

forcing the law was evidenced in the people's lack of support of the temple services. Unacceptable sacrifice of the worst rather than the first of their flocks were brought to God. Tithes went unpaid and the practice of intermarrying with Gentile women again reared its ugly head. (cp. *Ezra* 9)

In this state the coming of the Messiah for Whom they waited was in reality a threat rather than a promise.

We do not know the name of the author of this last Old Testament writing. The word Malachi means "my messenger" and is the name of the writer's function. It is suggested that he is called Malachi because of his emphatic prediction of a personal Messiah. The term "Malachi" is actually translated "my messenger" in 3:1.

This primary prediction of the book (3:1) is applied to John the Baptist, also the Messiah's messenger. (cp. *Matthew* 11:10, *Mark* 1:2, *Luke* 7:17, *Matthew* 17:10-12, *Mark* 9:11-12, *Luke* 1:16-17)

Most commentators point out that Malachi's prophecy coincided with the first period of Daniel's seventy weeks (cf. *Daniel* 9:24). Thus the emphasis upon him as the Messiah's messenger seems fitting.

MALACHI'S MESSAGE . . .

Malachi's central concern is for fidelity to the covenant. (See the Covenant Theme in the Prophets, chapter III.) The priests have corrupted the worship which was designed to perpetuate covenant consciousness among the people. The men are marrying foreign women and so opening the door to idolatry as had Solomon of old.

In refuting this evil, Malachi rises to one of the heights of Old Testament prophecy in describing the purpose of the covenant in the ultimate worship of God among the Gentiles. His references to God as Father, the ideal priest, and the blessings of true obedience are equally striking in their Messianic overtones. He further clarifies, "the Day of the Lord," and points to the forerunner of the Messiah.

It is no doubt for these reasons that Malachi immediately precedes the New Testament in our English versions of the Bible.

The next word from Jehovah to His people is John's preaching.

CHAPTER XLIV

DENUNCIATION OF UNFAITHFULNESS

SUPERScription . . . Malachi 1:1

RV . . . The burden of the word of Jehovah to Israel by Malachi.

LXX . . . The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by the hand of his messenger. Lay it, I pray you, to heart.

COMMENTS

Malachi begins with the prophet's usual claim to inspiration, "the burden of the word of Jehovah." The message is to Israel.

The term "Israel" appears four times in Malachi. (1:1, 1:5, 2:16, and 4:4) There can be little doubt that its use in this context is designed to underscore the covenant relationship of the people to Jehovah. (See review of the use of "Israel" in Chapter IV, comments on *Micah 1:5*)

The message will first convince, then comfort; first discover sin, then reprove it. It will reach its climax in the promise of Him Who is to take away sin.

GOD LOVES ISRAEL . . . Malachi 1:2-5

RV . . . I have loved you, saith Jehovah. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith Jehovah: yet I loved Jacob; but Esau I hated, and made his mountains a desolation, and gave his heritage to the jackals of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are beaten down but we will return and build the waste places; thus saith Jehovah of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and men shall call them The border of wickedness, and The people against whom Jehovah hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, Jehovah be magnified beyond the border of Israel.

LXX . . . I have loved you, saith the Lord. And ye said, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and hated Esau, and laid waste his borders, and made his heritage as dwellings of the wilderness? Because one will say, Idumea has been overthrown, but let us return and rebuild the desolate places; thus saith the Lord Almighty, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall be called The borders of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord has set himself for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord has been magnified upon the borders of Israel.

COMMENTS

In these verses Israel is charged with being insensible to God's love. To overcome this insensitivity, He says emphatically, "I have loved you."

It is not the first time He has declared His love. (cp. *Jeremiah 31:3-4*) All of His dealings, from the initial establishment of the covenant, have been the result of this love.

In answer to the anticipated question "Wherein hast thou loved us?" Jehovah answers specifically in terms of His preference for Jacob over Esau.

The Jews were prone to think of themselves as superior to other races. Here God reminds them He has shown His love to them, not just in preference to other races, but in preference over those of their own race. Jacob and Esau were twin brothers, yet God established His covenant with Jacob, father of all Israelites, rather than with Esau, father of the Edomites. "I loved Jacob . . . I hated Esau."

God does not, of course, unequivocally, hate any man or race of men. (cf. *Acts 10:34, 35*) This statement must be kept in context. It is in contrast to His great love for His covenant people that His love for others seems hatred by comparison. Much in the same vein, Jesus demands that we "hate" father, mother, brother, sister, wife and even self. (*Luke 14:26*) We know He does not want us to literally hate anyone. (cp. *Matthew 5:43-48*) Neither does He hate anyone, excepting in comparison to His love for His chosen people.

The evidence of His preferential love for Israel over Edom is pictured in contrast of Edom's homeland to the "land flowing with milk and honey" into which He led His people. Edom lies southeast of the Dead Sea in the Arabian desert. Its capital, Petra, was cut out of solid red limestone cliffs. The surrounding area is desolate and barren.

Paul set upon the contrast between Jacob and Esau in establishing God's love for His covenant people. (*Romans 9:13*) The apostle points out the contrast is not between two nations *per se*, for "they are not all Israel that are of Israel." (*Romans 9:6*) The real contrast is between the covenant people and the noncovenant people for "this is a word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." (*Romans 9:9-13*)

Since it was His promise to redeem all mankind that was the heart of His covenant, His preferential treatment of Israel is ultimately evidence of His love even for Edom!

Nevertheless, in the years before Christ, He could point with justification to His treatment of His people in comparison to others as evidence of His love.

ISRAEL IS UNFAITHFUL . . . Malachi 1:6-2:9

RV . . . A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master; if then I am a father, where is mine honor? and if I am a master, where is my fear? saith Jehovah of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar. And ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of Jehovah is contemptible. And when ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is no evil! and when ye offer the lame and sick, it is no evil! Present it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee? or will he accept thy person? saith Jehovah of hosts. And now, I pray you, entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious unto us; this hath been by your means: will he accept any of your persons? saith Jehovah of hosts. Oh that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle fire on mine altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, saith Jehovah of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith Jehovah of hosts. But ye profane it, in that ye say, The table of Jehovah is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even its food, is contemptible. Ye say also, Behold what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith Jehovah of hosts; and ye have brought that which was taken by violence, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye bring the offering; should I accept this at your hand? saith Jehovah. But cursed be the deceiver, who hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a blemished thing; for I am a great King, saith Jehovah of hosts, and my name is terrible among the Gentiles. And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith Jehovah of hosts, then will I send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. Behold, I will rebuke your seed, and will spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your feasts; and ye shall be taken away with it. And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant may be with Levi, saith Jehovah of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him that he might fear; and he feared

me, and stood in awe of my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found in his lips; he walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts. But ye are turned aside out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble in the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith Jehovah of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have had respect of persons in the law.

LXX . . . A son honours his father, and a servant his master: if then I am a father, where is mine honour? and if I am a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord Almighty. Yet the priests are they that despise my name: yet ye said, Wherein have we despised thy name? In that ye bring to mine altar polluted bread; and ye said, Wherein have ye polluted it? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted, and that which was set thereon ye have despised. For if ye bring a blind victim for sacrifices, is it not evil? and if ye bring the lame or the sick, is it not evil? offer it now to thy ruler, and see if he will receive thee, if he will accept thy person, saith the Lord Almighty. And now intreat the face of your God, and make supplication to him. These things have been done by your hands; shall I accept you? saith the Lord Almighty. Because even among you the doors shall be shut, and one will not kindle the fire of mine altar for nothing, I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord Almighty, and I will not accept a sacrifice at your hands. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof my name has been glorified among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord Almighty. But ye profane it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted, and his meats set thereon are despised. And ye said, These services are troublesome: therefore I have utterly rejected them with scorn, saith the Lord Almighty: and ye brought in torn victims, and lame, and sick: if then ye should bring an offering, shall I accept them at your hands? saith the Lord Almighty. And cursed is the man who had the power, and possessed a male in his flock, and whose vow is upon him, and who sacrifices a corrupt thing to the Lord; for I am a great King, saith the Lord Almighty, and my name is glorious among the nations. And now, O priests, this commandment is to you. If ye will not hearken, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, saith the Lord Almighty, then I will send forth the

curse upon you, and I will bring a curse upon your blessing; yea, I will curse it, and I will scatter your blessing, and it shall not exist among you, because ye lay not this to heart. Behold, I turn my back upon you, and I will scatter dung upon your faces, the dung of your feasts, and I will carry you away at the same time. And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, that my covenant might be with the sons of Levi, saith the Lord Almighty. My covenant of life and peace was with him, and I gave it him that he might reverently fear me, and that he might be awe-struck at my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked before me directing his way in peace, and he turned many from unrighteousness. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty. But ye have turned aside from the way, and caused many to fail in following the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord Almighty. And I have made you despised and cast out among all the people, because ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

COMMENTS

God's love and faithfulness to His covenant people stands in stark contrast to their unfaithfulness to Him. They neither fear Him as a master nor honor Him as a father . . . and their priests are the chief offenders.

The severe reproof of the priests is a just one. They have profaned the holy things of God with which they were intrusted. It was their sin that was leading the people to be unfaithful.

They took His name in vain, not by pronouncing it in profanity, but by offering unacceptable sacrifices to him. They are accused of polluting the altar.

When they deny the charge, saying, "Wherein have we polluted thee?", Jehovah's answer is "In that ye say the table of Jehovah is contemptible."

The term "bread of God" is synonymous with "sacrifices to God" (*Leviticus 21:8*), so we should not think here of the table of shewbread, but of the sacrificial flesh offered upon the altar.

The priests have declared the table of God contemptible by sanctioning the offering of skimpy and blemished sacrifices. The sacrificial animals Darius, and no doubt his successors had provided Israel as a

vassal state were kept to replenish their own flocks and only the culls were brought to God.

Such cheap religion is less than worthless, it is an affront to God.

The law said such animals were not to be offered as sacrifice (cp. *Leviticus 22:17-25, Deuteronomy 15:21*) yet the priests addressed here saw no harm in it.

The governor appointed by the Gentile emperor would not eat the meat they offered to God, yet they presented it as an act of worship and said, "it is not evil."

Their real error in offering blemished sacrifices lies in the fact that such animals could not do what the sacrifices were designed to do, namely, typify the ultimate Sacrifice, without spot or blemish. (*I Peter 1:19*) It was to keep this prophetic object lesson before the people that the temple had been rebuilt. It was to maintain this constant covenant reminder in the eyes of the people that the sacrifices *must* be made according to divine directive. A blemished animal could not possibly portend the coming Lamb of God, and without that portent the entire sacrificial system was meaningless.

The scathing irony of verse nine underscores this truth. Malachi challenges the unfaithful priests to try it, if they think such unacceptable sacrifices will win them the favor of God.

The entire passage draws a vivid contrast between man's religion and God's sacrificial scheme of redemption. Men, in their religious efforts to curry God's favor, always think of themselves as bringing *Him* something. The advent of the Christ, toward which the sacrificial system pointed, is the exact opposite. God was bringing the Real Sacrifice to man.

From the beginning God has not been served by men's hands as though *He* needed anything. (cp. *Psalms 10:1-12, Acts 17:25*) In demanding the presentation of the very best of Israel's flocks to be slain upon the altar, God intended that they learn something of the price He would pay for our redemption when He offered the "Choice Jewel of Heaven" on Calvary. If He were to tolerate a lesser offering, the whole point of the sacrifices would be missed.

GOD DESPISES INFIDELITY . . .

(Verse 10) Calvin points out that, in the temple, one priest was stationed at the doors of the court of burnt offerings for the express purpose of keeping out animals unfit for sacrifice. In this verse, God cries out in anguish for just one priest whose concern for God's law

would cause him to shut the door against such blemished sacrifices as were being offered daily. It would be better to let the fires go unkindled than to continue to desecrate the altar and mar the meaning of God's covenant by offering animals unfit to depict the coming Real Sacrifice. Better none at all than these. (cp. *Isaiah 1:11-15*)

Since no such priest stood at the door, God would Himself refuse to accept their sacrifices.

(Verse 11) This verse is reminiscent of Paul's attitude toward those Jews who rejected the preaching of the Gospel. (*Acts 13:46*) God, Who lives in eternity and so is much less pre-occupied with time than we, treats the acceptance of His Sacrifice by the Gentiles as an already accomplished fact. He Who knows the end from the beginning is able of the very stones to raise up children to Abraham (*Matthew 3:9*). Other sheep He has which are not of this fold (*John 10:16*). "For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves . . ." (*Romans 2:14*) and God is glorified. His name is, in fact, great among the nations. (cp. *Isaiah 1:11-15*)

"Sacrifice," in verse 11, is used figuratively as in *Psalms 51:17*, *Hebrews 13:10,15,16* and *I Peter 2:5,12*, but the truth is that "in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." (*Acts 10:35*)

(Verses 12-13) Whereas the ineffable name of God is thus glorified among the nations who have not the law and are thus separated from the Messianic hope, foreigners in the commonwealth of Israel, oblivious of the promises of God and unaware of any hope as yet (*Ephesians 2:12*), that same name is made a mockery among those who have for centuries been His covenant people.

They offer to God what they would not eat themselves, and even this is "a drag," irksome service! Isaiah had informed their fathers that it was God Who is wearied by such service and not they. (*Isaiah 43:22-f*)

Meat taken by violence, *ie.* torn by animals, was not even lawful for human consumption, yet they offered it to God. (cp. *Exodus 22:31*)

(Verse 14) For "deceiver" here, read hypocrite. It was not poverty, as some pretended, which caused such niggardly sacrifices. It was greed which placed personal gain above God's required service. They possessed "a male," *ie.* such as required by law sacrifice, yet they offered God blemished animals. (cp. *Leviticus 1:3-10*) Even the Gentiles would be too fearful of God to do such things.

ESPECIALLY FOR PRIESTS . . .

(2:1-2) Here begins a special decree for the priests of Israel who are the cause of Israel's infidelity. "Ministers," Moore points out, "cannot sin or suffer alone. They drag down others if they fall." Thus does God, for the sake of His people, pronounce a curse on their unfaithful spiritual leaders. That which had been their special blessing as priests would become a curse.

(Verse 3) The maw of the sacrificial victims was, on feast days, the special food of the priests. (*Deuteronomy 18:3*) The stomach, or maw, was regarded as one of the choice delicacies. Instead of receiving this, God threatens to fling dung in their faces because of the defiled offerings from which it came.

By law, the dung of the sacrifices was to be carried outside the gate and disposed of. Because of the awful way the priests insulted God in the offering of blemished animals, they were to be carried with it.

Whether the threat to fling dung in their faces and to carry themselves to the dung heap is to be understood literally or not, it leaves little doubt as to how much God despises those who make a sham of His services. They are to be banished from His presence.

(Verse 4) The reason for God's rebuke of the priests is that the special priestly covenant which He had made with Levi, the priestly tribe, must be maintained.

(Verses 5-9) Here Malachi describes the promises and conditions of the Levitical covenant, Levi's former observance of this covenant, and the rewards of such observance. Over against these he sets the consequences of violating this covenant as these priests were doing.

Formerly, God had bestowed life and prosperity upon Levi (the priestly tribe). On him God laid the duty of reverence. In return the priests had revered God and respected His name. They had given true instructions to the people and had spoken no injustice. They had lived in accord with Him and in so doing had turned many people from sin to God. Men then stood in respect of the priests and sought to learn from them because they recognized in them God's messengers.

The unfaithful priests of Malachi's time, in contrast, have left off the righteous practices of their predecessors. Instead of leading many from sin to God, they have caused many to fall into sin. Whereas the former priests of Levi had taken their special relationship to God very much to heart, these have treated it as of no consequence.

As a result, God will make them despicable in the eyes of the people. Because of their sinful lives and unjust application of the law

for favor (cp. *Leviticus 19:15*) the people would no longer respect them as a special class and their special privileges would cease.

The principles underlying God's denunciation of the priests through Malachi merit our attention. We, as Christians, are all priests of God (*I Peter 2:9*). As such, we enjoy blessings those outside of Christ never dream of. We, too, are charged to offer sacrifices to God, holy and acceptable (*Romans 12:1-2*). To do less is to make a mockery of His name before the world.

If we do not offer ourselves as holy and acceptable sacrifices to God, we may be assured that our relationship to Him will become a curse rather than a blessing. Un-Christian men will be able to point at us and say they have more fear of God than do we. We shall then be stumbling blocks, leading them deeper into sin rather than teaching them God's truth, for they will not heed the words of priests whose lives do not match their doctrines.

GOD DESPISES INFIDELITY . . . Malachi 2:10-16

RV . . . Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers? Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of Jehovah which he loveth, and hath married the daughter of a foreign god. Jehovah will cut off, to the man that doeth this, him that waketh and him that answereth, out of the tents of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto Jehovah of hosts. And this again ye do: ye cover the altar of Jehovah with tears, with weeping, and with sighing, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, neither receiveth it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because Jehovah hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did he not make one, although he had the residue of the Spirit? And wherefore one? He sought a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For I hate putting away, saith Jehovah the God of Israel, and him that covereth his garment with violence, saith Jehovah of hosts; therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

LXX . . . Have ye not all one father? Did not one God create you? why have ye forsaken every man his brother, to profane the covenant of your fathers? Juda has been forsaken, and an abomination has been

DENUNCIATION OF UNFAITHFULNESS 2:10-16

committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Juda has profaned the holy things of the Lord, which he delighted in, and has gone after other gods. The Lord will utterly destroy the man that does these things, until he be even cast down from out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and from among them that offer sacrifice to the Lord Almighty. And these things which I hated, ye did: ye covered with tears the altar of the Lord, and with weeping and groaning because of troubles: is it meet for me to have respect to your sacrifice, or to receive anything from your hands as welcome? Yet ye said, Wherefore? Because the Lord has borne witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, whom thou hast forsaken, and yet she was thy partner, and the wife of thy covenant. And did he not do well? and there was the residue of his spirit. But ye said, What does God seek but a seed? But take ye heed to your spirit, and forsake not the wife of thy youth. But if thou shouldst hate thy wife and put her away, saith the Lord God of Israel, then ungodliness shall cover thy thoughts, saith the Lord Almighty: therefore take ye heed to your spirit, and forsake them not.

COMMENTS

(Verses 10-12) The special covenant which made priests of the tribe of Levi was not unrelated to the everlasting covenant which is the prophet's primary concern. The common father here (*v. 10*) is not God as some have said, but Jacob. The Levites as well as the people were the children of Israel (*i.e.* Jacob).

Of all the nations on earth, they alone worshipped but one God. In any other nation the people professed varied loyalties to various household deities.

Because all Israel, priests and people alike, stood under one covenant before one God, unfaithfulness to one another constituted unfaithfulness to the covenant. And such abominable practices were present, the prophet assures his readers, in all Judah and even in the holy city in the shadow of the temple. The holy relationship of the covenant was being violated in loving and marrying pagan women.

(Verse 12) The words of verse twelve are not idle threat. The practice of inter-marriage with foreign women had brought Baal worship among the people and it was this which brought about the destruction of the northern tribes as well as the captivity of the southern tribes. If it again gained ascendance among the returned remnant, God's covenant purpose would indeed be in jeopardy.

To avoid this, God here threatens to cut off to the man, *ie.* on an individual basis, all who indulge in such practice. "Out of the tents of Jacob" signifies separation from the people of the covenant.

(Verse 13-a) This sin had once, since the return, been checked by Ezra (*Ezra 9:10*). Malachi here addresses a relapse. "This again ye do."

(Verse 13(b)-14) The covering of the altar with tears is symbolic of the weeping of wives who were being deserted for foreign women. These were Israelite women who were of the covenant people. Their abuse covered the altar *ie.* the covenant with tears.

It was customary for such marriages, *ie.* "the wife of thy youth," to be contracted when the parties were very young. Many were only thirteen or fourteen and their wives even younger. (cf. *Proverbs 5:8, Isaiah 54:6*) The couple was bound not only by the covenant of marriage, but by the even deeper relationship they shared as children of God's covenant. Those who, at later age, abandoned the wives of their youth to marry foreign women were not only breaking their own marriage vows, they were violating God's everlasting covenant with Israel.

(Verse 15) "Did He not make one . . ." Malachi's argument here in reference to this abandonment is similar to that of Jesus concerning divorce. (cp. *Matthew 19:3-ff*) God, in the beginning, made one male and one female, although He had unlimited spiritual resources and could have made more of either. These two, male and female, are called *one man* (humankind). (cf. *Genesis 1:27*) Malachi, as Jesus, understands this to indicate God's intent that there be one wife for each man.

The prophet says the reason God established this unity is that He "sought a godly seed." The modern concern of the sociologist for the effect of broken marriages upon the children (seed) of those marriages is well-founded. Eternity alone will reveal the number of children who have turned from God because their fathers abandoned their mothers to marry pagan women!

Every Christian father stands in covenant relationship to God, as did those in Israel who were addressed by Malachi. Such a father always jeopardizes his children's relationship to God when he leaves the "wife of his youth" for another woman.

"Therefore," says Malachi, "take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

(Verse 16) "I hate putting away . . ." Whatever doubt may linger concerning God's attitude toward divorce is certainly dispelled

by this verse. The statement of His hatred of the practice is accompanied by His name *Jehovah* as God of the covenant people. It could not be more emphatic.

"*Him that covereth his garments with violence.*" A better translation would be "*Him that covereth his violence with a garment.*" One commentator has suggested "their *violence* is the putting away of their wives; the *garment* with which they try to cover it is the plea of Moses permission."

The terminology of *Genesis 20:16*, *Deuteronomy 22:30*, *Ruth 3:9*, and *Ezekiel 16:8* in which husbands and wives are each described as a covering for the eyes of the other would tend to indicate that the *garment* here is the wife and the *violence* with which the *garment* is covered is the divorce. The thought in these passages is that one's love for and marriage to one's wife should cover his eyes against the attraction of other women.

Whatever the meaning of this idiomatic expression, it is obvious that Malachi is denouncing, in God's name, the practice of leaving a wife who is of the faith for another who is not of the faith, and denouncing divorce in general.

Chapter XLIV—Questions

Denunciation of Unfaithfulness

1. The prophet _____ is considered by Jewish tradition as the *seal of prophecy*.
2. The traditional Christian view is that Malachi is the bridge between the _____ and the _____.
3. Malachi probably wrote about _____ B.C.
4. Malachi means _____.
5. Malachi's prophecy coincides with the _____ period of Daniel's seventy weeks.
6. Malachi's central concern is _____.
7. Discuss the corruption of the priesthood as addressed by Malachi and show its effect upon the people.
8. Why does Malachi immediately precede the New Testament in our English versions of the Bible?
9. Outline the book of Malachi.
10. The next word from Jehovah to His people after Malachi would be spoken by _____.