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## Lecture 6

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# Lecture 6

## ON FAITH

1. Having treated the ideas of the character, perfections, and attributes of God in the preceding lectures, we next proceed to treat the knowledge which persons must have that the course of life which they pursue is according to the will of God, so they may be enabled to exercise faith in him unto life and salvation.

2. This knowledge supplies an important place in revealed religion; for it was by reason of it that the ancients were enabled to endure “as seeing him who is invisible” (Heb 11:27). It is essential for any person to have an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to the will of God 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 to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing (not believing merely) that they had a more enduring substance (Heb 10:34).

3. Having the assurance that they were pursuing a course which was agreeable to the will of God, they were enabled to take not only the spoiling of their goods and the wasting of their substance joyfully, but also to suffer death in its most horrid forms, knowing (not merely believing) that when this “earthly house of this tabernacle [was]” dissolved, we have a building of

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\* Bracketed material in 1835 edition, but without brackets.

God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor 5:1).

4. Such was and always will be the situation of the Saints of God. Unless they have an actual knowledge that the course they are pursuing is according to the will of God, they will grow weary in their minds and faint. For such has been and always will be the opposition in the hearts of unbelievers and those who know not God against the pure and unadulterated religion of heaven (the only thing which ensures eternal life). They will persecute to the uttermost all who worship God according to his revelations, receive the truth in the love of it, and submit themselves to be guided and directed by his will. And they will drive them to such extremities that nothing short of an actual knowledge of their being the favorites of heaven and of their having embraced that order of things which God has established for the redemption of man will enable them to exercise that confidence in him necessary for them to overcome the world and obtain that crown of glory which is laid up for them that fear God.

5. 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 also, 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. It requires actual knowledge, realizing that when these sufferings are ended, he will enter into eternal rest and be a partaker of the glory of God.

6. For unless a person does know that he is walking according to the will of God, it would be offering an insult to the dignity of the Creator were he to say that he would be a partaker of his glory when he should be done with the things of this life. But when he has this knowledge and most assuredly knows that he is doing the will of God, his confidence can be equally strong that he will be a partaker of the glory of God.

7. Let us here observe that 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 is 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 sought nor will he seek His face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life.

8. It is in vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their all in sacrifice, and by this means obtained faith in God and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life, unless they in like manner offer unto him the same sacrifice and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of him.

9. It was in offering sacrifices that Abel, the first martyr, obtained knowledge that he was accepted of God. And from the days of righteous Abel to the present time, the knowledge that men have that they are accepted in the sight of God is obtained by offering sacrifice. And in the last days before the Lord comes, he is to gather together his saints who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Ps 50:3-5).

10. Those, then, who make the sacrifice will have the testimony that their course is pleasing in the sight of God. And those who have this testimony will have faith to lay hold on

eternal life and will be enabled, through faith, to endure unto the end and receive the crown that is laid up for them that love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who do not make the sacrifice cannot enjoy this faith, because men are dependent upon this sacrifice in order to obtain this faith. Therefore, they cannot lay hold upon eternal life, because the revelations of God do not guarantee unto them the authority so to do; and without this guarantee faith could not exist.

11. All the Saints of whom we have account in all the revelations of God which are extant obtained the knowledge which they had of their acceptance in his sight through the sacrifice which they offered unto him. And through the knowledge thus obtained, their faith became sufficiently strong to lay hold upon the promise of eternal life and to endure “as seeing him who is invisible” (Heb 11:27). They were enabled through faith to combat the powers of darkness, contend against the wiles of the adversary, overcome the world, and obtain the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

12. But those who have not made this sacrifice to God do not know that the course which they pursue is well pleasing in his sight. For whatever may be their belief or their opinion, it is a matter of doubt and uncertainty in their mind; and where doubt and uncertainty are, there faith is not, nor can it be. For doubt and faith do not exist in the same person at the same time. So persons whose minds are under doubts and fears cannot have unshaken confidence, and where unshaken confidence is not, there faith is weak. And where faith is weak, the persons 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. But they will grow weary in their minds, and the adversary will have power over them and destroy them.\*

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\* Note: This lecture is so plain and the facts set forth so self-evident that it is deemed unnecessary to form a catechism upon it. The student is, therefore, instructed to commit the whole to memory [1835 footnote].