

## Lecture Sixth: Course Pursued is According to Will of God

An actual knowledge to any person that the course of life which he pursues is according to the will of God is essentially necessary to enable him to have that confidence in God without which no person can obtain eternal life. It was this that enabled the ancient saints to endure all their afflictions and persecutions, and were enabled to take, not only the spoiling of their goods, joyfully, but also to suffer death in its most horrid forms; knowing (not merely believing) that when this earthly house of their tabernacle was dissolved, they had a more enduring building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For a man to lay down his all, his character and reputation, his honor, and applause, his good name among men, his houses, his lands, his brothers and sisters, his wife and children, and even his own life – counting all things but filth and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ – requires more than mere belief or supposition that he is doing the will of God, but actual knowledge, realizing that, when these sufferings are ended, he will enter into eternal rest, and be a partaker of the glory of God. A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things, never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things: it was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things, that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has, for the truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice, because he seeks to do His will, he does know most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not nor will not seek His face in vain. Under these circumstances, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life, and to endure as seeing Him who is invisible; and through faith, combat the powers of darkness, contend against the wiles of the adversary, and overcome the world. Where faith is

weak, a person will not be able to contend against all the opposition, tribulations, and afflictions which they will have to encounter in order to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus; and they will grow weary in their minds and faint, and the adversary will have power over them and destroy them. In the last days, before the Lord comes, He is to gather together His saints who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice.

## Lecture Seventh: The Effects of Faith

All things in heaven and on earth are the result of faith, for it is by faith that Deity works. When a man works by faith he works by mental exertion and words, instead of physical force. It is by this power that all the hosts of heaven perform their works of wonder, majesty, and glory; thus, we might expect to find the same principle upon which His creatures here below must act in order to obtain the felicities enjoyed by the saints in the eternal world; and when God would undertake to raise up men, He would teach them the necessity of living by faith, seeing that all blessings of eternity are the effects of faith. Hebrews 11:6 *“Without faith it is impossible to please God”* – for it is impossible for men to be saved without faith. When men begin to live by faith they begin to draw near to God; and when faith is perfected, they are like Him and can lay hold on to eternal life; and because He is saved, they are saved also; for they will be in the same situation He is in, because they have come to Him; and when He appears they shall be like Him. Christ is the prototype of the saved man. Saved beings work by faith; enabled to act in the presence of the Lord and be ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. When Christ proposed to save the human family, He proposed to make them like Himself, and He was like the Father, the great prototype of all saved beings. For any portion of the human family to be assimilated into Their likeness is to be saved; and to be unlike Them is to be destroyed. For where faith is, there will the knowledge of God be also, as well as revelations, visions, dreams, and every necessary thing, in order that the possessors of faith may be perfected, obtain salvation, and all necessary knowledge and wisdom, until he shall know God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, whom He has sent – whom to know is eternal life.

# OF FAITH

The doctrine portion of the first edition of the *Doctrine & Covenants* (1835) was comprised of seven lectures “Of Faith” that embraced “*the important doctrine of salvation*” (preface). At the time, these lectures were unanimously voted upon and accepted as the Word of God by the membership of the church. However, in 1921, after standing as canonized scripture for 86 years, a committee of six men deleted these critically important doctrines from the *Doctrine & Covenants*. This pamphlet provides excerpts and a summary of these doctrines as originally prepared by **The Prophet, Seer, & Revelator, Joseph Smith**, for the *School of the Prophets* in Kirtland, Ohio (1834-35). It is hoped that these truths will be received as the word of God as originally intended.

*“Designed to unfold to the understanding the Doctrine of Jesus Christ”* (p.1)

Full text available in print and online as the “*Lectures on Faith*”

## Lecture First: What Faith Is

Faith is the 1<sup>st</sup> principle in revealed religion, the foundation of all righteousness, and the principle of power that exists in God. Hebrews 11:1 *“Now faith is the substance [assurance] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* Faith, and faith only, is the moving cause of all action. It is the assurance and hope we have of the existence of things that we have not yet seen, which stimulates us to action and effort. We sow, plant, ask, seek, and knock because we believe we will reap, gather, receive, find, and have things opened. Would you exert yourself in any activity if you did not believe you would obtain the desired outcome? We are dependent on faith (belief) for the acquisition of all knowledge, wisdom, and intelligence. Hebrews 11:3 *“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.”* All things were created and exist by faith. Faith is the moving cause of all (temporal and spiritual) action, a governing principle of power, dominion, and authority in both God and man.

*“...the extent of their knowledge respecting His character and glory will depend upon their diligence and faithfulness in seeking after Him [by devoting themselves to His service, through prayer and supplication incessantly strengthening their faith in Him], until, like Enoch, the brother of Jared, and Moses, they shall obtain faith in God, and power with Him to behold Him face to face.” (Lecture Second, v.55 [p.24] and p.37)*

## Lecture Second: The Object On Which Faith Rests

God is the only Supreme Being in whom all fullness and perfection dwell. In God the principle of faith dwells independently. He is the object in whom the faith of all other beings center for life and salvation. Beyond creation itself, what evidences are there of the existence of God? Adam and Eve were in God's presence in the Garden of Eden. When they transgressed God's commandment by partaking of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they were sent out of the Garden and God's presence; an event known as the Fall. Though separated from God, Adam and Eve retained the knowledge of the existence of their Creator, as they had previously stood in His presence and glory, and spoke with Him face to face. God continued to manifest His will unto Adam and Eve and their posterity, and they continued to call upon God. Although they could not see God's face, they could hear His voice. The Holy Spirit was given unto them, bearing record of the Father and the Son. Adam communicated the knowledge he had of God to his posterity. It was through the means of testimony that the thought was first suggested to the minds of their posterity that there was a God, which laid the foundation for the exercise of their faith, through which they could obtain a knowledge of His character and glory. Therefore, the evidence that people had in the early ages of the world of the existence of God was the testimony of their fathers. Thus, after the Fall, God became an object of faith, which stirred individuals to search after a knowledge of His character, perfections, and attributes, until they became extensively acquainted with Him and not only communed with Him and beheld His glory, but were partakers of His power and stood in His presence.

## Lecture Third: The Character of God

Three things are necessary in order to exercise faith in God unto life and salvation: 1) the idea that He actually exists (2<sup>nd</sup> Lecture); 2) a correct idea of His character, perfections, and attributes (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Lectures); and 3) an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to His will (6<sup>th</sup> Lecture). Without an understanding of these three things, faith is imperfect and unproductive; but with this understanding faith can become perfect and fruitful, abounding in righteousness, unto the praise and glory of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. A correct understanding of God's character, perfections, and attributes comes to us through revelation as found in the scriptures, without which, no man by searching could find them out (Job 11:7-9; 1 Cor. 2:9-11). God is 1) the same God before and after the creation of the world; 2) merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness; 3) unchanging: the same yesterday, today, and forever, and His course is one eternal round; 4) a God of truth who cannot lie; 5) no respecter of persons: he that fears God and works righteousness is accepted of Him; and 6) love.

## Lecture Fourth: The Attributes of God

Knowledge of the attributes of God, from the scriptures, enables man to exercise faith in God in order to obtain eternal life. God's attributes are: 1) knowledge; 2) faith or power; 3) justice; 4) judgment; 5) mercy; and 6) truth.

*“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:14,16*

## Lecture Fifth: The Godhead

Two personages constitute the governing and supreme power over all things, by whom all things were created and made: 1) the Father, a personage of spirit, glory, and power, possessing all perfection and fullness and 2) the Son, a personage of tabernacle, being in the form and likeness of man, or rather man was formed after His likeness and in His image, who is also the express image and likeness of the personage of the Father. The Son possesses all the fullness of the Father, being begotten of Him, and ordained from before the foundation of the world to be a propitiation for the sins of all those who should believe on His name. He was called the Son because of the flesh, and descended in suffering below that which man can suffer; suffering greater sufferings, and exposed to more powerful contradictions than any man can be. Having overcome, the Son received a fullness of the glory of the Father, possessing the same mind, wisdom, knowledge, spirit, glory, power, kingdom, and fullness with the Father; being filled with the fullness of the mind of the Father, which mind is the Spirit of the Father, or the Holy Spirit, that bears record of the Father and the Son. The Spirit is shed forth upon all who believe on His name and keep His commandments; and all those who keep His commandments shall grow up from grace to grace, and become heirs of God and the heavenly kingdom, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; possessing the same mind, being transformed into the same image or likeness, even the express image of Him who fills all in all; being filled with the fullness of His glory, and become one in Him, even as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, who constitute the Godhead. As the Son partakes of the fullness of the Father through the Spirit, so the saints, by the same Spirit, are to be partakers of the same fullness, and to be one in Them.