



**By Elder
Jeffrey R. Holland**
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

THE TRUE NATURE OF GOD

Jesus Christ was the perfect manifestation of the perfect Father's care.

After generations of prophets had tried to teach the family of man the will and the way of the Father, usually with little success, God in His ultimate effort to have us know Him, sent to earth His Only Begotten and perfect Son, created in His very likeness and image, to live and serve among mortals in the everyday rigors of life.

To come to earth with such a responsibility, to stand in place of Elohim—speaking as He would speak, judging and serving, loving and warning, forbearing and forgiving as He would do—this is a duty of such staggering proportions that you and I cannot comprehend such a thing. But in the loyalty and determination that would be characteristic of a divine child, Jesus could comprehend it and He did it. Then, when the praise and honor began to come, He humbly directed all adulation to the Father.

“The Father . . . doeth the works,” He said in earnest. “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth



the Father do: for what things soever [the Father] doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise” [John 14:10; John 5:19]. On another occasion He said: “I speak that which I have seen with my Father” [John 8:38]. . . .

. . . Some in the contemporary world suffer from a distressing misconception of [God our Eternal Father]. Among these there is a tendency to feel distant from the Father, even estranged from Him, if they believe in Him at all. . . . Through a misreading (and surely, in some cases, a mistranslation) of the Bible, these see God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son as operating very differently,

this in spite of the fact that in both the Old Testament and the New, the Son of God is one and the same, acting as He always does under the direction of the Father, who is Himself the same “yesterday, today, and forever.”¹ . . .

So feeding the hungry, healing the sick, rebuking hypocrisy, pleading for faith—this was Christ showing us the way of the Father, He who is “merciful and gracious, slow to anger, long-suffering and full of goodness.”² In His life and especially in His death, Christ was declaring, “This is *God’s* compassion I am showing you, as well as that of my own.” In the perfect Son’s manifestation of the perfect Father’s care, in Their mutual suffering and shared sorrow for the sins and heartaches of the rest of us, we see ultimate meaning in the declaration: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” [John 3:16–17]. ■

From “*The Grandeur of God*,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2003, 70–73.

NOTES

1. For example, 1 Nephi 10:18; 2 Nephi 27:23; Moroni 10:19; Doctrine and Covenants 20:12.
2. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 42.