

CHAPTER XLV

THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD

THE LORD WILL SEND A MESSENGER TO PREPARE FOR HIS DAY . . . Malachi 2:17—3:6.

RV . . . Ye have wearied Jehovah with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? In that ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of Jehovah, and he delighteth in them; or where is the God of justice? Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts. But who can abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto Jehovah; as in the days of old, and as in ancient years. And I will come near to you to judgement; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the sojourner from his right, and fear not me, saith Jehovah of hosts. For I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

LXX . . . ye that have provoked God with your words. But ye said, Wherein have we provoked him? In that ye say, Every one that does evil is a pleasing object in the sight of the Lord, and he takes pleasure in such; and where is the God of justice? Behold, I send forth my messenger, and he shall survey the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come into his temple, even the angel of the covenant, whom ye take pleasure in: behold, he is coming, saith the Lord Almighty. And who will abide the day of his coming? or who will withstand at his appearing? for he is coming in as the fire of a furnace and as the herb of fullers. He shall sit to melt and purify as it were silver, and as it were gold: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver, and they shall offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. And the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to the Lord, according to the former days, and according to the former years. And I will draw near to you in judgement;

and I will be a swift witness against the witches, and against the adulteresses, and against them that swear falsely by my name, and against them that keep back the hireling's wages, and them that oppress the widow, and afflict orphans, and that wrest the judgement of the stranger, and fear not me, saith the Lord Almighty. For I am the Lord your God, and I am not changed:

COMMENTS

WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE . . . v. 17

Two things in the arguments of the priests wearied Jehovah. *First*, they considered evil to be good, so they declared it good "in the sight of Jehovah."

Second, they said "where is the God of justice." They looked at the drought, crop failures and generally unprosperous conditions of Judah on the one hand, and on the other, the fact that the forms of the ceremonial law were being observed and concluded that God was slack in His justice. As we have seen, the *quality* of the sacrifices and the *spirit* in which they were offered put the lie to their arguments.

BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER . . . v. 1

Here is God's answer to their question, "where is the God of justice." Suddenly the Lord will appear in the temple heralded by His forerunner.

Isaiah had made a similar prediction. (*Isaiah 40:3-5*).

The New Testament applies Malachi's prophecy to John the Baptist. (eg. *Matthew 3:3, 11:10, Mark 1:2-3, Luke 1:76, 3:4, 7:26-27, John 1:23*) The obvious fulfillment of this promise in the baptist's ministry would be difficult for any open-minded Bible student to overlook.

The sudden appearance of the Lord mentioned here was interpreted by the Rabbis as a dramatic explosive visitation by which the Messiah would announce His presence. It was this popular expectation which the devil exploited in tempting Jesus to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. (*Luke 4:9*) To have done so would have won for Him instant acceptance as the Messiah on the basis of popular though erroneous expectation.

"*The messenger of the covenant . . .*" What more apt description could there be of Him Whose coming formed the heart of God's covenant promise? How fitting that the writer of Hebrews should intro-

duce his comparison of the Old and New Covenants with the argument for the superiority of the New based on the superiority of the Son over the prophets, angels and Moses, who were the messengers of the Old. (cp. *Hebrews 1:1-2:4*)

(Verses 2-6) "Who can abide the day of His coming?" The Messiah was coming but not to confirm the racial arrogance or religious exclusiveness of these false Israelites. John will speak of Him as one "whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His threshing-floor; and He will gather His wheat into the garner but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire." (*Matthew 3:12*).

Malachi here makes a like prediction. By a change of metaphors he describes the Messiah's judgement first as fuller's soap then as refiners fire.

In this sense, soap and fire have one thing in common, both remove impurity. The entire ministry of the Messiah, including His first coming, the intervening age and His second coming, will purge the impurities from the people of God. Those whose profession is false, whose hope is based on false ambition and nationalistic exclusiveness will be removed from Israel. The remnant will be saved.

This refining process is described by Zechariah as removing all but a third of those who call themselves Israel. (cp. *Isaiah 1:25*)

(Verses 3-4) Since Malachi's primary concern is with false priests (see above on 1:10-ff), he pictures the Messiah, in verse three, as a refiner sitting before the crucible in which the sons of Levi are purged of those who are unfaithful so that they will offer to Jehovah offerings in righteousness.

The offerings to the Christ are not the blemished animals of Malachi's day. Rather they are to be "holy and acceptable unto God," (cf. *Romans 12:1, Hebrews 13:5, I Peter 2:5*) as were those offered in the beginning by Aaron.

(Verses 5-6) They have asked "where is the God of justice." (2:17) When Messiah comes they will have their answer. He will testify against the sorcerers (*Acts 8:1, 13:6, Galatians 5:20*), against adulterers (*Matthew 5:28*), against false swearers (*Matthew 5:34,36*), against those that oppress the hireling, the widows, the fatherless, and they that turn aside the sojourners (*Matthew 25:31-46*), and that fear not me (*Matthew 10:26-28*).

Special notice should be taken of the inclusion in this list of priestly sins of "those that turn aside the sojourner." A sojourner was one of another land who was not a Jew. God's concern for all men, rather than just for the Jew, as stated in the covenant is apparent throughout

His dealings with the people through whom He purposed to bless all men.

(Verse 6) It is a tragic error to assume that, because God has not smitten the wicked, He has changed from a God of justice to one of easy-going tolerance. Malachi points out to his readers that God's unchanging nature is the only reason they were not themselves long since wiped out!

Paul points out in Romans eleven (cf. *v.* 29) that God's mercy toward even the covenant people finds its source in His unfailing faithfulness to His own covenant.

Peter speaks to the same fatal fallacy when he writes, "But forget not this one thing beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; but is long-suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (*II Peter* 3:8-9)

IF THE PEOPLE WILL RETURN IN DEVOTION TO GOD HE
WILL YET BLESS THEM . . . Malachi 3:7-12

RV . . . From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. But ye say, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation. Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah 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. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the time in the field, saith Jehovah of hosts. And all nations shall call you happy; for ye shall be a delightful land, saith Jehovah of hosts.

LXX . . . but ye, the sons of Jacob, have not refrained from the iniquities of your fathers: ye have perverted my statutes, and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, saith the Lord Almighty. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man insult God? for ye insult me. But ye say, Wherein have we insulted thee? In that the tithes and first-fruits are with you still. And ye do surely look off from me, and ye insult me. The year is completed, and ye

have brought all the produce into the store-houses; but there shall be the plunder thereof in its house: return now on this behalf, saith the Lord Almighty, see if I will not open to you the torrents of heaven, and pour out my blessings upon you, until ye are satisfied. And I will appoint food for you, and I will not destroy the fruit of your land; and your vine in the field shall not fail, saith the Lord Almighty. And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a desirable land, saith the Lord Almighty.

COMMENTS

FROM THE DAYS OF YOUR FATHERS . . . v. 7

When Stephen stood before the council and accused them with, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears . . . as your fathers did, so do ye," (*Acts 7:51*) he was in good company. Malachi here levels the same charge against his readers.

Just as their ancestors had turned aside from God's ordinances to worship Baal, these were turning aside in making a mockery of the same ordinances. The withholding of tithes, the offering of blemished animals, the indulging in sorcery and adultery and false swearing while showing unconcern for human need by oppressing wage-earners, widows, orphans and non-Jews indicated theirs was a religion of form rather than sincerity. The prophet sees no advantage in this over the false religion which had brought on the Babylonian captivity.

There is an eternal principle presented here which the modern church member cannot afford to ignore. The observance of outward form and the passive abstention from false religion are a sham if done as these did them. The cheapening of the ordinances of God as they did in offering unacceptable sacrifices, or as is often done in present day churches by penny-wise and niggardly church budgets are no more advantageous than false doctrine. The lack of any real concern for the poor, the abandoned, the downtrodden, that is frequently hidden under an annual Christmas basket, does not deceive Him Who knows the hearts of His people.

The entreaty of God to such people to return to Him is frequently met today as in Malachi's time (*v. 7*) with a blank faced and feigned innocence expressed in "wherein shall we return?"

(Verse 8-13) Malachi's answer to this sham is "will a man rob God?" When their response was again an assumed innocence expressed in, "wherein have we robbed thee," the prophet goes directly to the heart of the matter . . . "*in tithes and offerings.*"

That they could answer in such false righteousness after what the prophet has written in the preceding chapters about their unholy sacrifices, is amazing. It is no more so than the assumed correctness of the "New Testament Christian" today whose sacrifices of himself is an hour or two on Sunday and whose giving of "tithes and offerings" consists of less than he spends for soft drinks and tobacco.

"Ye are cursed with a curse because ye rob me" declares Malachi (v. 9). Our own consciences may accept a cut-rate allegiance to God, but He will not. The country parson who said, "Salvation is free but it ain't cheap," spoke the truth!

There is a significant distinction drawn here between tithes and offerings. The law defined the first tithe as a tenth of all that was left *after* the first fruits were paid. This tenth went directly to the Levites for their support. (*Leviticus 27:30-33*) A tenth was to be paid in turn to the priests. (*Numbers 18:26-28*)

A second tithe was to be paid for the entertainment of the Levites and their own families at the temple. (*Deuteronomy 12:18*)

A third tithe was to be paid every third year for the welfare of the poor, etc. (*Deuteronomy 14:28*) It has been estimated that the total tithes amounted annually to approximately 27% of one's gross income.

The offerings were in addition to the tithes. These consisted of not less than 1/60 of one's corn, wine, and oil (*Deuteronomy 18:4, Nehemiah 13:10-12*).

So the Israelite under the Old Covenant gave in three categories. (1) He sacrificed the first fruits of his fields and flocks (2) he tithed three times, first of all remaining after the sacrifices, second for the entertainment (expenses) of the Levites and thirdly for the sake of supporting the poor, and (3) he then gave an offering of at least 1/60 of all his grain, wine and oil.

It was common, during the lean years, such as those which prevailed at the time of this writing, to neglect the tithes and offerings. Malachi, as we have seen, accuses his readers of also bringing much less than the first fruits for sacrifice.

Jehovah's challenge (v. 10) is to bring all the tithes (the whole tithe) into the storehouse and see if times do not change. Jesus would say, "seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (cp. *Matthew 6:19-34*)

Here is the eternal principle of giving which continues from covenant to covenant. The support of the Lord's work must come *first*

in the economic lives of His covenant people. He who gives only what he can afford has not given at all!

This passage, especially verses nine and ten, are frequently used to prove that one who does not give ten per cent of his income to the church is robbing God. Conversely, on the basis of these same verses, promises are frequently extended that "God will open the windows of Heaven" to those who practice "store-house tithing."

Before one makes such accusations or promises from these verses it would be wise to keep in mind several pertinent points concerning Mosaic tithing; (1) The tithes spoken of here had to do with the tithes of the fruit of the land, not wages *per se*. (2) These words are directed specifically to Judah because of the neglect of the ordinances of the law. (3) No *money* was involved. The tithe was a portion of the produce of an agrarian society. (4) The promise to "open the windows of heaven" has to do with rain which would end a drought and cause the land to again become productive when the people met the requirements of giving.

The principle taught, which must be learned by Christians, is stated by Jesus, not as a command to count one dollar of every ten into the offering, but to put the kingdom of God before the material necessities of life. (cf. *Matthew 6:33*) When this principle is applied to the giving of money, ten per cent seems a frightfully immature and inadequate amount, especially when those who "had witness borne to them through their faith, (even though they) received not the promise . . ." (*Hebrews 11:39*) were *required* to give 27% of all they produced on the land.

(Verses 11-12) Upon their return to faithfulness in tithes and offerings, God promised to remove the blight from the land. Whatever was organically wrong with the crops would be corrected. They had robbed God (*v. 8*) from the very first (*v. 7*). They were now cursed (*v. 9*) with drought (*v. 10*). The curse brought about by their dishonesty had taken two forms, drought and locusts (*v. 11*). Their repentance would be the occasion of unmeasured blessing, blessing so great they would be the envy of surrounding nations. (*v. 12*)

God's provisions are always more than adequate to those who are honest in their dealings with Him.

WHEN THE DAY COMES, TRUE WORSHIPPERS WILL BE
SPARED . . . Malachi 3:13—4:3

RV . . . Your words have been stout against me, saith Jehovah. Yet ye say, What have we spoken against thee? Ye have said, It is vain

to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts? and now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up; yea, they tempt God, and escape. Then they that feared Jehovah spake one with another; and Jehovah hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, even mine own possession, in the day that I make; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. For, behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Jehovah of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the sun or righteousness arise with healing in its wings; and ye shall go forth, and gambol as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I make, saith Jehovah of hosts.

LXX . . . Ye have spoken grievous words against me, saith the Lord. Yet he said, Wherein have we spoken against thee? Ye said, He that serves God labours in vain: and what have we gained in that we have kept his ordinances, and in that we have walked as suppliants before the face of the Lord Almighty? And now we pronounce strangers blessed; and all they who act unlawfully are built up; and they have resisted God, and yet have been delivered. Thus spoke they that feared the Lord, every one to his neighbour; and the Lord gave heed, and hearkened, and he wrote a book of remembrance before him for them that feared the Lord and revered his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord Almighty, in the day which I appoint for a peculiar possession; and I will make choice of them, as a man makes choice of his son that serves him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, and between him that serves God, and him that serves him not. For, behold, a day comes burning as an oven, and it shall consume them; and all the aliens, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that is coming shall set them on fire, saith the Lord Almighty, and there shall not be left of them root or branch. But to you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise, and healing shall be in his wings: and ye shall go forth, and bound as young calves let loose from bonds. And ye shall trample

the wicked; for they shall be ashes underneath your feet in the day which I appoint, saith the Lord Almighty.

COMMENTS

(Verses 13-15) Malachi continues to list Jehovah's grievances against the people. They needed to return and they feigned unawareness of any such need (*v.* 7). They robbed God, yet pretended not to be aware of the robbing (*v.* 8). They have spoken against God, and again pretended innocence (*v.* 13 cp. 2:17)

The prophet continues to speak frankly, as he answers this latest question, "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we keep his charge?"

Such complaining is not uncommon among those who cannot understand the spiritual nature of God's covenant. Those who see the covenant as a mercenary bargain, attend to outward observance in the hope of receiving material blessings. When such are not forthcoming, because they are at most incidental to God's purpose in His people, such worshippers are always disappointed and prone to despair.

God has never promised wealth to the faithful or poverty to the unjust. We manifest a gross ignorance of His nature and His love when we judge the worth of service to Him on such basis.

The evidence of this misunderstanding on the part of Malachi's readers is seen in the last part of verses fourteen and fifteen. They equate their sacrifice of blemished animals and the withholding of tithes and offerings out of concern for material necessities with "keeping His charge." They equate piety with walking "mournfully." They mistake pride for real happiness and complain that the wicked are better off than the rest. They accuse God, very subtly, of injustice because the wicked "tempt God and escape."

(Verses 16-18) Rather than continuing to rebuke their lack of perception, Malachi turns to words of comfort. He assures them the faithful will not be forgotten. They will be spared who are God-fearers, and ultimately made to understand the real difference between the righteous and the wicked.

A book of remembrance is being written he assures them, in which the names of the faithful were being recorded (cp. *Esther* 6). In the day when Jehovah acts, they will be spared His judgment and beyond this, they will be revealed as Jehovah's peculiar treasure. (cp. *John* 3:18, *I Peter* 2:9)

THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD 3:16—4:1

Even in dark times there are those few who fear Him and so "speak," *i.e.* converse with one another about Him.

THEY THAT FEARED JEHOVAH . . . v. 16

Malachi foresees the repentance of some, though not all the people. They would speak with one another. No doubt their speaking would concern the need for repentance, for genuine worship. As always, the fear of Jehovah would prove the beginning of wisdom for Jehovah would hear and remember.

THEY SHALL BE MINE . . . v. 17-18

Malachi's covenant consciousness is evident here. It is those who fear Jehovah and think on His name who are His people. No reference is made to religious ritual or racial origin.

Peter voiced this same conviction. Following the thrice repeated vision which convinced him to go to a non-Jewish home with the gospel, and the resultant demonstration of God's overwhelming approval of his action in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Peter exclaimed, "of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him." (*Acts 11:34-35*) Paul confirms this same truth in *Romans 2:13*, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

Malachi would have his readers understand this truth. In the days of Jehovah His people will be those who really serve.

BEHOLD, THE DAY COMETH . . . 4:1

The association of fire with the final judgement is a theme which runs throughout much of the Scriptures. Daniel describes it vividly. (*Daniel 7:9-10*) The Psalmist sang of it. (*Psalms 1:3*) Peter affirms it at some length. (*II Peter 3:7-10*)

Malachi promises that those who feel this final fire will be without hope of springing again to life. They will be without branch or root. (See *Amos 2:9*)

(Verse 2) The prophet does not, however, limit his vision of the coming day to that of doom. In contrast, he presents the effects of its coming on God's people. On those who fear His name the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its (His) wings..

Here is one of the most picturesque descriptions of the Messiah to be found in the Old Testament. To dissect it is to destroy it. Suffice

it to say, that as the sun is the light and source of life to all the earth, so the Christ is the light and giver of life to the true worshipper.

In the warmth of this sun of righteousness, God's people shall be as carefree as calves playing in the sunlight.

(Verse 3) When this day comes, and the wicked are punished by fire while God's people are freed from all care, the question of 3:15 will finally be answered.

Jesus' rehearsal of the fate of the rich man and Lazarus is a fine illustration of this truth. (cf. *Luke 16:19-ff*) The unrighteous rich who lord it over the righteous poor will, in that day, find their situations completely reversed . . . eternally and completely.

In our present day, when churches have become pre-occupied with alleviating the temporal needs of men, regardless of their spiritual condition, and when making a profit in business has become, to some, immoral regardless of the good that may be done with such wealth, the idea that the iniquities of this life will be rectified in the next is *passé* to some. In the presence of this spiritual blindness, God's people dare not lose sight of our obligation to be concerned for men's temporal needs in Jesus' name. (cf. *Matthew 25:31-46, I John 3:16-18*) But this concern can, by no form of logic, negate the coming day of judgement

Nor can such concern negate the fact that the injustices of wicked men who prey upon the righteous and deprive the weak obviously go unpunished here and now. Honesty, in business, is not always the "best policy" for those whose chief purpose is personal gain.

Just as surely as this is so, so does the justice of God demand a day of reckoning. For those who come to Christ, the day of reckoning was held on Calvary (*Romans 3:25-26*). For those who do not fear God, the time of reckoning is yet to come and it will.

CONCLUSION . . . MALACHI 4:4-6

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and ordinances. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. 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.

LXX . . . And, behold, I will send to you Elias the Thesbite, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes; who shall turn again the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man to his neighbour, lest I come and smite the earth grievously. Remember the law

of my servant Moses, accordingly as I charged him with it in Choreb for all Israel, even the commandments and ordinances.

COMMENTS

The Old Testament Scriptures close with a prophetic plea to God's people to remember the law of Moses. It would be some four hundred years before Jehovah would speak again. In the interim, if they are to survive as His people, the law must be remembered.

Special attention is called to the statutes, that is those portions of the law dealing with religious ceremony. These ceremonies, as we have seen, were designed to keep visually and tangibly before the people an object lesson of the coming Lamb of God. If they were to fall into disuse before He came, Calvary would indeed be hard to comprehend.

Fortunately, they did not fall into disuse. During the Maccabean period and shortly thereafter (c. 160 B.C.), the party known as the Pharisees came into being for the express purpose of maintaining the literal outward observances of the statutes governing the Mosaic ceremonies in worship. Regrettably the Pharisees became obsessed with the letter to the neglect of the spirit of these observances, but they did, quite significantly, preserve the form.

In calling for remembrance of the law, Malachi does so in such a way as to provide the people one last term of its covenant meaning. The burden of the last Old Testament writer was delivered to a stiff-necked and rebellious people. They prided themselves on being Jehovah's people, but he bluntly declared, "I have no pleasure in you, saith Jehovah of hosts." (*Malachi 1:10*) They thought they could play fast and loose with God, but Malachi reminded them of the greatness of Him with Whom they had to do. (*Malachi 1:14*) In their faithlessness, Malachi reminds them of the covenant, and told them flatly they were breaking it. (*Malachi 2:1-9*) He despaired of the nation as a whole and of the race as a race. He foresaw the coming of a terrible day in which this proud and wicked people would be utterly consumed.

But the remnant would survive, made up of those who individually feared Jehovah (*Malachi 4:2*) and thought upon His name. That is, those who had come to understand the true character of the eternal God and His purpose for all men. (*Malachi 3:16*) These faithful would be spared *only because they had fulfilled God's covenant conditions* (cf. *Exodus 19:5-6*) laid down on Mount Horeb (Sinai). Those who were so spared would be God's true Israel; all the rest were doomed.

Before the terrible day of the Lord, Elijah would come to once more call the remnant. His purpose would be the reconciliation of those present at his coming with the covenant faith of their fathers. Elijah, perhaps more than any other prophet of the pre-exilic period, had pled for a return to the pure worship of Jehovah as implemented in the law. The second Elijah would have the same purpose. Unless this be done, there would be not even a remnant in that day and the whole earth, which Jehovah had striven to redeem, would stand under a curse. The word "curse" (Hebrew *cherem*) means literally a *ban*.

Just as those Gentiles who had not the law and were ignorant of the covenant were without God and without hope in the world (cf. *Ephesians 2:12*), so, if the remnant were not finally called in preparation for the day of the Lord, the whole world would stand permanently alienated, banned forever from the presence of God.

The Old Testament is continuous with the New. The Bible is, in this sense, a single book. The coming of Christ did not constitute an abrupt break, but a fulfillment. The method and purpose of Jesus is a continuation and fulfillment of the method and purpose revealed in the call of Abraham. The new factor is the personal presence of the Messiah.

Malachi's promise of Elijah's coming is fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist. Jesus began where Malachi left off and *consciously* continued the work of the prophets. His ministry is understood only in light of God's plan to redeem all the world through a people prepared as the instrument of divine worldwide purpose. (cp. *Luke 24:44-47* and *Ephesians 1:23*)

Chapter XLV—Questions

The Coming Day of the Lord

1. What were the two arguments of the wicked priests?
2. What was God's answer to the questions, "Where is the God of justice?"
3. The New Testament applies *Malachi 3:1* to _____.
4. Relate the rabbinic interpretation of this verse to Jesus' temptations.
5. What is meant by Malachi's description of the Messiah as fullers' soap and refiner's fire?
6. When Messiah came He would testify against the _____, _____, _____, and against _____.
7. Comment on those "who turn aside the sojourner."

THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD

8. Discuss the proposition that, because God does not immediately smite the wicked, He is no longer a God of justice.
9. Note the similarity of *Malachi 3:7-12* to Stephen's defense (*Acts 7*).
10. What is the eternal principle presented in these passages?
11. How were Malachi's readers robbing God?
12. What is the distinction between tithes and offerings?
13. What were the first, second and third tithes required by the Law?
14. The offering consisted of not less than _____ of one's corn, wine and oil.
15. The Israelites were commanded to give in three categories: _____, _____, and _____.
16. How does Jesus express the thought of *Malachi 3:10*?
17. Is this passage a valid proof text for modern "store house tithing"?
18. List four pertinent points concerning Mosaic tithing.
19. When the principles of stewardship presented by Malachi is applied to modern giving, ten per cent seems. _____.
20. What is meant by the promise of Malachi that God would "open the windows of heaven?"
21. God's provisions are always adequate to those who _____.
22. Not only have Malachi's readers robbed God, they have _____.
23. God has never promised _____ to the faithful nor _____ to the unjust.
24. The people equated the sacrifice of blemished animals and withholding of tithes and offerings with _____.
25. A book of _____ is being written.
26. To whom does "they shall be mine" (*Malachi 3:17-18*) refer?
27. Discuss *Malachi 3:17-18* in comparison to *Acts 11:34-35*.
28. Trace the association of fire with judgement.
29. The sun of righteousness shall _____.
30. The wicked are to be punished by fire while God's people are freed from _____.
31. Does the unequal distribution of wealth negate the necessity of righteousness?
32. The justice of God demands a _____.
33. The Old Testament closes with a plea to God's people to _____.
34. Why was it essential that the formal observance of the sacrificial system be preserved?
35. The proud and wicked would be consumed but the _____ would survive.

