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Trust in God

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Abstract: This article discusses Abraham's obedience when commanded to sacrifice his son.

EDITOR'S TABLE.

TRUST IN GOD.

The need of one's having a keen knowledge of the truth is paramount. So also is it that every Latter-day Saint should have a deep-rooted conviction of the justice of God, and an implicit confidence and faith in his being and mercy. To rightfully understand the gospel and to be able to keep his commandments such knowledge is absolutely necessary. Let each person ask himself if in his soul there is a sharp and immovable conviction of these facts. Could anything that might occur to you, or that might take place in the Church, or with her officers or authorities, change your faith in the purposes, and in the absolute justice and mercy, of the Lord, or in the saving power of his gospel, the message of his salvation? If so, your faith is not deep-rooted, and there is strong need of your becoming convinced.

The scriptures abound in examples of men who were unflinchingly grounded in an abiding faith in God. There is need of every young man leaning upon such a pillar of strength.

In the loss of all his earthly goods, and even in the severer bereavement which befell him in the loss of his children, Job yet implicitly trusted in the Almighty, and was able in the midst of his sorrows to say: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." When, later, under the most trying personal afflictions, his wife requested him to curse God and die, his reproving answer was: "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" And to his friends who chided him with sin, he exclaimed, with the utmost confidence in the Lord—a confidence that stands apart as a consoling lesson to all the ages:—"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

In Abraham we have another example of devotion to the word

of God, and faith in ultimately sharing his goodness. The gracious promises to him were fulfilled, even as they were in the end to Job, who, notwithstanding his sore afflictions, was finally blessed with great abundance in all things, and came into possession of twice his former blessings in material prosperity; and possessed many sons and daughters. The Lord blest his last days more than his beginning, and he lived to see his fair daughters obtain an inheritance among their brethren, and saw his sons' sons, even four generations. And at length he passed to his rich reward full of days.

And so in Abraham's willingness to trust in God in the greatest trial that could come to a father—the sacrifice of his son—we observe deep-rooted faith and abiding confidence in the Almighty being able and willing to fulfill his promises, no matter how improbable it might appear under the most trying circumstances. Having an assurance that his course, in offering his son Isaac, was agreeable to the will of the Lord, Abraham was enabled, in the face of the improbability of all the promises being fulfilled, that he was to be the father of many nations, and that in Isaac should that covenant be established, to place that son upon the altar of sacrifice, and to stretch forth his hand and knife to slay him. But when the Lord saw that Abraham feared him, he permitted his angel to supply a ram for sacrifice instead, and blessed the Father of nations for his confidence and faith. And so will he do with all who trust him, for the promise is unto all.

Such knowledge, faith, and confidence, supply an important part in revealed religion, enabling him who possesses them to exclaim with Paul: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Abraham learned the great truth, which we also must impress upon our hearts, that God is just, and will fulfill his promises to the uttermost. And so he was blessed, as we shall be also, in trying circumstances, because he trusted the Lord and obeyed his voice. It was further told to him, Thus saith the Lord: "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

The situation is the same today: unless the Saints have an actual knowledge that the course which they are pursuing is in harmony with the will of God, they will grow weary in trial, and will faint under persecution and contumely. But, on the contrary, with this trust in God burned into their souls, no matter what comes, they are happy in doing his will, knowing full well that at last the promise shall be theirs. Thus is the world overcome, and the crown of glory obtained which God has laid away for those who love, honor and obey him.

These lessons, or the many others of a similar class that might be quoted, are necessary to be impressed upon the young Latter-day Saints. Every day, there are influences that tend to draw them away from the faith. These being constantly presented before them, it follows as a matter of course that there arises an inclination to deny or become skeptic of the old-fashioned faith of their fathers. But the end of a life that puts no trust in the Lord will be unhappy, while the being who puts his trust and implicit confidence in God, doing his will, shall receive all happiness and glory. Lack of faith gives a little freedom and ease to begin with, but a day soon comes when there is nothing to lean upon in sore affliction, when there is no One to cry to in faith, to comfort and to heal! How then shall they be cast about and cradled in affliction!

No person can realize the fullness of the blessings of God, unless he can approach, in some degree, at least, the standard of faith in God's justice, exemplified in the examples quoted. He must have founded in his own soul belief and confidence in the justice and mercy of God. It must be individual, no man can act for another. Lessons of this class need be taught and held up before the youth of Zion, to bring forcibly to their minds the truth which alone will make them free and able to stand firm in the faith. Let them, as they are called together in their assemblies, present themselves before God, and be reminded of his gracious benefits, in bringing forth the Book of Mormon, in the scenes of Kirtland, in Zion, in Nauvoo, in the trying days of the exodus, and in the wilderness. This that they might count the mercies of God in his promises, and behold how past affliction and sore trial have been turned to the well-being of his people; and so renew their covenants, filled with a deep-rooted, immovable conviction of the good-

ness and mercy of the Lord. Each individual must learn this lesson, it must be impressed upon his soul, so deep, and be so well-founded that nothing can separate him from a knowledge of the love of God, though death and hell stand in the way. It was thus that Joshua impressed ancient gathered Israel, her elders and her officers: "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: * * * and if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve, * * * but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord." That was Joshua's declaration. It is that of every true Latter-day Saint who is able with Job to declare: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me."

God is good; his promises never fail; to implicit trust his goodness and mercy, is a correct principle. Let us, therefore, put our trust in Him.

JOSEPH F. SMITH.

THE OCTOBER CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH.

The seventy-fourth semi-annual conference of the Church convened on the fourth, fifth, and sixth, and was largely attended. The great Tabernacle was filled on Sunday morning at 10 o'clock, and in the afternoon large meetings were held besides, in the Assembly Hall and upon the Tabernacle grounds. The evening meeting of the Sunday School Union was largely attended and well conducted. The audiences on Monday and Tuesday continued large.

President Smith's opening address reiterated the cautions uttered by him six months ago in regard to debt and the industrial training of the young; "get out of debt and keep out of debt;" "young men, learn to become skillful in the arts, and in mechanics, and in doing something that will be materially useful in building up the commonwealth where we live and where our interests are centered," were his counsels to the people. In a striking synopsis