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ART. I.—MALACHI.

THERE is something peculiarly solemn in the closing book of the Old Testament canon. The stern vigour of its reproofs, the yearning tenderness of its appeals, and the sublime sweep of its predictions, combine to give it an intrinsic interest of the profoundest character. But this interest is greatly enhanced by its position. It is the transition-link between the two great dispensations of redemption—the last note of that magnificent oratorio of revelation, whose wailings of sorrow and breathings of hope were soon to give place to that richer song, which should be not only of Moses, but also of the Lamb; and tell not only of Eden and Sinai, but also of Calvary and heaven. Hence we find sounding through it voices of the past and voices of the future—the knell of the departing and the chimes of the coming age. It is, perhaps, in part to this fact that we owe some of the abruptness that characterizes this prophecy in so unusual a degree.

The same kind of interest attaches to the personal history of the prophet. He appears before us with some of the vague mystery as well as the stern vehemence of Elijah the Tishbite; delivers his message with an indignant earnestness, reproves the Pharisaic wickedness of the present, points forward to the glorious yet dreadful future, and disappears as suddenly as he came. His very name is by no means certain. The name Malachi (*my messenger*, or *my angel*) is commonly taken as an apocopated form of the name "*messenger*," or "*angel of Jehovah*." But the only instance of such an apocope given by Gesenius (Uri for Uriah) is very doubtful, if not absolutely erroneous. The invariable suffix in such forms is מַלְאֲכִי and not מַלְאֲכִי; and the name would have been Malachiah, like Zechariah, and the large class of compounded names of this formation. Hence it was very anciently conjectured that this

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was not the name of the prophet. The Septuagint translates בְּיַד מַלְאָכִי "by the hand of his angel," or "messenger," showing that they regarded it as not a proper name. The Targum of Jonathan adds after the word Malachi, "who otherwise is called the scribe Ezra;" which, with other conjectures as to his name among the Jews, identifying him with Haggai, Mordecai, &c., shows that Malachi was regarded by them as merely a name of office. Indeed Haggai is actually called by this very name, "the messenger of Jehovah," in Hag. i, 13. And as the precise form itself occurs in chap. iii, 1 of this prophecy, where it must be translated "my messenger," there seems to be a very strong probability that it was given originally, at least, as an official rather than a personal title. He was called, by eminence, "the messenger of God," partly because he was the last inspired messenger of the Old Testament, and partly because he came to announce the coming of the great Messenger of the New, chap. iii, 1. But as there is no other instance in the Old Testament in which the official title alone of the writer is prefixed to the book, it is by no means impossible that the official became a personal designation, as was afterward virtually the case with John the Baptist, and even the Apostle Peter.

There is less difficulty in determining the age of the prophet than in ascertaining his name or personal history. Indeed it may be regarded as absolutely settled by Vitranga, who, in his elaborate disquisition, (*Observationes Sacrae*, lib. vi, cap. vii,) comes to the conclusion that Malachi prophesied about the time of the second return of Nehemiah from the court of Persia, which was somewhere between the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, B. C. 432, and the year B. C. 424; for Artaxerxes died after a reign of forty-one years, and Nehemiah returned the second time to Jerusalem during his life. Neh. xiii, 6. The temple was evidently built, (chap. i, 10; iii, 1-10,) which places him after Haggai and Zechariah; a civil ruler was over the Jews, which places him before the death of Nehemiah, who was their last civil ruler; and the crimes reprobated by the prophet, such as mixed marriages, neglect of tithes, &c., were precisely the abuses corrected by Nehemiah. As these abuses were actually reformed by Nehemiah, we are compelled to assign the date of the prophet as precisely coincident with the second reformation of Nehemiah, or about B. C. 424. He then sustained the same relation to Nehemiah that Haggai and Zechariah did to Joshua and Zerubbabel, or Isaiah to Hezekiah, and Jeremiah to Josiah, in the earlier history of Israel. The silence of the Book of Nehemiah is no valid objection to this view, because it does not profess to be a complete history of the times, but only a personal

narrative of the acts of the author. It is an interesting coincidence, therefore, that while this stern Hebrew was reproving the formalism and falsehoods of the people of Jerusalem, Socrates was engaged in a similar work among the mercurial masses of Athens.

The characteristics of the times of Malachi are apparent on the surface of the prophecy. Before the captivity the besetting sins of the Jews were idolatry and superstition. Afterward they were prone to the other extremes of practical atheism and Epicureanism. There were two elements then at work which afterward issued in the frigid formalism of the Pharisees, and the scoffing scepticism of the Sadducees. But the predominant element, owing to the fact that they were in the transition-state from superstition, was the Pharisaic,—a spirit of proud and bigoted self-righteousness that claimed the favour of God with insolent haughtiness, at the very moment that this favour was forfeited by unbelief and neglect of duty.

The period that elapsed between the return from Babylon under Joshua and Zerubbabel, and the mission of Nehemiah, (about a century,) was by no means prosperous. The efforts of Haggai and Zechariah were crowned with only partial success. Indeed, the prophecies of Zechariah contain manifest indications of much unbelief and obstinacy among the people, and consequent punishment from the Lord. Zech. v; x, 3; xi, 6, &c. Having neglected the commands of God, they were deprived of God's favour; and adversity, instead of softening their hearts, hardened them, and led them to accuse God instead of accusing themselves. This self-righteous spirit was at the root of all their sins, as will be seen by a careful perusal of the prophecy. It had wrought its mournful results for many years preceding the first return of Nehemiah; so that he found the people disheartened, the worship of the temple neglected, and flagrant abuses encouraged in violation of the law. These he partially reformed during his first visit; but having returned to the Persian court, and remained there an indefinite time, (Neh. xiii, 6, 7,) probably from ten to twelve years, he came back to Jerusalem, and having found that the people had relapsed into many of their former sins,—such as mixed marriages, (xiii, 23-30,) withholding of tithes, (xiii, 5,) and neglect of the Sabbath, (xiii, 15-22,)—he set himself vigorously to the work of a second reformation, that might be more permanent than the first. It was then, as we infer, that he was joined by Malachi, that the special dealings of God with his ancient Church might be finished, and the canon of Scripture closed up, until the coming of that great Messenger of the covenant, who was to open a new dispensation of the great plan of redemption.

He thus ends the great argument precisely where the evangelists take it up, so that a verse of his prophecy is made the introduction to one of the Gospels. (See Mark i, 2.)

The canonical authority of Malachi has never been called in question. It is found in all the authoritative enumerations of the canonical books, and is referred to repeatedly in the New Testament as an inspired prophecy. (See Matt. xi, 10; xvii, 12; Mark i, 2; ix, 11, 12; Luke i, 17; and Rom. ix, 13.)

The prophecy is composed of six distinct portions. Part I (c. i, 1-5) opens the charges against Israel by laying bare the root of their sin, an insensibility to the love of God, that had been so signally unfolded in their history; and shows, by reference to the history and condition of Edom, how great had been that love. Part II (c. i, 6-ii, 9) addresses the priests, reproving them for their neglect of the worship of God, and their profanation of his ordinances; threatening punishment for these sins, and predicting the calling of the Gentiles. Part III (c. ii, 10-16) rebukes the mixed marriages of the people, and their injurious treatment of the Jewish wives. Part IV (c. ii, 17-iii, 6) predicts the coming of Christ and his forerunner, and the different aspects in which he will appear from that in which he is looked for by the Jews. Part V (c. iii, 7-12) reproves their withholding of tithes. Part VI (c. iii, 13-iv, 6) describes more fully the sinful character of the people, contrasts it with the character of those who fear the Lord, and then describes the contrast in their destinies that shall take place in the dread scenes of the future.

It is our purpose, in further expounding this book, to give first a literal translation of the several sections in their order, followed by a comment, which, without going extensively into grammatical or expository details, shall yet discuss the more important verbal difficulties, and suggest the more weighty expository uses of the text, in a way that will make it useful not only to the ministry, but also to the more intelligent portion of the laity, who may have no acquaintance with the Hebrew. We have used freely all the aids within our reach, but especially C. B. Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Maurer, Hengstenberg, and those to whom they refer. Indeed, so little has been done for this prophecy in the present century, that most students are at fault in attempting to obtain suitable aids for its exposition. The ordinary English expositions are so meagre that they skim over most of the difficulties of the text, and more elaborate commentaries are beyond the reach of most readers. It is our aim in this humble effort to furnish some aid to the careful student, in the absence of better assistance from more competent

hands. If it shall assist, in the slightest degree, the student of the lively oracles, in his endeavour to understand the last note of ancient prophecy, or shall stimulate any abler hand to undertake the work in a more thorough manner, our labour will not be lost, and our wishes not be defeated.

SECTION I, CHAP. i, 1-5.

The Expostulation.

1.

"A BURDEN.

The word of Jehovah to Israel by the hand of Malachi.

2. I have loved you, saith Jehovah.

And ye say, 'In what hast thou loved us?'

Was not Esau brother to Jacob? saith Jehovah.

3. And I loved Jacob; and Esau have I hated, and I made his mountains a waste, and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness. But if Edom should say [*although*] we are overthrown, yet shall we return and build up the ruins: thus saith Jehovah of hosts, They may build up, but I will cast down; and [*men*] shall call them the borders of wickedness, the people against which Jehovah is angry forever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, Great is Jehovah beyond the boundary of Israel."

Ver. 1 contains the heading of the book. The word מִשְׁבָּר we have rendered "burden," being the motto of the prophecy. It is always prefixed to prophecies of a threatening character, and seems designed to indicate the fact, that like some dark cloud, heavy with its pent-up fury, these prophecies are surcharged with the wrath of God, and hang ready to pour their dreadful contents on those against whom they are directed. Many modern commentators give the word the meaning of "declaration;" but Hengstenberg shows clearly (Zechariah ix, 1, Christology II, pp. 77-79) that its undoubted meaning is "burden," in a threatening sense.

Ver. 2, 3. There is something very touching in the opening of this message of rebuke. Addressing a self-righteous and disobedient people, we would naturally expect an outburst of indignant invective. But instead of this God speaks to them in accents of the softest tenderness,—though the reproaching tenderness of love. It is like the language of some weeping parent, who seeks to woo back a prodigal child, by recalling to his memory the love that has been lavished upon him. And it is in painful contrast with this tearful tenderness of God's love that we hear the insolent challenge of the ungrateful people, "In what hast thou loved us?" Here they lay bare the root of their sin,—insensibility to the love of God, and to their own wickedness. They had been punished, and left to adversity; but instead of referring these calamities to the love of God, chastening their sins, they considered themselves unjustly treated,

and met the tender expostulation of God with dogged insolence and hard ingratitude. Their history was crowded with proofs of God's kindness in the midst of his chastisements; but with perverse hearts they looked, not at what he had left but at what he had taken. But it is too true that, in this respect, they only acted as men act still toward God,—enjoying his mercies with thankless oblivion of the giver, until some of those mercies are removed, when he is acknowledged only by murmuring complaints.

It is an additional illustration of the patient love of God that he condescends to argue the case with them. He refers to the fact that Jacob was chosen while Esau was rejected; and that they, as the children of Jacob, were enjoying the blessings that followed this choice. Their history as a people, then, compared with the history of the children of Esau, showed wherein God loved them. "Hated" is used in a negative, not a positive sense, as in the phrase, "If any man come unto me, and *hate* not his father and mother," &c. Paul quotes this text, Romans ix, 13, in illustrating the dealings of God. The argument is very obvious. Israel complained that it had not enjoyed outward prosperity, and hence had no tokens of God's love. It is replied that Israel had been much more favourably dealt with than Esau, without any claim to such treatment, and in this respect had tokens of God's love: Israel was only straitened, Edom was laid waste. The phrase *לְתַיִתּוֹת מִדְּבָר* is somewhat doubtful. Maurer and Gesenius, following the Septuagint and the Syrian version, render it "habitations of the desert." But there seems to be no necessity for a rendering so harsh. If we suppose *תַּיִתּוֹת* to be the plural of *תַּיִת*, we have a common image of a deserted spot. See Isa. xiii, 22; xliii, 20, &c. The fact that it is a feminine form is no objection to this view, for many common nouns take both forms of the gender in the plural, (see Nordheimer's Grammar, § 556, 558.) When a city became a place for the dens of jackals, it was a complete solitude.

Ver. 4 predicts the hopelessness of Edom's desolation, in spite of all the efforts of man to the contrary. Such efforts were strenuously put forth; but at last the curse of God was stronger than man, and the lonely solitudes of Petra now remain as monuments of the fact that God's words never fail. The perpetuity of this desolation is guaranteed by the fact that the current of eastern commerce that once enriched Edom, has been diverted beyond all hope of recall into other channels. Yet when this prophecy was uttered, and for years after, Edom was a prosperous and powerful country. The prediction that it should be called "the borders of wickedness" is strikingly fulfilled by its present condition, for it is one of the most

dangerous spots in the East. It can only be visited with a strong escort. Therefore the prophecy thus far has been fulfilled.

Ver. 5 predicts that these acts of God, outside of the borders of Israel, would hereafter produce a giving of glory to him—a prediction that has been verified a thousand times in those who have gazed on the rocky solitudes of once populous and powerful Edom.

The general argument of this section is wider in its application than the circumstances that called it forth. God still addresses men with the same touching appeal, "I have loved you;" and he still meets the same hard, ungrateful response, "Wherein hast thou loved us?" Men suffer many forms of outward evil and inward grief, because of their sins; but instead of referring them to the proper cause, their own wickedness, they impiously accuse God in their hearts of being indifferent to their welfare. They refuse to look at the tokens of love strewed all along their history, and dwell in obstinate ingratitude on the evils that their own sin has entailed upon them. And yet that history is crowded with such tokens. Besides the unnumbered blessings that each one individually has received, God has passed by our elder brethren, the angels who kept not their first estate, and provided a salvation for man. Here is a token of love as high as heaven, and as broad as eternity, that may be urged like the love of God to Jacob in rejection of Esau, in proof that the love of God to man is wonderful, and past finding out. And the perpetual rejection of the sinning angels, like the perpetual desolations of Idumea, stands as an everlasting proof of the goodness and severity of God,—goodness to those who had not been doomed to such a fearful rejection; severity inscrutable and mysterious to those who have.

SECTION II, CHAP. i, 6—ii, 9.

The Sin of the Priests.

6. "A son honours a father, and a servant his master. Now if I am a father, where is my honour? and if I am a master, where is my reverence? saith Jehovah of hosts to you, O priests! despising my name!
7. And ye reply, 'In what have we despised thy name?' Offering upon my altar polluted bread. And ye say, 'In what have we polluted thee?'
8. In your saying, 'The table of Jehovah is contemptible.' And when ye offer the blind in sacrifice, is not this evil? And when ye offer the lame and the sick, is not this evil? Offer it, I pray you, to your governor; will he be pleased with it, or accept your face, saith Jehovah of hosts?
9. "And now, I pray, supplicate the favour of God that he may be gracious to us, [*since*] by your hand must this be done. And will he accept your
10. persons, saith Jehovah of hosts? Who is there among you that will shut the doors, so that ye may not be kindling fire upon mine altar in vain? I have no delight in you, saith Jehovah of hosts, nor will I receive an offer-
11. ing from your hands. For from the rising of the sun to his going down

- my name shall be great among the nations, and in every place incense shall be offered to my name, and a pure offering, for great is my name
12. among the nations, saith Jehovah of hosts. But you are profaning it in saying that the table of Jehovah is polluted, and of its produce that the
 13. food is contemptible. And ye say, [*also,*] Behold, what a weariness! And ye have snuffed at it, saith Jehovah of hosts. And ye have brought the stolen, and the lame, and the sick, and have offered an offering. Will
 14. I accept this from your hands, saith Jehovah? Cursed be the deceiver who has a male in his flock, and offers and sacrifices a corrupt thing to the Lord! for a great King am I, saith Jehovah of hosts, and my name is feared among the nations.
- ii, 1, 2. "And now to you is this command, O priests! If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay to heart to give glory to my name, saith Jehovah of hosts, then I will send upon you a curse, and I will curse your blessings.
3. Yea I have cursed them, because ye lay not to heart [*this thing*]. Behold I will rebuke the seed for you, and spread dung upon your faces, the
 4. dung of your festal offerings, and they shall take you away in it. And ye shall know that I have sent to you this commandment, that it might
 5. be [*a confirmation of*] my covenant with Levi, saith Jehovah of hosts. My covenant with him was [*to give to him*] life and peace, and I gave them to him, [*and on his part to me*] reverence; and he did reverence me, and feared before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips; in peace and uprightness he walked before me, and converted many from sin. For the lips of the priest should keep knowledge, and the law should they seek from his mouth; for he is the
 8. messenger of Jehovah of hosts. But ye have departed from the way, ye have caused many to stumble by [*your*] teaching, ye have corrupted the
 9. covenant of Levi, saith Jehovah of hosts. And I also will make you contemptible and mean before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, and have been partial in [*dispensing*] the law."

In this section God reproves the priests for neglecting to honour him, (ver. 6,) for offering defective sacrifices, (ver. 7-9,) and for failing to vindicate the purity of his house as they ought, (ver. 10.) He then predicts the consequent rejection of the Jewish nation, and the bringing in of a people from the heathen that would serve him better, (ver. 11,) and reproves with threats their neglect of duty, (ver. 12-ii, 3,) then contrasts them with the former priests, and threatens severe punishments, (ver. 4-9.)

Ver. 6. The priests boasted that God was a Father and a Ruler to them, and hence expected blessings from his hand. God requires that they show the sincerity of this claim by treating him as they professed to regard him.

Ver. 7, 8, develop in detail their sin, and show that they treated God as they would not dare to treat an earthly ruler, striving to put him off with the mere shreds and ekings of time, strength, and means, and then wondering that he does not reward them for such niggard mockery.

Ver. 9. The principal question in regard to this verse is whether it is serious exhortation or irony. Michaelis, (and Rosenmüller, of

course, who usually transcribes Michaelis word for word, except when he is too orthodox,) Hitzig and others, take it as a serious exhortation to repentance. The difficulties in this view are, that the whole tone of the passage is reprehensive, and not hortatory; and that the challenge, "Will he accept your persons?" identical with the phrase "accept your face," in verse 8, seems to imply that God would not listen to them, and hence an exhortation to pray to him would seem idle. We therefore prefer with Maurer to take it ironically: "Go, then, with such ragged offerings and intercede with God, since this is your duty as priests; and think you that he will accept such an insult? I tell you nay. He will fling it in your teeth with, Who hath required it at thy hand, thus to tread my courts."

Ver. 10 is taken by our English version as an accusation of a mercenary spirit in the priests: "Who is there among you that would shut the doors *for naught*?" as if they were charged with being unwilling to do the smallest service for God without reward. But the coherence of the passage with what follows requires a different interpretation. It is not an indolent mercenary spirit that is rebuked, but a want of zeal to vindicate the purity of God's house. The meaning is, "Where is there among you some Phinehas, who will rise in holy indignation and shut the doors of my house against such desecration, and prevent this smoking of useless and polluting sacrifices upon my altar? Better withhold your beggarly apology for religion than insult me, and add to your own guilt by palming it upon your conscience as an acceptable service to God." It is, therefore, a burst of indignant scorn upon such attempts to palter with God in the matter of religion. Then, as now, men sought, as for the philosopher's stone, a cheap religion—one that would insure heaven to them on the easiest terms. Hence they made a shuffling compromise with duty, compounding for the lowest possible percentage of self-denial and effort. God assures them that a cheap religion, like most cheap things, was always dear, since it always cost more than it was worth,—for it was worth just nothing. God will not despise the widow's mite, but he will despise the miser's mite,—especially when the blinded man is dreaming that by this beggarly shift he is securing the favour of God. As he drops his pittance into the treasury of the Lord, a voice comes forth from the throne, Who is there among you that will close the doors against this insulting mockery, and tell the starveling giver that he had better keep his miserable apology for a gift, for it was worse than thrown away when presented as an offering to God. O that this voice of indignant scorn could be rung through the laggard Churches

of Christendom, who are striving to solve the same impossible problem in the maxima and minima of spiritual calculus, with how little self-denial and active labour a man may reach heaven at last.

The wish that the doors of the temple should be closed, conveys an intimation that if no one is found to shut them God will do it himself; or rather will forsake that temple, and leave it an altar without a promise and a shrine without a divinity. This explains the force of "for" in the next verse.

Ver. 11 is elliptical, the exact antecedent to "for" not being expressed. The intimation is: "But if there be none who will thus vindicate the glory of my name among the priests of my own temple, still that name shall be glorified; *for* a people will be raised up from among the heathen who not merely in this temple, but 'in every place,' shall offer, not the blind and lame, but a pure offering to my name." This, then, predicts the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles into the Church. The conversation of Christ with the Samaritan woman, at Sychar, is a striking commentary on this verse.

And who can tell but that, if we also are faithless in God's work, others may be raised up from the dark places of heathenism, and we left to perish in our rejection? Certain it is that God's name will be glorified on the earth; and if we are false to our duty, he can of the very stones raise up children to Abraham, while we are shut out.

Ver. 12 renews the charge of sacrilege in further detail. The "produce" of the altar was the offerings of the people, from which the priests obtained their subsistence, which the priests despised, like the godless sons of Eli, perhaps longing gluttonously for more luxurious fare.

Ver. 13 amplifies the charge. The priestly function was to them a weariness, in view of its imperfect reward; and they "snuffed" at the provision that was made for them at the Lord's table. Religion is still a weariness to many, and the provisions it furnishes to the soul snuffed at with ill-disguised contempt.—אֵרוֹן, *it*, refers to the produce of the table of the Lord, in verse 12; נִשְׁבָּט means torn away by violence—that is, stolen, and not lacerated.

Ver. 14 reproves the people, as well as the priests, for withholding suitable offerings to the temple. A male victim was more valuable than a female. It was, indeed, expressly required by the law. See Lev. i, 3, 10, &c. The same intimation of a removal of the Church to the Gentiles, if the chosen people were unfaithful, as in verse eleven, is made in the second clause. Alas! how often do we keep back the firstlings of our flocks, the best of our services, and

offer God the shreds of our time, the weary remnant of our thoughts and affections, and the niggardly gleanings of our means! It is in touching reproach that God refers to the heathen, as if he had said: The very heathen fear me more than my own people; even now in their blindness they have more dread of offending me than those whom I have chosen. Alas! heathenism in the great day will condemn much of our Christianity.

Chap. ii, 1. Having, in chap. i, 14, turned aside for a moment to the people, he returns to the priests, whom he rebukes for violating the covenant of the priesthood: (1) by unbelief and disobedience, ver. 2, 3; (2) by corrupt teaching, ver. 4-8; (3) by partiality in dispensing the law, ver. 9.

Ver. 2 threatens a curse for disobedience, if it were persisted in. The phrase *גַּם אֲרִוּתֵיךָ* is taken by Maurer and others as an emphatic repetition; but it seems more natural to give *גַּם* its ordinary meaning, and take the verb as a preterite. Then the sense would be: "This is no idle threat, for the curse is even now upon you because of your sin; ye are condemned already."

Ver. 3. To rebuke the seed is to forbid its growing. "For you," is for your disadvantage. (For this use of *לְ* see Nordheimer, § 868.) The spreading of dung on the face is an image of the most insulting indignity, while the being carried away in it is assurance that this indignity will be permanent,—a thing that cannot be fled from, but will cleave to and follow its objects wherever they go.—*אֲנִי* is to be taken here impersonally.

Ver. 4 is susceptible of two interpretations. That of Rosenmüller and others makes "this commandment" to be in apposition with "the covenant with Levi," asserting their substantial identity; but this is incompatible with the words *לְדָרֶוֹת* which express design. We therefore prefer that of Maurer, which takes the last clause as explaining the design of this commandment, with its threats, namely, to establish the original covenant with Levi, and bring the priests back to the purity of their sacred order, and thus effect a complete reformation.

Ver. 5 explains more fully the covenant with Levi, alluded to in the fourth verse; and shows, by the mode in which Levi observed it, how much his descendants had violated it. The grammatical construction of *בְּדִרְאָ* is somewhat doubtful. Rosenmüller and others take it as an accusative in apposition with the suffix *בְּ*, representing the design for which the life and peace were given. We prefer with Maurer to take it as a nominative in apposition with "covenant," just as "life and peace" are in the preceding clause, and expressing

the other branch of the covenant. The sense then would be as follows: "My covenant with Levi was this, namely, on my part there were to be given to him *life and peace*, and I fulfilled my part, and gave them to him; on his part there was to be rendered to me *reverence*; and he did reverence me, and fear before my name." This furnishes the most consistent sense, and requires no unusual grammatical construction. It states first the conditions of the covenant on both sides, and secondly the fact that these conditions had been faithfully met. This was at once a reproof to the irreverent descendants of Levi, and an explanation of the absence of those blessings from God's hand which they considered to be guaranteed to them by the covenant. The covenant referred to we have in Numbers xxv, 12, 13, "Behold I give unto him my covenant of *peace*; and he shall have it and his seed after him, even the covenant of an *everlasting* priesthood,"—life and peace.

Ver. 6 describes yet further the conduct of the ancient priesthood. The law of truth in the mouth refers to their truthful teachings, the absence of perversity in their lips to their upright judgments in judicial cases. See Deuteronomy xvii, 8, 9; xix, 17, where judicial functions are expressly recognized in the priesthood. And as the priests were especially to judge of the fitness of sacrificial offerings, the comparison becomes yet more bitter as a reproof. To walk with God is to follow his precepts, as did Enoch, (Genesis v, 22;) Noah, (vi, 9;) and Abraham, (xvii, 1.) To walk in peace is so to walk as to please God; and to walk in uprightness is to walk sincerely, without guile. The effect of this kind of walking with God then, as now, was the conversion of sinners.

Ver. 7 declares that these were the proper functions of the priesthood, and hence those in whom they were wanting were derelict to their duty.

Ver. 8 openly charges the dereliction intimated in the seventh verse. They have not only departed from the right way themselves, but have caused others to do so by their teaching. We have, with Maurer and De Wette, rendered *תורה* here teaching rather than law, because it requires that sense in the preceding verses, and bears it here. Instead of converting sinners, they perverted them; instead of teaching truth they taught error; instead of keeping the Levitic covenant they broke it, and therefore forfeited all claim to the blessings it promised, exposing themselves to yet additional punishments.

Ver. 9 threatens these punishments, and declares that as they had violated the conditions of the covenant, God would inflict its penalty. As they had exercised their priestly functions, judicial and other-

wise, partially, respecting the persons of one class while they disregarded those of another, God would visit them with punishment for this injustice.

The lessons of this section have been suggested in the exposition, and need not be drawn out in detail. The grand lesson is, that men never make anything by attempting to drive a hard bargain with God. Religion is not a thing of bargain, but a thing of love; and the moment a man begins to chaffer for easier terms, he shows that his heart is not right before God. We may compromise with conscience for a low rate of obedience; but we will discover at last that God has not endorsed the compromise, and therefore it is worthless. We have lost not only what we thought we had purchased, but lost also what we paid for it. Let us, then, be warned by the example of these faithless priests, and not bring the refuse of our good things to God, as if anything were good enough for him and his service; but give him the firstlings of our powers and possessions, with the assurance that no man ever lost anything by serving God with a whole heart, or gained anything by serving him with half a one.

SECTION III, CHAP. ii, 10-16.

Mixed Marriages.

- ii, 10. "Is there not one father to all of us? Has not one God created us? Wherefore, then, do we act treacherously one toward another, [lit. *a man toward his brother,*] in profaning the covenant of our fathers? Judah acts treacherously, and wickedness is done in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the holiness of Jehovah, which he loved, and has married
12. the daughter of a strange god. Jehovah will cut off the man who did this, the watcher and the answerer, from the tabernacles of Jacob, and him
 13. presenting an offering to Jehovah of hosts. And this in the second place have ye done. Ye have covered with tears the altar of Jehovah, with weeping and crying, so that there is no seeing of your offering, or
 14. accepting favourably from your hands. And ye say, Wherefore? Because Jehovah is the witness between you and the wife of your youth, toward whom you have acted treacherously, and she your companion
 15. and the wife of your covenant. And did he not make one? And the remainder of the Spirit was with him. And wherefore one? Seeking a seed of God. Take heed then to your spirits, and do not act treacherously to the wife of your youth. For he hates putting away, saith Jehovah the God of Israel; and the one who covers his garment with iniquity, saith Jehovah of hosts. Take heed then to your spirits, and do not act treacherously."

The prophet now turns to reprove the sin of mixed marriages, which we learn from Nehemiah was one of the crying sins of the Jews at this time. The greatness of the sin arose from the fact that it tended to defeat one of the purposes of the Mosaic economy. God isolated the Jews from all other nations, that they might be a nursery for the great ideas of religion that were to be elaborated in the history of

the world, and a stock from which he would bring forth the Messiah. All mingling with other nations, who had not been trained in this way and preserved for this purpose, tended to defeat this design. Especially was this true of matrimonial alliances. Heathen women retained a natural longing for the indulgences of their own religion, and easily led their husbands into guilty compliances. The women of Moab and Philistia, and the wives of Solomon, furnish mournful proofs of this fact. They led their infatuated husbands and paramours into the grossest idolatry. Hence these connexions were grievous sins against God; but as they led to cruel treatment of the Jewish wives, they were also sins against humanity. The prophet strikes at once at the heart of the sin, and shows that it is want of fidelity to God that lies at the root of it all. Whoever violates the theocratic law, rebels against God who made it. They, therefore, who chose heathen wives, thereby rejected the God of Israel.

Ver. 10 opens somewhat abruptly. The argument is this: God has chosen us as his children, from all other nations, to preserve us a peculiar people for peculiar purposes. To intermarry with heathen defeats these purposes, and therefore is a sin against our Father God. The fatherhood here spoken of is not that of the whole human race, or the reasoning would be without force, since he was in that sense the Father of the heathen as well as of the Jewish woman. The word "create" does not militate against this view, for it is used exactly as in Isa. xliii, 1, "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob," &c.

The Jewish people were a family of God, and to introduce heathen members into it, without permission from God, was to violate both the filial and the fraternal relations.

Ver. 11 specifies the crime by which this filial relation had been violated, viz., marrying the daughter of a strange god, or, in other words, the worshippers of strange gods. The filial relation is used in Scripture to express the relation between worshipper and worshipped. (See Jeremiah ii, 27, "Saying to a stock, Thou art my father," &c.)

Ver. 12 declares that however lofty or sacred be the position of the offender, he shall surely be punished. The proverbial phrase *צַר וְעֹנֵן*, Gesenius renders "the waking and the answering," supposing that it refers to the watch of the Levites in the temple, when one kept awake and called and the other answered. The Arabs have a similar proverbial expression, "No caller and no answerer." The meaning is, whatever or whoever he may be; being an idiomatic phrase for universality, like our English one "root and branch."

Ver. 13 turns to the human aspect of this sin, and shows the cruelty that it involved to the Jewish wives. By a bold and beautiful figure he represents the guilty husbands as covering the altars of God with the tears and cries of their injured wives, so that the offering on the altar cannot be seen by God. The mute supplication of sacrifice may rise to invoke a blessing on the offerer; but above it, and rising first to heaven, is the language of injured innocence that calls down a curse on the man who has wronged the helpless and confiding wife of his youth.

Ver. 14 opens with a query from the people, Wherefore God thus refused to receive their offerings? The answer is, Because he was a witness to the nuptial contract. Marriage is a religious act, having all the solemnity of an oath; and God is called to witness this compact, and therefore to punish any violations of its terms. This was true, in an especial sense, with the theocratic people, for reasons already suggested. The phrase "wife of your covenant" alludes to the fact that the wife was a daughter of Israel, the covenant people; and therefore a sin against her, in this respect, was a sin against God. The phrases "wife of your youth" and "companion" are thrown in to show the aggravated nature of this offence. "She whom you thus wronged was the companion of those earlier and brighter days, when in the bloom of her young beauty she left her father's house and shared your early struggles, and rejoiced in your later success; who walked arm in arm with you along the pilgrimage of life, cheering you in its trials by her gentle ministry; and now, when the bloom of her youth has faded and the friends of her youth have gone, when father and mother whom she left for you are in the grave, then you cruelly cast her off as a worn-out, worthless thing, and insult her holiest affections by putting an idolater and a heathen in her place." There is something very touching in these allusions to the aggravations of this wrong, arising from the tender associations and memories of youth.

Ver. 15 is one of some difficulty, and has been singularly misunderstood by the commentators. Most of the continental interpreters, including Rosenmüller, Maurer, and Hengstenberg, follow Kimchi, and interpret it as referring to Abraham, and stating an objection of the Jews, thus making אֶת־הַיָּהוָה a nominative. "Did not one (viz., Abraham) do so?" *i. e.*, take a heathen Hagar to wife? The prophet replies, Yes; but it was to raise up a godly seed. This interpretation is so unnatural that it is amazing that it should have been so generally adopted. It is liable to insuperable objections. First, there is no reason for supposing an allusion to Abraham here. He is never called by the name of "the one," nor was his conduct a

parallel at all to that reprovèd. The crime reprovèd here was putting away their covenant wives and taking heathen wives. But Abraham did not put Sarah away when he took Hagar; and he took her also at Sarah's request, and not, as the Jews then did, in utter disregard of the wishes of their wives. Hence the cases are wholly dissimilar. Secondly, this interpretation gives no sufficient sense to the words *וְשָׂאָר רֵיחָ לְךָ*. The tame rendering "to him there was a remnant of intelligence" of Maurer, shows how utterly unmeaning they are on this interpretation. The idea of "remainder" cannot be made to cohere with this view of the words. The same thing is true of the idea of *one-ness* that is made so prominent. Thirdly, in every other case an objection by the people is introduced by the formula, "ye say," the omission of which here is fatal to this view. Others, with Calvin, and most of the English interpreters, refer the words to Adam and Eve. But the case of Adam and Eve does not touch the one before us. It would be pertinent if the sin reprovèd were polygamy, but not at all so when it is the putting away of a covenant, *i. e.*, a Jewish wife, and taking a heathen in her place. This also, like the preceding interpretation, gives no face to the *one-ness* insisted on in the verse as bearing on the question, and which furnishes the key to the passage. The cases of Adam and Abraham have nothing that meet the logical demands of the verse. The true view of the passage has been brought out by no writer we have seen except Rev. P. Fairbairn, of Salton, Scotland, in an essay in the *Christian Treasury* for 1847, (Edinburgh, p. 287.) And its obvious coherence demonstrates its truth at sight.

The prophet at the outset (ver. 10) had argued the oneness of the Jewish people from the fact that they had one father. They were therefore one, and these mixed marriages that violated this oneness were wrong. This wrong became more apparent when the reason for this oneness is regarded. Having then shown that the Jews were breaking this arrangement and inflicting cruel injustice on their covenant wives, he asks again, as he did at the outset, "Did not God make us one? Did he not separate us from other nations into an isolated unity? Yet this was not done because the blessing was too narrow to be spread over other nations, or because infinite fulness was exhausted; for the residue of the Spirit was with him. There remained an inexhaustible fulness of spiritual blessing that might have been given to other nations. Why then did he choose but one? It was that he might make a seed of God, a nation which he should train to be the repository of his covenant and the stock of his Messiah, a people in which the true doctrine of the unity of God should be cherished amid surrounding polytheism and

idolatry, until the fulness of time should come. Now to introduce this very polytheism and idolatry into the chosen people, and to reject the wives who were protected by the covenant, was to break up this oneness, and do that which if persisted in would amalgamate the Jewish people with the other nations of the earth." Such we consider to be the argument of the prophet; and its obvious consistency and force, its development of the significance of the words "one," "remainder," and "seed of God," that are the pregnant words of the sentence, demonstrate it on presentation to be the true view of the passage.

Ver. 16. The words $\text{וְיָשָׁן אֶת־בָּתְּוֶהָבָהּ}$ are rendered by the Septuagint, Vulgate, and Luther's translation, "if he hate her, let him put her away." But as it is a *quasi* putting away that is condemned, a permission to do so in such a connexion would seem to be incongruous. The ordinary sense of וְיָשָׁן is "for," and not "if," as this view demands; and the absence of pronominal suffixes and the form of the second verb are inconsistent with this view. The form would be וְיָשָׁן , the Pret. Kal, instead of the Piel Inf. construct as we find it, in which conjugation it has the sense of divorcing. (See Gesenius, s. v.) Hence we prefer, with most modern interpreters, to take Jehovah as the subject of the first verb, and render it, "for he [Jehovah] hates [*such*] putting away," viz., as has just been described. This is given as the reason for the warning to "take heed and not act treacherously to the wife of your youth." The change of persons from the third to the first is not at all uncommon. (See Zech. xiv, 2, 3.)

The words $\text{וְיָכַסּוּ חֵטְאֵי־בְּרִיּוֹתָם}$ have been variously rendered. A common rendering is, "who covers violence with his garment," i. e., conceals it. The grammatical objection to this is, that עַל with this verb always designates the thing covered, and not the covering itself. (See Deut. xiii, 8; Hab. ii, 14, &c.) Hence we have rendered it, "who covers his garment with violence." The word "garment" was used among the Hebrews to designate the conjugal relation, (see Deut. xxii, 30; Ruth iii, 9; Ezek. xvi, 8,) somewhat as the word bed is with us. It is, also, so used in Arabic. Hence, to cover the garment with violence, was to act in a violent and unjust manner toward the conjugal relation, just as to be unfaithful to the bed is with us to be unfaithful to the nuptial obligations. This brings the phrase into exact harmony with the rest of the section, and makes a fitting conclusion to this solemn rebuke.

The great doctrine that underlies this section is, that God has a people in the world bound to him by special relations, and, by virtue of this fact, bound by special relations to one another. The violation

of these relations to each other is therefore a violation of their relations to him. The Christian Church is still such a people, and although its relations to the world are very different from those of the Jewish people, this law of mutual obligation is still in force. The Church is one family, and is bound to act thus in all the dealings of its members with each other. And even in the matter of marriage her members must not be unequally yoked, but have reference to their Christian obligations in forming this relation, and marry in the Lord, *i. e.*, in accordance with the obligations that bind them to the Lord. The neglect of this principle has caused incalculable wretchedness and apostasy in the past, and condemned many a heart either to life-long sorrow, by the sin of a partner in life, or, worse still, to a fellowship with that sin and its consequent condemnation.

(To be continued.)

ART. II.—MR. MAURICE AND HIS WRITINGS.

1. *Grounds for laying before the Council of King's College, London, Certain Statements contained in a Recent Publication, entitled, "Theological Essays, by the Rev. F. D. Maurice, M. A., Professor of Divinity in King's College."* By R. W. JELF, D. D., Principal of the College, and Canon of Christ Church. Oxford and London. Parker and Rivingtons. 1853.
2. *The Word "Eternal," and the Punishment of the Wicked: a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Jelf, Canon of Christ Church, and Principal of King's College.* By FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE, M. A., Chaplain of Lincoln's Inn. Cambridge, [England.] Macmillan and Co. 1853.
3. *Theological Essays.* By FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE, M. A., Chaplain of Lincoln's Inn. Second Edition. With a New Preface, and other Additions. Cambridge. Macmillan and Co. 1853.
4. *Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays.* By ROBERT S. CANDLISH, D. D. London. Nesbit and Co. 1854.

OUR readers do not need to be informed that in the bosom of the Church of England there is ever maintained a strife of parties. The different influences which, three centuries ago, combined to determine the complex form, and to fix the incoherent accessories of English Protestantism, as by law established, have, through the circumstances of that Church's position, and, above all, through the spirit and tendencies of her established order, and her many-toned and sometimes dissonant teachings, been themselves continually reproduced and propagated afresh. That is to say, the influences which determined the form and conditions of that Church have been con-

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ART. I.—MALACHI.

SECTION III, CHAP. ii, 17—iii, 6.

The coming of Christ and the Forerunner.

- ii, 17. "YE weary Jehovah with your words. And ye say, 'Wherein do ye weary him?' In your saying, 'Every one who does evil is good in the eyes of Jehovah, and in them he delights;' or, 'Where is the God of judgment?'"
- iii, 1. "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare a way before me, and suddenly there shall come to his temple the Lord, whom ye are seeking, and the messenger of the covenant for whom ye are longing.
2. Behold he shall come, saith Jehovah of hosts. And who shall endure the day of his coming? And who shall stand in his appearing? For he
 3. shall be as a refiner's fire, and as a fuller's soap. And he shall sit, refining and purifying the silver, and shall purify the sons of Levi, and refine them, as gold and as silver, and they shall be Jehovah's, offering sacrifice
 4. in righteousness. And grateful to Jehovah shall be the sacrificial offering of Judah and Jerusalem, as in the days of old; and as in the years of the
 5. past. And I draw near to you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and the adulterers, and those who swear to a falsehood, and those who defraud the hireling of his wages, and the widow, and the orphan, and those who oppress the stranger, and who fear not
 6. me, saith Jehovah of hosts. For I am Jehovah, I change not, and you (*therefore*) sons of Jacob are not consumed."

Chap. ii, 17. Here opens another count in this solemn indictment, the charge of an Epicurean scepticism, or a denial of the providence of God in human affairs, so far, at least, as their own condition was concerned.

There is no attribute of God more wonderful than his long-suffering. It has borne with a sinful world for six thousand years, with unwearied patience, and is even now waiting to be gracious. Hence when we read, as we do in this verse, that this attribute is exhausted, we infer that the wickedness which possessed such power as this, must have been very flagrant. What then is this enormity? Not

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murder, or lust, or any of the most atrocious crimes of the human standard of guilt, but the abuse of the long-suffering itself as an indication that God was indifferent to sin. To pervert this very kindness into a pretext for so blasphemous a thought exhausted the kindness itself, and extorted from the prophet the indignant accusation, "Ye weary Jehovah with your words." The extent of their depravity is evinced by the mode in which this charge was met. It was not met with penitent regret, or even silence, but with the insolent challenge, "Wherein do we weary him?" What have we done so much worse than others that God charges us with wearying him? The prophet replies, that it was in saying that either God loved evil-doers, or there was no directing hand of a righteous God in the affairs of men.

The cause of this ungodly challenging of Divine Providence lay in the existing circumstances of the Jews. After they returned from the captivity, they continued, in spite of the efforts of Haggai and Zechariah, to neglect the more important duties of religion, while they discharged other lesser ones with superstitious punctiliousness. Because of the discharge of these minor duties, they conceived God as laid under obligation to prosper them. But because of the neglect of the higher duties God did not prosper them, even as much as surrounding heathen nations were prospered. Instead, however, of inferring that their peculiar privileges above the heathen brought after them peculiar guilt in the neglect of these privileges, and demanded peculiar punishment, they looked only at the few points of their obedience, and inferred that they were unjustly dealt with in not being rewarded for them. They therefore came to the monstrous conclusion, that either God loved and rewarded the evil-doer, like the surrounding heathen; or if not, "Where is the God of judgment?" Where is the proof that there is any directing hand of God in human affairs? Either there is no providence, or it favours the wicked. Hence they longed for the coming of that Messiah whom the prophets had promised, and whose coming was to bless the chosen people; supposing that when he came all these apparent anomalies would be rectified, and prosperity return to Israel. These delusions are corrected in the remainder of the section, when it is shown that this Messiah shall come; but his coming, so far from bestowing reward upon them in their sins, would only hasten their punishment, and bring about that final rejection which should scatter them like autumn leaves, all over the earth. The state of mind, therefore, which the prophet addresses, is not that of scepticism as to the ultimate coming of Messiah, as interpreters generally assume; but false views as to the

purpose and result of that coming. This is proved by chap. iii, 1, where they are said to be "seeking" him, and "longing" for his advent, not doubting it. It was not doubt about his coming, but delusion that he would correct. "He shall come as you expect, but not with the results that you expect." Such is so clearly the drift of the passage, that it is surprising that the other view should have obtained such universal prevalence.

Chap. iii, 1. In regard to this important verse several questions arise. Who is the messenger sent to prepare the way? Who is the Lord? Who is the messenger of the covenant? And what is the connexion of this passage with previous prophecies in the Old Testament, and the references to it in the New? An answer to the last question will aid us greatly in reaching an answer to the others, and therefore we address ourselves first to its consideration.

This passage is evidently founded on Isaiah xl, 3-5: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord," &c. This was probably a favourite passage with the Jewish people at this time, from which they drew their hopes of a Messiah, who should rectify all their anomalies and grant them a signal prosperity. Hence they looked anxiously for the promised forerunner who would herald his coming. Malachi assures them that this prophecy would be fulfilled—the forerunner and the Lord would both surely come as they were predicted. The voice was to cry from a wilderness, not in a literal sense so much as a figurative. The condition of the chosen people would be that of a wilderness—one of desolation and ruin. Now when that desolation was darkest and wildest the voice of summons should be heard calling upon them to prepare for the coming of the Lord. This voice is applied expressly to John the Baptist in Matthew iii, 3; Mark i, 3; Luke i, 76; iii, 4; and John i, 23. But the question arises, Is John alone referred to by this voice? Hengstenberg, Olshausen, and other expositors of note, say that he is not the only one referred to, but only the last one of a series. This is inferred from the use of the plural "our God," and from the fact that this preparation was really the work of all the prophets who prophesied until John, and not of John alone. The cry was the same, but it was taken from lip to lip along the whole line of prophets, until the last and greatest of them could say, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

In the citation of this prophecy in Mark i, 3, it is preceded by that of Malachi iii, 1, and there is a difficulty in the quotation that does not meet the eye of the English reader. The received text reads "as it is written in the prophets," which, as the quotations are from

both Malachi and Isaiah, presents no difficulty. But the true reading is admitted to be "as it is written in Isaiah the prophet," and hence the question arises, How can the passage from Malachi be referred to Isaiah? Hengstenberg explains it by the fact that the passage in Malachi rested on that in Isaiah, and hence the original was quoted, as it was the greater, as well as the older prophecy, to indicate this connexion. This is very ingenious, though Olshausen (on Matt. iii, 3) remarks, that it seems forced. The fact is, that as the minor prophets were regarded as but one book, they were rarely quoted by name, and where they were cited with one of the major prophets, the name of the latter was naturally given, especially as in this case, when the other evangelists had cited the major prophet by name. The omission, therefore, of the name of Malachi, is unimportant.

It is then plain from this brief reference to the relations of this text to Isaiah and the Gospels, that "the messenger" here predicted was John the Baptist. Mark quotes it with several verbal alterations to adapt it to his purpose in the use he makes of it. Christ expressly refers it to John the Baptist in Matthew xi, 10, and Luke vii, 27. Hence there can be no doubt in the mind of any believer in the claims of Christ, as to the proper reference of this text to John the Baptist. The only question is, whether it refers to him exclusively. Hengstenberg and others say here also, that it does not. Their reasons are, (1) the connexion with Isaiah xl, 3, where not an individual but a series is meant; (2) the word "behold," intimating a nearer connexion with the time of the prophet than the age of John; (3) the connexion of this passage with chap. iv, 5, that predicts the coming of Elijah, which, as we shall see, is the strongest reason of the three. By this interpretation the word "messenger" is applied to that long series that ended in John, to all of whom this preparatory work was assigned. The prophecy was really fulfilled in John, though not exhausted by him, but possessing a continuous fulfilment all along the history of the past. The work of John was too narrow to meet the sweep of the predictions of this prophecy. Hence, when he appeared in the wilderness, fasting, and clothed in the wild garb of the old prophets, he appeared rather as a symbol to gather in his own case all the scattered delineations of prophecy, and explain their meaning and application, than as himself the end and object of these prophecies. His appearance was not so much a mere fulfilment of prophecy, as a reëxistence of all its awful and glorious voices, couched under obvious symbols. The Jewish people were in a state of desolation, all the bloom of their civil and spiritual life withered, and their hearts as hard as the

parched wilderness. Hence, when John took up his abode in the wilderness, he presented to the people a vast and silent symbol of their condition. He came, clothed in a garb of penitence, like the older prophets, and eating a diet of penitence, to present a symbol of the great duty of the people, *repentance*. He then proclaimed the near approach of the Messiah, thus gathering up the three great topics of prophecy, sin, repentance, and salvation, and presenting them for the last time before the coming of the expected One. His ministry was therefore a symbolical epitome of all that had gone before, in the prophetic teachings of God to the Church; and hence he was, as the last representative of this long line of ambassadors from God, preëminently the messenger.

Who then is meant by "the Lord" יהוה? We reply, God; because יהוה with the article always has this meaning. See Exod. xxiii, 17; xxxiv, 23; Isa. i, 24; iii, 1; x, 16, 33, &c. In Dan. ix, 17, it seems to mean the Son, where the prophet prays to God to grant his request, for the Lord's sake. The fact that God is the speaker proves the same thing; for after declaring the way shall be prepared "before me," he adds that the Lord should come, thus identifying the Lord with himself.

There is now but little difficulty in determining who is meant by the "messenger of the covenant." The authority of the New Testament settles it to be the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The "covenant" here does not mean any specific outward transaction between God and the Jews, but that deeper inward relation which he has to the whole Church, involving, as it does, the great purpose and plan of redemption, of which Christ was the executive agent. In distinction from this national covenant, Christ is called "the Mediator of the new covenant," Heb. xii, 24; in allusion to such passages as this one, Jer. xxxi, 31, &c. He is called the "messenger" or "angel" of the covenant, in allusion to Exod. xxiii, 20, where the Jehovah Angel is promised as the guide of the people. This angel is thus identified with the Shekinah, that went before the tribes, dwelt in the tabernacle, and afterward in the temple, through which all the manifestations in the Old Testament were made. This text, compared with Mark i, 2, identifies this angel with Christ, proving thus, that all the theophanies of the Old Testament were through the Son, who became flesh, and dwelt among us. Those who wish to pursue this interesting theme more fully, will find it very ably discussed in the Lectures on Divinity, by Principal Hill, of St. Andrews. (Book iii, chap. v, sec. 1-3.) The bearing of this point on the Socinian controversy is obviously very important, for if this is established, it follows irresistibly that Christ is God.

The words "for whom ye are longing," show clearly that the state of mind existing then was delusion and not doubt, as is commonly stated. They longed for Messiah to bring those temporal blessings which Jehovah had not bestowed on them yet, and the prophet corrects their error as to the purpose of his coming. To assume, as the expositors do, that only the pious portion of the people thus longed for him, is perfectly unauthorized and arbitrary, for the very persons longing thus, are those reprov'd for sin, and threatened with his coming. The temple here is not necessarily to be limited to the literal temple, any more than the wilderness in which the other messenger was to appear. The theocratic people, the Church, is sometimes called the temple of the Lord. (See Jer. vii, 4; and especially Zech. vi, 12, 13, 15, which is exactly parallel to this passage.) The Church is frequently so called in the New Testament. (See 2 Cor. vi, 16; 2 Thess. ii, 4; Rev. iii, 12, &c.) The literal temple was only a symbol of this spiritual temple, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the chief corner-stone.

Ver. 2. "The day of his coming," and his "appearing," are not to be limited to the first advent of Messiah, but to his entire work, including the whole dispensation that shall end with the judgment. The "day of his coming" is parallel to "the day of the Lord" mentioned so frequently in the prophets, (see Amos v, 18; Joel ii, 11, &c.,) and afterward called "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" in chap. iv, 5, where it is obviously identical with the day spoken of here. This is further proved by the allusions to this text in the New Testament, *e. g.*, Luke xxi, 34, 36; Eph. vi, 13; and Rev. vi, 16, 17, where this "standing" at his appearing is referred to a period yet future. The mission of Christ is regarded as a whole, from the manger of Bethlehem to the throne of judgment, and declared to be for the fall as well as for the rising of many in Israel, a work that should separate the pure from the impure, just as the refiner's fire and the fuller's washing lye, or potash. This process began during the life of our Lord on earth; it has been going on ever since; and will continue until the final separation, of which we have so solemn a description from the lips of Christ himself in Matt. xxv, 31-46.

Ver. 3 takes up the metaphor of verse 2, and, slightly altering it, gives it more distinctness, and presents us with an image of exquisite beauty. When the ore is cast into the glowing crucible, it seems as if it were to be destroyed, and could it reason, it would, like Christians when put into the furnace of affliction, infer that the result and design must be destruction. But when the process is ended, that which went in cold, sordid, and impure, comes forth

bright, glowing, and unalloyed. And the refiner is beautifully represented as coming and sitting down beside the crucible, that the fire may not be too hot, or the process left incomplete. He bends in patient love over the furnace, until, (in the rule given to the Manchester ladies, who sought an illustration of this text in a refiner's shop,) when he looks down on the liquid metal, he can see his own image perfectly reflected there; then the process is completed, and the fire removed. The Old Testament images of "sons of Levi," "sacrifice," &c., are here used to express New Testament facts with obvious propriety. *לַיהוָה* means belonging to the Lord, including their own joyful acknowledgment of this fact.

Ver. 4 declares the result of this process, that the offerings of the people shall be grateful to God. These sacrifices are of course eucharistic and not expiatory, such as are mentioned in Rom. xii, 1; 1 Peter ii, 5, &c.

Ver. 5 refers to the godless cavil of chap. ii, 17, "Where is the God of judgment?" as if he was totally removed from all notice of human affairs. God says that he is near to them for judgment, and a swift witness against their crimes, committed against their helpless wives and dependents. He may seem not to notice sin, and to delay its punishment, but all the time his sleepless eye is noting the sinner, and his thunder but grows hotter the longer it sleeps. While these impious cavillers were inferring that God did not hate sin, because he did not punish others, they would suddenly receive a proof of his justice in his punishing themselves. The first three crimes were against their wives; sorcery was connected with the idolatrous worship to which their heathen wives allured them, and was a common practice among the later Jews, as appears from Acts viii, 9; xiii, 6; and also from Josephus, (Arch. xx, 6; B. Jud. ii, 12, 23,) quoted by Hengstenberg. The other crimes were against the unprotected, of whom God touchingly represents himself as the protector and avenger; oppression of the helpless is defiance of God. The root of their crimes is traced in the fact that they do not fear God—a crime whose folly seems even greater, if possible, than its wickedness.

Ver. 6. The exact force of *כִּי* in this verse is somewhat obscure. It must be taken as a causal particle, introducing a reason for, or an inference from what precedes. The connection is probably as follows:—In view of this prevalent wickedness, there were two conclusions that might be drawn. First, that of the sceptic—that God had ceased to punish sin, since the sinning people still continued to exist; and secondly, that of the timid believer—that with so much sin, Israel must be destroyed. God replies that neither of these conclu-

sions is correct. "They are spared and not consumed, because I am Jehovah, the covenant God of their fathers, and they, sons of Jacob, to whom I am bound by covenant; and while I spare them, I will also punish them, and while I punish them, I will also preserve them from total extinction!" The stress of the verse, then, is found in the meaning of יהוה, which was the covenant name of God to the Jews, as is clearly proved by the remarkable—and on any other hypothesis inexplicable—passage, Exod. vi, 3; and is here used in antithesis with Jacob, the covenanting head of the visible theocracy. So when the Church grows cold, and there shall be no faith on the earth, the hope of the Christian must be founded, not on the visible tokens of either impunity or gathering doom, but on the unchanging love of God, who will not allow the gates of hell to prevail against her. The immutability of God, then, is at once the guarantee that his people shall be cast into the furnace, and also that they shall not be consumed.

Some of the solemn lessons of this section are, that one of the greatest sins we can commit, is to infer that the inequality of human condition is a proof that God is indifferent to human conduct. The inference is unfair on a sufficiently extensive induction of facts, if we know nothing of God, but most atrociously wicked, even if more plausible, in view of what we actually know of him as a righteous ruler. Chap. ii, 17.

The remedial dispensation of God's mercy in Christ has two aspects—one of wrath, the other of love. The Angel of the Covenant is the same that led the people out from Egypt; and like that cloud-girt presence of Jehovah, it has an aspect of terror to the foes of God, while it has an aspect of love to his friends. The gradual dispensation of the gospel is separating the gold of the earth from its dross, in the mass of men, and doing the same refining work in every Christian heart. When the separating process is complete in the one case, the world will end; when in the other, the fire will be put out in the furnace of affliction, and the purified spirit brought out of the crucible. Chap. iii, 1-3.

It is not enough to desire the coming of Christ. Many desire it, to whom it will be a dreadful apocalypse of wrath. Chap. ii, 17.

The helpless, who have no human protector, have a mightier and surer one in God. He may allow them to be oppressed for a time, but in the end will visit swift and terrible judgment on their oppressors. Chap. iii, 5.

Let not the Christian heart grow timid in a time of prevalent wickedness and unbelief, in the fear that the ark of God may perish. The sons of Jacob shall not be consumed—the seed of Christ shall

not perish. The unchangeableness of God is the sheet-anchor of the Church. He will be faithful to his Son, and to his word, however disheartening external circumstances may appear to our wavering faith. Chap. iii, 6.

SECTION IV, CHAP. iii, 7-12.

Neglect of Tithes and Offerings.

- iii, 7. "From the days of your fathers ye have departed from my statutes, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith
8. Jehovah of hosts. And ye say, 'Wherein shall we return?' Will a man defraud God? Because ye have defrauded me. And ye say, 'Wherein
9. have we defrauded thee?' In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with
10. a curse; for me have ye defrauded, the whole nation (*of you*). Bring all the tithes into the house of the treasury, and let there be food in my house, and prove me, I pray you, in this, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open to you the flood-gates of heaven, and pour down upon you a blessing
11. perpetually. And I will rebuke for you the devourer, and it shall not destroy for you the fruits of the ground, and it shall not blight for you the
12. vine in the field, saith Jehovah of hosts. And all nations shall pronounce you blessed, for ye shall be a land of delight, saith Jehovah of hosts."

Ver. 7. It is a principle in God's government, that the sins of the fathers should be visited upon the children, in order that parental affection may be an additional restraint against sin. Now the Jews having begun their wanderings after returning from captivity, at the point where their fathers had left off, instead of repenting of and forsaking their sins, this law of hereditary guilt was allowed to take its course. God, however, assures them that if they return to him in penitence, he will return to them in prosperity. They then, with the same stolid impenitence that they have all along shown, ask wherein they were to return—as if the accusation of departure was a calumny.

Ver. 8 answers this insolent question with a burst of indignant invective. What, when the cry of your injured wives, the ruins of the holy city, and the neglected altars of the temple, are all telling of your having withheld from God his dues, do you ask wherein you must return? Will a man defraud God, and yet think that he has nothing to repent of? The word *כִּפֵּר* having the radical sense of covering or hiding, is properly *to defraud*, rather than *to rob*. The force of *כִּי* seems to be as follows: "Can you think that sacrilege is not a crime to be repented of? Yet you have committed that crime, because ye have defrauded me." Again the hardened insolence of the people rears its brow, and demands wherein this fraud had been committed? And God answers, "In tithes and offerings." The tithes required by the Mosaic law were, first, a tenth of all that remained after the first fruits, (which belonged to God and must be

given to him,) which tenth was God's, as the original proprietor of the soil, and was to be paid to the Levites for their maintenance. Lev. xxvii, 30-32. Secondly, from this tenth the Levites paid a tenth to the priests. Num. xviii, 26-28. Thirdly, a second tenth was paid by the people for the entertainment of the Levites and their own families at the tabernacle. Deut. xii, 18. Fourthly, another tithe was paid every third year for the poor, widows, orphans, &c. Deut. xiv, 28, 29. The first three classes of tithes are specially referred to here, as appears from the context, though the fourth was also withheld as we would infer from chap. iii, 5. "The offerings" are referred to in chap. i, 7-14.

Ver. 9 states that, because of this defrauding of God, the people were cursed, as already stated in chap. ii, 2. The position of "me" we regard as emphatic, designed to intimate the enormity of the attempt to defraud God. For the syntax of ך, which is here taken causally, see Nordheimer, § 1093, 6, e. a.

Ver. 10 contains God's challenge: Be faithful to God, and see whether he will not be faithful to his promises. "All the tithes:" (see under ver. 8 what these were.) The phrase עַד-בְּלֵי-יָדַי has been variously rendered; literally it means, "until a failure of sufficiency," and the interpretation depends on the exact reference of sufficiency. Our version understands sufficiency of room to receive the blessing; but it seems most natural to refer it to the source of this sufficiency, viz., God. This makes it precisely analogous to the corresponding passage where this idiom occurs, (Psa. lxxii, 5,) "Until a failure of the moon," *i. e.*, as long as the moon endures, which was equivalent to saying perpetually: so here it would be equivalent to, "as long as the sufficiency of God endures;" and as this sufficiency is infinite, it means perpetually. We have preferred to translate the idiom into its proper equivalent in our language. The reasoning is, that constant obedience will produce a constant shower of blessing; the exact meaning of the phrase being *perpetuity* of blessing, rather than *abundance* of blessing, as it is commonly rendered, a thought which was sufficiently expressed by the words "pour down" and "flood-gates of heaven."

Ver. 11. "The devourer" is not any specific kind of destroyer, but any and every one, rational or irrational. The allusion is to the threat of chap. ii, 3, which is here specifically revoked, on condition of repentance and obedience.

Ver. 12 promises a blessing in the same form in which it is promised in Deut. xxxiii, 29; Zech. viii, 13.

The doctrine of this section is, that the man who defrauds God, defrauds himself—the Christian who keeps back the tithes, the toil,

and the treasure that God claims of him, will be in the end the greatest loser. We fear that there are many tithes yet withheld from the treasury of the Lord, and that this is one great cause of the barrenness and deadness of the Church. The flood-gates of spiritual influence are closed, and the heavens are to us as brass, because we have defrauded the Lord's pensioners and the Lord's house. Let Christians only take God at his word, and prove him in this matter—be whole-hearted and whole-handed Christians—and see if the cloud will not rise over Carmel, and the heavens grow black with rain.

SECTION V, CHAP. iii, 13—END.

Reproofs and Warnings.

13. "Your words have been violent against me," saith Jehovah. And ye
14. say, 'What do we say against thee?' Ye say, 'It is vain to serve God, and what profit (*is it*) that we have kept his observances, and that we have
15. walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts? And now we pronounce the proud happy; they are built up, the workers of iniquity: also, they tempt God, and escape.'
16. Then they who feared Jehovah, spake, every man to his neighbour; and Jehovah attended and heard: and there was written a book of remembrance before him, for those who feared Jehovah, and for those who thought
17. upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, in the day in which I shall make up my possession, and I will spare them, as a man spares his son that serves him. And ye shall return and discern
18. (*the difference*) between the righteous and the wicked, and between him
- iv, 1. who serves Jehovah, and him who serves him not. For behold! the day comes! burning like a furnace! and all the proud, and all the doers of evil are chaff! and the day that comes, burns them, saith Jehovah of
2. hosts, who will not leave to them root nor branch. And then shall rise on you who fear my name the Sun of righteousness, and healing in his
3. wings, and ye shall go forth and leap as calves of the stall. And ye shall trample down the ungodly; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your
4. feet in the day which I make, saith Jehovah of hosts. Remember the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb, for all Israel, statutes and judgments.
5. Behold! I send to you Elijah the prophet, before the day of Jehovah
6. comes, the great and the terrible! And he shall return the heart of the fathers to the sons, and the heart of the sons to the fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."

The passage (ver. 13–15) repeats in a more aggravated form, the sin of the ungodly Jews, reprov'd in the previous portion of the prophecy. That sin was—charging God with partiality and injustice, because he did not reward them for their mercenary and imperfect obedience, while the heathen seemed to be so much more prosperous. There is a sort of climax in the utterance of their feelings. At first, their murmurings were such as to cause God to say that he had no pleasure in them. Chap. i, 10. Then their unreasonable

pertinacity was such that their words wearied him. Chap. ii, 17. But now their insolence arises so high as to amount to audacious violence. Chap. iii, 13. The error, lying at the root of all this, was a mistake in regard to the nature of God's service, and converting it into a mere mercenary kind of worldliness, supposing that, if it did not reward, in the good things of this life, all those who performed its outward observances, whatever was the motive of these performances, it was a failure. They mistook, at once, the spiritual motives and feelings required, and the eternal rewards promised to those who served God. This selfish estimate of religion, and disposition to test it by the worldly prosperity it confers, is one of the tendencies of the human heart that did not cease with the calculating religionists of the times of Malachi.

Ver. 13. חָזַק with עַל is literally to be *strong upon* any one, *i. e.*, to be violent. It represents the aggravated insult contained in the words of the Jews, as if they really forced God to punish them. נִבְרַחְנוּ, being the Niphal form of the verb, has the reciprocal sense of this conjugation, (see Nordheimer, vol. i, p. 94, § 141, 3,) and implies that these things were said—not directly to God—but of God, to one another. For this meaning of the word, see Ezek. xxxiii, 30, where it is fully explained in the context.

Ver. 14 expresses the corrupt feelings, the utterance of which had so insulted God. They had engaged in the discharge of duty, not from any love to God, but from a hope of being well paid for it; and when they found that God did not pay them as they expected, they murmured, and charged him with being unjust. Their error, however, was not in thinking that God would reward those who faithfully served him, but in thinking that such beggarly services as theirs, arising from such ignoble motives, had any claim on God's favour. "To walk mournfully" was to assume the garb of penitence, which was the garb used by mourners. They had even submitted to fasting and humiliation, and yet had not been paid for it, forgetting the teaching of Isaiah lviii, in regard to the fast which God had chosen.

Ver. 15 is a continuation of the conversation of the people with one another. "And now" expresses the inference they stated to each other, as to be drawn from their adversity as compared with the prosperity of the heathen. "Since we are not rewarded, who serve Jehovah, and the proud heathen flourish in prosperity, we must now pronounce them the favourites of God, and say that he builds up the workers of iniquity, and allows them, who dare him to punish them, by breaking his laws, to escape." This atrocious insinuation, that God favoured evil-doers, was the highest insult they could have

uttered, and was that which, as it were, drove God to inflict his judgments upon them.

Ver. 16. It is a cheering thought that no defection from the truth has ever been so wide spread, as not to leave a remnant who never bowed the knee to Baal. Such was the fact here. Amid the astounding wickedness of the people, there were still those who were faithful to God. Their *character* is described as those "who feared Jehovah." This fear is not the fear of terror or guilt, but the fear of a love that is always tremblingly alive to the possible alienation of its object. Their *conduct* is also described: "They spake one to another." While the wicked spake to one another words of daring scepticism, they who feared the Lord were speaking to each other words of encouragement and faith. Maurer and Hitzig endeavour to show that the persons referred to in this verse are the same with those spoken of in verses 13-15. But the promises in verses 16, 17 are plainly inconsistent with the heavy condemnation implied in verse 13. The reward of this fidelity is then stated. The kings of Persia were accustomed to enter in a book the names of those who had rendered any special service to the king in order that they might be duly rewarded. See Esther vi, 1. This, or the books in Daniel vii, 10, may be referred to here, to express the fact that their fidelity would not be overlooked. The faintest whisper which they utter in the ears of each other will be heard and recorded in heaven.

Ver. 17. The word קְנָאָה in the English version is rendered "jewels;" but it strictly means "a possession," implying some special value, though without limiting it to the precise kind of valuables indicated by the word jewels. It will admit of two constructions. The first is that preferred by Maurer and the older interpreters, which connects it with יָרֵךְ יְרֵךְ, and gives the sense, "They shall be my possession in the day that I shall make." This construction is at variance with the accents, and does not give that fulness of significance to the promise that seems to be demanded by its terms. Hence the other construction is preferable, which declares that in that great day of final adjustment, when God shall make up his own peculiar people from the assembled millions of the earth, then these humble and fearing followers of Jehovah, in the midst of abounding wickedness, shall be his; and when the threatened wrath begins to consume the enemies of God, he will spare them with all a father's yearning fondness for a docile and loving child. Thus the prophet carries the mind forward to the mighty adjustments of the future, in which all the seeming anomalies of the present shall be fully explained and wholly removed forever.

Ver. 18 expresses this fact: "Now you murmur at the ways of

God as unjust in seemingly confounding the righteous and wicked, thus refusing to him the justice you concede to a man, not to condemn an unfinished plan, because it seems to you to be objectionable. It is in part to test your disposition to trust God in spite of all appearances that perplex, and to make your service of him less mercenary and selfish, that this blended state of facts is allowed. But when the experiment has been fully made, and it is thus seen who will be faithful in the face of perplexity, and who will be otherwise, then shall you see clearly that there is a difference between the righteous and the wicked as broad as the abyss between heaven and hell."

Chap. iv, 1. In this verse we have a prophecy that requires the application of what we may call the principle of successive fulfilment. This is one of great importance in interpreting the Bible, if we would avoid confusion. There are a number of statements by the sacred writers that are designed to apply to distinct facts, successively occurring in history. If the words are limited to any one of these facts, they will seem exaggerated, for no one fact can exhaust their significance. They must be spread over all the facts before their plenary meaning is reached. There is nothing in this principle that is at variance with the ordinary laws of language. The same general use of phrases occurs repeatedly. Thus, Berkeley's celebrated line, "Westward the star of empire takes its way," is fulfilled with every new advance of occidental greatness, and includes the smallest as well as the greatest facts of this nature. The expression, "The schoolmaster is abroad," has its fulfilment in every successive teacher of youth who goes forth to his work. Every language contains these formulas, which refer not to any one event, but a series of events, all embodying the same principle, or resulting from the same cause. Hence, there is nothing in this principle at variance with the laws of language.

We find repeated instances of this species of prediction in the Scriptures. The promise in regard to the "Seed of the woman," (Gen. iii, 15,) refers to no one event, but runs along the whole stream of history, and includes every successive conquest of the religion of Christ. The same thing is true of the promise, that men shall beat their swords into ploughshares; and kindred predictions of the peace that shall ensue in Messianic times. They refer to every advance that is made in the peaceful tendencies of the religion of the Bible, and await their fullest fulfilment in the future.

There is a class of predictions in interpreting which this principle is eminently important. It is that which refers to what the old theologians called the *novissima*, to which this verse belongs. When

Christ speaks of these last things, he does it in terms that obviously refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, and yet as obviously transcend that event. This has led to the Universalist dogma, that there is no day of judgment, except in that indefinite sense in which every judicial visitation of God is a day of judgment, just as every gracious visitation of God is a day of grace. Relying on the indefinite use of the word day in Scripture, they seek to eviscerate these predictions of a future day of judgment of all the tremendous significance that they have commonly possessed. They refer to the fact that Peter applied Joel's prediction of the day of the Lord to the events of Pentecost, in Acts ii, 16; and from thence infer that the formula "day of the Lord" cannot be applied to a future judgment, as it is commonly held. The difficulty which they press, however, can be wholly removed by adopting this principle of successive fulfilment. It is true that the deluge, the destruction of Sodom, Babylon, and Jerusalem, and all subsequent visitations of God's wrath, were days of the Lord, and in each one of them the proud and evil-doers were as chaff. But as each one did not exhaust these ominous predictions, so all together have not yet met the full reach of the terrors, which will only be done in that future day in which the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the drama of earth shall be ended. All previous judgments were but reddening of the dawn, that betokened the coming, but did not unfold the terrible brightness of that awful day. As the prophet in this verse gazes upon its distant rising, he exclaims, as if in breathless emotion, It comes! burning like a furnace! the wicked proud are chaff! the day burns them! There is something very forcible in these abrupt exclamations, as if the prophet was elevated on some mount of vision, and actually beheld this terrible pomp come rolling up the distant skies, with its reddening pathway of fire and blood. The finality of this day is distinctly declared in the utter ruin that it is predicted to bring.

Ver. 2 presents the situation of the righteous in this future day of terror, as contrasted with that of the wicked. To the wicked, the day should come fierce and consuming as a furnace; to the righteous, it should dawn in peace, and the sun that should illumine it would be, not one of condemnation, but of "righteousness,"—not one of destruction, but of "healing." Wings are attributed to the sun, poetically, in allusion to his apparent motion, just as we read of "the wings of the morning," in Psa. cxxxix, 9. The image of the sun seems to have been suggested by the expression "day," used in the preceding verse, in order to make the contrast more striking between the day of terror to the wicked, and of gladness to the right-

eous. The phrase "Sun of righteousness" is generally applied to Christ in popular language, and if the ultimate ground of this future gladness and righteousness is brought in view, the phrase is undoubtedly applicable to him. But we cannot think that the prophet here meant to predict Christ personally by this phrase, or indeed to look at the ground of this righteousness at all. His object was to show the contrast that this future day would present to the righteous, from the aspect it would present to the wicked; and while it is true that the foundation of this contrast rests on Christ, yet it is the contrast itself, in its bright and joyous character, rather than the foundation that is here contemplated by the prophet. To leap as a young animal, which after confinement exults in the joyousness of freedom, is a striking image of the joy that the righteous shall feel after being kept so long waiting for deliverance.

Ver. 3 is designed to meet the perplexity of the righteous, in view of the prosperity of the wicked. That prosperity would be brief, and soon reversed. The image of ashes refers us back to that of fire in ver. 1, which was to consume the ungodly.

Ver. 4 expresses the condition on which this future blessing would be bestowed, namely, obedience. Obey the law already given, and at the proper time it shall be found, that in the end it shall be well with the righteous, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

Ver. 5. The main difficulty in this verse, is, to answer the question, Who, or what is Elijah? Is he the Tishbite, who is personally to reappear on earth? So the Jews, and even some of the early Christian fathers, thought. But the reference by Christ himself of this passage to John, proves that this could not be its meaning. Indeed, the fact that he is called "the prophet," and not "the Tishbite," implies that it is his official, and not his personal relations, that are here contemplated. If, then, it is not Elijah personally, is it John personally that is here predicted under the name Elijah? This view of the case is contradicted by the express assertion of John. When, in evident allusion to this passage, he was asked, (John i, 21,) "Art thou Elias?" he replied, "I am not;" and then, as if to meet the supposition, that he might thus only mean to deny that he was Elijah reappearing on the earth, when he was asked further, "Art thou that prophet?" (the article here must be taken as emphatic,) he replies, "No," thus asserting that none of these prophecies found an exhaustive fulfilment in him individually. The Jews supposed that this prophecy would be fulfilled finally in a single individual, and that when this individual would come, the time of Israel's glory was near at hand. It was this false view of the passage that John denied, and not any reference of it to him. He must have

known, from the communication of the angel to his father, (Luke i, 16, 17,) that this prophecy had a reference to him, and his adoption of the costume of Elijah proved the same thing; hence it could only have been the exclusive application of the text to him that he meant to deny.

In what sense then is Elijah predicted? The fact that John, to whom the passage is applied by Christ, calls himself "the voice crying in the wilderness," which we have seen (Mal. iii, 1) to be identical with "the messenger" then predicted, proves that Elijah is here to be understood in the same sense with "the messenger." We are here therefore presented with another case of successive fulfilment, such as we found in ver. 1. Indeed, this is expressly intimated when we are told that John was to come in "the spirit and power of Elijah." Luke i, 16, 17. As Moses in the preceding verse was taken as the representative of the law, the preceptive revealings of God, so Elijah is taken as the representative of the prophets, or the prophetic revealings of God. This was done again in the transfiguration, where these men appear in their representative and not in their personal character. This use of Elijah is not unknown to the Old Testament; in 2 Chron. xxi, 12, it is said that "a writing from Elijah the prophet" came to King Jehoram, when Elijah had been for many years in heaven. This can only mean a prophecy, in the spirit of Elijah. So in 1 Kings xix, 15, 16, it is predicted that Elijah shall do acts that in fact were done by Elisha (2 Kings viii, 13) and one of the young prophets. 2 Kings ix, 13. This also implies that Elijah was taken as a representative of the prophetic order, or more strictly, of the spirit of prophecy. This prophetic mission was to reprove, to instruct, to warn, and to predict. The general fact, then, that is predicted, is, that before God comes in his terrible mission of judgment, he will send agencies to revive and reform his people, so that they may escape from the wrath to come. Were it announced to us that before God would cut off an apostate Church, he would send a Luther, we should instantly comprehend the meaning of the prediction, and see no confusion of language, but rather a greater clearness in this use of a typical or representative man. Thus, then, it is predicted, that before God sends wrath, he will send messengers to summon to repentance. This was done before the downfall of the Jewish people. John, as the first of these sent messengers, had especial prominence, but he was not the last; others followed with the same message, "Repent, for the day is coming!" And in every subsequent revival of religion in the Church it has been so. In the reformation of the sixteenth century, Elijah came in the burning words of Luther, Calvin, and Knox; in the eighteenth, in the fervid spirits of

the Wesleys, Whitefield, and Edwards; and now that we are verging upon yet more fearful unfoldings of the wrathful visitations of God on the earth, we look for Elijah to come forth again in some new and mighty awakening of men to repentance. Indeed, to every regenerated soul there is essentially this coming of Elijah, this summons, "Repent, for the day is coming!" And as the faithful minister of Christ goes forth, it must ever be in this same spirit, calling on men to repent, and pointing to the lurid flashings of that *dies iræ*, which, when once perceived by the startled eye of the soul, will lead it to flee to the only refuge from this wrath to come. We thus see, that instead of a narrow prediction that is exhausted by its application to a single man, and that confuses us by this restriction, we have a magnificent formula of the spiritual world, that stretches like a law over all its phases, and gives unity to them all, from the most mighty to the most minute.

Ver. 6 describes the work of the preacher of repentance. The expression, "return the heart of the fathers to the sons, and the heart of the sons to the fathers," has usually been explained to mean the restoration of domestic harmony among the people. But this is a very meagre sense of words that close up the utterances of God to his people for twelve generations. Want of domestic concord was not one of the sins charged upon the people, and its removal would hardly be the great work assigned to the Elijah messenger. The meaning is suggested in the words of the angel to Zacharias, in Luke i, 16, 17; where, instead of the clause, "the heart of the sons to the fathers," is put, "the disobedient to the wisdom of the just." This paraphrase indicates that the hearts of the devoted ancestors were to live again in the obedience of their repentant posterity, and that the backslidden sons were to be restored to the piety of their fathers. The piety of the fathers had been referred to repeatedly before, (see i, 2; ii, 5, 6; iii, 4,) and the promise is, that this piety should live again in the children, under the Elijah call to repentance; and it is threatened, that if this is not the result, the land shall be laid under the terrible *harem*. This was a devotion to destruction, such as was done to the Canaanites by the judicial act of God. As these guilty nations were cut off because of their sins, so should the people who had taken their place on the soil of the land of promise, or those who in turn would take their place on the covenants of promise, if they imitated their sinful example. This was fulfilled five hundred years afterward, when the chosen people were finally rejected, and the awful blood was upon them and their children, according to their own imprecation. And to this hour, the soil that was wet with that blood lies under the terrible *harem*, and will so continue, until that Elijah

call that shall bring back the heart of David, of Isaiah, and of Nathanael to their exiled posterity, enabling them to see him whom they have pierced, and to cry, "My Lord and my God." And by the same principle of interpretation that we have applied to the previous verse, do we extend this warning to every age of the Church, and find in it the germ of the solemn admonition of Paul in discussing the same subject, (Rom: xi, 20, 21,) "Be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed, lest he also spare not thee."

The reproofs and warnings of this section are eminently applicable to our Epicurean age. There is the same tendency to challenge the dealings of God now that there was then, and there is the same need to point men forward to the mighty adjustments of the future, in which all these apparent anomalies will be rectified, and to urge them to listen to the heavenly voice that calls them to repent, believe, and obey, assuring them that if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, he is *Anathema, Maran-atha!* And it is suggestive of much solemn thought, that the last utterance of God to the Church and to the world, before the coming of the Messiah, the word that was to sound through four hundred years of history, was that awful word "*curse!*"

ART. II.—CURTIS'S HISTORY OF THE CONSTITUTION.

History of the Origin, Formation, and Adoption of the Constitution of the United States, with Notices of its Principal Framers. By GEORGE TICKNOR CURTIS. In two vols. Vol. I. New-York: Harper & Brothers, 1854. 8vo., pp. 488.

THE English Constitution is the aggregate of all the fundamental laws, usages, and institutions under which the people of England live. The Constitution of the United States is something very different. It is not the aggregate of *all* our laws and institutions, nor even of the larger portion of them. The law with which we most frequently come in contact, which governs most of our ordinary transactions, and to which we oftenest have occasion to appeal, emanates from the particular state in which we reside, and is not at all affected by the circumstance that we are also subject to another jurisdiction, and to a second fundamental law, which regulates the remainder of our ordinary concerns. There is a division of *the matter* of sovereignty, not of the sovereignty itself, between two distinct powers, which touch us, so to speak, on opposite sides. The one is not superior, and