

MALACHI

THE ARGUMENT.

The Prophet was one of the three, which God raised up for the comfort of his Church after the captivity, and after him there was no more until John Baptist was sent, which was either a token of God's wrath, or an admonition that they should with more fervent desires look for the coming of Messiāh. He confirmeth the same doctrine, that the two former do, but chiefly he reproveth the Priests for their covetousness, and for that they served God after their own fantasies, and not according to the prescript of his word. He also noteth certain peculiar sins, which were then among them, as marrying of idolatrous and many wives, murmuring against God, impaciencie, and such like. Notwithstanding for the comfort of the godlie he declareth that God would not forget his promise made unto their fathers, but would send Christ his messenger, in whom the covenant should be accomplished, whose coming should be terrible to the wicked, and bring all consolation and joy unto the godlie.

Chapter 1

A complaint against Israél and chiefly the Priests.

The ^aburden of the word of the Lord to Israél by the ministry of Malachí. 2 I have loved you, saith the Lord: yet ye say, ^bWherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esáu Jaakób's brother, saith the Lord? yet I loved Jaakób, 3 And I ^chated Esáu, and made his mountains waste, and his heritage a wilderness for dragons. 4 Though Edóm say, We are impoverished, but we will return & build the desolate places, yet saith the Lord of hosts, they shall build, but I will destroy it, and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, & the people, with whom the Lord is angry forever. 5 And your eyes shall see it, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified upon the border of Israél. 6 A son honoreth *his* father, and a servant his master. If then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of hosts unto you, ^dô Priests, that despise my Name? and ye say, ^eWherein have we despised thy Name? 7 Ye offer ^funclean bread upon mine altar, and you say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say the table of the Lord is not ^gto be regarded. 8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is ^hnot evil: and if ye offer the lame and sick, it is not evil: offer it now unto thy prince: will he be content with thee, or accept thy person, saith the Lord of hosts? 9 And now, I pray you, ⁱpray before God, that he may have mercy upon us: this hath been by your means: will he regard ^kyour

1 a Read Isa. 13.1.

2 b Which declares their great ingratitude that did not acknowledge this love, which was so evident in that he chose Abraham from out of all the world, and next chose Jacob the younger brother of whom they came and left Esau the elder.

3 c For besides that the signs of mine hatred appeared even when he was made servant unto his younger brother, being yet in his mother's belly, and also afterward in that he was put from his birthright, yet even now before your eyes the signs hereof are evident, in that that his country lies waste, and he shall never return to inhabit it, where as you my people whom the enemy hated more then them are by my grace and love toward you delivered, read Rom. 9.13.

6 d Besides the rest of the people he condemns the Priests chiefly because they should have reprovèd others for their hypocrisy, & obstinacy against God, & not have hardened them by their example to greater evils. 6 e He notes their gross hypocrisy, which would not see their fautes, but most impudently covered them, and so were blind guides.

7 f You receive all manner offerings for your own greediness, and do not examine whether they be according to my Law or no.

7 g Not that they said thus, but by their doings they declared no less.

8 h You make is no faute: whereby he condemns them, that think it sufficient to serve God partly, as he has commanded, and partly after man's fantasy, and so come not to that pureness of religion, which he requires, and therefore in reproach he shows them that a mortal man would not be content to be so served.

9 i He derides the Priests who bare the people in hand, that they prayed for them, and showed that they were the occasion, that these evils came upon the people.

9 k Will God consider your office and state, seeing you are so covetous, and wicked?

persons, saith the Lord of hosts?

10 Who is there even among you, ^lthat would shut the doors? and kindle not *fire* on mine altar in vain, I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.

11 For from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, my Name is ^mgreat among the Gentiles, & in every place incenses shalbe offered unto my Name, and a pure offering for my Name is great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.

12 But ye have polluted it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is ⁿpolluted, & the fruit thereof, *even* his meat is not to be regarded.

13 Ye said also, Behold, *it is* a ^oweariness, and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts, and ye offered that which was torn and the lame and the sick: thus ye offered an offering: should I accept this of your hand, saith the Lord?

14 But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock ^pa male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my Name is terrible among the heathen.

Chapter 2

Threatenings against the Priests being seducers of the people.

And now, ^qô ye ^aPriests, this commandment *is* for you. 2 If ye ^rwill not hear it, nor consider it in your heart to give glory ^bunto my Name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and will curse your ^c blessings: yea, I have cursed them already because ye do not consider it in *your* heart.

3 Behold, I will corrupt ^dyour seed, and cast dongue upon your faces, *even* the ^edongue of your solemn feasts, and you shalbe

10 l Because the Levites who kept the doors, did not try whether the sacrifices that came in, were according to the Law, God wishes, that they would rather shut the doors then to receive such as were not perfect.

11 m God shows, that their ingratitude, and neglect of his true service shall be the cause of the calling of the Gentiles: and here the Prophet that was under the Law framed his words to the capacity of the people, and by the altar, and sacrifice he means the spiritual service of God, which should be under the Gospel, when an end should be made to all these legal ceremonies by Christ's only sacrifice.

12 n Both the Priests and the people were infested with this error, that they passed not what was offered, for they thought that God was aswell content with the lean as with the fat: but in the mean season they showed not that obedience to God, which he required, and so committed both impiety, and also showed their contempt of God and covetousness.

13 o The Priests and people were both weary with serving God, and passed not what manner of sacrifice and service they gave to God, for that which was least profitable, was thought good enough for the Lord.

14 p That is, has ability to serve the Lord according to his word, and yet will serve him according to his covetous mind.

Chapter 2

1 a He speaks unto them chiefly, but under them he contains the people also.

2 b To serve me according to my word.

2 c That is, the abundance of God's benefits.

3 d Your seed sown shall come to no profit.

3 e You boast of your holiness, sacrifices and feasts, but they shall turn to your shame, and be as vile as dongue.

like unto it.

4 And ye shall know, that I have ^fsent this commandment unto you, that my covenant, which I made with Leví, might stand, saith the Lord of hosts.

5 My ^gcovenant was with him of life and peace, and I ^hgave him fear, and he feared me, and was afraid before ⁱmy Name.

6 The law of ^ktruth was in his mouth, and there was no iniquity found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.

7 For the Priest's ^llips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the ^mmessenger of the Lord of hosts.

8 But ye are gone out of the way: ye have caused many to fall by the Law: ye have broken the covenant of Leví, saith the Lord of hosts.

9 Therefore have I also made you to be despised, and vile before all the people, because ye kept not my ways, but have been partial in the Law.

10 Have we not all ^oone father? hath not one God made us? why do we transgress every one against his brother, and break the covenant of ^pour fathers?

11 Judáh hath transgressed, and an abomination is committed in Israël and in Jerusalém: for Judáh hath defiled the holiness of the Lord, which he loved, and hath married the ^qdaughter of a strange god.

12 The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this: *both* the master and the servant out of the tabernacle of Jaakób, and him that ^roffereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts.

13 And this have ye done again, & ^scovered the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with mourning: because the offering is no more regarded, neither received acceptably at your hands.

14 Yet ye say, ^tWherein? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and thy wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast transgressed: yet is she thy ^ucompanion, and the wife of thy ^vcovenant.

15 And did not ^whe make one? yet had he ^xabundance of spirit:

4 f The Priests objected against the Prophet that he could not reprove them, but he must speak against the priesthood, and the office established of God by promise, but he shows, that the office is nothing slandered, when these vileness, and dongue are called by their own names.

5 g He shows what were the two conditions of the covenant made with the tribe of Levi, on God's part, that he would give them long life and felicity, and on their part, that they should faithfully serve him according to his word.

5 h I prescribed Levi a certain Law to serve me.

5 i He served me and set forth my glory with all humility and submission.

6 k He shows that the Priest ought to have knowledge to instruct other in the word of the Lord.

7 l He is as the treasure house of God's word and ought to give to every one according to their necessity, and not to reserve it for himself.

7 m Showing, that whosoever does not declare God's will, is not his messenger, and Priest.

10 n The Prophet accuses the ingratitude of the Jews toward God and man: for seeing they were all born of one father Abraham, and God had elected them to be his holy people, they ought neither to offend God nor their brethren.

10 o Whereby they had bound themselves to God to be an holy peole.

11 p They have joined themselves in marriage with them that are of another religion.

12 q That is, the Priests.

13 r You cause to people to lament, because that God does not regard their sacrifices, so that they seem to sacrifice in vain.

14 s This is another faute, whereof he accuses them, that is, that they break the laws of marriage.

14 t As the one half of yourself.

14 u She that was joined to you by a solemn covenant, and by the invocation of God's Name.

15 x Did not God make man and woman as one flesh and not many?

15 y By his power and virtue he could have made many women for one man.

and wherefore one? because he sought a godlie^z seed: therefore keep your selves in your^a spirit, and let none trespass against the wife of his youth.

16 If thou hatest *her*, ^bput her away, saith the Lord God of Israël, yet he covereth ^cthe injury under his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore keep your selves in your spirt, & transgress not.

17 Ye have wearied the ^dLord with your words: yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that ^edoeth evil, is good in the sight of the Lord, and he deliteth in them. Or where is the God of ^fjudgement?

Chapter 3

1 Of the messenger of the Lord, John Baptist, & of Christ's office.

Behold, I will send my ^amessenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the ^bLord whom ye seek, shall speedily come to his Temple: even the ^cmessenger of the covenant whom ye desire: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

2 But who ^dmay abide the day of his coming? and who shall endure, when he appeareth? for he is like a purging fire, and like a fuller's soap.

3 And he shall sit down to try and fine the silver: he shall even fine the sons of ^eLeví, and purify them as gold and silver, that they may bring offerings unto the Lord in righteousness.

4 Then shall the offerings of Judáh and Jerusalém be acceptable unto the Lord, as in old time and in the years afore.

5 And I will come near to you to judgement, and I will be a swift witness against the soothsayer, and against the adulterers, and against false swears, & against those that wrongfully keep back the hireling's wages, *and vex the widow*, and the fatherless, and oppress the stranger, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.

6 For I am the Lord: I change not, and ye sons of Jaakób^f are not consumed.

7 From the days of your fathers, ye are gone away form mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*: ^greturn unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts: but ye said, Wherein shall we return?

8 Will a ^hman spoil *his* gods? yet have ye spoiled me: but ye say,

15 z Such as should be born in lawful and moderate marriage wherein is no excess of lusts.

15 a Contain yourselves within your bounds, and be sober in mind, and bridle your affections.

16 b Not that he does allow divorcement, but of the two fautes he shows, which is the least.

16 c He thinks it sufficient to keep his wife still, albeit he take others, and so as it were covers his faute.

17 d You murmur against God, because he heard not you assoon as you called.

17 e In thinking that God favored the wicked, and has no respect to them that serve him.

17 f Thus they blasphemed God in condemning his power and justice, because he judged not according to their fantasies.

Chapter 3

1 a This is meant of John Baptist, as Christ expounded it, Lk. 7.27.

1 b Meaning, Messiah, as Ps. 140.1, Dan. 9.17.

1 c That is, Christ by whom the covenant was made and ratified, who is called the Angel or messenger of the covenant, because he reconciles us to his father: and is Lord or King, because he has the government of his Church.

2 d He shows that the hypocrites which wish so much for the Lord's coming, will not abide when he draws near: for he will consume them, and purge his and make them clean.

3 e He begins at the Priests that they might be lights & shine unto others.

6 f They murmured against God, because they saw not his help ever present to defend them: and therefore he accuses them of ingratitude, and shows that in that they are not daily consumed, it is a token, that he does still defend them: and so his mercy toward them never changes.

7 g Read Zech. 1.3.

8 h There are none of the heathen so barbarous, that will defraud their gods of their honor, or deal deceitfully with them.

Wherein have we spoiled thee? In ⁱtithes and offerings.

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

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in mine House, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven unto you, and pour you out a blessing ^kwithout measure.

11 And I will rebuke the ^ldevourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruit of your ground, neither shall your vine be barren in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a pleasant land, saith the Lord of hosts.

13 Your words have been stout ^magainst me, saith the Lord: yet ye say, What have we spoken against thee?

14 Ye have said, *It is in vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his commandment, and that we walked humbly before the Lord of hosts?*

15 Therefore we count the proud blessed: even they that work wickedness, are set up, and they that tempt God, yea, they are ⁿdelivered.

16 ^oThen spake they that feared the Lord, every one to his neighbor, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a ^pbook of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name.

17 And they shall be to me, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day ^qthat I shall do *this*, for a flock, and I will ^rspare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

18 Then shall you return, and discern between the righteous and wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.

8 i Whereby the service of God should have been maintained, and the Priests, and the poor relieved.

10 k Not having respect how much you need, but I will give you in all abundance: so that you shall lack place to put my blessings.

11 l Meaning, the caterpillar, and whatsoever destroys corn and fruits.

13 m The Prophet condemns them of double blasphemy against God: first in that they said that God had no respect to them that served him, and next that the wicked were more in his favor than the godly.

15 n They are not only preferred to honor, but also delivered from dangers.

16 o After these admonitions of the Prophet some were lively touched, and encouraged others to fear God.

16 p Both because the thing was strange, that some turned to God in that great and universal corruption, and also that this might be an example of God's mercies to all penitent sinners.

17 q When I shall restore my Church according to my promise, they shall be as my own proper goods.

17 r That is, forgive their sins, and govern them with my Spirit.

Chapter 4

The day of the Lord, before the which Eliáh should come

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

2 But unto you that fear my Name, shall the ^bSunne of righteousness arise, and health *shalbe* under his wings, and ye shall ^cgo forth, and grow up as fat calves.

3 And ye shall tread down the wicked: for they shall be dust under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith the Lord of hosts.

4 ^dRemember the Law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horéb for all Israél with the statutes and judgements.

5 Behold, I will send you ^eEliáh the Prophet before the coming of the great and ^f fearful day of the Lord.

6 And he shall ^gturn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come ^hand smite the earth with cursing.

1 a He prophesies of God's judgements against the wicked, who would not receive Christ, when as God should send him for the restoration of his Church.

2 b Meaning, Christ, who with his wings or beams of his grace should lighten, and comfort his Church, Eph. 5.14, and he is called the sunne of righteousness, because in himself he has all perfection, and also the justice of the father dwells in him: whereby he regenerates us into righteousness, cleanses us from the filth of this world, and reforms us to the image of God.

2 c You shall be set at liberty and increase in the joy of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3.17.

4 d Because the time was come that the Jews should be destitute of Prophets until the time of Christ, because they should with more fervent minds desire his coming, the Prophet exhorts them to exercise themselves diligently in studying the Law of Moses in the means season, whereby they might continue in the true religion and also be armed against all tentations.

5 e This Christ expounds of John Baptist, Mat. 11.14, who both for his zeal, and restoring of religion is aptly compared to Elijah.

5 f Which as it is true for the wicked, so does it waken the godly and call them to repentance.

6 g He shows wherein John's office should stand: in the turning of men to God and joining the father and children in one unity of faith: so that the father shall turn to that religion of his son which is converted to Christ, and the son shall embrace the faith of the true fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

6 h The second point of his office was to denounce God's judgements against them that would not receive Christ.