

GIBRALTAR OF FAITH

TEXT: Romans 4:20: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving Glory to God:

History is made up of one era following another in stately succession. As the sun of the heavens kisses the hills of God in marital array from mighty mountain ranges, so each era stands for some great achievement time - the forward mark of the race. So history is always represented by a dominant personality. Through all ages, somber and sin-shadowed though they have been, **somewhere** God has always kept His beacon light brightly burning.



In the Bible:

Behold Moses, with his cathedral mind, the peerless lawgiver, statesman, and emancipator, giving to the world the foundation of all its jurisprudence.

See David — the versatile and many-sided king who was like a diamond scintillating from whatever angle viewed, whether it be that of a general poet, priest, shepherd, soldier, or statesman.

Then there is Daniel, the sublime hero who — keeping company with the King of Heaven — knew no fear of earthly monarchs.

Consider Elijah — the man of iron character — impelled by a mighty conviction, denouncing to his face a recreant king upon his ivory throne.

Observe Paul — the mighty apostle to the Gentiles — astounding the world by the magnitude of his labours.



There is Luther, like some Olympian Jove, scattering the hoary man in intellectual birth and achievement.

These and hosts of other kingly souls do but show that in every realm — whether material, social, intellectual, or spiritual — in the hour of destiny, they hear and shine like an angel in the sun, in the supreme man.

In the world's historic morning, Abraham looms on the horizon as a Gibraltar of faith and integrity, writing for himself an imperishable name as a friend of God. We are worshipers of great things. God is a lover of great men, and Abraham was a man after God's own heart.

It is instinctive for men to admire that which is powerful. This is seen in the little child whose heart is thrilled by a fine horse, a fast auto, or a powerful engine, and in the adult by his love for towering skyscrapers, mighty battleships, or immense bridges. There is no sadder tragedy than when a man sees great things, and yet is blind to a great God. Happy is the man who can look out at the sunrise and see God in the tapestry of the skies, or in the horses and chariots of fire with which the dying day departs.

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Mozart said that whenever he saw a great mountain, it said to him, "*Turn me into worshipped music, Play me on the organ*". Mendelssohn, writing to his sister, said "*This is what I want to say to you today...*" and then followed with a bar or two of music which she was to play. So the mountain spoke to Mozart, and the organ spoke to Mendelssohn's sister.



We are object slaves to the tyranny of bigness. Our all-absorbing interests are largely material. Gone are our great poets, our master sculptors, and our supreme artists. The finer things of life are tossed aside to make way for billion-dollar corporations, gigantic trusts, and commercial temples. We have become reincarnated Nebuchadnezzar's, standing off and admiring the work of our hands, saying, '*Look at the mystery Babylon which we have builded*'.

We have again attempted to erect a Tower of Babel, which will reach to the very heavens as a mighty monument to our material prowess. But behold, the strong arms of a Samson are already at the pillars. **We are in imminent danger of being swallowed up amid the collapse of the proud temples which we have created, because we have forgotten the most essential things — our foundations, those basic moral and spiritual principles without which no structure, whether of individual life or world civilization, can stand secure and solid.**



Our hope is in our acknowledgment that we have been worshipping mud gods and that they have failed us, and in our return to the God of our fathers; back to the simple life, to the family Bible, to the daily altar, and to a quiet serene trust in the Heavenly Father. Let us stop worshipping bigness and begin to worship a great God.

It is the mark of a small man to be hypnotized by a skyscraper, but only a super soul can be enthralled by a beggar whose sores are licked by the dogs. The Master Man was never concerned about property rights, but He was unceasingly insistent in His zeal for human rights. **Let us have a compassionate interest in the hearts of men, rather than selfish love for the things of men.**



In wearing the title of honor — **A Friend of God** — an outstanding character, rich in life's cardinal virtues, is supposed. A study of these eminent characteristics would be of value in our analysis of Abraham's favor with God.

Abraham was reverent and worshipful. Reverence is the cornerstone of true religion. The vision of a Holy God sitting upon a throne high and lifted up and filling the earth with His Glory will bring, as it did to Isaiah, a sense of reverence and a feeling of personal unworthiness.

Abraham was both pious and rich, a mighty intercessor, and was perfect in his obedience.

Genesis 12:1: Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, "Get thee out of thy county, and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:"

It is not for us to know how God called Abraham, but He did call him; and Abraham heard and responded, ***"Here I am."*** Then came the divine command, ***"Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house . . . "***

That seemed like a leap in the dark. It was not so to Abraham, however, for two things he knew. First, he knew at Whose bidding he was to do go. Second, he knew his faith would be rewarded.



Genesis 12:2
And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

There is much more than a command in this text. There is a promise as beautiful as a plenteous autumn vine. ***"I will make of thee a great nation"***. To be just to God, we should remember that He respects our wills and treats us like sons, not as irresponsible machines. His ***"Get thee out"*** is not an arbitrary command, but one that He blesses; for Christ says:

Mark 10:29-31:

29 And Jesus answered and said, "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake, and the Gospel's,

30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come Eternal Life.

31 But many that are first shall be last; and the last first."

If the command is to sell what thou hast here, the promise is thou shall have treasures in Heaven.

Two prerequisites for moral supremacy are these:

1. a listening ear

2. an obedient heart.

Obedience is the acid test of sonship.

When God called, Abraham not only heard, but instantly obeyed. Obedience is the acid test of sonship. The wise Samuel rebuked the delinquent Saul:

1 Samuel 15:22: And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Christ said:

Luke 6:46: And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

We now come to the supreme text in Abraham's career.



Genesis 22:2: And He said, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a Burnt Offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

"TAKE NOW THY SON, THINE ONLY SON ISAAC".

To approach an appreciation of what this meant to Abraham, we should remember that it was his lifelong desire to be succeeded by a son. In those days of old, not to be followed by an heir was regarded as life's crowning calamity. When, after the

years, this prayer was realized in Isaac, the fullness of joy came to Abraham and Sarah. Day after day, the development of the splendid lad was showed with the keenest appreciation; and now that he had well nigh reached his majority, Abraham began to feel that his succession was assured, and that soon he might lay aside his burdens in favor of this manly, upright son, who had become to him the apple of his eye.



Just at this period, when life's sun was at its zenith, here came this staggering test of Abraham's faith and devotion. Now it was that the iron must have entered deep into his soul, but the Word gives us no intimation of that struggle. We can only surmise what must have passed through his mind and heart during the long, dark days of the night preceding this memorable journey through the wilderness to the heights of Mount Moriah.



Let us pause here to note a lesson of practical value. God is always calling men. His love for wayward souls is clearly revealed in the story of the Prodigal Son. How beautifully has the artist Heinrich Hofmann pictured the Saviour as a seeker of souls, in his masterpiece where the King of Glory stands before a closed door. And this changeless Christ is even now standing before the portals of every heart, saying, ***Behold, I stand at the door and knock . . .***

Revelation 3:20: Jesus' Words "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My Voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

Today, God is calling for the lives of youth — lives that shall become radiant in the shining paths of service for the world in need.

Romans 6:14: For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.



WHEN MOSES was in Egypt to punish Pharaoh, God turned the waters into blood.

When Christ was on earth, He turned the water into wine.



That is the difference between Law and Grace.

The Law said, "**Kill them**". Today, Grace says, "**Forgive them**".
The Law said, "**Condemn them**". Today, Grace says, "**Love them**".
When the law came out of Horeb, 3,000 men were destroyed:

Exodus 32:28: And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

At Pentecost, under grace, 3,000 men found life:

Acts 2:41: Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

What a difference!

When Moses came to the burning bush, he was commanded to take the shoes from off his feet.

Exodus 3:5: And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is Holy ground.



When the prodigal came home after sinning he was given a pair of shoes to put on his feet.

Luke 15:22: But the father said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:"

I would, a thousand times, rather be under Grace of God than under the Law.

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