

# SUPPLEMENT.

LAMONI GAZETTE.

JULY 1888,

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## SERMON,

BY ELDER WILLARD J. SMITH,  
OF CAMERON, ONTARIO, DELIV-  
ERED AT INDEPENDENCE, MO.,  
APRIL 7TH, 1888.

I stand before you this morning for the purpose of talking to you for a while in regard to the gospel of Christ.

I call your attention to Malachi 3:6:

For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

This basis for my remarks is selected because it purports to be a statement from God. It is His language spoken through his accredited prophet about four hundred years prior to the coming of Christ. Through this prophet God says he is an unchangeable God; "and therefore," for this reason, "ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." We can easily understand why the saints were not consumed, when we consider that the 136 psalm in 26 different places, tells us that God's mercy endureth forever. It was for this reason that they were not consumed. God's mercy had been extended unto them in the past; and he declared in the language of our text, that he did not change, and therefore they could have confidence in him, that he would still be merciful to them. And we read that God said, "All day long I have stretched

forth my hand to a wicked and gain-saying people;" but his mercy was still extended unto them because he was an unchangeable God.

Some may object to our going to the Old Testament to select a text. We have had people do so in our experience. But this objection can not stand when we call attention to the fact that the same sentiment is voiced by James in chapter 1 and verses 17 and 18:

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

This seems to be stronger than the language of our text. It positively affirms that with God there is not even a shadow of turning. If God is thus unchangeable, we can for that reason exercise confidence in him. If we can find how God has dealt with his people in the past, methinks we can find how he will deal with them in the future. God is presented both in the text and by James as absolutely unchangeable. We have been taught from our infancy that there are three personages in the God-head, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. James in speaking of the "Father of lights," no doubt refers to God the eternal father. And he declares that He is without variableness

or shadow of turning. We ask how is it with Christ, the second personage in the God-head. Is he like the Father, unchangeable, or will he change? If you will go with me to Hebrews 12:8, you will read that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. The Father and Son, then, are unchangeable. Is the Holy Ghost unchangeable also? When we consider that the Holy Ghost procedes from the Father, and the Father and Son are unchangeable, we see that the Holy Ghost must also be unchangeable, from the fact that a pure fountain could not send forth impure water. As we have the Father, Son and Holy Ghost constituting an unchangeable God, if we can find out what God has been in the past we can find out what he is to-day. But some will say we all believe in God, and that he is an unchangeable being, and why waste time in making this argument? For this reason: It must be apparent to all, that if the Father, Son and Holy Spirit constitute an unchangeable God, they must of necessity have an unchangeable law. If we can find out what that law was in the past, we can find out what it is today. If God has one law for today and another for tomorrow we cannot have confidence in him. Our text gives us to understand that he does not deal thus with the human family. If, therefore, we can ascertain his law in the past with reference to final salvation, we have ascertained what his law in the present is also.

I first quote Psalms 19:7:

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

This may be questioned because it is in the Old Testament; we there-

fore come<sup>s</sup> to the New Testament, James 1:25:

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

The apostle and Psalmist harmonize in teaching the same grand truth, that the law of God is perfect, and whosoever obeys it shall be blessed. As God is unchangeable, and his law perfect, I ask how do we understand this perfection? I stand before you, and I declare myself to be a perfect man, that is in organization. I have all the parts necessary to constitute a perfect man. Suppose I should stand before you this evening minus a hand or a finger, could I then represent myself as being perfect in organization? I certainly could not; for the moment I should do so, you would call my attention to the fact that one of my members was gone. If I am imperfect when one of my limbs is gone, can we represent the law of God as being perfect, if we take one principle therefrom, even if it is the simplest principle contained in the word of God? If we take anything from that law it becomes imperfect; and as the Psalmist tells us that the perfect law brought salvation, if we pervert it by taking anything from it, will that perverted law bring salvation? It seems to me that you will agree with me that it cannot, because it takes the whole, perfect law to bring salvation. If the law was perfect, taking anything from it would render it imperfect, and adding anything to it would render it monstrous.

We can readily see the necessity for clearly understanding what that law is that was given through Jesus

Christ eighteen hundred years ago. In Hebrews 6:1-2, we are told the principles of that law, namely, faith, repentance, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. These are the six fundamental principles of that perfect law. If they constituted the principles of that law then, they constitute the principles of it to day. If these constitute that law to day, which one of them is not obligatory upon the human family? Are they not all of equal force to us? Do they not all rest upon us with equal power? We are generally told to-day, in answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and the moment we do so, the Father for Christ's sake forgives our sins." I do not believe it. I once listened to a preacher discussing the subject of baptism. He interpreted the word so as to dispense with that principle. After he made his argument he said: "Do you still ask me what to do to be saved? I answer, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; that is all there is to do." There is not a soul under the sound of my voice, but what would go away free from his sins, if he could do so by simply saying, I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But devils thus believe. The apostle says that devils believe and tremble, and if they are going to be saved I do not want to go there. Belief is not all. I stop and ask, if I simply believe in Jesus Christ, shall I do away with my sins? Is this all there is to do? Christianity to-day tells us it is. Jesus says, "Verily I say unto you, unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish." Jesus teaches re-

pentance. If you wish to dispense with the principles of baptism because not mentioned in the language of Paul, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," then upon the same theory I will dispense with repentance because it is not mentioned in the same place. I believe that faith is an independent principle, and when Jesus said, we must believe or perish, he said what he meant, and when he said we must repent he meant every word of it.

Repentance is conceded by most people, but it is not always taught even in the sermons of those who concede it, that it is necessary to salvation. But I ask, is there anything else necessary? "Yes" says the Christianity of to-day, "you must give your heart to God. You must pray, call upon God and be sincere and devoted to God and you will be saved." This I do not believe, from the fact that God is unchangeable. I turn to the ninth and twenty second of Acts and find that Saul believed in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and repented of his sins, and was engaged in prayer. But what does Ananias say about his sins? Does he say this is all that is necessary? No. He says, why tarriest thou?" You have believed, repented, and are engaging in prayer, why tarry, God has sent me that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. In order to this, "Arise and be baptized." What for? Because your sins have been forgiven? Arise and be baptized because your sins *have been* washed away? It would have to read that way if Sectarianism were true. But it reads, "Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins. If this was required

of Paul in order to the washing away of his sins, it is also required of us today—of all who have not entered into covenant relationship with God by virtue of obeying his commandments. It is required of all because God does not change. We are told that it is not necessary to be baptized. When we get to heaven we will not be asked as to what road we came. I understand on the contrary, that there is but one way and that a straight and narrow one. "Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it." But popular Christianity renders it thus: "Straight are the gates and narrow are the ways, that enter into life, and many there be that go in thereat." What does our Savior tell us in regard to this matter? He said to Nicodemus, "Except you are born of water and of the spirit, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Thus has Jesus declared; and I care not what D. Ds., or L. L. Ds. have said, we cannot get into the kingdom of heaven without being baptized. I prefer to stand with Christ, though so far as others are concerned I may stand alone. How can we be born of water? Come up here if you want to be baptized, and I will pour you. Another says, we will sprinkle you and another you must be immersed; and yet others tell us it is immaterial which one of these we follow. Jesus says, "Except a man be born of the water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." We can not be born of water by having a little water sprinkled upon our heads; nor by having a little water poured upon us. I may have a barrel of water poured upon me, and still it does not

constitute a birth. Before a birth there must be a conception. There is none in either sprinkling or pouring. In order to a birth there must be a change of position and a change of element. Without being changed from one element to another, it is impossible to be born. In order to be born of the water, we must be changed from the element of air to the element of water, and back again to the element of air. This change does not take place either in sprinkling or pouring. In order to be born of the water, I must be concealed in that element. When I am concealed in that element, the water encloses me as it were in a tomb, and when I emerge from it, do I not come from the element of water to the element of air? In order to be born of water we must first be conceived in water; and in order to a conception there must be an immersion. Jesus has made this imperative.

I now pass on for a moment. Jesus also says that we must be born of the Spirit. Latter Day Saints tell us that in order to receive this Spirit as an abiding comforter, we must comply with the conditions we have already mentioned. Also that we must receive the laying on of hands for the gift of that Spirit. Hundreds take exceptions to this view. They tell us that they have believed, have repented of their sins, and have associated themselves with the various churches of the day. That God has blessed them and poured out his spirit upon them. Some have belonged to church for fifteen or twenty years. Life's troubles have at times loomed up before them, and they have been cast down and discouraged; but going to God in humble prayer they have received grace and strength. They ask us, do you not think this is the Holy Spirit, abiding Comforter? Do you think I have not received the comforter when I have received such comfort? They tell us they never have believed in it, yet have received these blessings. I answer for myself and say, I do not believe it is the Holy Ghost as an abid-

ing Comforter, neither do I believe it can be obtained in that way unless God steps outside of his usual way. John says, "We must not believe every spirit, but try the spirits." Isaiah says of spirits, if they speak not according to God's law, it is because there is no light in them. If a spirit bears witness to me that Jesus is the Christ, though I had never obeyed the conditions necessary to the reception of the Holy Spirit, I am forced to believe it is not the abiding comforter; because we read here, that we must comply with the law in order to receive it. Let us see what this spirit is that people receive without obedience to the principles of the gospel. Come to the eighth of Acts, and I think I can give you a description of it.

"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voices, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized: both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God,

they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost; (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostle's hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."

You will notice that when they believed Philip's preaching in that city they had great joy. Just as some of our friends have great joy at Camp meeting. As good Charles Wesley expresses it,

"I will not let thee go,  
Till a blessing thou bestow."

God blessed them with peace and joy to which they had hitherto been strangers. Let us see whether this joy was the Holy Ghost. We are informed that when they believed the preaching of Philip concerning the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized. Then when the apostles heard that Samaria had received the word they sent unto them Peter and John. What for? "Who when they were come prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet he had fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." They had received joy, the same kind of joy which our friends tell us about, but had not received the Holy Ghost. They had believed, repented, been baptized, and received great joy, but had not received the Holy Ghost, as an abiding Comforter. What was this they had received? Did they ever receive the Holy Ghost? Yes. Let us see about this. When Simon saw that through the laying on of the hands of the apostles, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them

money, to secure the same power, to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. This is positive proof that the Holy Ghost is given through the laying on of hands, and that the "great joy" was not the Holy Ghost. We read in the nineteenth of Acts, that Paul had baptized twelve different parties, and when he had laid his hands upon them, they received the Holy Ghost, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. Then one of the principles of the "perfect law" of the Lord is the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. It was for this specific purpose, that the Apostles came to Samaria. If the Holy Ghost is then received as an abiding Comforter only through the laying on of hands, what is this great joy? In John 12:2, Jesus says:

"And I, if I be lifted up on the cross, will draw all men unto me."

Again in John 6:44:

"No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

Again John 14:15-16:

"If ye love me, keep my commandments: And I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."

My friends, this passage explains the matter. "I will send you *another* Comforter." They had one Comforter which the world could receive. But "I will send you *another* Comforter," if you keep my commandments, and this the world can not receive. A man may receive great joy by humbling himself before God and calling upon his name, whether he is at the penitent bench or not. What do you think it is for? To draw all men to Christ. It is a Comforter given which the world may receive, for the specific purpose of leading us to Christ. "No man can come unto the Son, except the Father draw him." "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me." I assert that the Apostles of Jesus Christ,

prior to the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, received no other spirit than that which the world may receive. Some will take exceptions to this. But Jesus promised them *another* Comforter. You will find in John 7:38-39 the following:

"He that believeth on me, as the Scriptures hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not glorified.)"

We read that he said just before his ascension, "Father, glorify thou me, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." He was not glorified prior to his ascension. If you love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father and he will send you *another* comforter." You have had during my life with you the comforter which the world can receive, but now I propose to give you the comforter which the world can not receive. "It will guide you into all truth and show you things to come." Any man may receive great joy if he will believe, repent and humble himself before God; but the Holy Ghost as an abiding Comforter can not be received except through the laying on of hands, unless God steps out of his usual way. When they obeyed the law they received the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands. This the apostles never received after the ascension. In the second of Acts I find an account of their receiving it. According to Christ's command they tarried at Jerusalem, and after waiting they assembled together and received the Holy Ghost. I wish to show you the difference between the spirit which they received on Pentecost and that which they had received prior to that time. In Luke Jesus says: "Peter, Satan has desired to have thee, that he might sift thee as chaff. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." Peter had been sent by the

Lord to cleanse lepers, cast out devils and raise the dead; and after three years Jesus says, "When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." Afterwards when Peter boldly declared that he would stand by his Lord in any extremity, Jesus said, "The cock shall not crow twice until thou hast denied me thrice." This prophecy as you all know was literally fulfilled. Three days from the time Peter denied his Master, Jesus arose triumphant over death, hell and the grave, tarried with them forty days, and then, just before his ascension he says, "Tarry at Jerusalem until you are endowed with power from on high." From the day that Peter denied Christ until the day of Pentecost just 53 days had elapsed. Let us see whether Peter had received this abiding comforter before Christ's ascension. In the last of Luke we are told that Jesus returned on high, and the Apostles returned to Jerusalem. They received and enjoyed that which gave them great joy, but it was not the abiding comforter. On the day of Pentecost there came the sound as of a mighty rushing wind, and filled the whole house where they were sitting. Cloven tongues as of fire sat upon each of them, and they spake in tongues. There were seventeen different nationalities right there, and they came together and heard these men speak in their own tongues. Some mocked and others said these men are drunken, filled with new wine. But Peter standing up with the eleven spoke unto them as follows:

"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your

young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants, and on my hand maidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

Peter does not deny him here. The Holy Ghost had been given, and he was enabled to speak by the power of that Spirit. Then the people cried out "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Equivalent to the expression, We realize that we have crucified Christ, what shall we do to have our sins remitted? Peter says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." "These men supposed to be devout men, they were thought to be good, pious men; but Peter, nevertheless says, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you and unto your children and unto all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." This promise is far reaching. "Unto all that are afar off." As many even in this age as will comply with the conditions, obey the commandments may re-

receive the Holy Spirit, as an abiding comforter. The promise is unto as many "as the Lord our God shall call." Are we under the call of God? Then we have a right to that same spirit. Says Isaiah, "Look unto me all ye ends of the earth and be saved; for I am God." "Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, buy milk and honey without money and without price." We pass along to the time of Christ and we hear him saying, "Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden and I will give you rest." To whom was this addressed? All that desired rest. Again I find it recorded in Revelations, "And the spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say come, and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will may come and partake of the waters of life freely." Friends, I am glad it says, "Whosoever will." That includes you and me. And if we are under the call of God to-day,

we have a right to that Spirit. May heaven help us to strive in that way that is acceptable to God to be obedient, that that spirit may be an abiding comforter unto us. Then may we "add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, etc., that we may be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord." May heaven help us to seek and cultivate the Christian graces, that we may at last be permitted to dwell with Christ, is my prayer, Amen.

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# ELDER H. C. BRONSON,

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## ON the ATONEMENT of CHRIST,

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Will be our next supplement.