

DISCOURSE

BY

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DELIVERED

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REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I WILL call the attention of the congregation to a portion of the word of God contained in the third chapter of Malachi—"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. 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."

I have read these words, because of the peculiar prophecy which is contained therein, of what the Lord will perform about the time of his coming. A prophecy that the Lord would come, and the nature of that coming should be such that but a few comparatively will be prepared to endure that day; that when he does come, he will have a temple on the earth, to which he will come. A part of the programme which was read yesterday morning, if I recollect right, for the elders to speak upon, during conference, was in relation to building temples. The building of temples of the Lord is promised in his word, for there we read that in the latter days he would have a house built on the earth. I know that in the ears of this generation it will sound very strangely to talk about the Lord having a house built on this globe of ours; yet we have such a promise, strange as it may be, and that when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, and shall sit as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap on the sons of Levi, to purify them as gold and silver he will, in that day, come to his temple, and come very suddenly. That shows, at once, that he must have a temple on the earth in the latter time.

There are two other prophets, besides Malachi, who have spoken of the house of the Lord. Isaiah, in his second chapter, refers to the building of the Lord's house in the latter days. I will repeat the passage—"It shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and nations shall flow unto it. Many nations shall say, 'Come, let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he shall teach us of his ways, and we shall walk in his paths;' and the Lord shall rebuke strong nations afar off"—meaning nations at a great distance from Jerusalem, where the prophet delivered the prophecy. "He shall rebuke strong nations afar off, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." The fourth chapter of Micah contains a similar prediction, which it is not necessary for me to repeat, as it reads, almost word for word, like that in the second chapter of Isaiah, showing plainly and clearly that in the latter days God would have a house built on the earth.

Perhaps there may be objections by our Christian friends to the Latter-day Saints proclaiming in the midst of Christendom that the Lord intends to have a house built on the earth. They will probably say—"He has hundreds of them, and has had for many generations. God has houses scattered here and there throughout all the Christian nations, and there never has been a time since the days of the Apostles but what the Lord has had a house, either at Corinth, Athens, or somewhere else; and you can read the inscriptions upon them as you pass through the towns and cities of Christendom." These houses are called the houses of God, or Jesus, the church of St. John, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Mark and others, and all of them are considered the houses of God. Would to God that this were true! Would to God that he had given some directions concerning the building of some of these

houses! But alas! when we come to inquire concerning their origin, we find that they were built by uninspired men, that the architecture and everything pertaining to them has been devised by the cunning and wisdom of men. Ask them if God commanded them to select the particular location on which one of these houses stands? They will say—"No, God does not direct now-a-days. There was a time when the Lord did direct in such matters, but now we have wise men, we have bodies of learned men who have studied theology. We do not need the Lord to interfere in our day; he don't speak anything to the people in the age in which we live; these houses were constructed according to the best plans and architecture we were acquainted with by our wisdom, without any commandment or revelation from the heavens." Very well, then the Lord has nothing to do with them. What I understand by the building of a house of God, is to build one after the pattern that he shall give. I do not mean a pattern that was given in ancient times, but one given to the very people to whom the revelation comes to build a house to his name. Has such been the case with the houses of worship throughout the Christian nations? Not in one instance. You may travel all through this great republic, from one end thereof to the other, and among all the Christian denominations who deny new revelation, is there one house which God commanded to be built? Indeed these very prophecies would seem to indicate that, in the day when they should begin to be fulfilled, there should be no house of the Lord on the earth. Is it not a peculiar kind of a saying that in the latter days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and be exalted above the hills? It shows that for a long period prior to the erection of the house of God in the mountains no such thing could be found on the face of the whole earth, and it was needful for the Lord, in the latter days, to begin a work of that kind. No place for Jesus to come to. He is to come in the clouds of heaven, in flaming fire, in power and great glory, clothed upon with all the brightness of the celestial heavens, his face will outshine the sun and cause it to withhold its light in shame. No place for this glorious personage to come to, no temple prepared into which he can come. When he does come, however, this work will have been accomplished—he will come to his temple suddenly. It will not be like his first coming. Then, instead of coming to his temple suddenly we find him born in a very low condition, not even in the common mansions or dwelling places of the inhabitants of Palestine, but in a stable or manger. When he visited the great temple at Jerusalem, when about twelve years old, and also after he began his ministry, when about thirty years old, instead of sitting upon the sons of Levi and purifying them as gold and silver in a furnace of fire, that they might offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, who was it who rejected the Son of God in that day? The sons of Levi. They cried out against and persecuted him; they were his greatest enemies; they crucified him. They were not purged and prepared to offer in the temple of the Lord an offering in righteousness. The glory of God did not appear in their midst, and their offerings were not acceptable in that temple before the Lord, but he found his house, in that day, a den of thieves, occupied by money-changers and brokers; speculation going on in the midst of the house of God, and he was under the necessity of making a small scourge and driving them out by whipping them. Not so in the latter times, when he comes to his temple. In that day, when the mountain of the house of the Lord is established in the tops of the mountains, it will be an indication of a great period of peace, a period which is so often spoken of by the mouths of the ancient prophets, in which nation shall no more lift up sword against nation, when they shall no longer have use for firearms or weapons of war, or anything that is calculated to destroy life; but these deadly implements will be converted into useful articles of husbandry. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war any more. That time has not come, and such a period was never known on the earth.

There is another thing connected with the building of the temple in

the latter-days. When it is built, on the place, and according to the pattern that the Lord shall designate it will be so strange to the nations, that they will actually come up from all parts of our globe. Many of them will say one to another—"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the house of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob." "What do you want to go up there for? Why do you want to travel several thousand miles across land and sea to go to the mountain of the house of the Lord?" "That he may teach us of his ways, that we may walk in his paths." "Can you not be taught in his ways in your own chapels, which you have built in England, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Austria, or wherever you may have resided? Can you not worship in your own chapels?" "Oh, no, there is no house of the Lord, we have no teachers authorized of God, no prophets and apostles inspired by and called of God to officiate like the ancient apostles; no one to say to us 'Thus saith the Lord God,' by new revelation; no visions are manifested among us; no angels have honored our houses of worship with their presence; no glory, no fire descending from heaven to light up these chapels and sanctuaries which we have built, and we have lost all confidence in our teachers, consequently let us go up to yonder mountain on which God's house has been built, and when we get there, he will teach us in his ways, and we will walk in his paths." "Is the only object you have in going to the mountain of the house of the Lord to receive teachings?" No there are other things to be attended to in the house of God or in temples that may be built in the tops of the mountains besides teaching. We have a great many important duties to perform pertaining to the house of God, duties that can not be performed anywhere else acceptably in his sight.

Would you like to know some of the uses of these temples or houses of God? I will read a little from one of our modern revelations, given through Joseph Smith, in Nauvoo, on the 19th day of January, 1841. I have not time to read the whole of the revelation, but will select a few sections. Speaking of building a house to his name, the Lord says—"Verily I say unto you, let all my saints come from afar"—this we have fulfilled so far as the gathering is concerned.

"And again, verily I say unto you, let all my Saints come from afar; and send ye swift messengers, yea chosen messengers, and say unto them, Come ye, with all your gold and your silver, and your precious stones, and with all your antiquities; and with all who have knowledge of antiquities, that will come, may come, and bring the box tree, and the fir tree, and the pine tree, together with all the precious trees of the earth; and with iron, with copper, and with brass, and with zinc, and with all your precious things of the earth, and build a house to my name, for the Most High to dwell therein; for there is not a place found on earth that he may come and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fullness of the priesthood; for a baptismal font there is not upon the earth, that they, my Saints, may be baptized for those who are dead; for this ordinance belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me. But I command you all, ye my Saints, to build a house unto me; and I grant unto you a sufficient time to build a house unto me, and during this time your baptisms shall be acceptable unto me."

I want this conference to understand that it is not only the Saints who are here assembled, but all in this Territory, and wherever our settlements extend, all who have entered into covenant with the Lord are under this command. I will read further.

But behold, at the end of this appointment, your baptisms for your dead shall not be acceptable unto me; and if you do not these things at the end of the appointment, ye shall be rejected as a church, with your dead, saith the Lord your God. For verily I say unto you that after you have had sufficient time to build a house to me, wherein the ordinance of baptizing for the dead belongeth, and for which the same was instituted from before the foundation of the world, your baptisms for your dead cannot be acceptable unto me, for therein are the keys of the holy priesthood, ordained that you may

receive honour and glory. And after this time, your baptisms for the dead, by those who are scattered abroad, are not acceptable unto me, saith the Lord; for it is ordained that in Zion, and in her stakes, and in Jerusalem, those places which I have appointed for refuge, shall be places for your baptisms for your dead.

"And again, verily I say unto you, how shall your washings be acceptable unto me, except ye perform them in a house which you have built to my name? For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise, that those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before the world was; therefore verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your memorials for your sacrifices, by the sons of Levi, and for your oracles in your most holy places, wherein you receive conversations, and your statutes and judgments, for the beginning of revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, honour, and endowment of all her municipalities, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name."

It seems to be a standing command to the Saints, wherever they may be located, to build a house unto the Lord, wherever there is a stronghold pointed out for the gathering of the saints, such as Kirtland, Nauvoo, Jackson County, Mo., and other places which are mentioned in revelation. The Lord has commanded his Saints in all these places to do a work, which will be effectually accomplished in due time. They are always commanded to build a house unto the Lord.

We have been here twenty-six years and have only a foundation and a few tiers of rock laid towards a house of the Lord. It is true we have a large tabernacle which will contain some fifteen thousand persons when they are closely seated, and the standing room also occupied. But this is not a temple of the Lord. We meet here to sing praises, and to be instructed in our duties as Saints, but this is not a house of ordinances; it is not a house for the baptism of the dead, or in which the Saints receive their washings and anointing; it is not a house in which you will receive statutes, and judgments, and laws pertaining to the kingdom of God. God has ordained a building of a different pattern wherein laws, statutes, judgments, and ordinances are to be revealed for the benefit of his people. "And verily I say unto you, let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people; for I desire to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fullness of times."

I think that portion of this revelation which I have read, will give you a general idea of the sacredness of the house of the Lord which is to be built in the latter times, a place wherein the angels may come and visit, as they did in the ancient temple; a place wherein you can receive all those ordinances which the Lord has revealed, and which he will, hereafter reveal, from time to time, preparatory to the great day of the coming of the Lord.

Now let me mention over some few things which should be administered in the temple of the Most High. Marriage, for instance, is an ordinance of God. We know it to be not only an ordinance administered among the various nations according to their civil laws, but know also that it is a religious ordinance, administered by authority from God. If any one wants any proof on this point let him read the 6th verse of the 19th chapter of Matthew. "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder." It seems, then, that in marriage there is such a principle as the Lord officiating through his servants, in joining persons in this sacred and holy ordinance. There are a great many marriages that may answer the requirements of the civil law of different countries and nations, and there are some marriages performed even in our Territory, but the Lord has not directed them, neither has he directed his servants in their administration. He has not particularly forbidden these marriages, he permits and suffers them, but he has no particular hand in their performance. Do you wish

me to explain this matter? I will. For instance, in the distant settlements of the Territory oftentimes a young man and woman desire to be married. They go and find a justice of the peace, or an elder of the church, as the case may be, and he officiates in the ceremony and marries them, somewhat similar to what people are married among the various nations. Does God really accept of this marriage, or does he merely suffer it to be so, for the time being? Has he joined them together, or has the justice of the peace, by virtue of his civil office? "How is it?" Says one—"I suppose it must be a legal marriage." It is legal so far as the laws of the Territory are concerned. If a young man and woman in any part of this Territory wish to be married, there is nothing illegal in a justice of the peace performing the ceremony, he has a right to do it, according to the laws of the Territory. But is it legal in the sight of heaven? No, it is not. Why not? Because God has appointed a place in which this sacred ordinance should be administered, and he has appointed certain authority to officiate in its solemnization, and a certain form, when it is done in the place and by the authority he has ordained. It is then legal in the sight of heaven, then they are married or joined together, not for time alone, but the union is to exist throughout all the ages of eternity. This is the real order of marriage. This is one of the purposes for which God has commanded us to build a house, that our young people may have the privilege of entering into that sacred union not only for time, or until they are parted by death, but that they may have a legal claim, by virtue of the marriage covenant, upon each other after the resurrection.

Some may say—"I think I will wait until after the resurrection and then I will secure me a wife for eternity; or perhaps I will merely marry a woman here for time, and put off the eternal part, until after the resurrection." What says Jesus on this subject? "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage." Why not? Because that is an ordinance, like baptism, that must be administered by those in the flesh. If, while in the flesh, we fail to secure to ourselves the remission of our sins, and the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost by going down into the water and being baptized for the remission of our sins, by one having authority to administer this ordinance, we can not attend to it in our own persons after the resurrection. That is an ordinance that cannot be administered after the resurrection; if it is not done until then, it must be done by some person still living in the flesh, for and in behalf of the one who has gone into the spirit world. Those in the spirit world have no claim upon blessings for eternity, unless they are secured while in the flesh. It is so with all the ordinances pertaining to eternity, they must be performed in the flesh, and not in the next life. Hence if an individual is so unfortunate that he fights against a principle, or becomes careless and indifferent; or if he goes to a justice of the peace, thinking that he will secure to himself a wife for eternity, he is grandly mistaken; and if he dies, having been married according to this form, he has no promise whatsoever that, after the resurrection, he will have a wife; for in that world, this sacred ordinance cannot be attended to.

Another thing which I wish to explain is, that, in the sight of heaven, their children are illegitimate. Of course they are legitimate according to the laws of the country. Such children can claim the property of their parents, they are the legal heirs to the property descending from parents to children by virtue of the laws of the country. But when I say illegitimate I mean in the sight of heaven. Now, all you young people who have been married in this Territory or abroad, by justices of the peace, or even by elders of the church only for time, when you have the opportunity of coming up here to the house of God, and receiving these ordinances, and do not, your children are illegitimate in the sight of heaven.

Perhaps you may enquire, "What is there to be inherited in eternity that makes it really necessary that our children should be legitimate, so far as divine authority is concerned?" The Lord our God is a God of law, his house is a house of order; and all blessings, and honor, and glory, and inheritance, that are to be received in the eternal worlds