

Also in other prophets and men of God, although they may have on certain occasions, like Jonah, exhibited weaknesses, there is something really grand and admirable shown in their character. But such traits of character as we find evinced in the ancient worthies are not the products of accident or chance, neither are they acquired in a day, a week, a month, or a year, but are gradual developments, the results of continued faithfulness to God and to truth, independent of either the plaudits or criticisms of men.

Written characters do not always amount to much; they are well enough in their place however. It is important that we, as Latter-day Saints, should understand and bear in mind that salvation comes through the grace of God, and through the development in us of those principles that governed those righteous people before mentioned. The idea is not to do good because of the praise of men; but to do good because in doing good we develop godliness within us, and this being the case we shall become allied to godliness, which will in time become part and portion of our being. I will refer again to the Rechabites, and the strong temptation that they were under when invited to the Temple of God, and there, in one of the apartments, asked by Jeremiah, one of the greatest Prophets, to drink wine; or, in other words, to do something that they had been instructed by their father not to do. But they could not be moved, the teaching of their father had found an abiding place in their hearts, and the consequence was that they utterly refused to do what the Prophet of God told them to do. The Lord Himself admired the course that they took in this matter, and was led as I before said,

to make such a glorious promise to the house of Rechab; and I would not be astonished to know that among this people may now be found some of the descendants.

Do we not at times do things that we feel sorry for having done? It may be all very well, provided we stop doing such things when we know them to be wrong; when we see the evil and then reform, that is all we can do, and all that can be asked of any man. But undoubtedly, it is too much the case with some that they consider and fear the publicity of the wrong they commit, more than committing the wrong itself; they wonder what people will say when they hear of it, etc. And, on the other hand, some are induced to do certain things in order to receive the approbation of their friends, and if their acts fail to draw forth favorable comments or to be recognized, they feel as though their labor had been lost, and what good they may have done was a total failure. Now, if we really desire to draw near to God; if we wish to place ourselves in accord with the good spirits of the eternal worlds; if we wish to establish within ourselves that faith which we read about and by which ancient Saints performed such wonderful works, we must, after we obtain the Holy Spirit, hearken to its whisperings and conform to its suggestions, and by no act of our lives drive it from us. It is true that we are weak, erring creatures, liable at any time to grieve the Spirit of God; but so soon as we discover ourselves in a fault, we should repent of that wrongdoing and as far as possible repair or make good the wrong we may have committed. By taking this course we strengthen our character, we advance our own cause, and we fortify ourselves against temptation;