When in the garden, he issued “the Abba cry” (Mark 14:36; Psalms 22:1). It was the most intimate, familial cry of a child in the deepest of distress for his father.

All the cumulative weight of our sins—the whole human family—fell upon him. He, and he alone, bore them! Thus he is able to say, “I have overcome and have trodden the wine-press alone, even the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God” (D&C 76:107; 88:106). This would include all the penalties that a God who cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance would require (see D&C 1:31). Could there be any wrath more fierce than divine wrath? Especially as Jesus encountered cumulative, mortal grossness including the vilest of all human sins? Jesus bore them.

Indeed, Christ was alone, for “there was none with me” (Isaiah 63:3; D&C 133:50). His astonishing, personal triumph was complete. Yet he who premortally had promised he would give glory to our Father kept that promise, saying after accomplishing the Atonement, “Nevertheless, glory be to the Father” (D&C 19:19; Moses 4:2).

Several years ago, Christian physicians, writing in the *Journal of American Medicine*, indicated they felt that, because of the loss of blood when he was scourged, Jesus would have been in serious, if not critical condition before he ever carried a portion of his cross to Calvary. Other scholars say Jesus was likely scourged with a Roman flagellum, something similar to a cat-o’-nine-tails with metallic objects at the end of each thong. If he assumed the usual posture for scourging, it would have been kneeling over before his scourger so that the muscles of his back were tensed and thus

more easily torn and shredded. He would have lost much blood in addition to what he lost earlier while bleeding from every pore in Gethsemane.

No wonder he needed help to carry the cross!

Jesus bore all mortal sins, mankind’s cumulative total. Thus Jesus, of his suffering, truly could later say that “he descended below all things” (D&C 88:6).

The requirements of divine justice were severe. According to Elder James Talmage, in order “that the supreme sacrifice of the Son might be consummated in all its fulness, the Father seems to have withdrawn the support of His immediate Presence [while Jesus was on the cross], leaving to the Savior of men the glory of complete victory over the forces of sin and death” (*Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1916], p. 661). What an awful and awesome aloneness! What deprivation, especially after the special and extended closeness of Father and Son!

On the cross, there came from Christ the soul-rending cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46; see also Psalms 22:1). What awful aloneness! Is it possible that Jesus needed to suffer and experience aloneness not only so his personal triumph would be total, but also so that he might “know according to the flesh” how it is for us to feel forsaken? (See Alma 7:11–12.) In any case, he felt forsaken and alone.

Compared to his feeling forsaken, what are our occasional feelings of being forsaken and alone? Or our feelings of being unnoticed and unappreciated? Or our deprivations?

All this emptying agony preceded the empty tomb, which signified the glorious resurrection. In his comments after the awful atonement, he uses words like “sore” and “exquisite.” Jesus tells us that he suffered “both body and spirit” (D&C 19:18–19). He does not even mention having been spat upon, struck, receiving vinegar and gall, being scourged, etc.

He does say that he trembled because of pain and would that he might not shrink, that he might not fail to partake fully of the bitter cup and finish the Atonement (see D&C 19:18). As already indicated, he partook of the bitter cup and did so without becoming bitter! Mercifully for all of us, he did not shrink!

*And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.* [3 Nephi 11:11]

*I have overcome and have trodden the winepress alone, even the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.* [D&C 76:107]

Thus he became our *fully comprehending and fully atoning* Savior. No wonder we sing of him, “How great thou art!” (Hymns, 1985, no. 86).

Why did he do it?

*And the world, because of their iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of naught; wherefore they scourge him, and he suffereth it; and they smite him, and he suffereth it. Yea, they spit upon him, and he suffereth it, because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men.* [1 Nephi 19:9; emphasis added]

Ponder the term *loving-kindness*. It is a special word, used in David’s plea after he sinned so grievously:

*Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.* [Psalms 51:1; emphasis added]

Hold that special word in your minds as I read in conclusion these verses about his coming majesty:

*And it shall be said: Who is this that cometh down from God in heaven with dyed garments; yea, from the regions which are not known, clothed in his glorious apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? . . .*

*And the Lord shall be red in his apparel, and his garments like him that treadeth in the winevat.*

*And so great shall be the glory of his presence that the sun shall hide his face in shame, and the moon shall withhold its light, and the stars shall be hurled from their places.*

*And his voice shall be heard: I have trodden the wine-press alone, and have brought judgment upon all people; and none were with me;*

*And now the year of my redeemed is come; and they shall mention the loving kindness of their Lord, and all that he has bestowed upon them according to his goodness, and according to his loving kindness, forever and ever.* [D&C 133:46, 48–50, 52; emphasis added]

Blessed be the Father for his loving-kindness in giving his Only Begotten as Our Redeemer! We do not know, nor could we appreciate if we did, the feelings of the Father as he watched his firstborn go through the Atonement. How great our Father is. Blessed be the Son, Jesus Christ, for his loving-kindness in atoning for our sins. I “scarce can take it in” (“How Great Thou Art”). Whenever you and I witness and experience in a human being impressive loving-kindness, we marvel—and we should marvel. But such highly developed loving-kindness is still not closely comparable to Jesus’ loving-kindness. So it is with each of his qualities about which I have spoken tonight. When we are fortunate enough to experience the stirring samples of likeness, these are real and wonderful experiences, but they are not yet fullness. They are not yet the fullness found in Jesus. Even so, he of fullness clearly and kindly beckons us to develop that greater likeness in our lives which precedes fullness. It is that likeness that will give us the light in our lives so that we might, as Paul says,

“shine as lights in the world.” These are the attributes that convey to us the added authority of example. And as we emulate him, by developing likeness in these attributes, he will bless us and magnify us for his purposes.

My quorum president, President Howard W. Hunter, said twenty-six years ago in April general conference, “He loves the Lord with all his heart, who loves nothing in comparison of him and nothing but in reference to him.”

As one of his special witnesses, I testify to you tonight that he is risen. And how marvelous it is, even given the great distance of the trek spoken of earlier, that he beckons us to develop this likeness so that one day we may have fullness with him. It is the journey of journeys. Nothing else is even remotely comparable to it in its importance. There is nothing in comparison of him. Indeed, as Paul said, “in Christ all things hold together.”

That is my witness to you on this Easter night, the reality of his mercy, the genuineness of his loving-kindness. He has said to us, “What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Nephi

27:27). What an invitation! That invitation verifies the possibility of its realization.

I salute you for who you are, but, more important, for what you have the possibilities to become. There is none like him. And as he has said to us in the marvelous imagery of holy scriptures, “I wait for you with open arms.” But it is we who must go to him in this journey of journeys.

Finally, I witness to you the reality of the great Atonement. It is the central act of all human history. Nothing else even remotely approaches it in terms of significance. The meek Jesus says: “Here am I, send me.” Jesus will come in majesty, and we will hail him for his loving-kindness. If we love him, we must so love one another.

He is risen, and the symbol of Christianity might well be the empty tomb that bespeaks the fullness of the great Atonement of which I testify to you tonight in love and in appreciation and in recognition of who you really are. I bear this witness to you humbly, lovingly, but, most important, in the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen.