

# SUPPLEMENT TO THE SAINTS' HERALD.

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[Reported by A. Whitehouse; prepared by the speaker.]

## SERMON BY ELDER J. R. LAMBERT,

DELIVERED AT

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### Subject, FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE REQUIRED.

IN the second chapter of the Book of Revelation, and tenth verse, we have the following language: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Though there are but few present, I am not disposed to find fault. When we consider the short time for announcing this meeting together with the rain and mud, there is left no room for complaint. I trust our meeting will be of sufficient profit to us to at least pay for the effort made to come and hear. I will try and adapt my remarks to the Saints, ~~while they may~~ contain something suitable for those who are not yet in the faith.

The language of the text was spoken to one of the churches of the ancient Saints; and although having direct application to them, it is also applicable to the people of God to-day. It is often said, "We do not have that faith in God that we should have;" and we cannot have perfect faith unless we become obedient to the commandments of God. One reason of the weakness of our faith is, because we do not have sufficient knowledge of God. We need to learn from him and of him; and the only way to learn from God is to put ourselves in a proper *position* to receive light and knowledge from him. This is done by rendering an intelligent and complete obedience to the gospel.

There are two things in the text which we will notice; first, the injunction, "Be thou faithful unto death." We admire and commend faithfulness wherever we find it. The faithful dog and horse are commended and trusted, while those which are not faithful are not. Among ourselves, those who are known to be faithful in all the affairs of life are loved and trusted, while others are not. There are many things concerning which the judgment of God and men are very different; but so far as trusting, commending, and rewarding those who are faithful are concerned,

they are one. All, or nearly all, seem to admire faithfulness in others, even if they are unfaithful themselves. God loves and commends it in his servants and people, as the following Scriptures, and many others, prove: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods."—Matt. 24: 44-47.

The point is, that the Lord will commend and reward that servant who shall be found doing his will, faithfully and well at his coming.

The same important lesson is presented in the parable of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, where the "kingdom of heaven" is likened unto "a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods." He gave to every one according to the ability he possessed; to one five talents, to another two, and to another one; so that when the lord returned, these talents might be given back to him with usury. When the lord returned he found that the man who had received five talents had gained other five; the one who had received two had gained other two. The lord addresses them in the following manner: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—Verse 21. See also verse 23. The man who had received but one talent hid it in the earth, and at the lord's coming presented it without any increase. The lord commanded that the talent should be taken from him and given to the one who had five, and that the "unprofitable

servant" be cast "into outer darkness."

Notice the principle upon which these men are rewarded. They had been *faithful* over a few things; and because of this faithfulness, they are made rulers over many things. And our faithfulness must be in Christ, for when we make covenant with God we agree to walk in Christ's footsteps, that is, take him for our example. And we must do the things which he has commanded that we may become fit subjects for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Christ is our "commander and leader." After being brought into this desirable condition of harmony with God, we are required to be truly faithful by walking in all the requirements of the gospel. In the gospel we have the first principles or fundamentals, and we must not neglect them. These fundamentals are enumerated by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews in the sixth chapter of his book. He mentions faith, repentance, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. These are called by the inspired writer "the principles of the doctrine of Christ;" and we are taught by the Apostle John that we must abide in the doctrine of Christ in order that we may have "both the Father and the Son." (2 John, verse 9.) It is written, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."—Heb. 11:6. By this principle we move along in life, and yet we are enabled to extricate ourselves from the things which bind and confine us to this world, and live every day for the things of a better. By it we can overcome the various hindrances we meet until we become strong in God, and in the power of his might.

We are required, too, to repent of all our sins, and to be baptized. This faith in God and in his Son Jesus Christ reaches every principle of truth, as found in the gospel, requiring us to believe and obey. It reaches to those grand principles of the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. Thus, if we do these things, we secure the Holy Spirit, and its fruits will be seen in our lives; and by walking in its light, we will draw nearer to "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," into which we shall finally be permitted to enter and abide.

God is the author of nature, it is true, and she presents to us many beautiful and useful lessons; but the gospel is greater and higher than all else, its grand purpose being to so change men and women as to make them new creatures in Christ. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

After a proper obedience to that gospel, life has a new meaning to us, and its purposes are changed. We are governed by a different and higher standard in all the ways of life. We do not seek to return injury for injury received, but having become the adopted children of God, we must walk in his ways. The gospel proposes to supplant all hatred with love: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which

despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."—Matt. 5: 44, 45.

The Pharisees tempted Jesus, and sought to entrap him in his words. One of them who was a lawyer, once asked him this question: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." How comprehensive and grand is the law of love as here laid down by the Great Teacher! That which is stronger than all else; that which is full of mercy and good-will, is to govern the children of God. Love to God, love to man; simple, but grand! "On these two commandments," said Jesus, "hang all the law and the prophets."

Let us view the matter from another standpoint. The precious promises that reach into that better world are only made to those who "overcome." We are not as trees and brutes, but have been endowed with intelligence, agency, and the ability to reason, for the use of which we become responsible to God. Our work is before us. How important it is that we do not neglect it. I can say that I have been trying to live right, have made some progress, but have not always overcome. A constant effort is needed upon our part, lest instead of overcoming, we ourselves shall be overcome; and we readily see the difference between the two conditions. The one who is constantly overcome by his besetting sins cannot retain the Christlike character, but will become weak, and will drift far away from God.

In order to give a proper emphasis to this point, let me call your attention to some of the promises as we find them in the opening chapters of the Book of Revelations:—

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

"He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron," etc.

Notice, we are to keep the works which God has ordained unto the end, and not works of our own. And it is clearly implied in this last scripture that no one will be trusted by the Almighty to rule over others until he has first learned to rule himself. When we have fully learned the lesson of overcoming we shall be prepared to rule others, according to God's will.

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar

in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

These passages are found in the second and third chapters, and we call your attention to one more found in the twenty-first chapter, seventh and eighth verses:—

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

As Christ overcame, so must we overcome. And then, as he is with the Father in his throne, so we shall be with him in his throne. Did Christ ever give up in the midst of life's great trials? No, *never*: but we do, sometimes, and thus we lose ground that is harder for us to regain than it would have been for us to have been faithful at the first.

It may be asked, How long are we required to be faithful? The answer is, from the time that we learn God's will and make covenant with him through obedience to the gospel, until the victory is made complete, and the crown secured. The work is for life. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved;" "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," except they endure to the end. No matter how much we may be tempted, we are required to resist. God is a reasonable being, and hence he only requires that which we are able to do, and that which will be for our good. Christ did not turn away from any necessary trial, but continued to overcome even unto death. We read that "in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren;" that he "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He was very faithful, and his triumph was a glorious one. "Through death," he was to destroy "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Appearing to John on Patmos, He says: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."—Rev. 1:18. Now we are taught by Paul, in Romans 8:14-17, that through the gospel we become "heirs of God, and joint heirs of Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." We must walk as he walked, and suffer, when necessary, as he suffered, in order to be made joint heirs with him to glory and eternal life. This is just and reasonable.

We have but little time left in which to consider the second part of the text; viz., "I will give thee a crown of life." This crown evidently represents the great reward which God will bestow upon all the faithful, "in that

day." In 2 Timothy 4:7, 8, we have it very plainly expressed by the Apostle Paul: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

God is loving and kind. He commands that we may be prepared, and he promises that we may have a bright hope upon which we can safely rely. "I have kept the faith," said Paul, and because of this he knew that there was a crown of righteousness awaiting him, and that this same crown would be given to all who "love his appearing." Those who love his appearing will make preparation to meet him, that they may "see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Faithfulness is the condition which enables us to enter into rest, that glorious rest which remains "for the people of God."

If time would permit I would like to show you how we receive a foretaste of the promised reward in this life; a still greater degree in the intermediate state, and a *fullness* in the resurrection. We do not have to wait till we pass over the river of death—much less till the resurrection—without knowing anything of the character of the promised reward. The Ephesian Saints, after hearing the gospel of their salvation, trusted in Christ. And after their belief they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, "which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory."—Eph. 1:13, 14.

I believe that the faithful have an ever-present claim upon God for the Holy Spirit, though any great degree of its light and power seems to remain but for a little season, at a time, when we are left to feel keenly our own weakness, and learn to depend upon God. But these little seasons of enjoyment of light and power with God, saying nothing of the more constant blessings which we are too apt to overlook and undervalue, more than compensate for all our hours of darkness and struggle. This being true what will it be in the world to come when we are permitted to enjoy a fullness? The conditions there will be glorious! God will make all things new, the Saints with new and immortal bodies, standing upon a new and glorified earth: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."—Rev. 21:4. God will be with his people, and his people will be with him. A new order of things will be introduced. The meek shall inherit the earth, "delight themselves in the abundance of peace," "and dwell therein forever." We can safely trust in all his promises, but we must obey his commands in order to be worthy of them. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."