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TITHES AND OFFERINGS.

Discourses Delivered by Elder Orson F. Whitney and President George Q. Cannon, at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, November 12, 1893.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY.

[The speaker read the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 8th, 9th, and 10th verses of the third Chapter, and the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th and 6th verses of the fourth Chapter of Malachi. They read as follows:]

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap.

And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

These words were uttered by a Prophet of God, about four hundred years

before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh. They were spoken to the Jews by Malachi, the last of the Old Testament Prophets, after whose time the voice of prophecy was hushed and remained still until the advent of John the Baptist, heralding the coming of one mightier, even the Lord our Savior. I presume that many Christian scholars, perhaps most of them, would take the ground that these predictions have been fulfilled; that they were fulfilled when Christ came; that that was the "rising of the Sun of righteousness" of which the Prophet speaks. But the Latter-day Saints have been taught to believe, and we hold, that these predictions are applicable to our own day, and that they have not yet been fulfilled to the uttermost. In some particulars, doubtless, they have been, but the great fulfillment is yet to come.

It will perhaps be well for us to inquire a little into the circumstances under which these words were spoken. Six hundred years before the birth of our Savior, there came various Prophets speaking to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, telling them that that great city was about to be destroyed. Jeremiah the Prophet spoke thus. He told his countrymen that because of their transgressions, because of the profaning of the Sabbath, and the neglect by the people of the law of Moses, God would destroy the city of Jerusalem and carry away captive its inhabitants; that He had raised up a great man named Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, into whose hands He had committed all the nations of the earth. Jeremiah counseled his people to bend their necks to the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, and promised them that if they did so, it should be well with them. He told them that if they trusted in the power of Egypt—for there was an Egyptian party in Jerusalem, who thought it more advantageous that the Jews should form an alliance with that nation—they would lean upon a broken reed, and that it would be better for them to submit to Nebuchadnezzar. He predicted that they would serve him for seventy years, until the land which they had desecrated by their transgressions, by refusing to let it rest every seventh year, should have enjoyed its Sabbaths, and then they would be permitted to return. Another Prophet who had preceded Jeremiah—the great Isaiah—also referred to this captivity, and he named the man whom God would raise up to proclaim deliverance to His people, that they might re-occupy their land after the seventy years were ac-

complished. The Lord, through Isaiah, called this man Cyrus, His "Shepherd," His "Anointed," "whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him," and said that He had commanded him to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem. We are told that there were divers Prophets who predicted these or similar things to that disobedient and stiff-necked people. Among them was a Prophet named Lehi, who was a cotemporary of Jeremiah. He was warned in a dream of the destruction of Jerusalem, and told to take his family and depart into the wilderness, and God would lead him unto a chosen land. He did so, taking the records of his fathers (for he was a descendant of Joseph through Manasseh) with tents and provisions for his family and a few others, and they sojourned for some years in the wilderness of Arabia. On the shores of the Persian Gulf they constructed ships, by commandment of God, crossed the Indian and Pacific Oceans and landed on the coast of the country now called Chili, in South America. The Book of Mormon is a history of the descendants of Lehi. This Prophet lived at the time when Jeremiah predicted the destruction of Jerusalem.

A few years later this terrible prediction was fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar came against the city, besieged and captured it. He desolated the land, for the Jews had formed an alliance with the king of Egypt and had not hearkened to Jeremiah's words, and they were carried away into captivity, and served the king of Babylon seventy years. After that period was accomplished, God inspired Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon, who now bore sway over the world as the head of the Medo Persian empire, to proclaim deliverance to the Jews and give all who desired it the privilege of going up to the land of Judea to rebuild the waste places of Jerusalem. It is said that forty-two thousand, under the leadership of two great men named Zerubbabel and Joshua, took advantage of this offer and returned to their country, and began to rebuild and reinhabit the places which had been desolate for so long. But the work languished, for they were surrounded by people who were foreign to them in spirit, in motive, in laws and customs. The men of Edom were there, the descendants of Esau. They had encroached, during the years of the captivity, upon lands formerly occupied by the Jews, and retired reluctantly, even at the command of Cyrus, to give place to the returning captives. Other nations