

The Book of Malachi

from the book

Minor Prophets: Major Messages

by Rev. George McCurdy

Contents

How to Use This Study Guide.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Malachi's background.....	5
Approximate Dates.....	6
The message of Malachi, the "Lord's Messenger".....	6
The unique style of Malachi's prophecy.....	7
Chapter One.....	10
Malachi 1:1-2.....	10
Malachi 1:3-4 (a).....	14
Malachi 1: 4 (b) -6.....	17
Malachi 1:7-8.....	23
Malachi 1:9-10.....	27
Malachi 1:11.....	29
Malachi 1:12-14.....	36
Chapter Two.....	40
Malachi 2:1-4.....	40
Malachi 2:5-7.....	46
Malachi 2:8-10.....	51
Malachi 2:11.....	54
Malachi 2:12.....	58
Malachi 2:13.....	60
Malachi 2:14-16.....	62

Malachi 2:17.....	67
Chapter Three.....	71
Malachi 3:1-3.....	71
Malachi 3:4.....	77
Malachi 3:5-6.....	82
Malachi 3:7.....	88
Malachi 3:8-9.....	90
Malachi 3:10-12.....	93
Malachi 3:13-15.....	98
Malachi 3:16-18.....	102
Chapter Four.....	106
Malachi 4:1-3.....	106
Malachi 4:4.....	111
Malachi 4:5-6.....	114
Epilogue: A Summary of the Book of Malachi.....	119
Chapter One.....	119
Chapter Two.....	119
Chapter Three.....	120
Chapter Four.....	120

How to Use This Study Guide

1. A careful, unhurried reading of Malachi is essential. Reading the chapter before looking at the notes, while working with the notes, and after finishing with the notes will give each researcher a powerful sense of the series of meanings within each chapter. It is important to be comfortable with all the names and places in the prophecy and to understand the announcements the prophet makes on behalf of the Lord. When possible, historical information will be included in the notes to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our study of each chapter of Malachi will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms (P&P). This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of all four chapters of Malachi that provides general information about the internal sense. Our research will help move us from the generals to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations. This reference is used to find passages in the Writings where a verse(s) from the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad ways, according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help each of us to explore relevant topics and look up related passages to increase our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted in the Writings. But there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other doctrinal explanations will help us see possible applications to our study of Malachi. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly and admit openly that it is derived doctrine, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep some kind of notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly, beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from

preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to “see” the intent and message of the Lord’s Word.

Introduction

Welcome to the study of *Malachi*. *Malachi* is the last book of the twelve Minor Prophets and the last book in the Old Testament. Malachi’s prophecy was followed by a period of four to five hundred years of prophetic silence before the Lord’s advent occurred.

This introduction will focus on the examination of the following points:

1. Malachi’s background.
2. The approximate dates of his life and prophecy.
3. The message of Malachi, the “Lord’s Messenger.”
4. The unique style of Malachi’s prophecy.

MALACHI'S BACKGROUND

" No one knows who the author of the book was; the name “Malachi” is simply a transliteration of the Hebrew word meaning ‘My Messenger.’ Nor can anyone be certain as to when the author lived, although modern scholarship tends to give much credence to the ancient tradition to the effect that he lived sometime about 400 or 350. (There are still authorities...who would date Malachi much later than this; and there are others who would date him as early as the eighth century.)” *Pre-Advent Churches*, by Ormond Odhner, page 308.

I cite this statement because there has been considerable scholarly debate as to whether or not “Malachi” is a proper name or a common noun. If it is a noun, then this book is by an anonymous writer who refers to himself as “My messenger” or the “Messenger of Jehovah.”

The following background information about Malachi and his prophecy is derived from a series of online essays on “The Minor Prophets” authored by Al Maxey. The essay on *Malachi* is available at <http://www.zianet.com/maxey/Proph13.htm>.

The LXX (Septuagint) treats the word “Malachi” as a noun rather than as a proper name. The *Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel* (an Aramaic paraphrase of the prophetic books dating from the 4th or 5th century AD) includes this phrase: “ My messenger who is Ezra the scribe.” Josephus, when describing the major characters of the period, fails to mention Malachi among them. Even where Malachi is quoted in the

New Testament (*Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:27*), his name is not mentioned in the citations. Is the omission of Malachi's name of spiritual significance?

Some scholars think Ezra was the author of *Malachi*. Others believe *Malachi* originally was part of the prophetic book of *Zechariah* but was made into a separate book to make the Minor Prophets amount to the sacred number 12. So much more could be pulled into this quest to know about Malachi's background but to what end?

APPROXIMATE DATES

If "Malachi" is a name and not a noun, it is possible to identify a general date when this work was written by noting the history of Israel's exile and the rebuilding of the temple. The Babylonian captivity of the Jews ended in 536 BC when Cyrus allowed the Israelites to return to their homeland. With the leadership of Haggai and Zechariah, the people rebuilt the temple. The dates of this happening are between 520 and 516 BC. Malachi, Ezra, and Nehemiah wrote about the same sad and deteriorating spiritual conditions within the temple and among its priests. Was Malachi a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah? If so, the book of Malachi might have been written in the period of 445 to 425 BC.

But eventually, we probably will agree with Ormond Odhner: "No one knows who the author of the book was...nor can anyone be certain as to when the author lived..." So if we don't know who the author was, how can we pinpoint a date? This is something we have had to face with many of the Minor Prophets. Our New Church perspective teaches us that we are not to focus on the person who wrote the prophetic book. Instead, we are to concentrate on the contents of the spiritual sense of the Word. Given the choice, what would we consider most profitable in the study of this book of the Word: knowing about the man who wrote it or knowing the spiritual sense of this prophecy in the Word?

THE MESSAGE OF MALACHI, THE "LORD'S MESSENGER"

The message of Malachi calls the hearer to consider the Lord's providential care in bringing about the great release from Babylonian captivity. He reminds his listeners that the temple had been rebuilt, the walls of the city fortified again, and the sacrificial system reinstated. They had a degree of security from foreign aggression. But their enthusiasm for worship had been replaced by mechanical, ritualistic practice that was far from spiritual. Other gods slipped into the services within the temple. The worshippers' hearts were not with the Lord but with themselves. Relationships with the Lord and with one another were falling apart.

Malachi sought to turn the people's enthusiasm to doing what was pleasing to the Lord. To do this, he had to speak hard words about the lapses within the priesthood

and the temple. Malachi called for the priests and the people to hear and behold the error of their ways:

- The priests were not providing moral and spiritual leadership. They were contemptuous in discharging their duties. Their gifts to the Lord were lame, blind, and sick. Instead of giving their best to the Lord, they were offering Him their worst.
- The uses of supporting the work of the temple were neglected; tithing had ceased. The people neglected to make financial gifts or donate their time.
- Divorce and intermarriage with pagan wives were tolerated and sanctioned.
- The people had become disillusioned and doubtful of the Lord's love for them. They saw little use in serving the Lord. Cynicism and rebellion thrived within the heart of the nation.
- Editorializing, one might say the people were neither interested nor impressed with what the Lord had done for them in the past. It mattered more to them what they felt He was doing in the here-and-now of their lives.

THE UNIQUE STYLE OF MALACHI'S PROPHECY

The Book of Malachi uses the method of "disputation." An **assertion** or charge is made against the church and people, a fancied (haughty) **objection** is raised by the hearers, and then a **refutation** of the objection is presented by the speaker on behalf of the Lord.

- The text of *Malachi* is a debate with those who call into question the Lord's goodness and justice. Let's get a quick overview of where this style is used: *Malachi 1:2* "'I have loved you,' says the Lord...'In what way have You loved us?' 'Yet Jacob I have loved...'"
- *Malachi 1:6* "...To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'"
- *Malachi 1:7* "You offer defiled food on My altar. But you say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the Lord is contemptible.' And when you offer the blind...lame and sick, is it not evil?"
- *Malachi 1:11* "...For My name shall be great among the nations...But you profane it, in that you say, 'The table of the Lord is defiled...You also say, 'Oh, what a weariness!' And you sneer at it..."
- *Malachi 2:11-16* "...He has married the daughter of a foreign god...You cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying...Yet you say, 'For what reason?'...For the Lord God...hates divorce..."
- *Malachi 2:17* "You have wearied the Lord with your words; yet you say, 'In what way have we wearied Him?...Where is the God of justice?'"
- *Malachi 3:7* "Return to Me...but you said, 'In what way shall we return?'"
- *Malachi 3:8* "Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings."

- *Malachi 3:13-14* “Your words have been harsh against Me...yet you say, ‘What have we spoken against You?’ You have said, ‘It is vain to serve God.’”

We would do well in our study of *Malachi* to reflect for a moment, at some point, on how we might turn all of the negative “disputations” into positive responses.

- You have loved Me, Lord, and **here are the ways I see that Love in my life.**
- I will seek to **offer the best sacrifices of my life** to celebrate Your name and divine qualities.
- I will work toward **the preservation of Your conjugal principles.** I will at all times seek to wed my will and understanding into a marriage that honors the Lord.
- **I will not arrogantly (haughtily) question your judgment and justice.**
- My time, my tithes will be given in a **daily thought and reflection period for You.**
- **The work I do for the Lord is not a vain thing.** The work of the New Church is vital work. It is a church that needs me to seek for the best understanding of the Lord’s truth in His Word.

Malachi 3:10-12 makes this promise to those who seek the ways of the Lord:

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. And try Me now in this,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,’ says the Lord of hosts; ‘and all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

This passage is packed with correspondences. It deals with remains being brought into the memory. It is a divine invitation to try the Lord and see that He is good. Notice the word “if.” **If** we try the Lord, **if** we allow the remains of good to feed us, the windows of heaven will open and in will be poured blessings we would never have dreamed possible. Our “cup” will “run over.” The Lord promises to rebuke the devourers of hell. He will increase our understanding and will. Others will call us blessed (happy) and will find us to be a delightful land.

Notice also the repetition of phrases in this verse. Repetition is not for effect. Repetition is not for poetical beauty. Repetition is for spiritual purposes. The phrase “**says the Lord of hosts**” occurs three times. One is for the will, one is for the understanding, and one is for uses. What does the phrase “says the Lord of hosts” represent? *Apocalypse Explained (AE) 453 [6]* gives us this insight: “‘Jehovah of Hosts’...signifies the arrangement of truths from good by the Lord against the falsities from evil...” Hence we have a promise from the Lord that He will fight for His church to save it and for all of the people within His church. The Lord’s zeal will win

over the forces of hell. He will rescue and preserve the remnant so that a New Church will be born that will last for ever and ever.

The word “if” is a conditional word. The Lord awaits an answer from us. **If** we try Him, **if** we open the door (or window), He will come in and give us infinite blessings. What a great invitation the “Messenger of the Lord” brings to the church in *The Book of Malachi*.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. **If** anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” (*Revelation 3:20, emphasis added*)

Chapter One

MALACHI 1:1-2

“The burden [oracle] of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

‘I have loved you,’ says the Lord. Yet you say, ‘In what way have you loved us?’ ‘Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ says the Lord. ‘Yet Jacob I have loved...’”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “The Lord has instituted a church with those who could be in external truth, but who were not in external good.”

Arcana Coelestia (AC) 3322 [11]

- “In Malachi...1:1-3...‘Esau’ denotes the evil of the natural that does not admit spiritual truth which is ‘Israel’...and what is doctrinal of truth which is ‘Jacob’...and on this account he is vastated, which is being ‘hated’ (that ‘hating’ is nothing else, is manifest from what was adduced above from the Word concerning Esau and Edom in a good sense); but when truth does not suffer itself to be adjoined to good, then evil is on the other hand predicated of Jacob...”

Derived Doctrine

“The burden [oracle] of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.”

- A “burden” signifies infestations from falsities and consequent combats (*AC 7109*).
- What is meant by “oracle” is at first somewhat vague, but with some thought and reflection, a meaning begins to take shape. In *AE 277*, we read that an oracle signifies the inmosts. The inmost of the church? The inmost of the individual? The inmost of the Lord?
- According to *AE 638 [8]*, an “oracle” signifies where the Lord is.
- *AC 1574 [3]* states that an oracle signifies a Divine response.
- In *II Samuel 16:23*, we read about “the oracle of God.” *Coronis 25* teaches that this signifies love and wisdom.
- So it seems that this reference to the “burden” or “oracle” of the Word of the Lord simply means that the inmost of the Lord, His love and wisdom, was

about to make a divine response to the infestations from falsities that had entered Israel and the church.

- “Israel” signifies the church (AC 3654), the spiritual person (AC 4402), and goods and truths (AC 4502). Israel signifies that people who are of the church should hear the Lord, that is, hear Him in the Word (AC 6340). Israel signifies spiritual good (AC 5595), and it also signifies the quality of the church (AC 6636).
- Malachi’s name means “My messenger” or “My angel.” AC 4239, when explaining Jacob sending messengers to Esau, gives this representation: “... the subject here treated of is the conjunction of truth Divine of the natural (which is ‘Jacob’) with the good Divine therein (which is ‘Esau’) and therefore the enlightenment of the natural from the Divine...”
- AC 1925 has a wonderful explanation of “messenger angels.” “They were angels who were sent to men, and **who spoke through the prophets**; yet what they spoke was not from the angels, but through them, for the state of the latter was then such that they knew not but that they were Jehovah, that is, the Lord; but as soon as they had done speaking, they returned into their former state, and spoke as from themselves.” (*emphasis added*)

“I have loved you,’ says the Lord.”

- What is the essence of the Lord’s Love? *True Christian Religion (TCR) 43 [5]* teaches us that His essence is:
 1. To love others outside of Himself.
 2. To desire to be one with others.
 3. To render others blessed from Himself.
- Other teachings, too many to quote, state that the Lord’s love is for the salvation of the whole human race and that this love is ardent. See, for example, AC 1820. The Lord’s love is mercy (AC 1870). The Lord’s love toward the universal human race is such that He wills that “not one of them may perish” (AC 2023). “The Lord’s love surpasses all human understanding.” (AC 2077) “The Lord’s love, that is His mercy, is constant and eternal.” (AC 2177)

“Yet you say, ‘In what way have You loved us?’”

- We have here a debate between human beings and the Lord. It’s not the Lord debating. When a negative debate comes from a person, the internals shut down and little or nothing can be seen. Please read in its entirety a passage in AC 3428. Here is the shortened version: “so long as men remain in debate as to whether a thing is, and whether it is so, they can never advance into anything of wisdom.” There are innumerable things they can never see; they are like people who stand outside of the magnificent palace of wisdom and merely knock at the door but never enter. They remain “in complete ignorance of what charity is.”

- Can we safely assume this “debating nature” is what kept the children of Israel from seeing or being aware of the manifold ways the Lord loved them?

“Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ says the Lord. ‘Yet Jacob I have loved...”

- The story of Esau and Jacob struggling together as brothers, as told in *Genesis 25:24-25*, is about primacy. It centers on the debate “as to whether good or truth is prior, or what is the same, whether charity which is of good, or truth which is of faith, is prior. **From the earliest times there has been much contention in the spiritual church concerning this question...**” (*AC 3289, emphasis added*)
- Esau and Jacob signify, respectively, the truth of good from which is truth in the natural and the good of truth in the natural (*AC 3677*).
- Esau, later in our study called the nation of Edom, signifies the (love) good of the natural to which the doctrinal things of truth have been conjoined. In the opposite sense, Esau signifies the evil of self-love adding itself to the (love) good of the natural (*AC 3322*). In *AC 3322 [8]*, we read further that Esau in the opposite sense signifies the evils of the natural person from the love of self, which despises and rejects all truth.
- Why does this verse say that the Lord loved Jacob and hated Esau? Esau, representative of the external love of the church, would not allow or permit truth (Jacob) to enter the church and be adjoined to good. When love becomes corrupted, it is a more serious offense than when truth becomes corrupted. Truth is more correctable because it is in the external realm of our being. A corrupted love has many more pathways connected to internal deceits. Therefore, when the Lord’s zeal seeks to bring together a corrective love and wisdom, the corrupted love perceives the Lord’s actions as “angry” when, in fact, they are acts of deep divine love seeking to lift the soul.

Putting It All Together

Our ability to pull these verses together hinges on our understanding of the information found in *P&P*: “The Lord has instituted a church with those who could be in external truth, but who were not in external good.”

The external church became embroiled in infestations from falsities. Their mental and spiritual combats were not conducive to regeneration; instead, they prevented the people from progressing toward a love of truth. Can you picture great debates occurring within the church about the meaning and application of the Word? The “tradition of the elders,” the rabbinical exposition of the Law of Moses, was hardened and without an openness to find and live a life based on a charitable love for the Lord and neighbor. The Lord noted this tendency in the church when He stated: “Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.” (*Matthew 15:6*) Tradition supplanted the Word of the Lord. The external church was

filled with intellectual pride and self-love, which prevented the Lord from illustrating truths so as to show the way and warmth of His love.

When the Word of the Lord says “I have loved you...” and the reply from the church is “In what way have You loved us?”, we can sense how far the hardness of their hearts had moved the children of Israel from the Lord. They couldn’t name one loving act from the Lord. They felt that the Lord’s presence was gone from their lives. To Israel, He was invisible, untouchable, and they did not appreciate Him. It would appear that they believed all of the benefactions of life were self-derived, with nothing attributable to the Lord’s constant Love. Can we say the words of Israel again without feeling a sense of sadness? **“In what way have You Loved us?”** Do we not hear the spirit of negative debate keeping them outside the door of the temple of wisdom?

When the church argues about the primacy of good and truth, it errs greatly.

The Lord directs the orderly progress and timing, or primacy, of good and truth in our lives. The story of Esau and Jacob illustrates this well. We need to visit this lesson when we hear such arguments in the church. The Writings teach that truth is first in time, but love is first in end. Truth must lead for a time, but love is to reign in the end. Both have a use. One is not more important than the other. However, in our text, self-love blocked the way of truth coming into the church. The blockage of truth was not by accident or from a state of ignorance. It was a hindrance of choice, a choice of serious spiritual consequences. So the Lord’s Word illustrated this mistake with words that appear, or sound, like Divine favoritism: “Yet Jacob, I have loved...”

Why would the Lord love Jacob and hate Esau? Let’s answer this question by reflecting on the example Jeremiah was given at the potter’s house. When clay, the good of love in the mind, is hardened, when clay bakes in the oven of self-love, it cannot be reshaped by the Potter. In contrast, the clay of truth, unbaked, can be reshaped. The imperfections can be removed by the Potter and the clay made into new vessels.

The Love of Jacob and the Hate of Esau are not the lesson to be learned. Being grateful, amiable, malleable, in the hands of the Lord is what is prized. This then is the opening message of Malachi’s “burden” or oracle to Israel. Good is to welcome and draw in the truths of the Word. The heart of the external church is to seek ardently the truths of the Lord. This is what makes for a healthy, growing church. This is what the Lord wants for His church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 1:1-2*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Have you ever participated in a discussion about the primacy of love or truth? What side would you favor in such a debate? If you argued this point, was there any satisfaction about the outcome?
- Israel's debate with the Lord is sad. Do you recall talking with people who were bitter about the way the Lord was not doing anything favorable for their life? Did they express an anger that seemed to keep them from being interested in hearing about the love of the Lord?
- How well do you feel you could explain why the Lord said He loved Jacob? Do you have any examples that would clarify the meaning of this love in the spiritual sense?
- How well do you understand the meaning of Malachi's "burden" or "oracle"?
- Malachi's name means "My messenger." It also could mean "My angel." Does AC 1925, in the Derived Doctrine section, help picture the duties of a messenger of the Lord?

MALACHI 1:3-4 (A)

"...But Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness. Even though Edom has said, 'We have been impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places...'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "All external good has been destroyed and hence also external truth."

AC 7293 [5]

- "In these passages 'serpents' denote falsities from which are reasonings. The same are also signified by 'dragons;' but 'dragons' denote reasonings from the loves of self and of the world, thus from the cupidities of evil, which pervert not only truths, but also goods. These reasonings come forth from those who in heart deny the truths and goods of faith, but in mouth confess them for the sake of the lust of exercising command and of making profit..." *Malachi 1:3* is cited.

Apocalypse Revealed (AR) 537

- "...falsities devastate the church, since they take away its truths and goods, therefore they were represented by 'a dragon.' The reason is, because by 'a

dragon,' in the Word, is signified the devastation of the church, as may appear from the following passages...Malachi 1:3..."

AR 546

- "That by 'a wilderness' is signified the church devastated, or in which all truths of the Word are falsified..." *Malachi 1:3* is cited.

AE 714 [25]

- "In Malachi...1:3...'Esau' means such as are in good in respect to the natural man, here such as are in evil...therefore it is said, 'Esau I hated;' that the goods of love of the natural man will be destroyed is signified by 'I made his mountains a waste;' and that the truths of that good will be destroyed by the falsities of the sensual man is signified by 'I gave his heritage to the dragons of the wilderness.'"

AE 730 [21]

- "In Malachi...1:3...'Esau' signifies the love of the natural man; 'his mountains' signify the evils from that love, and 'his heritage' signifies the falsities from those evils, and 'the dragons of the desert' signify mere falsifications from which these come."

Derived Doctrine

"...But Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness."

- The meaning of hating Esau was covered in the previous section. In essence, this statement refers to the signification of Esau being a spoiled or falsified love of the natural person.
- "Mountains" signify the extension of worship within the heart. In the positive sense, a mountain represents where love to the Lord and the worship of Him prevails in the church (*AE 734 [2]*). In the negative sense, a mountain signifies the height or magnitude of evils that spring from the love of self and of the world (*AE 411*).
- A mountain being "laid waste" signifies the work of the Lord vastating the evil and falsities of the heart so that good and truth may return to the church. *AC 6141* defines being "laid waste" as being without truth that is visible.
- Note: the King James translation of the Word uses the wording "dragons of the wilderness" and the New King James translation "the jackals of the wilderness." Is there a conflict of meaning here in the spiritual sense? In the Writings, Swedenborg uses "IIM," "IJIM," "OCHIM," and "ZIIM," which are the Latin transliterations of the Hebrew words meaning wild beasts of the desert,

howling creatures, hyenas, jackals, and dragons. Essentially, all of these animals signify adulterated and profaned truths and goods.

“Even though Edom has said, ‘We have been impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places...’”

- “But in the opposite sense by ‘Esau’ and ‘Edom’ are represented those who turn aside from good through the fact that they altogether despise truth, and are unwilling that anything of the truth of faith should be adjoined, which is chiefly owing to the love of self...This evil of the love of self, which is of such a nature as not to admit the truths of faith, thus neither the doctrinal things of truth, is described in various passages of the Word by ‘Esau’ and ‘Edom’...”
(AC 3322 [7])
- *AC 775* explains the meaning of “impoverished” by showing “how almost non-existent human wisdom is, in that it hardly knows of the existence of spiritual good and truth, let alone what these may be.”
- Is Edom’s promise to return and build the desolate places a boast that it will restore the dwellings of self-love, or is it a promise to restore order to the Lord’s external church? If it means the positive restoration of order, then Edom must change and allow the truths of faith and the doctrinal things to enter the heart and mind of the church. But if it is a selfish boast, then Edom intends to rebuild a life of pretense and sham. *Malachi 1:5* leaves no doubt as to what the answer is to our question.

Putting It All Together

The Writings help to explain what kind of spiritual disorder Israel had within its heart and mind when Malachi prophesied on behalf of the Lord. The problem exposed by the Lord was something only He could know with certainty. There were those in the church who spoke with what appeared to be sound “reasonings.” What kind of reasoning did they use? The reasonings “come forth from those who in heart deny the truths and goods of faith...” “They confess them for the sake of the lust of exercising command and of making profit...” *(AC 7293 [5])* We also have a quote from *AC 3322 [7]* that tells us they (Edom) “turn aside from good through the fact that they altogether despise truth, and are unwilling that anything of the truth of faith should be adjoined...owing to the love of self...” We now can see why *P&P* sums up the church’s problems with these words: “All external good has been destroyed and hence also external truth.”

The impoverishment Edom admits to is interesting in that, unwittingly, Edom was revealing what kind of spiritual state it was in. For “impoverishment” signifies “how almost non-existent human wisdom is, in that it hardly knows of the existence of spiritual good and truth, let alone what these may be.” And yet, in spite of this impoverishment, Edom foolishly believes that it can return and build once again, by its own power, in desolate places. The illusions of spiritual insanity are grandiose

and without substance to fulfill their unrealistic promises. How sad and empty Edom is as portrayed in this prophetic lesson.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 1:3-4* (a).

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Looking back at the first verse of *Malachi*, can we now see why the people of Israel felt the Lord didn't love them? Their choices rebuffed all the love the Lord wanted to give them. Their rejection of the Lord blocked the entrance of His benefactions.
- The "serpent" or "jackals of the wilderness" are not from the Lord. Instead, they represent the devastation of the church brought about by the false reasonings of self-love within the people.
- Did you get a clear picture of what "impoverishment" represents? Isn't that quote from the *Arcana Coelestia* a great one to illustrate how human prudence fails to get the full picture of the Divine plan?
- What examples can we think of that show self-love boasting of its ability to build in desolate places?
- What kind of mountains have we built in our lifetime? Mountains of self-love or mountains of exalted love and worship for the Lord? Or can we see some of both kinds?

MALACHI 1: 4 (B) -6

"Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'They may build, but I will throw down; they shall be called the territory of wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord will have indignation forever. Your eyes shall see, and you shall say, 'The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel.' A son honors his father and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence? Says the Lord of hosts to you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Although the church is there, yet they do not acknowledge the Lord."

AC 3703 [10]

- “In Malachi...1:5, 6...‘father’ denotes those who are in the good of the church; and ‘master,’ those who are in the truth of the church; ‘father’ manifestly denoting the Lord as to Divine good; and ‘master,’ or ‘lord,’ as to Divine truth.”

AC 4973 [7]

- “Good is called a ‘lord’ relatively to a servant, and it is called a ‘father’ relatively to a son—as in Malachi...1:6...”

AR 527

- “...he who loves evils also loves to do evil to the Lord, yea to crucify Him. This lies inmosty hid in all evil, even among those who confess Him with their lips in the world...That ‘to fear God’ signifies to love the things which are of God, by doing them, and by not willing to do those which are against Him, appears from these passages...Malachi 1:5...”

AE 696 [15]

- “In Malachi...1:6...The terms ‘honor’ and ‘fear’ are used because ‘honor’ is predicated of the worship from good, and ‘fear’ of the worship by means of truths...therefore, ‘honor’ is also predicated of Father, and ‘fear’ of Lord, for Jehovah is called ‘Father’ from Divine good, and ‘Lord’ here from Divine truth.”

Derived Doctrine

“They may build, but I will throw down...”

- To “build” signifies to form doctrinal things (*AC 1187, 1302*). Where will Edom rebuild in the future? On the rock or on the sand? In a place of abundance or a place of desolation?
- To “throw” or cast signifies to be among falsities (*AC 4728*).
- The “downfall” of any nation signifies what occurs to those who do good for the sake of personal profit or reward in heaven (*AC 8002 [5]*).

“...they shall be called the territory of wickedness...”

- “Call” signifies to have a given quality (*AC 3421*).
- The “territory of wickedness” signifies the realm or residence of all the falsities of evil, a place where there is a unified wish for the destruction of the Lord’s good and truth. Here are a few passages to consider when thinking about the “territory of wickedness.” *AC 374*: Hatred is the source of all

wickedness. *AC 1076*: Those without a conscience rush into all wickedness. *AC 1080*: Hatred lurks in every word spoken by the wicked. *AC 1182*: Wickedness residing in hatred and deceit makes worship unholy.

“...and the people against whom the Lord will have indignation forever.”

- Does the Lord really have “indignation” toward anyone? No! To the wicked, it appears so. They project the indignation they feel toward the Lord as the indignation they imagine the Lord has for them. They totally miss the quality of His love. Read *AC 963* for a description of the indignation of the evil.
- *AC 3839* has this explanation for the Lord’s “indignation”: “It is not of anger, but of zeal, in which there is nothing of evil, and which is far removed from hatred and revenge...indignation springs from good...”
- *AC 3909* defines the “indignation” of the Lord toward evil as a “certain sadness that is attended with a prayerful wish that it be not so...”
- Thus, we may conclude that the Lord’s love or “indignation” toward evil will be “forever.” He is not happy over the loss of one sheep.

“Your eyes shall see, and you shall say, ‘The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel.’”

- “Eyes,” in the positive sense, signify the perception of the understanding and the intelligence given (*AC 2701*).
- To “see,” in the positive sense, signifies to perceive the truths that are in the Word from the Lord and, through them, to know and acknowledge Him (*AR 938*).
- To “say” sometimes signifies to perceive and sometimes to think because “saying” involves both perception and thought (*AC 2619*).
- *Webster’s New College Dictionary* (1956 edition) defines “magnify” as “to exalt; to enlarge; to make something stand high; to call something great; to declare something as being all glorious.”
- When anyone seeks to “magnify” the Lord, they must do so from a state of humility from the affection of good. To “magnify” the Lord is to acknowledge His omnipotence (*AC 8280*).
- “Beyond the border of Israel” offers an interesting lesson for us to reflect on. The words “beyond the border (boundaries)” teach us that the things of the Lord are beyond, or exceed, the external forms of worship. External worship is dead in comparison to the things of the Lord and His celestial and spiritual truths. The Lord is Infinite. External worship is finite. The Lord is “beyond the border,” or boundaries, of our finite comprehension. See *AC 1212, 1866, and 2973*.

"A son honors his father..."

- AC 5515 tells us that "sons of our father" signifies truths that are derived from good and so from one origin, "moreover, all truths are from one good." A son, in the positive sense, represents truths that have their origin in genuine truths.
- To "honor" signifies to worship the Lord's Divine Good (AR 373).
- "Father" signifies divine good from the Lord "...by whom is everywhere meant Jehovah, from Whom He was, and Who was in Him, and never any Divine separate from Him..." (AR 170)

"...and a servant his master."

- A "servant" signifies external memory-knowledges serving the internal person (AC 1486). "Servants" signify things in the external that must render obedience to the interior person (AC 1713). Interestingly, AC 3975 states that "serving" signifies "labor and study." "Servants" signify being kept constantly in truths from the Lord (AR 380).
- "Master" signifies the internal person whom the external person is to serve (AE 409 [8]). A reference in AC 2921 notes that the "name 'Lord'" is used as to good and the "name 'Master'" as to truth.

"If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence?"

- To understand the fuller meaning of the Lord's questions, we need to draw from what was learned above to make a summary for ourselves of what is being asked in the spiritual sense. To accommodate the eye, the spiritual sense is in the darker print.
- If I am the Father – **If I am the one origin of good**
- Where is My honor? – **Where is the holy worship of My Divine Good?**
- If I am a Master – **If the external is to serve the internal**
- Where is My reverence? – **Where is the worship from holy fear? Where is the worship from charity? Where is the shunning of evils as sins against God? Where have you refrained from committing them?**
- Information about the meaning of "reverence" may be found in AC 355, 5459, and Divine Providence (DP) 20.

"Says the Lord of hosts to you priests who despise My name."

- "Lord of hosts" signifies the Lord as to all goods and truths fighting against falsities and evils (AE 453 [6]). "Jehovah of hosts" signifies the church in its whole complex by which the Lord removes the hells in general and with everyone in particular (AE 734 [8]).

- “Priests,” in the positive sense, represent the Lord as to the Divine Good as to the work of salvation (*AC 9809*). “Priests” are to teach the goods and truths of life (*AE 235 [7], 624 [17]*). But the priests the Lord mentions in this text did not do these things. They cared little for the feeding of souls within the church.
- To “despise” signifies to look with contempt on the things of the Lord and to lightly esteem the conjunction of truth and good (*AC 1911*). “Despise” also signifies to consider the good of life, as a priority, to be of no account (*AC 3336*).

“Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’”

- Is there a degree of softness in their question? Is there a spirit of willing self-reflection? Are the priests open to hearing a Divine “review” of their work on His behalf? Or do we hear a spirit of rebellion and debate? Are these priests talking back as if the Lord was a “peer” of theirs?
- It would seem self-love wants no review from the Lord. With a casual wave of the hand, the questioners make light or little of the Lord’s words.
- The Lord, in His infinite Love, will now take time to answer them. Will they listen, or will they once again answer with a question laden with rejection? Read *AC 963* to learn about evil’s indignation with the Lord’s truth.

Putting It All Together

“Although the church is there, yet they do not acknowledge the Lord.” (P&P)

The church was there. The services were being held as usual. There were priests, and there were people. Buildings were going up, nice-looking facades, too. Wasn’t that a good sign that the job of the church was being done?

Not in the eyes of the Lord. The Lord had important things to say regarding the spiritual quality of the church. The Lord said that He would throw down the edifice of respectability self-love had constructed. He promised to expose the falsities of the external church. The Lord likened the church to a “territory of wickedness.” Why did the Lord use such strong terms to describe the church? He wanted to point out the source of their wickedness. Lies and hatred lurked in every word they uttered. The church harbored indignation toward the Lord. The church didn’t have as its propriety a wholesome mission of uniting love and wisdom in the hearts and minds of the congregation. Instead, the people of the church went out of their way to block such a union.

In a usual way of defeating an opponent, the church accused the Lord of having indignation toward them. The Lord harbored no such indignation toward the church. Instead, He had a “certain sadness that is attended with a prayerful wish that it [evil in the church] be not so...”

To awaken in the church a degree of self-examination, the Lord asks them a series of questions. The heart of the questions is His intent to help them to focus on the source of their faith. Am I your Father?, He asks. Where is My honor? If I am Your Master, where is My reverence? As we outlined above, these questions were intended to get the people to see the Lord as the one and only source of good. The Lord wanted His church to worship that good. He wanted to help them bring their externals into order so as to strengthen their internals. The Lord wanted them to shun evils as sins against Him. The Lord wanted a committed and dedicated priesthood to care for the souls of the people and to teach and preach the goods and truths of the Word, so that lives might be amended in the process of regeneration.

Would the people listen? Would they change from a territory of wickedness to a territory of goodness? No; instead, they asked the question, "In what way have we despised Your name?" They issued a challenge to the Lord's perception and assessment of the quality of spirituality within the external church. With such an arrogant attitude, is it not logical for the Lord to say of them, "Although the church is there, yet they do not acknowledge the Lord"?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 1:4 (b) -6*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you think of a way to illustrate the external signs of growth exhibited by something that lacks a solid and moral foundation for spiritual growth?
- Were you able to follow the series of questions the Lord asked regarding a father and son, a master and servant, and reverence? What did you take from this teaching?
- What is it about our proprium that thinks it can treat the Lord as a peer? Why is it unwilling to listen to the Lord's call for change?
- The quote from *AC 3909* regarding the Lord's "indignation" shows that He is soft, loving, and quite helpful. Doesn't this description remove from our minds the feeling that the Lord is a stern taskmaster? Doesn't it convey the message that He is sorry for our mistakes and that He wishes that it be not so with us?
- What did you learn from the Putting It All Together section to add to your understanding of the summary given in *P&P*?

MALACHI 1:7-8

“You offer defiled food on My altar. But you say, In what way have we defiled You? By saying, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably? says the Lord of hosts.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “They worship the Lord from evil and not from good.”

AC 2165 [2]

- “Now as ‘bread’ means all kinds of food in general, it therefore signifies in the internal sense all those things which are called celestial foods, as may be still more evident from the burnt offerings and sacrifices that were made of lambs, sheep, she-goats, kids, he-goats, heifers, and oxen, which were called in one word the ‘bread of the offering’...In Malachi...1:7...the hallowed things of the sacrifices, which they ate, were called ‘bread’...”

The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine 221

- “That the burnt-offerings and sacrifices, which consisted of lambs, she-goats, sheep, kids, he-goats, and bullocks, were in one word called ‘Bread,’ is evident from the following passages...Malachi 1:7...”

TCR 707

- “To eat of the holy things was to eat of the flesh of the sacrifices, which is here called ‘bread,’ as well as in Malachi 1:7...”

AC 2383 [5]

- “As what is blind signified what is false, therefore in the representative Jewish Church it was forbidden to sacrifice anything that was blind (Lev. 22:22; Deut. 15:21; Malachi 1:8). It was also forbidden that any one of the priests who was blind should draw near to offer upon the altar...”

AR 48

- “By ‘eye’...is not meant the eye, but the understanding of truth. Since by ‘eye’ is signified the understanding of truth, therefore it was among the statutes of the sons of Israel...” *Malachi 1:8* is cited.

AE 152 [14]

- “Because the ‘eye’ signified the understanding it was among the statutes pertaining to the sons of Israel...” *Malachi 1:8* is cited.

AC 4302 [7]

- “By the ‘lame’ in the Word are...signified those who are in no good, and thence in no truth...And because such are signified by the ‘lame,’ it was forbidden to sacrifice anything that was lame...Malachi 1:8...”

Derived Doctrine

“You offer defiled food on My altar.”

- In the positive sense, Abel’s “offering” signifies worship grounded in charity (*AC 350*). In the negative sense, Cain’s “offering” represented the works of faith without charity (*AC 346*). “That by ‘offerings’ in general is meant worship, is evident in the Prophets throughout, as in Malachi...” (*AC 349*)
- “Defiled” signifies a conjunction that is not legitimate (*AC 4439*). “Defile” signifies the profanation of spiritual good in the natural. When faith is separated from the good of charity, it is either dissipated or initiated into and conjoined with what is evil and false (*AC 6348*).
- The construction of an “altar,” “My altar,” was quite specific. Its dimensions, namely “the height, breadth, and length, signified in general good, truth, and the holy thence derived...the stones...signified lower truths...the brass...signified natural good...the horns signified the power of truth from good...the fire upon the altar signified love...the sacrifices and burnt offerings signified celestial and spiritual things according to their various species...Hence it is evident that internal things were contained within these external ones...” (*AC 4489*)
- It appears that the priests became careless with the specifics of the offerings and their representations.

“By saying, ‘The table of the Lord is contemptible.’”

- *AC 9527* tells us that a “table” signifies “a receptacle for celestial things, thus heaven in respect to the reception of such things as are from the Lord.” This

passage describes the things on the Lord's Table as the source of "consequent blessedness and happiness."

- To understand the meaning of "contemptible," let's look at what it means to despise something. To despise signifies those who turn aside from good by utterly despising truth (*AC 3322 [7]*).

"And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?"

- We read above that the "blind" signified what was false and thus meant a blind understanding. "Lame" signifies one who is not in genuine good because of not having been taught what is good and true (*AE 518 [4]*). "Lame" signifies, in the opposite sense, those who are in natural good into which spiritual truths cannot flow because the fallacies of the senses will not admit truths (*AC 4302 [8]*).
- The Lord asks the people whether offering these flawed things is an evil act. Didn't they know the code of sacrificing? Did they do these things in spite of the spiritual directives?

"Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" says the Lord of hosts.

- "Governors" signify "generals in which and under which are particulars." (*AC 5290*) The Lord asked the people if they would be satisfied if "general gifts" were given to them. He knew that because of their care for themselves, they would have wanted the very best "particular gifts." What a great question by the Lord. He got to the core of their ruling love and what quality it was. Love of self was of greater importance than love of the Lord.
- "The Lord of hosts" is used again to signify His zeal to remove the hells from every person and from the church to clean up its worship of His good and truth.

Putting It All Together

"They [the church] worship the Lord from evil and not from good." (P&P)

Offerings to the Lord that should have been the very best were compromised. Flawed sacrifices were routinely being put on the altar, or table, of the Lord. Careless attitudes were employed in the temple. Ritual, tradition, required the people to offer sacrifices, but theirs were vain oblations and were not sacrifices of willing hearts.

Those who acted in the priestly role cared more for themselves than for the Lord. They worried more about what others thought of them than about what the Lord thought of them. Worship was so empty that, within their hearts, they found the Lord's Table "contemptible." The Lord instituted the sacrifice of "breads" so that the

people might find it a “source of consequent blessedness and happiness” (AC 9527). The Lord told the people that the table and altar were a source of empty and sad worship. The ruling love of the people drove them to take the best for themselves and leave the rejects for the Lord.

What did Joseph tell his brothers when he revealed himself to them? “...you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good...” (Genesis 50:20) The Lord meant for the church to find goodness, blessedness, and happiness, but they meant to perform acts of evil against Him.

How do the people once again flaunt their contempt for the Lord? “In what way have we defiled you?” “The table of the Lord is contemptible.” How sad this is, and how needy they are of the Lord’s benefactions. Will they come to see the folly of their worship?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 1:7-8*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- In the face of Israel’s persistent defiance, are you impressed with how patient the Lord is with them? If the comments made to the Lord were made to us by our children, would we be able to remain as calm?
- How about the custom of giving the Lord second best? Do we do the same thing today?
- Do we still worry more about what other people think of us than we worry about what the Lord thinks of us?
- How about the table of the Lord? We come to the table of Holy Supper periodically. Is our heart in the service? Do we leave the table with a sense of wonderment? Do we think, “What have I just partaken of? What was I supposed to get out of it spiritually?” Has the Holy Supper been a source of “consequent blessedness and happiness”?
- I couldn’t bring myself to say the words “the Lord’s Table is contemptible.” Would you imagine there are some today who might say this about the Lord’s Table? What brings a person to this attitude?
- I yearn that this might not be said, but I do have a feeling there are some who would say that the things of the Lord have no worth for them. Do you hear anything that would lead you to concur with my fear?
- What can we, as a church, do to invite a heavenly sphere into our worship in which we feel the conjunction of the Lord and all of His hosts with us?

MALACHI 1:9-10

“But now entreat God’s favor, that He may be gracious to us. While this is being done by your hands, will He accept you favorably? says the Lord of hosts. Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, so that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, nor will I accept an offering from your hands.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “Therefore their worship is not accepted.”

AR 939

- “That by ‘seeing the face of the Lord’ is not meant to see His face, but to know and acknowledge Him as He is as to His Divine attributes, which are many; and that they who are conjoined with Him by love know Him, and thus see His face, may be evident from the following passages...Malachi 1:9...”

AE 412 [11]

- “In Malachi...1:9...‘faces of Jehovah,’ ‘of God,’ or ‘of the Lord,’ mean in the interiors of the church, of the Word, and of worship, because Divine good and Divine truth, thus the Lord Himself, are in these interiors, and from them in externals; but are not in externals, namely, of the church, of the Word, and of worship apart from these.”

AC 8989 [4]

- “In Malachi...1:9, 10...‘to shut the doors’ denotes not to communicate with holy or Divine things.”

Derived Doctrine

“But now entreat God’s favor, that He may be gracious to us.”

- *AC 7391* tells us that to “entreat” or to “supplicate” signifies humiliation, and to pray signifies entering a state of humiliation and seeking intercession. The reason supplication involves humiliation is that the angels do not attend to the supplication but to humiliation.
- “Favor” or “grace” signifies to seek comfort and relieve with hope in states of temptations (*AC 5043*).

- To be “gracious to us” is a petition to find the Lord’s unfailing care. Those who “are in humiliation of thought beseech His grace: ‘grace’ relates to spiritual things, which are of faith, or the understanding...and ‘mercy’ relates to celestial things which are of love or of the will...” (AC 598 [3])

“While this is being done by your hands, will He accept you favorably?” says the Lord of hosts.”

- In the positive sense, “hands” signify ability and power and the confidence that attends them (AC 878). But in this verse, it appears that this power, ability, and confidence are mostly from self. Otherwise, why would there be a question about the Lord accepting the work favorably?
- What leads me to view this from the negative perspective is the added phrase “the Lord of hosts.” This phrase signifies the Lord’s goods and truths fighting against falsities and evils to remove the hells from everyone.

“Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, so that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain?”

- To “shut the doors” is to not communicate with holy or Divine things. “Doors” signify what introduces either to good or to truth or to the Lord (AC 2356). “Doors” signify admission to the arcana (secrets) of heaven (AE 260 [1/2]).
- “Kindle” in the positive sense signifies that nothing of self-love ought to appear in the things in a person from the Lord (AC 10732). In the negative sense, “kindle” signifies indignation on the part of natural good (AC 3909). So which is it? Is it a positive kindling or a negative kindling? The answer seems clear from the statement about closing the door and kindling “in vain.” If the door is closed and communication with holy things is cut off, how can anyone kindle a genuine holy fire on the Lord’s altar?

“I have no pleasure in you,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘nor will I accept an offering from your hands.”

- “Pleasure,” in the positive sense, signifies the acceptance of love. It also means to allow love to enrich with Divine truth the life of all who receive life from Him. See AE 295 [4] regarding what is meant by the Lord’s “good pleasure.” In the negative sense, we can see that the Lord wants no part of their evil and false hearts. The presence of these evil loves will not permit the Lord to enrich them with truth and life. “I have no pleasure in you” sounds hard and so final.
- The offering of their hands is unworthy and unacceptable. The ability, power, and confidence of their hands are tarnished, unacceptable gifts of self-love. If you heard the Lord say these things to you, wouldn’t you be in tears or in a state of fright and be anxious to change?

Putting It All Together

“Therefore their worship is not accepted.” (*P&P*)

What brought the church to the point of not being accepted? The people closed the doors. They didn't let good and truth flow in, so the heavenly secrets of the Lord were not present in their worship. The fire on the altar was a vain thing. The work of their hands was to serve themselves and not to perform acts of charity. Thus, the pleasures of the Lord were not able to come to them. He couldn't accept their love, nor could He enrich their lives. This is the short summary. It is a sad commentary. It is not one that the Lord's New Church will ever have to listen to because the Word says the walls of the holy city have no gates. The doors are wide open, and they face the four quarters so that everyone who approaches the Lord may enter through His open gates with praise and thanksgiving.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 1:9-10*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- In the text above, I asked a question: If the Lord spoke these things to us, would we be in tears or in a state of fear? The judgment of the Lord comes from a true picture of what our motives are like. He sees through the shams of pretense. So if He declares that doors are shut and our fires are in vain, it must be so. This realization must be accompanied by some sense of urgency. But Israel doesn't react that way at all. Why?
- I still shudder when I read the words “I have no pleasure in you...nor will I accept an offering from your hands.” The answer to this dilemma is not far from Israel's reach. Do you recall the opening? “Now entreat God's favor” that “He may be gracious to us.” Without sounding like a born-again preacher, can we accept the urgency of getting straight with the Lord? Can we redouble our efforts to find ways to open doors?
- Prayer, humiliation, and supplicating the Lord are ways to find what? Grace and mercy. Grace for the understanding and mercy for the will.

MALACHI 1:11

“For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the nations,” says the Lord of hosts.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “Those who are outside of the church worship the Lord...”

AC 10137 [5]

- “That in [Malachi 1:10-11] by a ‘meat-offering’ is not meant a meat offering, nor by ‘incense’ incense, is plain, for the subject treated of is the church among the nations (with whom however there was no meat-offering); for it is said, ‘from the rising of the sun to its going down the name of Jehovah shall be great among the nations, and in every place is a clean meat-offering and incense’ (that ‘incense’ denotes adoration from the good of faith...”

AR 778

- “That the meal-offerings, which were of fine flour of wheat, were offered upon the altar together with the sacrifices...Malachi 1:10, 11...”

AC 2009 [5]

- “In Malachi...1:11...where by ‘name’ is not signified the name, but the worship; which is the quality of Jehovah or the Lord, by reason of which He wills to be adored.”

AC 6674 [5-7]

- “That the ‘name’ of the Lord is everything of faith and love by which the Lord is to be worshiped, is still more plain from the following passages...” *Malachi 1:11* is cited.

AC 9475 [4]

- “The reason why such things [as belong to the faith that is from the good of love and charity] are signified by ‘incense’ is that they belong to the thought and thence to the mouth; but the things which belong to affection, and thence to the heart, are signified by the ‘meat-offering’ in Malachi...1:11...”

AC 10177 [8]

- “In Malachi...1:11...‘a clean meat-offering’ is added, because by it is signified the good of love...”

AR 277

- "...worship by incense was worship from spiritual good. Whether you call it worship or confession, it is the same thing, for all worship is confession... Worship from spiritual good is signified by 'incense' in the following passages...Malachi 1:11..."

AE 102 [4]

- "The 'name of the Lord,' in the New Testament means the like as the 'name of Jehovah' in the Old, because the Lord there is Jehovah." *Malachi 1:11* is cited.

AE 324 [11]

- "In Malachi...1:11...'From the rising of the sun even unto its going down My name shall be great among the nations' signifies that the church and worship of the Lord shall be everywhere with those who are in good; 'from the rising of the sun to its going down' signifying every place where there is good; 'My name shall be great' signifying the acknowledgment and worship of the Lord; and 'nations' signifying those who are in good; 'incense shall be offered unto My name, and a clean meal-offering,' signifies the worship of the Lord from spiritual good, which is the good of charity towards the neighbor, and from celestial good, which is the good of love to the Lord; worship from spiritual good is signified by 'incense-offering,' and from celestial good by 'meal-offering.'"

AE 401 [28]

- "In Malachi...1:11...'From the rising of the sun unto its going down' signifies all, from the first to the last, who are in the good of love to the Lord, because all in heaven dwell according to quarters. Those who are in the good of love to the Lord dwell from the east to the west; those who dwell in the east are those who are in a clear good of love, and those who dwell in the west are those who are in obscure good of love. This is why 'from the rising of the sun unto its going down' signifies all, from the first to the last, who are in the good of love."

AE 422 [6]

- "In many passages the words 'from east to west,'...are mentioned...these quarters involve the two others, because all who are in good are also in truths, for good and truth everywhere act as one...the same is true of the following passages. In Malachi...1:11..."

AE 491 [3]

- “‘Burnt-offering’ also signifies worship from the good of celestial love, and ‘sacrifice’ worship from the good of spiritual love; these two goods are signified also by ‘meal-offering and frankincense.’ The like is true of ‘meal-offering and incense-offering,’ for the incense-offering was chiefly of frankincense. In Malachi...1:11...”

AR 81

- “...by His ‘name’ is meant the all of doctrine, and, in the universal sense, the all of religion. The reason why these things are meant by ‘the name’ of Jehovah is because in heaven no other names are given but what involve the quality of any one, and the quality of God is all that by which He is worshiped...He that keeps in mind, therefore, this signification of the ‘name of Jehovah,’ wherever it occurs in the Word, will understand...what is signified by it in the following places...Malachi 1:11-13...”

TCR 298

- “In the spiritual sense, the name of God means everything which the church teaches from the Word, and by which the Lord is invoked and worshiped... That the Word and whatever the church has from it, and thus all worship, is the name of God, can be seen from the following passages...Malachi 1:11-13...”

Derived Doctrine

“For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles...”

- Consider this teaching in AC 9031 about the rising and setting of the sun: “... the Sun of heaven, which is the Lord, concerning which it is said that it ‘rises,’ but in hearts, when man is being regenerated; and also when he is in the good of love and faith; and that it ‘sets’ when man is in evil and in the consequent falsity. And yet **the Lord is continually in His rising**, from which also He is called the ‘Sunrise,’ or ‘East,’ and **He is never in any setting**; nor does He turn Himself away from man, but man turns himself away from Him. From this arises the appearance that the Lord turns away His face and also brings evil...”
- “My name shall be great” is not a bragging statement from the Lord. Egotism is not part of His Divine character. Instead, what is being communicated in the spiritual sense is the following: “great” signifies glory (AC 1415); “great” signifies a semblance of humiliation from the affection of good (AC 2421 and 2423); “great” signifies successive increase or abundance (AC 3403); “great”

signifies infinity (AC 4645); “great” signifies that truth from good shall increase (AC 6286); and “great” signifies that truths and goods are joined (AC 6521). The Lord is talking about the growth of His new church and the wholeness and strength of its spiritual foundations.

- Why would the Lord establish His new church among the “Gentiles”? *AE 447* gives us a valuable clue: “Gentiles’ signify the establishment of the church with those who are in the good of life and receive the truths and are thus in the conjunction thereof, and in combat against evil and falsity.”

“...in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering...”

- “Incense” signifies “a representative of the grateful hearing and reception by the Lord of all things of worship which are from love and charity.” (AC 10176) “...‘incense’ signifies confession, adorations, and prayers which proceed through the mouth from thought.” (AC 10295) “‘Incense’ signifies the uplifting of worship through prayers.” (AC 10198)
- A “pure” (clean) meat “offering” signifies “the worship of the Lord from spiritual good, which is the good of charity towards the neighbor, and from celestial good, which is the good of love to the Lord.” (AE 324)

“...for My name shall be great among the nations,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

- We looked at the signification of “My name” as being a promise of the increase of good and truth. His name has reference to His infinity. The use of the word “nations” has significance when we read AC 409: “The church rarely, if ever, remains with those who when vastated have truths among them...but is transferred to those who know nothing at all of truths, for these embrace the faith much more easily than the former.”
- The “Lord of hosts” signifies the Lord’s zeal to remove the hells from everyone and the church to clean up the worship of His good and truth (AE 734 [8]).

Putting It All Together

How hard must it have been for the people of Israel to hear the words of Malachi telling them that the Lord was going to establish His church outside of their nation? Would the Lord transfer His care to the Gentiles? What about Israel being the chosen people?

In all likelihood, the children of Israel scoffed at this prophecy. Gentiles were hated and shunned by Israel. Didn’t Israel have scripture that told them to not take unto themselves strange wives from the Gentile nations? The tradition of Israel regarding the Gentiles was well formed. Gentiles were not to have the things of Israel’s religion. The people must have reasoned among themselves that the Lord couldn’t and wouldn’t go against the long-standing dictates of their spiritual heritage. Israel, in

effect, tried to put the Lord in a finite box, to limit Him. Israel believed they were chosen. The Lord's favoring them was guaranteed. He wouldn't abandon them for a bunch of Gentile nations. However, this was a wrong move on the part of the children of Israel.

Let's bring the internal sense into this discussion. *P&P* sums up this verse with these words: "Those who are outside of the church worship the Lord."

What substantial reasons are we given that support this statement?

1. The Lord is continually "rising" in the minds and hearts of those who love Him. Israel let the Lord's Sun "set." The Lord never turns Himself from a person, but people turn themselves away from the Lord. This turning is called the "setting of the sun."
2. The Lord wanted to make His name great in the church. His love and wisdom were not, in the church of Israel, being kept in a state of conjunction. Wholeness of doctrine was compromised. Genuine worship and the inquisitive need to know and discover the truths of the Lord were gone.
3. So the Lord called unto Him the "Gentile" nations where the hearing and reception of His Word would begin anew. In the Gentile nations, the "incense" of confession, adoration, and prayers had the potential to be an acceptable gift in the sight of the Lord. The gentile newness would bring clean or pure meal-offerings.
4. *AE 324* teaches that the Gentiles had within them the "good of charity towards the neighbor...and the good of love toward the Lord." *AE 447* teaches that the Gentiles had a desire to receive the good of life and truths so as to enter into "combat against evil and falsities." The Gentile nations would have a spiritual inquisitiveness and a desire to fight evil and falsity.

Israel's days of wanting to fulfill the goals of the Lord were over. This church was being vastated, and the work of the Lord was moving on to people and nations that would allow His name to be great. The Gentiles were being readied to accept the "Lord of hosts." Their hearts were ready to receive His zeal to remove the hells from everyone and the church. Good and truth needed to be conjoined in life so that love to the neighbor and love to the Lord would once again thrive in His church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 1:11*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you think of personal examples of your experiences with the rising and setting of the sun of the Lord? The Lord never “sets.” He is always “rising.” Moments of disappointment or tragedy cause people to allow the setting of the Lord’s sun in their lives. In such moments, the light seems to be going down or out. What does it take to have a new dawn after this personal darkness?
- Israel’s obstinacy is remarkable in some ways. Their traditional teachings were firm about their “favored nation” status. Can you identify with them? How would you feel if it ever came to us that the Lord was going to bring the New Church to Gentiles? To make it a little more personal, would we be ready, and open, to hear this message?
- Since coming into the organized New Church, I have heard people say, “We need to allow ‘Gentiles’ to find us.” We are somewhat cautious about “outsiders” and with some justification. We need to be slow with our evangelism so that a genuine sense of spiritual discovery comes with the newcomer. We don’t want lip service or a joining for the wrong reasons. There have been those who say they are interested in the church but really wanted the benefits of school and its tuition breaks.
- Please consider the meaning of a pure (clean) offering and incense. The lack of these brought the Jewish church down. Do we have our acts of worship in better shape?
- I’m still feeling somewhat sorry for the church of Israel. I’m sorry that they didn’t listen. I’m sorry that they didn’t want to change. And I am sorry they drifted away from the Lord. But why do I feel sorry for them? I guess the sorrow has its base in the worry that I too get into patterns where I tend to become careless with matters of faith. Are there any ways we can inspire each other to offer the incense of prayer, confession, and adoration that will stay fresh and sincere?
- Again, I offer a personal feeling: Does a study of the Lord’s Word, such as this one, give us a means to keep the “sun rising” and to make the name of the Lord great?
- Study is hard. There will be times when we find the application of the Word escaping our grasp. But experience shows that a steady plodding will pay dividends. Our study will give Spiritual IRAs that pay eternal dividends. What are Spiritual IRA’s? Instruction, Reflection, and Application of the Word to the good of life.
- If you find this kind of study guide useful, will you encourage others to use it as well?

MALACHI 1:12-14

“But you profane it, in that you say, “The table of the Lord is defiled; and its fruit, its food, is contemptible.” You also say, “Oh, what a weariness!” And you sneer at it,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?’ says the Lord. ‘But cursed be the deceiver who has in his flock a male, and makes a vow, but sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—for I am a great King,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘and My name is to be feared among the nations.’”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “...those who are within the church profane worship, and do not worship the Lord.”

AE 725 [11]

- “In Malachi...1:14...‘A male in the flock’ signifies the genuine truth of doctrine from the Word; ‘a corrupted thing’ signifies what is falsified; and ‘to vow and sacrifice’ signifies to worship, thus from things falsified when truth is known; that this worship being fraudulent is infernal is signified by ‘cursed be the defrauder.’”

Derived Doctrine

“But you profane it [My name] in that you say, “The table of the Lord is defiled...”

- To “profane” “signifies to be led by one’s self and one’s own loves and not by the Lord.” (AC 10362) To “profane” signifies to defile holy truths (AC 5044 [7]).
- A “table” of the Lord signifies a receptacle. A table signifies “the reception of such things as are from the Lord, which are the good of love and the good of faith, and the consequent blessedness and happiness” (AC 9527).
- “Defile” signifies the effect of impure worship (AC 1292 [3]).

“...and its fruit, its food, is contemptible.”

- “Fruit” signifies good. Essentially, it signifies the good of life (AE 48).
- “Food” signifies things of use to a person’s soul (AC 5293).
- “Contemptible,” or contempt, signifies those who turn from good by utterly despising truth (AC 3322 [7]).

“Oh, what a weariness!’ And you sneer at [the fruit and food on the Lord’s Table]...”

- “Weary,” in the positive sense, signifies to be in distress because there are no truths (*AC 8568 [9]*). The negative sense would be to be in distress because of the presence of truth.
- “Sneering” has an interesting description in *DP 318 [7]*. This number draws attention to the fact that there is nothing that cannot be confirmed and that “falsity is confirmed more readily than the truth.” Those who confirm themselves in falsity “sneer” at those who allow the “inflowing light of day” to dispel falsity. Is this not what is going on in this verse? Sneering at the fruit and food on the Lord’s Table is profane, but the people who are sneering won’t listen to the Lord’s warning.

“And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick...Should I accept this from your hand?”

- “Stolen” signifies to attribute to oneself what belongs only to the Lord, namely good and truth (*AC 4002 [2]*).
- “Lame” signifies those not in good, and so not in truth (*AC 4302 [8]*).
- “Sick” signifies those who are distressed by evils and falsities but don’t want to be healed by the Lord. See *Conjugal Love (CL) 4586* for the positive meaning.
- Should the Lord accept these inferior offerings? We know the answer from the literal sense. He will not. Nor will He acknowledge the self-power (hand) that brought them.

“But cursed be the deceiver who has in his flock a male, and takes a vow, but sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished...”

- Please note that most of this verse is explained in *AE 725 [11]*, as quoted above. We need just a few points to round out the correspondences.
- “Cursed” signifies the sensuous nature that averted “itself from that which is heavenly, turned itself to that of the body, and thus cursed itself...” (*AC 245*)
- A “deceiver” is someone who denies the presence of the Lord for the purpose of claiming self-merit (*AC 4077 [3]*).
- A “vow” in the positive sense signifies a willingness to acknowledge the Lord’s providence and allow Him to provide essentials. This is not the case with the deceiver. Deceivers give lip-service that is nothing but a sham.
- How do we know this? The Lord refuses to accept a deceiver’s “blemished” sacrifices. The Writings use the term “fraudulent” worship (*AE 725 [11]*).
- “Flock” signifies the church and those who are in the truths of simple good (*AC 6828*). “Flock” signifies an interior natural good (*AC 4244*).
- “Male” signifies, in the positive sense, the genuine doctrine of the Word (*AC 7829 and AE 710 [33]*). Therefore, we can see why the Lord exposed this deceiver among the flock. The deceiver put on the face of genuine doctrine

but wanted to offer fraudulent, blemished sacrifices that were not acceptable to the Lord.

“...for I am a great King...and My name is to be feared among the nations.”

- A “king” signifies one who is in truth from affection for what is good (AR 440). Our verse uses the capital K for “King,” signifying the Lord who is Divine Truth and Divine Love.
- As for His name being feared among the nations, we know from doctrine that the word “fear” signifies having adoration, a deep humility, a holy love of the Lord (AR 56).

Putting It All Together

The Lord, preparing the disciples for the day when they would have to go out and preach and teach without Him, warned them that they would be like sheep in the midst of wolves. He warned them to beware of wolves that put on sheep’s clothing. He illustrated what their role should be in their ministry. They were to remember that a disciple is not above his teacher, nor is a servant above his master. And where would they find the enemy? “A man’s enemies will be those of his own household.” (Matthew 10:36)

What has this to do with our summation? The cursed, the deceiver, the one with a “male in the flock” taking a vow, had little interest in the care of the flock. He put on the clothing of sheep. He came looking like he was making a sacrifice to the Lord, but instead, he brought defective goods to the altar. Love wasn’t there. He made a sacrifice to the Lord for show and not for the furtherance of genuine doctrine. The “male” averted himself from that which was heavenly. Instead, his real interest was to turn all things to the body. The “male” deceiver, in his heart, denied the presence of the Lord for the purpose of claiming self-merit. Such profane worship wearied the Lord. He noted the inward sneer in the deceiver’s heart. Yes, the enemy was really in the household of the external church. And so the summation in P&P makes sense:

“...those who are within the church profane worship, and do not worship the Lord.”

The cursed, the deceiver, the pretenders would not prevail. The Lord announced that He was a great King and His name would elicit a holy fear based on adoration, deep humility, and a genuine love of His great Kingship. Can you hear Isaiah 9:6 being sung in the “Messiah” chorus? “And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.”

And the people shall say “Amen.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from P&P.

Read Malachi 1:12-14.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. At what point of pulling together the doctrine and derived doctrine did the spiritual sense of this passage begin to unfold for you?
2. Did you experience a kind of inner light?
3. Could you picture the cursed, the deceiver, and his profane offering of a blemished gift instead of the good gift that he could have given; are these images illustrating things for you in tangible ways?
4. What stands out in your memory that helps you get the feeling that the Lord is a great King? Is it looking back over your life to see how His providence has guided us over the years? Is it reading the Word to see how He wins out over evil? Does it occur with an act of kindness or the gentle sphere of innocence?
5. What does it mean to you that the Lord said He was wearied with the sacrifices of the evil?
6. Do you think your moment of reflection would be helped if you played a portion of the "Messiah" chorus? Music stirs the soul to feel the majesty and glory of our Lord. If you don't have the music, read Isaiah 9 with the tune in your mind.

Chapter Two

MALACHI 2:1-4

“And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. If you will not hear, and if you will not take it to heart, to give glory to My name,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take it to heart. Behold, I will rebuke your descendants and spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your solemn feasts; and one will take you away with it. Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, that My covenant with Levi may continue,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “Unless they worship the Lord, all worship will be perverted and profane.”

AC 10037 [4]

- “...‘to embrace dunghills’ denotes to learn and choose falsities...In Malachi... 2:2, 3...‘to scatter dung upon the faces’ denotes to defile the interiors of life with the falsities of evil; ‘the dung of feasts’ denotes to defile the holy things of worship.”

AC 1038 [3]

- “In Malachi...2:4...‘Levi’ in the supreme sense is the Lord, and hence the man who has love and charity...”

AE 365 [26]

- “In Malachi...2:4...‘Levi’ signifies all who are in the good of charity towards the neighbor, and in the highest sense, the Lord Himself, because that good is from Him; here the Lord Himself is meant.”

AE 444 [12]

- “That ‘Levi’ in the highest sense signifies the Lord in relation to love and mercy, is evident in Malachi...2:4...Here ‘Levi’ in the highest sense means the Lord in respect to His Divine Human...”

Derived Doctrine

“And now, O priests, this commandment is for you.”

- The word “commandment” needs our attention. Is the Lord referring to the Decalogue, or does He mean “listen to this command I am about to give you”?
- The Decalogue is “in a brief summary a complex of all those things of religion by means of which there is conjunction of the Lord with man and of man with the Lord.” (*Doctrine of Life 54*)
- To “command” signifies to prepare and do, or to act according to the word of the Lord (*AC 783*). To “go and do” signifies to obey Truth Divine and to do so from the will (*AC 7944-7945*).
- “Priests” of Aaron and of the Levites represent the work of salvation in successive order. The priesthood of Aaron represents the work of salvation of those in the Lord’s celestial kingdom, and the priests represented by the Levites are the work of salvation proceeding from the former. See *AC 10017*.

“If you will not hear and if you will not take it to heart...”

- “Hear,” in the positive sense, signifies that one who understands should obey what the Word teaches. To “hear” is to perceive and to obey (*AR 87*). From this, we can see that to “not hear” represents an unwillingness to perceive and obey.
- To take to “heart” signifies doing the will of the Lord from love and freedom (*AC 9460*). Having a stony or stubborn heart signifies the presence of impurity and the presence of things that would impede the influx of good and truth (*AC 7225 [2]*).

“...to give glory to My name...”

- To “give glory” to the Lord signifies that the Lord desires the surrender of a person’s heart and worship of Him from those who love Him (*AE 175 [6-7]*).
- His “name” signifies the sum of all His qualities, love and faith, by which He is to be worshiped (*AC 2724*).

“...says the Lord of hosts.”

- Have you noticed how many times this phrase is used in the prophecy of Malachi? Please make note of this phrase because it signifies the church in its whole complex by which the Lord removes the hells in general and with everyone in particular (*AE 734 [8]*).

“I will send a curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take it to heart.”

- The word “curse” appears three times in this verse. The number three signifies what is holy, and it signifies the state of repentance, which is essential (AC 900 and 901).
- Would it be appropriate for us to consider the trine of love, wisdom, and use in this context? Could the “curse” occurring here represent a statement of judgment by the Lord about their love, wisdom, and use?
- “Curse” signifies that the sensuous has “averted itself from that which is heavenly, turned itself to that which is of the body, and thus cursed itself” (AC 245).

“Behold, I will rebuke your descendants...”

- “Behold” signifies thought, reflection, acknowledgment, and confession. “Behold” what? The Lord and His presence. See AC 2329 and 3711.
- The Lord, in *Revelation 3:19*, said, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” These words, “rebuke” and “chasten,” signify that those who are being regenerated must face temptations “because without them, negations and confirmations against Divine truth could not be extirpated.” (AR 215) In AE 342, we are taught that “rebuke” signifies the desolation of all truth.
- We can understand more of the meaning of “rebuke your descendants” when we read a passage in TCR 103 [2]. “Since the soul of man is the man himself, and is spiritual in its origin, it is evident why the mind, disposition, nature, inclination, and affection of the father’s love dwell in offspring after offspring and return and display themselves from generation to generation...**And it is only by means of the spiritual things of the church that this likeness is changed.**” (emphasis added) With this teaching in mind, can we see why the Lord needed to rebuke the descendants? Only the Lord, His Word, and His church can change the tendencies of hereditary evils that are passed on from generation to generation.

“...and spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your solemn feasts; and one will take you away with it.”

- A “face” signifies the interiors of the mind (HH 457 and AE 381).
- “Dung” (refuse) signifies what is unclean, “consequently evil and falsity, for in the spiritual sense these are unclean because all that is useless and worn out of the food goes into dung.” (AC 10037) In AE 617, we read that “dung” signifies the adulteration of Divine truth.
- Putting these teachings together, we can see that the Lord was telling the people that all of the useless and wasted things of the interior of their minds would become plainly seen by all as if they were written on their faces. Their adulteration of truth would be exposed by the Lord.

- “Feasts,” in the positive sense, have various representations. Let’s look at two passages that seem to sum up the representation of feasts. *AC 2341* teaches that feasts represent nothing else than the Lord’s dwelling with people in the holy things of love. *AC 5161* teaches that feasts were held to signify the initiation into mutual love and thus conjunction with the Lord. Considering these teachings, can we then see the negative aspect of our passage? Their solemn feasts were not for the purpose of giving the Lord a dwelling place within their heart, nor were they interested in His holy things of love. They did not wish to be initiated into mutual love or conjunction. It was all a show and, therefore, the “refuse” of a solemn feast in the eyes of the Lord.

“...and one will take you away with it.”

- Who is the one who will take them away? Is it the Lord, or is it hell? “One” is almost always ascribed to the Lord. “One” is that which is perfect. To “take away” signifies to remove every good and truth of the church, leaving no power to resist falsities (*AE 727 [12]*). To “take away” signifies to destroy defending truths (*AC 10540*).

“Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you...”

- When it is revealed to the children of Israel that they have no power or defending truths left, will their feeling that they are acting from themselves change to awareness that without the Lord they are nothing?
- Is this verse a “wake-up call” for the church?

“...that My covenant with Levi may continue...”

- A historical note must be appended here before we look at correspondences. “My covenant with Levi” goes back to a time at Mt. Sinai when Levi was faithful to the Lord in spite of the sin of Israel and the golden calf. For Levi’s fidelity, the Lord made a covenant with him and his descendants. The Lord promised him life and peace and a name that would be feared. “The Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister to Him and to bless His name, to this day. Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers; the Lord is his inheritance...” (*Deuteronomy 10:8-9*)
- So, in the historical sense, the Lord was making a spiritual contrast for Israel to reflect upon. What is the state of the fidelity of the priesthood? How far have you come from the pristine order of the priesthood as established by the Lord? Is the Lord still your **only** inheritance, or have you made profit and prestige your desired inheritance?
- We also have *Exodus 32:25-29*, *Numbers 3:45*, *Numbers 18:21-24*, and *Deuteronomy 33:8-11* as references to the Lord’s covenant with Levi.

- “That ‘covenant’ signifies nothing else than regeneration and the things pertaining to regeneration, is evident from various passages in the Word where the Lord Himself is called the ‘Covenant,’ because it is He alone who regenerates, and who is looked to by the regenerate man, and is the all in all of love and faith.” (AC 665 and 666)
- The phrase “That My covenant...may continue” speaks for itself. The Lord wanted the priesthood to serve Him and to make it a high priority to feed the people with the truths of the Word so that the Lord might be the “all in all” of their love and faith.

“...says the Lord of hosts.”

- This portion of the text is highlighted again. Why are these words used so often in Malachi’s prophecy? To remind us that the Lord has a zeal to remove the hells from everyone and the church. He wants purity to return to the forms of worship offered up by His children. He wants good and truth to inspire and lift all in their daily uses of life.

Putting It All Together

To pull things together, let’s pay close attention to the orders of the Lord as outlined in the literal sense. We will first look at the orders from the positive sense:

1. Priests, listen to My commandments.
2. Hear and take heart.
3. Rebuke your descendants.
4. Know My commandment.
5. Return to My covenant.
6. The covenant of the Lord is the “all in all” of love and faith.

Listening to and obeying the command of the Lord is essential for the priestly acts of worship within us. The Lord desires us to perceive the things of the Word with a willing heart. “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do and hear” is a song we have learned from childhood. We still sing it today. The words and meaning of that song preserve the simplicity of what the Lord wishes for us. He wants us to trust and obey Him.

The command to rebuke our descendants refers to the inherited tendencies toward evil that we all carry with us. The doctrines teach us that “only by means of spiritual

things of the church” can these tendencies be changed by “inherited tendencies toward good.”

How are we changed?

“Know My commandments.” Return to “My covenant.” Let “My covenant” continue.

To have less than this spirit brings the negative aspects into focus. The Word offers this order of what happens to those who are obstinately negative:

1. If you will not listen and take heart, a curse will come upon you and your blessings.
2. Your descendants will be rebuked.
3. Refuse will be spread on faces.
4. Refuse will be spread on the solemn feasts.
5. Those with a stony heart and unwilling spirit will be carried away.

If we refuse the order of the Lord, the curse of the sensual takes over our priorities. The “curse” of the sensual person will “avert” us from the heavenly spheres of the Lord. The refuse or dung on the face signifies the defiling of the interiors of life with the falsities of evil, and the refuse or dung on the solemn feasts represents the defiling of the holy things of worship.

This then brings us to the understanding of what is meant by being “carried away.” The unwilling and obstinate spirit will not choose the Lord. That kind of spirit flees from the presence of the Lord. Away, away, away from the Lord is what the cold heart desires.

P&P calls us to consider the meaning of these passages: “Unless they worship the Lord, all worship will be perverted and profaned.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:1-4*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Is the priest within our earthly temple listening to the commandments of the Lord? Is the perpetual fire of worship burning? Have only holy embers kept the fire going, or have “strange” coals been added?
- Do we see the rebuking of our descendants going on as we regenerate? Resisting the tendency toward inherited evils is the battle of a lifetime. One by one, the Lord introduces them when we are ready to face them. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten” seems like a necessary part of regeneration. But, it is not something we look forward to. How do you see the meaning of “rebuke and chasten”?
- “Command” is a loaded word. It has been noted by researchers that we have a built-in “command resistance” tendency. What they mean by this is that if authority comes on too strong, we zig when it tells us to zag. Do you remember a parable of the Lord about two sons? The father asked each son to go work in the field. The first son said, “No.” Later, he reflected on his negative reaction and went and did the work. The second son said, “Yes,” but then he never went. I’m sure we all see the implications of this parable. Do we not only see it but live it as well?
- The image of dung on the face and solemn feasts is quite graphic. Without the internal sense, it might offend our senses. Is the Lord trying to awaken us with these references?
- How do you understand the references to “curses”? It sounds as if the Lord is doing the cursing. In fact, it is the people who bring the curse on themselves. It seems the hells want us to put blame on the Lord for everything. What is your understanding of these “curses”?
- By now, have you gotten the message of the meaning of “says the Lord of hosts”? It is a phrase we are not finished hearing, so we need to put a “book mark” on it as we read on with Malachi’s prophecy.
- The Lord’s covenant is to be the “all in all” of our love and faith. How can we do this? Worship, study, and application to life seem like the ways to do this. There are obstacles that block or interfere with good intentions to study—schedules, fear of our ignorance, looking for easier tasks, wanting others to explain it for us. Do these obstacles attempt to block you from doing a daily study?

MALACHI 2:5-7

“My covenant was with him, one of life and peace, and I gave them to him that he might fear Me; so he feared Me and was reverent before My name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and equity, and turned many away from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “Through the Word it is granted them to have conjunction with the Lord, who is here meant by ‘Levi.’”

AC 3875 [4]

- “...in the supreme sense ‘Levi’ signifies the Lord’s Divine love or mercy, and in the internal sense spiritual love, therefore the tribe of Levi was made the priesthood; for in the internal sense of the Word the ‘priesthood’ is nothing else than the holy of love...” *Malachi 2:4, 5, 8, 9* are cited.

AE 701 [9]

- “‘The covenant of Jehovah with Levi’ signifies in the highest sense the union of the Divine with the Human in the Lord, and in a relative sense, the Lord’s conjunction with the church; for by ‘Levi’ as by ‘David’ the Lord is meant, but ‘Levi’ means the Lord in relation to Divine good, which is the priesthood of the Lord, and ‘David’ in relation to Divine truth, which is the royalty of the Lord...‘A covenant of life and of peace’ signifies that union and that conjunction...from which the Lord Himself became life and peace, from which man has eternal life, and peace from the infestation by evils and falsities, thus by hell. What is signified by ‘His fear’ may be seen above (n. 696). Those who live contrary to Divine truth are meant by ‘ye have turned aside out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble in the law, ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi;’ ‘to turn aside out of the way and to stumble in the law’ signifies to live contrary to Divine truth, and ‘to corrupt the covenant of Levi’ signifies to corrupt conjunction with the Lord.” *Malachi 2:7* is cited.

AR 306

- “...when man is in the Lord, he is in peace with his neighbor, which is charity; in protection against the hells, which is spiritual security; and when he is in peace with his neighbor, and in protection against the hells, he is in internal rest from evils and falsities.” *Malachi 2:4-5* is cited.

AE 365 [26]

- “In Malachi...2:4-6...‘Levi’ signifies all who are in the good of charity towards the neighbor; and in the highest sense, the Lord Himself, because that good is from Him...‘The covenant of life and peace’ signifies the union of His Divine with His Divine Human, from which union is all life and peace...”

AE 444 [12]

- "...that 'Levi' in the highest sense signifies the Lord in relation to love and mercy, is evident in Malachi...2:4-8...Here 'Levi' in the highest sense means the Lord in respect to His Divine Human, for it is said of Levi, that 'the law of truth was in his mouth, and perversity was not found in his lips,' and that 'the priest's lips they shall seek the law from his mouth, for he is the messenger of Jehovah of Hosts;' therefore 'the covenant of Levi' means conjunction with the Lord through love and charity; 'the covenant of life and peace' signifies that conjunction; 'fear,' which is also predicated of Him signifies love. 'The priest's lips they shall seek the law from his mouth' signifies that all truth of doctrine is from the Lord, and is with such as are in love to Him. He is called 'the messenger of Jehovah' because of the Divine truth that the Lord teaches in the Word and through the Word; 'they turned aside out of the way and caused many to stumble in the law, they corrupted the covenant of Levi,' signifies that the church that was among the Israelites perverted the truths of the Word and the goods of life therefrom, and thus destroyed conjunction with the Lord; 'way' signifying the truths of doctrine, 'law' its goods, and the 'covenant of Levi' conjunction with the Lord."

AC 3623 [2]

- "The reason why here and in other passages lives are spoken of in the plural, is that there are two faculties of life in man; one of which is called the understanding, and is of truth; and the other of which is called the will, and is of good; these two lives or faculties of life make a one when the understanding is of the will, or what is the same, when truth is of good..."
Malachi 2:5 is cited.

AR 527

- "...every one who loves also fears to do evil to him whom he loves. Genuine love is not given without that fear. Therefore he who loves the Lord fears to do evils, because evils are contrary to Him...That 'to fear God' signifies to love the things which are of God, by doing them, and by not willing to do those which are against Him..." *Malachi 2:5* is cited as an example.

AE 696 [16]

- "In Malachi...2:5...'Levi' means here the Lord in relation to the Divine Human, and 'the covenant of life and peace' signifies the union of His Divine with Himself, and 'fear' and 'to fear' signifies holy truth, with which there is union."

AC 2826 [7]

- “In Malachi...2:5, 6...where the Lord is treated of, who here in the internal sense is ‘Levi;’ ‘Levi’ signifies the priesthood, and signifies love; ‘fear’ here denotes the good of Divine love; the ‘law of truth,’ truth; and ‘peace and uprightness,’ both.”

AE 97

- “That in the Word ‘ways’ signify truths or falsities, and ‘walking’ signifies living, may be seen from many passages...” *Malachi 2:6* is cited.

AC 1286 [4]

- “In Malachi...2:6, 7...This is said of Levi, by whom the Lord is represented; ‘lips’ denote doctrine from charity.”

AE 130 [8]

- “...in Malachi...2:7...He is said to be the ‘angel of Jehovah,’ because he teaches Divine truth; not that he is the angel of Jehovah, but the Divine truth that he teaches is. Moreover, it is known in the church that no one has Divine truth from himself. ‘Lips’ also here signify the doctrine of truth, and ‘law’ Divine truth itself.”

AE 701 [9]

- *Malachi 2:4-6, 8* is cited, followed by this explanation. “A covenant of life and peace’ signifies that union and that conjunction...from which the Lord Himself becomes life and peace, from which man has eternal life, and peace from the infestation by evils and falsities, thus by hell...Those who live contrary to Divine truth are meant by ‘ye have turned aside out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble in the law, ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi;’ ‘to turn aside out of the way and to stumble in the law signifies to live contrary to Divine truth, and ‘to corrupt the covenant of Levi’ signifies to corrupt conjunction with the Lord.”

Derived Doctrine

Almost all that we need to understand in the spiritual sense of these verses was given to us. There was just one short sentence needing our attention:

“...he...was reverent before My name.”

- There are no passages we can use for the signification of “reverent.” However, we know the qualities inherent in reverence. Reverence involves respect, honesty, humility, a sense of awe, and a spirit of willingness to obey the Lord. “Before My name” represents having reverence for the sum of all things that signify the Lord’s qualities (*AC 2724*). Reverence doesn’t include a competitive or combative attitude. Instead, there is a willingness to accede to the holiness of His Infinite qualities.

Putting It All Together

When you look over chapter two of Malachi, verses 5 to 7 of *Malachi*, note the use of pronouns—him, he, his, his mouth, his lips—and of “priest” and “messenger.” The Writings clearly teach us that all of these pronouns have reference to the Lord. By “Levi,” the Lord is meant.

As I read these verses, my mind turned to the wording of *John 1:1*: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Notice the use of the pronouns in that passage. Don’t we have somewhat the same style of message in *Malachi*, too? Try putting the Lord’s name in place of all of the pronouns of our verses from *Malachi*. Think of **love and wisdom** expressing to us how they **are conjoined** and ready to help us find life and peace through the Word.

My (**Love**) covenant was with the Lord (**Wisdom**) from His advent.

I (**Love**) gave it to the Lord (**Wisdom**) from His advent.

My **Wisdom** will **Love** Me.

The law was in the Lord’s mouth.

Injustice was not found on the lips of the Lord.

The Lord walked in peace and equity

The Lord turned many away from iniquity.

People should seek the law from the mouth of the Lord.

The Lord is the messenger—He is the Lord of hosts.

AR 306 sums up the meaning of the prophecy of Malachi in this way: “When a person is in the Lord, he is at peace with his neighbor, which is charity, in protection against the hells, which is spiritual security; and when he is in peace with his neighbor, and in protection against the hells, he is in internal rest from evils and falsities.”

P&P sums up these verses with these words: “Through the Word it is granted them to have conjunction with the Lord, who is meant by ‘Levi.’”

This part of the Lord’s prophecy is an invitation to be conjoined with Him through the Word. Those who desire such a conjunction will have **life and peace**.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:5-7*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Were you able to put the Lord in the place of Levi and the various pronouns? Did it help you see more of the spiritual sense?
- I found this exercise to be a wonderful opening of the Word. It helped me see the Glorification process being explained to the church.
- Did you find *AR 306* a passage worth keeping handy to quote? Peace, security, protection, and rest from evils and falsities: these are words of comfort when we feel overwhelmed with temptation.
- The Lord is inviting us to have conjunction with Him through the Word. I believe that what we are doing in this study guide is so important. How about you?

MALACHI 2:8-10

“But you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base before all the people, because you have not kept My ways but have shown partiality in the law.’ Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another by profaning the covenant of the fathers?”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “They have departed from the Word, and have thereby dissolved the conjunction.”

AE 412 [25]

- Showing partiality signifies “In Malachi...2:9...to have the mind better disposed towards, and to show more favor to superiors, the rich, and friends, than to inferiors, the poor, and enemies.”

AC 2005

- “In Malachi...2:10...To ‘create’ denotes to regenerate...”

AC 3704 [3]

- “In Malachi...2:10...where in the internal sense ‘to create’ signifies to regenerate...and as the Lord is the only Regenerator and Redeemer, it is He who is here called ‘Father’ and ‘God.’”

AE 294 [11]

- “In Malachi...2:10...‘hath created us’ signifies hath reformed that they might be a church; therefore it is said, ‘wherefore do we act perfidiously?’”

AC 8999

- Acting treacherously is acting “contrary to truth Divine, or what is the same, contrary to the laws of Divine order...In heaven the laws of Divine order are truths, for Divine order...proceeds from the Lord.” *Malachi 2:10, 11, 14, and 15* are cited as examples.

Derived Doctrine

“But you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law.”

- When anyone “departs from the way,” a spiritual change occurs within that person. Consider this teaching from *AE 406 [2]*: “...all cognitions of truth and good and the confirming knowledges (scientifica) that man from infancy has imbibed from the Word and from teachers, will **change their places** and their state in the natural man and perish out of sight when falsities enter.” *(emphasis added)*
- “Way,” in the positive sense, signifies following doctrine by which one is instructed, or led, into a deeper understanding of truth (*AC 2231*).
- In *AE 444 [12]*, we have an explanation of the passage from *Malachi 2:4-8* that contains almost the same words as our present text: “they turned aside out of the way and caused many to stumble in the law, they corrupted the covenant of Levi,’ signifies that the church that was among the Israelites perverted the truths of the Word and the goods of life therefrom, and those destroyed conjunction with the Lord; ‘way’ signifying the truths of doctrine, ‘laws’ its goods, and the ‘covenant of Levi’ conjunction with the Lord.”
- “Stumble” signifies to change truth into falsities and to fall thereby. “Stumble” also refers to those who should teach truths from the Word, but teach falsities. See *AE 624*.

"You have corrupted the covenant of Levi..."

- Let's pause long enough to notice where the responsibility for the corruption of the covenant rests. The Lord isn't at fault. "You" represents priests. "You" represents Israel.
- The "covenant of Levi" was "the way" the Lord laid out for their regeneration. The priests changed the way. They stumbled by teaching falsities as truths and truths as falsities and, thus, broke the covenant.

"...says the Lord of hosts."

- Here is that oft-stated phrase to call our attention to the zeal and intention of the Lord to remove hell from everyone and the church (*AE 734 [8]*).

"Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base before all the people..."

- "Contempt" signifies a state of mind. "Contempt" represents a spiteful mind that takes delight in turning from good and utterly despises the Lord's truth (*AC 3322 [7]*).
- "Base" or "vile" signifies that the Lord was going to show the inward evil that had been covered in an external pretense of a good life. See the basket of figs example in *AE 403 [19]*.

The remaining portions of these verses were covered above in the direct quotes from the Writings.

Putting It All Together

What point should we start with to pull things together? The bottom line is that the priesthood and the church picked another "way" to follow and turned their backs on the Lord's way. They chose a road of favoritism because they felt it was more advantageous to them. Their choices over the years changed what they had learned from childhood. What the Word taught, what their teachers had shared with them perished. Falsities had changed places with these truths in their priorities. The priesthood and the church were on a way that had but one end. They were going to perish if they didn't return to the Lord's Word and the Lord's way.

As it was, the minds of the priests and the people of the church were growing hostile toward the way of the Lord. How could they do anything else but "stumble" with the contemptible perceptions they had? Meanwhile, they "wore" clothes of righteousness, but within, there were hideous and ugly forms of self-love and hatred.

In His zeal, the Lord wanted to show these people the folly of their way, so He posed a question to them through Malachi. "Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?" The spiritual sense of these words poses the question this way: Doesn't

the Lord know the one way for regeneration for all of His children? He doesn't show favoritism. No one can buy or think their way into heaven and its order. We all have one Father. His way is the one way to walk. "But you have departed from the way." As *P&P* states: "They have departed from the Word, and have thereby dissolved the conjunction."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:8-10*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you reflect for a moment on your journey through life? Can you see any roads where you departed from the Lord? Did you stay on that other road for long? At some point, do you remember coming to the conclusion that you needed to return to the Lord's way?
- The idea of the one way of the Lord might be misunderstood, so let's look at that point for a moment. There is one way, but that one way is individually set for each person. The Lord knows our individuality. He is fair and impartial. He doesn't show favoritism. So He is willing to work with us toward our regeneration. We need to walk with Him. His Word is the means for our conjunction. So the remains of our youth and the teachers of the Word have done much for us. What we need to take care to ensure is that we have not "changed" the spiritual structure within us, with falsity taking center place and truth pushed out.
- Can we handle the news that "You" have dissolved the covenant? The Lord is revealing to us that He has made our regeneration possible. If things fail, it will not be due to His inattentiveness. This is the case from the Lord. He asks only that we try to trust His covenant path.
- As I look back over the spiritual correspondences, I wonder what effect it might have had if He plainly spoke the inner sense to the priests? Might they have done greater harm to themselves by rejecting the "plain truths" of the Lord?

MALACHI 2:11

"Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, for Judah has profaned the Lord's holy institution which He loves; he has married the daughter of a foreign god."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “They have worshipped another god, whence came profanation...”

AC 3024 [7]

- “That the Israelites were not to contract marriages with the daughters of the Canaanites also had regard to the spiritual laws that good and falsity, and evil and truth, are not to be joined together; for thence comes profanation. The prohibition was also representative of the matter concerning which we read in...Malachi...2:11...”

AC 3881 [11]

- “...when they did not remain in the rituals ordained by Jehovah or the Lord, but turned away from them to idolatries, they then no longer represented celestial and spiritual things, but the opposite, that is, infernal and diabolical things—according to the Lord’s words in...Malachi...2:11...”

AC 9182 [8]

- “In Malachi...2:11...‘to betroth the daughter of a strange god’ denotes to be conjoined with the evil of falsity; ‘a strange god’ denotes falsity...”

AC 4434 [3]

- “In Malachi...2:11, 14...where ‘to love and betroth the daughter of a strange god’ is to conjoin one’s self with falsity instead of truth...”

Derived Doctrine

“Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem...”

- “Judah,” in the supreme sense, “signifies the Lord and the Divine of love; in the internal sense, the Word and also the Lord’s celestial kingdom; and in the exterior sense, the doctrine from the Word which is of the celestial church.” (*AC 3880 [10]*)
- To act “treacherously” (with guile) signifies to have malice from the will with premeditation (*AC 9013*).
- “...the signification of ‘abomination’ [sacrilege] as being infernal foulness and filthiness....” (*AC 7454*)

- “Israel,” in the highest sense, “means the Lord in relation to the internal of the church...‘Israel’ means the church with those who are interiorly natural, and have truths therein from a spiritual origin...‘Israel’ signifies the church that is spiritual-natural.” (AE 768 [15])
- “Jerusalem” means the church and not the city, “...for about the time of the Lord’s coming Jerusalem was not so great...for the church of the Lord is internal and external; in the internal church are those who are in intelligence and wisdom, and thus in the higher heavens, but in the external church are those who are in knowledges and cognitions of truth and good from the Word, and in no interior intelligence and wisdom, and who are therefore in the lower heavens; the former are called spiritual, the latter spiritual-natural, and the spiritual are meant by those who are ‘in the midst of Jerusalem,’ and the spiritual-natural by those who are ‘in the suburbs.’” (AE 629 [6])

“...for Judah has profaned the Lord’s holy institution which He loves...”

- What is the Lord’s holy institution which He loves? Is it marriage? Is it the Sabbath day? In AC 4171, marriage is thought by human beings to be a heavenly institution. In AC 8495, the Sabbath is taught to be the holiest institution of the Lord. Let’s read AC 8495 (in the Elliot translation): “Anyone who does not know what the Sabbath represented, and what it was consequently a sign of, also cannot know why it was held to be **the holiest institution of all**. It was held to be the holiest because in the highest sense it represented the union of the Divine and the Divine Human within the Lord, and in the relative sense the pining together of the Lord’s Divine Human and the human race. This is why the Sabbath was the holiest. And since it represented those realities it also represented heaven in respect of the pining together of goodness and truth, that is, the joining together called the heavenly marriage...since the joining together of goodness and truth is accomplished by the Lord alone and nothing at all by man, and since it is accomplished in a state of peace, people were strictly forbidden to do work on that day.” (*emphasis added*)

Putting It All Together

The “messenger” announces to the church that the Lord’s holy institution, which He loves, was profaned by Judah in the land of Israel and in Jerusalem. Was the profanation an accident or oversight on the part of the finite church? The messenger’s use of the words “treacherously” and “abomination” answers our question. We are told that treachery, or guile, is the act of malice; it springs from the premeditation of the will.

What did the people do to profane the Lord’s holy institution? They chose to break their conjunction with the Lord, and they turned to idolatry. They married the

daughter of a foreign god. The ordinance of the Lord was clear that they should not marry good and falsity nor evil and truth.

What makes idolatry so appealing to people that they would choose idols over the Lord? Let's look at some numbers in the *Arcana* for an answer to this question; *AC 1094, 1205, 1357, and 1363* provide the following information.

- Idolatry consists in a worship of externals.
- The externals—corporeal things—are what the idolater desires most.
- The idolater is unwilling to know internal things and eternal life.
- There are three universal kinds of idolatry:
 - Love of self
 - Love of the world
 - Love of pleasures.
- All idolatry has one or more of these three loves for its end.
- There are internal forms of idolatry.
- There are external forms of idolatry.
- Internal idolaters are capable of profaning holy things.
- External idolaters are not able to profane holy things.

On the basis of *AC 1363*, we can make a pretty good assumption that Israel had entered into an internal form of idolatry. They profaned the holy institution the Lord loved. “They have worshipped another god, whence came profanation...” (*P&P*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:11*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do you get a sense of what made idolatry more attractive than following the Lord? Can we imagine why loving self, the world, and pleasures would seem more valuable than following the Lord?
- Why is external idolatry permitted? How does internal idolatry have the potential to destroy holy things?
- Are we in any danger of committing these idolatries?
- If you are studying this section in a class setting, what other points about idolatry that were mentioned in the discussion have added to your understanding of the spiritual meaning?
- Do those seeking their “fifteen minutes of fame and fortune” seem like idolaters? What kind would they be? Internal or external idolaters?

MALACHI 2:12

"May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob the man who does this, being awake and aware, yet who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts!"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...wherefore they will perish."

AE 573 [7]

- "...the truths and goods of heaven and the church are meant in the Word by 'hosts;' which makes clear why it is that Jehovah is called in the Word... 'of hosts'..." *Malachi 2:12* is cited among many references.

Derived Doctrine

"May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob the man who does this, being awake and aware..."

- A "tent" signifies the external person conjoined with the internal (*AC1616*). "May the Lord cut off" signifies taking away the Divine truth from the church but with knowledge that it will live again in a new church (*AE 315 [23]*).
- "Awake" and "aware" reinforce the point that those who chose idolatry did so with their eyes open and with full knowledge of the consequences of their actions. Therefore, they needed to be "cut off" from the tents of Jacob.
- *AC 9594 [6]*, *AC 10545 [8]*, and *AE 724 [17]* are consistent in their explanation of the meaning of "the tents of Jacob" signifying the goods of the church and of worship. In the opposite sense, "the tents of Jacob" signify the evils of worship and the church. "Bringing back the captivity of the tents of Jacob...stands for restoring the external Church's forms of goods which had been destroyed..." (*AC 9594 [6]*)

"...yet who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts!"

- In the positive sense, an "offering" signifies internal worship by those who are holy (*AC 349*). A negative sense of an "offering" signifies worship from faith that is without charity (*AC 346*). Which kind of offering is the Word talking about?
- The "Lord of hosts" signifies the truths and goods of heaven. Are we being given a contrast between the idolater and the Divine? Picture the profaner marching in to offer vain and empty gifts lacking any charity, and the Divine

not needing his gifts because He already has all the goods and truths of heaven.

Putting It All Together

Do we really need to do much pulling together? It seems quite clear that those who want idolatry are going to be cut off from the tents of Jacob. There is little pity for these idolaters. They chose this. They did so with a clear understanding of what they loved. They wanted the idolatry of self, the world, and their pleasures. The life and pleasures the Lord offered them were firmly rejected. They were awake and aware when the decision was made.

Once they made that choice, the Lord sought to protect the idolaters from more grievous acts of profanation. He took away from them their ability to see ways of conjoining themselves with Him. He turned away from the pompous empty acts of their offerings. What the Lord took away from them was not to be lost or forgotten. His covenant with a new church will restore the perception of how to conjoin the Divine Human with the church in that holy institution the Lord loves.

But as for the church of Israel, “wherefore they will perish” (*P&P*).

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:12*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do you feel any sympathy for those who were “cut off” from the tents of Jacob?
- Can you picture the idolaters being quite happy with their choice?
- Did the contrast of the empty offering and the bountiful Lord stand out in your mind in the closing portion of our text?
- Why do you think the idolaters continued the ritual of offerings? Did it fulfill their need for self love, fame, and merit?
- Hold on to this question (number 4) for *Malachi 2:13*. In this next verse, we will look at the extremes the idolaters went to in order to appear righteous before others.

MALACHI 2:13

“And this is the second thing you do: you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying; so He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with goodwill from your hands.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “...therefore their external worship is not accepted.”

AE 484 [3 & 4]

- “In both weeping and in shedding of tears water comes forth which is bitter and astringent, and this occurs through an influx into man’s grief from the spiritual world, where bitter water corresponds to the lack of truth because of falsities, and to consequent grief; therefore those who are in truths grieve on account of falsities. From this it can be seen why it is that in the Word, where ‘tears’ are mentioned ‘weeping’ also is mentioned, namely, that it is on account of the marriage of good and truth in every particular of the Word. I will only adduce the following passages in evidence of this...Malachi...2:13...”

Derived Doctrine

“And this is the second thing you do...”

- The first offense against the Lord was their marriage of “the daughter of a foreign god.” Their attempt to work a marriage of evil and falsity was an abomination before the Lord. Divorce among the priesthood, both literally and spiritually, was destroying their uses.
- What then was the second offense? A long dissertation could be written about the laws of the Lord regarding cleanliness and holiness. Suffice it to say the principles laid out by the Lord could best be described this way: Israel should reflect in her community and worship what she ascribes to the Lord. If the Lord acts in justice, the nation should be marked by justice. If the Lord’s nature is steadfast love, then His people’s love should be steadfast. **If the Lord is clean and holy, then Israel should be clean and holy. Cleanliness is a hallmark of Israel’s faith.** Laws about what the priesthood should do regarding their own preparation for offering sacrifices are precise. Completion of the ritual of self-examination prior to entering the “holy of holies” was a must. The book of *Leviticus* (chapters 11, 13, and 15) details what priests had to do for the treatment of sores and leprosy. The priesthood was to be without blemish. Again, let’s restate the principle of the law of

correspondences. If God is pure, holy, and clean, Israel must reflect these qualities in her life and in the acts of worship.

The point of this brief summary is to illustrate the care and preparation that was expected prior to offering sacrifices to the Lord. The priesthood became careless. They put on a pious front with their clothing. But within their hearts, there was little to match their externals. Notice now how they acted in front of the people when offering gifts of oblation to the Lord:

"...you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying..."

- *AE 484* gives us the positive meaning of "weeping" and shedding tears. These honest forms of grief were to represent the sadness one feels from the lack of truth when dealing with falsity. Weeping and shedding tears were part of the process to bring about the marriage of good and truth.
- But the weeping described in this verse was not part of an attempt to bring about this marriage. It was a sham. It was an act, and the Lord was not pleased with the shoddy performance of His priests and people.
- So, the first grievance was their marriage to idolaters and the divorce of their wives, and the second grievance was with their lack of concern for true repentance. Both offenses were violations of the principles of the Lord that should have been reflected in their life and worship.

Putting It All Together

I feel quite sure you have the summary of this section in your mind. *P&P* states the case: "...therefore their external worship was not accepted." Clearly, Israel was not participating in the worship of the Lord for the right reasons. They were not looking for repentance and reformation. It was all about self and not about the Lord. They truly wanted to marry idolatry and divorce themselves from the Lord.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:13*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Was the section on the duties of the priesthood clear? If you would like more information on this topic, read Bishop de Charms' book on the Tabernacle.
- Can you picture the scene at the altar? Such wailing and tears over what? What kind of actors must they have been to pull this off in front of the congregation?

- Through it all, didn't someone sense that it wasn't genuine? When Malachi spoke these words on behalf of the Lord, I can imagine that a remnant of the people must have heard and believed his message.
- What can be done to make our worship as individuals more sincere and reflective of what the Lord is in our lives?

MALACHI 2:14-16

"Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. 'For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence,' says the Lord of hosts. 'Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "They have severed themselves from the church..."

AC 255

- "In Malachi faith is called the 'seed of God'...2:14, 15...In this passage the 'wife of youth' is the Ancient and Most Ancient Churches, of whose 'seed' (or faith) the prophet speaks."

AC 9818 [8]

- *Malachi 2:15* is cited regarding the meaning of "spirit." "It is very evident that in these passages by 'spirit' is meant the very life of man; that it denotes the intellectual life, or the life of truth, can be seen from the fact that by 'spirit' in the natural sense is meant the life of man's respiration; and that the respiration of the lungs corresponds to the life of truth, which is the life of faith and from this of the understanding."

Doctrine of the Lord 49

- "That by 'spirit' is meant the life of one who is regenerate, which is called spiritual life...Malachi 2:15..."

AR 565 [3]

- “That by ‘the seed of the woman’ are here meant those who are of the New Church, and are in the truths of its doctrine, may appear from the signification of ‘seed,’ in the following passages...Malachi 2:15...”

AE 768 [4]

- “In Malachi...2:15...‘Is there one that seeketh the seed of God?’ signifies that no one seeks Divine truth; evidently ‘the seed of God’ here signifies Divine truth; so ‘the born of God’ mean those who are regenerated by the Lord by means of Divine truth, and a life according thereto.”

Doctrine of the Lord 48 [5]

- “As man’s life varies according to his state, by ‘spirit’ is meant the varying affection of life in man. As...5. A life of various evil affections...Malachi 2:16...”

AC 6353 [8]

- *Malachi 2:16-17* is cited when the significance of violence covering one’s garment is explained. “...‘a man of violence’ denotes those who destroy the truths of faith and the goods of charity...”

Derived Doctrine

“Yet you say, ‘For what reason?’”

- This question carries with it a challenge. The people question the Lord’s reasoning for refusing their offerings. Their question suggests that they are being hurt or misunderstood by the Lord. Their question seems to carry a pretended acknowledgment and worship of the Lord. They maintain a pretense of obedience to Him while playing for the support and affection of the people.

“Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously...”

- The Lord is a true and faithful “witness” regarding testimony and evidence. As a witness, He sought to join them by love (*AC 4192*). As a witness, He sought to bring confirmation to their marriages. But now, the Lord bears witness or “certifies” that they have dealt treacherously with the holiness of innocence that was a gift from the Divine.

- A “wife,” in the positive sense, signifies the goods of truth. When she is dealt with treacherously, ravished, turned away, or divorced, it represents a perversion of goods and truths (*AC 8902 [5]*).
- *AC 255* explains the meaning of “wife of youth.” It refers to the remnant of the Ancient Church against which the Jewish Church acted treacherously (*AE 701 [29]*). In other words, Israel severed the conjunction and holiness of good and truth passed down to them from the days of the Most Ancient and Ancient Churches.

“...yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant.”

- She (affection) is your companion. “Companion” signifies, in the positive sense, the truth of love and charity toward the Lord and the neighbor. In the negative sense, it means the destruction of these acts of charity. See *AC 10490*. “Companion,” in our times, indicates someone we feel close to and with whom we are willing to share certain aspects of our inner world.
- A “wife by covenant” signifies a conjunction of the church and heaven with the Lord through His Divine Proceeding (Holy Spirit). This “covenant” plan of the Lord’s is an irrevocable marriage of good and truth. The ideas for the interpretation of the above are drawn from *AE 701 [10]* and *AC 10249*.

“But did He not make them one...”

- “One” signifies what is perfect, authentic, or genuine. “One” signifies the truth of faith, and “One” signifies doctrine. See *AC 1316* and *AE 374 [2]*.
- The Lord’s question draws us to a truth about what He offers us. He gives the best, the perfect, the genuine, and the complete doctrine of the truth of faith. His “One” plan or covenant is to save and lead us to the eternal life of heaven.

“...having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one?”

- “Remnant” or “remains” signify the truths stored up by the Lord in our interiors (*AC 5113 [8]*). *AE 724 [29]* adds that remains signify the truths and goods stored up with us by the Lord from infancy.
- “Spirit” has many important representations. We cannot cite all of them, but here are a few. “Spirit” signifies the mercy of the Lord (*AC 19*). “Spirit” signifies the Divine truth (*AC 24*). “Spirit” signifies the Divine Proceeding (*Divine Love and Wisdom 100*). “Spirit” signifies an internal dictate or influx of good and truth (*AC 573*).
- The point is that the “One” goal of our remains is to lead, inspire, and enlighten us in the ways of the Lord.
- Why the “One”? It is a complete plan of the Lord’s. The plan is not flawed, nor does it fall short in Divine effort.

“He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.”

- “Offspring” signify that which has birth from the marriage of good and truth and the marriage of the Lord with His church (*CL 121*). Therefore, the Lord is asking for spiritual accountability. He wants “godly” results. He wants unity of thought, genuine effort, a purity of doctrinal understanding, and a willingness to obey.
- Take heed. Be serious; be alert and ready to hear the Lord speak within your hearts.
- The command to remove treachery from our spirit is a reminder from the Lord for us to remove things that would hurt our spirit.
- Our caring for the wife of our youth may occur with the truths of the Lord’s Second Coming. For they carry on, and enlarge, the marriage of good and truth that was started from the very beginning of creation (infancy).

“For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce...”

- “Divorce” signifies good being rejected by truth. “Divorce” involves the acceptance of a discordant good. See *AE 768 [19]*. “Divorce” signifies the falsification of the Word whence the church separates from the Lord (*TCR 314*).
- “Hate” is not part of the Lord’s nature. It is a term projected onto the Lord when He opposes the evil. The true nature of the Lord’s “hatred” is captured in *AC 3605 [3]*. “...good does not even know what hatred is...In the internal sense [hatred attributed to Jehovah is actually] mercy, for the Divine is mercy; but when this flows in with a man who is in evil, and he runs into the penalty of evil, it then appears as hatred and because it so appears, in the sense of the letter it is likewise so called.”

“...for it [divorce] covers one’s garment with violence...”

- A “garment” (raiment) signifies truth clothing good (*AE 543 [14]*). A “garment” signifies the truths in the ultimate form (*AC 9372 [8]*). “Garments” signify truths “wherein is good.” (*AC 5954 [7]*)
- Spiritual divorce “covers” what was supposed to be useful and protective with a tainted garment of violence. The literal sense is twisted and used to prove anything the proprium wishes to justify.

“Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.”

- This is a repetition of what was said in verse 15. Please note that repetition is not for poetical effect. *AC 707* reminds us that repetition is used in the Word when both the will and understanding are involved in a prophecy.

"...says the Lord of hosts..."

- I call your attention to the repetition of this phrase throughout Malachi's prophecy.

Putting It All Together

Clever arguments have been contrived over the centuries against the ways of the Lord. His Word has been used to justify absurd things. Adultery is toned down with the "evidence" of David's shameful affair. Polygamy had its roots in the many wives of the Patriarchs. Slavery had its justification in the curse placed upon Ham that he would be in a lifetime of servitude to his brothers. I suppose there is nothing that can't be justified with the abuse of the literal sense of the Word.

So the Lord reviews and certifies the history of the "divorce" of the church from Him. He refuses to ignore the spirit of treachery and violence that covers the garment of the church. He reviews it all and declares "I hate divorce." In His mercy, He wants us to cease and desist from this practice of spiritual divorce. Why? Is it for His benefit? Obviously, that is not the case. His mercy wants us to stop hurting ourselves. He does not want one soul to choose Hell. He sounds the Divine alarm. "Take heed" are His words of care and concern.

He urges us to return to the remains from our youth. Remains are a wonderful collection of goods and truths that span our lifetime from birth to death. He has organized them into a "One." They are carefully stored up from our infancy. Hell knows not where they are. Hell can't violate them. So, with a prayerful attitude, we need to ask the Lord to touch our remains and to give us a right "Spirit" within our heart and mind.

Accountability follows a proper marriage of our youth. There must be godly offspring. Barrenness is not an acceptable goal of regeneration. Spiritual "fruits" must come before the Lord as a sign and token of our regeneration and gratitude for all the benefactions of our lives. These offerings will be accepted from our hands. The offerings of the "divorced" are not gifts of the hands that He accepts at the altar of worship. Nor is He impressed with the fakery of weeping and tears streaming from moroseness, self-pity, and self-love. He will welcome the "bitter" tears and weeping offered up by those who have a genuine concern over any deficiency sensed in the desired marriage of good and truth.

What of the "divorced"? "They have severed themselves from the church." (*P&P*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:14-16*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- In the Putting It All Together section, several examples were given to illustrate how the literal sense can prove whatever the mind desires to justify. What examples might you cite to illustrate this truth? Can you recall a time you used this method?
- Did you understand what the Writings said about the Lord not being capable of hating? Those being punished accuse the Lord of hatred and fail to see His mercy. As a parent, do you recall your children thinking you hated them when discipline was called for?
- Were you struck with the call to remember the bride of youth? Remains are often talked about in the church, but do you remember any class or article that helped you tap into this spiritual resource?
- The command to “Take heed to your spirit” is repeated. Did you sense that the repetition was there to instruct us about the work we need to do with our will and understanding?
- Have you ever thought about the “godly offspring” you can offer to the Lord? What offspring come to mind?

MALACHI 2:17

“You have wearied the Lord with your words; yet you say, ‘In what way have we wearied Him?’ In that you say, ‘Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them,’ or, ‘Where is the God of justice?’”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “...even by their calling evil good.”

Derived Doctrine

“You have wearied the Lord with your words...”

- “Weary” (labored) signifies to not see the door or access to truths that would lead to good (*AC 2385*). Also check the meaning of “weary” in *AC 3318*.

- “Words” refers to acting according to the word of the Lord (*AC 7406*). “Words” signify the primary truths that are to be remembered and done that representative worship may be instituted (*AC 10682*).
- What we get from this passage is that the priests and people “talked” about good and truth; they “talked” about the good of life; they “talked” about remembering and doing the things of the Lord. But their speeches were only words; they did not lead to action. Words in the understanding but not in the will “weary” the Lord.

“...yet you say, ‘In what way have we wearied Him?’”

- Is this question asked from a genuine sense of concern and inquiry, or is it a form of defiant rebellion and denial? Our answer comes in the next portion of this verse.

“In that you say, ‘Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them...’”

- How far from the truth is this reply? The Lord will not call evil good in His sight. The Lord will not delight in the ways of the evil.
- So why are the people saying these things to the Lord? Isn’t it the nature of the evil to call evil good and good evil? Therefore, we must come to the conclusion that they are projecting on to the Lord the thoughts which are in their hearts and minds.

“Where is the God of justice?”

- “Justice” signifies being endowed with the good of charity by which one can know what is true (*AC 615*).
- So were the priests challenging the good of charity from the Lord? Were they, in effect, telling Him that He didn’t know right from wrong? If this is reflective of their attitude, how sadly lost and misguided they were at this point. Is this a powerful example of how arrogance blinds one’s judgment and heart even against the Lord?

Putting It All Together

Hearing someone drone on and on, ad infinitum, about some technical point can be tiring or wearisome. We tire quickly if we can’t see some positive application coming out of the conversation. Our patience is limited because we are finite, time-and-space beings. The Lord is beyond time and space, and He has infinite patience. Why would the Word indicate to us that the Lord was wearied with the words of Israel?

The Writings give us a hint what “weary” signifies. The Lord saw the absence of basic and fundamental truths that would lead to good. “Weary,” in this context,

represents a loving concern that progress in spiritual growth had little chance of coming to fruition. He wanted less talk and more sincerity in finding truth in His Word.

Not only were the truths that lead to good absent, but the people's attitude was argumentative and combative. They picked away at the Lord. They challenged His motives. They accused Him and projected on Him things that were not true. Imagine announcing to the church that the Lord's judgment was faulty in that He did not know right from wrong. They accused Him of countenancing the evil and calling them good. Preaching that the Lord delights in evil must have been a wearisome thing to listen to. Who wants to hear these words? And yet, if we reflect for a moment, we still hear such things being said about the Lord. He is blamed for calamities and absence in moments of physical need. The charge is that the Lord did not intervene appropriately to relieve the plight of His people. "Where is the God of Justice?" rings out like endless words from those whose hearts are convinced the Lord doesn't care. Why didn't He care and provide for those caught in horrific conditions such as the tsunami in Asia that caught many in a rushing tide of death? He cares. He doesn't forget. But the arrogant rail on and use words that contain little truth that leads to good. Such people will never see or believe that the Lord brought the horrific events to a positive end. They will never see the welcoming angels taking the hands of the newcomers to the spiritual world.

What did the Lord say to the church of accusation and denial? "They have severed themselves from the church, even by their calling evil good." (*P&P*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:17*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- We have the expression "talk is cheap." What do we mean when we say this? Are we not pointing to empty words with little value to them? Some talkers we describe as having "running mouths." What does that expression convey? They have an unending flow of words that seem to overwhelm us with their content. They talk constantly with few breaks and keep us out of the discussion. Does any of this seem to fit in with our text?
- What is your response to the charges leveled at the Lord about His lack of Justice? Have you ever kept your tongue quiet listening to someone accusing the Lord of indifference to the tragedies of the world?
- Projection is a human tendency. What we have within our hearts can come out when we deal with emotional situations. Should we do more examination

of our projections onto the Lord and the neighbor? Are we always right when we put onto someone else what our feelings tell us about them?

Chapter Three

MALACHI 3:1-3

“Behold, I will send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,” says the Lord of hosts. ‘But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like launders’ soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “The Lord will come into the world, and will teach the Word in its purity.”

AC 1925 [6]

- “In Malachi...3:1...it is here plainly evident that the Lord is signified by the ‘Angel,’ since He is called ‘the Angel of the covenant’ on account of His advent.”

AC 3142 [2]

- “In Malachi...3:1...to ‘sweep the way’ signifies to make themselves ready and prepare to receive truth. The subject treated therein is the advent of the Lord, for which they were to prepare themselves for receiving the truth of faith, and thereby the good of charity, and by this eternal salvation.”

AC 4973 [5]

- “The Divine truth, which the Lord was when in the world, and which thereafter proceeds from Him, that is, from the Divine good, is called also ‘the angel of the covenant,’ in Malachi...3:1.”

AC 6804 [3]

- “That the Divine Human is a ‘covenant,’ that is, conjunction itself, can be seen from many passages in the Word, as...Malachi...3:1...”

AC 9167 [2]

- “In Malachi...3:1...speaking of the coming of the Lord, and He is called ‘Lord’ from Divine good and ‘Angel’ from Divine truth...”

AC 10528

- “...that here ‘angel’ denotes the Divine of the Lord with him is plain in Malachi...3:1...that the Divine of the Lord is here meant by ‘angel’ is because John the Baptist represented the Lord in respect to the Word, even as Elijah did, and the Word is Divine truth which is from the Lord...And whereas in the supreme sense the Lord as to the Divine Human is the ‘Angel,’ therefore it is said, ‘the Lord shall come to His temple, even the Angel of the covenant;’ ‘the temple’ denotes His Divine Human...The reason why He is called both ‘Lord’ and ‘Angel,’ is that He is called ‘Lord’ from Divine good, and ‘Angel’ from Divine truth. As ‘Jehovah’ in the Word denotes the Lord Himself, therefore it is said, ‘I send Mine Angel, who shall prepare the way before Me.’ This is said by Jehovah.”

Doctrine of Life 60

- “The reason why the Law was called the ‘covenant,’ is that ‘covenant’ signifies conjunction; and it is therefore said of the Lord that...He is called...‘The messenger of the covenant’ (Malachi 3:1)...”

AR 191

- “By ‘temple,’ in the supreme sense, the Lord is signified as to the Divine Human, in particular as to Divine truth; but, in the representative sense, by ‘temple’ is signified the Lord’s church in heaven, and likewise the Lord’s church in the world. That ‘temple,’ in the supreme sense signifies the Lord as to the Divine Human, and in particular as to Divine truth, is evident from these passages...Malachi 3:1...”

AR 344

- “That the Lord’s Divine Human is meant by ‘an angel,’ in the highest sense, is manifest from these passages...Malachi 3:1...”

AR 529

- “By that law called ‘a covenant,’ conjunction is signified; the reason is, because covenants were entered into for the sake of love, of friendship, of consociation, and conjunction. Therefore...He is called...‘The angel of the covenant’ (Malachi 3:1).”

AR 882

- “The reason why the tabernacle, in the highest sense, means the Lord’s Divine Human, is because this is signified by ‘the temple,’ as may appear from... Malachi 3:1...and elsewhere; the same is meant by ‘the tabernacle.’ With this difference, that by ‘the temple’ is meant the Lord’s Divine Human as to the Divine truth or the Divine wisdom, and by ‘the tabernacle’ is meant the Lord’s Divine Human as to the Divine good or the Divine love. Hence it follows, that by ‘behold the tabernacle of God is with men,’ is meant that the Lord will now be present with men in His Divine Human.”

TCR 92

- “The Lord also called Himself ‘one sent by the Father,’ for the reason that sent and angel have the same meaning, angel meaning in the original one sent. For it is said...in Malachi 3:1...‘And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in.’”

AE 220 [3]

- “In Malachi...3:1...Here also ‘temple’ means the Lord’s Divine Human; for the Lord’s coming is here treated of, therefore ‘coming to His temple’ signifies to His Human.”

AE 701 [3]

- “In Malachi...3:1...the Lord’s coming is proclaimed. The Lord is called ‘Lord’ from Divine good, and ‘the angel of the covenant’ from Divine truth...From this it can be seen that ‘covenant,’ in reference to the Lord, means either Himself or the union of His Divine with the Human in Him, and in reference to those who are in heaven and in the church it means conjunction with Him through the Divine that proceeds from Him.”

AC 666

- “That a ‘covenant’ signifies nothing else than regeneration and the things pertaining to regeneration, is evident from various passages in the Word where the Lord Himself is called the ‘Covenant,’ because it is He alone who regenerates, and who is looked to by the regenerate man, and is the all in all of love and faith...” “In Malachi...3:1, 2...where the Lord is called the ‘Angel of the Covenant’...The Sabbath is called a ‘perpetual covenant’...because it signifies the Lord Himself, and the celestial man regenerated by Him.”

AC 9303

- "...in the original tongue 'angel' means one who is sent, which is the derivation of the word; and by 'sent' is signified proceeding, as can be seen from the...following passages...Malachi 3:1..."

TCR 285

- "...'covenant' signifies conjunction...Malachi 3:1..."

TCR 688

- "It is written in Malachi...3:1, 2...'he shall prepare the way before Me'...it is clear that John was the prophet sent to make ready the way of Jehovah God, who should descend into the world and accomplish redemption; and that he made ready that way by baptism, and by announcing the coming of the Lord; and that without such preparation all on earth would have been smitten with a curse and would have perished."

AE 242 [9]

- "In Malachi...3:1-3...these things are said of the Lord's coming. It is said that Jehovah is to send a messenger (an angel) who will prepare the way before Him; and the messenger (angel) meant is John the Baptist, as is known. 'Before Me,' or before Jehovah, means before the Lord's Divine Itself; 'the temple to which He is to come' means His Divine Human; that is also called 'the messenger (angel) of the covenant,' because through it there is a conjunction of men and angels with the Divine Itself, for covenant means conjunction. 'The silver that He shall sit refining and purifying' means truth from good; 'the sons of Levi' mean all those who are in the good of charity and in the truths of faith therefrom; it is therefore said, 'He shall purge them as gold and silver.' This is because 'gold' signifies good, and 'silver' the truth therefrom. 'Bringing to Jehovah an offering in righteousness' means worship of the Lord from the good of charity...Therefore 'to bring an offering in righteousness' signifies worship from the good of love."

AC 8159 [2]

- "The temptations of those who were of the spiritual church, which they were to undergo after the Lord came into the world, and could then from the Divine Human fight for them against the hells, are meant by these words in Malachi...3:1-4...clearly speaking of the Lord's coming; 'the sons of Levi' here denote those who are of the spiritual church, for by 'Levi' is signified charity or spiritual good...'the refiner's fire' is temptation, whereby is effected

purification, which is here meant by 'purifying and refining them as gold and silver;...'”

AR 357

- “That the tribe of Levi signifies the love of truth, which is the essential love from which the church is a church, and thence intelligence, may appear from these passages...Malachi 3:1, 3...”

AE 414

- “‘And who is able to stand?’ signifies, who shall sustain and live?...the evil... come not only into tremors from fear, but also into torments from interior conflict, consequently unless they flee away and cast themselves down they cannot live, for from fear and torment death as it were befalls them, for the presence of the Divine brings death to the evil as it brings life to the good. From this their state it is then said, ‘Who is able to stand?’ As...in Malachi... 3:2...”

AE 444 [8]

- “In Malachi...3:1-4...‘the sons of Levi’ here mean all who are in the good of charity, and thence in the good of faith. This treats of the Lord who was to come; his Divine Human is what is meant by ‘His temple’ to which Jehovah the Lord was to come; that He will purify those who are in the good of charity, and thence in the good of faith, is meant by ‘He shall purify and purge the sons of Levi.’ Evidently the sons of Levi are not meant, for it is said that ‘He shall then purify and purge them’...”

AC 3875 [4]

- “They who are in spiritual love are...called the ‘sons of Levi,’ as in Malachi... 3:2, 3...”

Derived Doctrine

With more than twenty-five direct quotes, you would imagine that there would be no need for derived doctrine. This is true. We have a wonderful array of passages explaining the spiritual sense of *Malachi 3:1-3*. As I look over all of the passages, I find only one correspondence that needs to be expanded in our resources. That is the correspondence of “soap.”

- “Soap” is described in *AE 475 [11]*: “...if one attempts to purify himself by his own efforts, although by means of truths and goods that are or that appear to be genuine, he will yet lead himself into falsities; ‘to wash oneself’ means to

purify oneself; 'waters of snow' mean truths that are or that appear to be genuine; **'soap' means the good from which they come...**

- *Jeremiah 2:22* also refers to soap: "For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap, yet your iniquity is marked before Me," says the Lord God."
- From these sources, we note that "soap" signifies spiritual washing that uses good from truth to remove falsities. But it is not a thorough washing process because it is done apart from the Lord.

Putting It All Together

Just imagine for the moment that you are living during the time of Malachi's prophecy. You have survived a period of brutal captivity, and you are now trying to make a new life for yourself and your family in Israel. Your love for the Lord is sincere. You attend services regularly. But you feel weighted down with what is going on in the temple. The priests and elders have overlaid the Word of the Lord with so many traditions it's hard to feel uplifted. It's hard to comply with the confusing rituals, rites, and regulations of the priesthood. In fact, your feeling is that worship is more for the priests and their comfort than it is to preach the good and truth of the Lord. Things are going on in the temple that look and sound like idolatry. Divorce and marriage to foreign wives is occurring all around you, and few seem worried. You wonder, "What happened to the days when we were unified in our opposition to certain disorders?"

A messenger named Malachi appears and points to things you sensed and worried about. He talks of the demise of the church and its priesthood. He sounds a warning to change and foster a spirit of obedience. Then, half-way through his oracle, he mentions the coming of the Messiah. Oh, how you have longed for that day!

Certain of his words just burn within your heart. "I am sending My messenger to prepare the way. He will suddenly appear in the temple." The messenger announces that there will be delight and joy at His arrival. He is coming. "Who will endure the day of His coming and who can stand when He appears?"

The messenger tells all that the Messiah will come and correct the errors of the temple. He will educate all in the truths of the Law. This will mean being washed. It will mean purification of the gold and silver and the sons of Levi. All of this will happen, he says, so that an offering of righteousness may be made to the Lord.

Now let's bring ourselves to the present again. We, as members of the New Church, need to hold and celebrate our sense of joy at the Lord's second coming. He has promised us a new conjunction. That conjunction is called a holy "perpetual covenant" of the Lord. The opening of the Word with its spiritual sense is a joy and a hope for our church. Evil will not be able to endure what is opened by the Lord. Hell trembles and quakes and falls down at the mention of the Lord's name. "Who can

endure the day of His coming and stand when He appears?" Not the evil. But His promise is that the good will be uplifted and encouraged. Why will the Lord enter into a covenant with His New Church? He does so for the sake of love, of friendship, of consolation and conjunction (*AR 529*).

Traditions have value. Habits have value. But if either of these overlay the Word of the Lord and make His Word of no importance, then we need to wash with the soap of good from truth. If issues of disorder are so blurred that we feel alone and out of step with the popular opinions of the world, we need to side with the truth of the Lord. Searching His Word is essential. Giving the Lord our obedience is a must. Nothing in this world will impede the coming of the Lord's New Church. Can we be inspired with the words of the Messenger? Can we make the worship of our heart "an offering in righteousness"?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:1-3*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Did the "Pulling It all Together" section "pump you up"? It did it for me. We often carry around with us a feeling of smallness. What impact can we have on the world? When will the New Church really come to fruition? On and on we go with a sense of our frailty. It's time to think positively. Where are you in this message? To be small in the hands of the Lord is good. Look at some of the most momentous moments in the Word. The Lord selected a few to win over the larger evil. With God, all things are possible. He can save by many or by few.
- Did you catch the "who can stand" message? Hell can't stand. Those who follow the Lord will stand before Him with a loyalty and hope for eternity.
- Spiritual washing is important. Our lesson reminds us that if we try to do it alone, we can use lye and lots of scrubbing, but it will be of no use unless the Lord is involved.
- There are so many points to be discussed in this section. I will trust that you will have lots to talk about and discuss. Let your reflection carry you into the realm of the spiritual world where angels behold the face of our Father and where they love to share the spiritual sense of the Word.

MALACHI 3:4

"Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old, as in former years."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “The church, doctrine and worship will then be as they had been among the ancients.”

AC 8159 [2]

- In Malachi 3:4 “...‘the meat-offering which they shall bring to Jehovah’ is faith and charity; ‘the days of eternity’ and ‘the former years’ denote the ancient churches, and the states of worship of the Lord at that time.”

AC 2906 [6]

- In Malachi 3:4 “...where the advent of the Lord is treated of...the ‘days of an age’ denote the Most Ancient Church; ‘ancient years,’ the Ancient Church; the ‘offering of Judah,’ worship from celestial love; and the ‘offering of Jerusalem,’ worship from spiritual love; that Judah is not meant here, nor Jerusalem, is plain.”

AC 3881 [8]

- “In Malachi...3:4...where the subject treated of is manifestly the Lord’s advent. It is known that the meat-offering of Judah and Jerusalem was not then pleasant; but that worship from love was pleasant, which is the ‘meat-offering of Judah;’ and worship from faith derived from love, which is the ‘meat-offering of Jerusalem.”

AC 6280 [7]

- “In Malachi...3:4...the subject treated of is His coming; the ‘offering of Judah and Jerusalem being then sweet to Jehovah’ signifies that worship from love and faith in Him will then be sweet. That by ‘Judah’ here is not meant Judah, nor by ‘Jerusalem’ Jerusalem, is clearly evident; for neither then nor afterward was the offering of Judah and Jerusalem sweet. That the ‘days of eternity’ are the states of the Most Ancient Church, which was celestial; and that the ‘former years’ are the states of the Ancient Church, which was spiritual...”

AR 350

- “That by ‘Judah’...is signified the celestial kingdom and its love, which is love to the Lord, is evident from these passages...” *Malachi 3:1-4* is cited.

AE 433 [12]

- “In Malachi...3:4...‘The offering of Judah and Jerusalem shall be agreeable unto Jehovah’ signifies that then there will be acceptable worship from the good of love to the Lord; ‘the offering of Judah’ signifying such worship; it is evident that the worship of the Jewish nation and of Jerusalem was not acceptable, for they did not acknowledge the Lord, but utterly rejected Him; ‘according to the days of an age, and according to former years,’ signifies according to the worship in the ancient churches; the Most Ancient, that was before the flood, and was in love to the Lord, is signified by ‘the days of an age,’ or of eternity, and the Ancient Church, that was after the flood, and was a spiritual church, is signified by ‘former years.’”

AC 349 [2]

- “That by ‘offerings’ in general is meant worship, is evident in the Prophets throughout, as in Malachi...3:2, 3, 4...An ‘offering in righteousness’ is an internal offering, which the ‘sons of Levi,’ that is holy worshipers, will offer. The ‘days of eternity,’ signify the Most Ancient Church, and the ‘ancient years,’ the Ancient Church.”

Doctrine of the Lord 64

- This is a long number regarding the meaning of “Jerusalem.” This number cites *Malachi 3:1, 4* as a representative example as to why “Jerusalem” means the church in respect to worship and as to doctrine. This number notes that “the Lord was present in Jerusalem, and taught in its temple, and afterwards glorified His Human there.”

AR 880

- This number cites *Malachi 3:2, 4* along with many other passages from the prophets regarding the meaning of “Jerusalem.” The number is long and does not give scriptural exposition of passages from *Malachi*, so it has not been quoted here.

Brief Exposition 100

- This passage cites *Malachi 3:1, 4* regarding the meaning of “Jerusalem.” The number is quite long and doesn’t give us the spiritual exposition of these verses from *Malachi*.

TCR 782

- The meaning of “Jerusalem” is treated of in a lengthy series of sections. *Malachi 3:1, 4* is cited in the context of verifying the meaning of “Jerusalem” as stated in the literal sense.

AC 9293 [6]

- “In Malachi...3:3, 4...by ‘a gift offered to Jehovah’ is signified the good of love and of faith, therefore it is said that ‘they may bring to Jehovah a gift in righteousness,’ and that ‘then it will be sweet to Jehovah’...‘Judah’ denotes the good of celestial love, thus those who are in this good...”

AC 10248 [10]

- “...‘according to the days of the generation of ages’ denotes according to the states of love and faith in the Ancient Church.” *Malachi 3:4* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

There is no need for us to use derived doctrine. Our lessons from the Writings are quite full and clear.

Putting It All Together

Have you noticed we are no longer involved in a dialogue between the Lord and the priests? There is instead a positive message about the Lord’s advent and what positive spiritual things will come to His church. The Lord is speaking words of truth and certainty. Debate and insolence have no part in this discourse. Isn’t it much more fulfilling to listen to what the Lord’s advent will do for the church?

There will be a return to worship services filled with love and wisdom. They will be the culmination of the love and wisdom that filled the Most Ancient Church and the Ancient Church. What does that mean? The Most Ancient Church worshiped the Lord in the Divine Human. He walked among them, giving them inspiration drawn from His Celestial Love. He walked and talked with them. If they had any questions, He spoke to them directly. They saw the Lord in some angelic form. He was not invisible to them.

The Ancient Church saw the Lord in the Divine Representatives of the world. The trees, the mountains, the brooks, the streams, and the oceans—all of nature—opened their minds to see the wisdom of the Lord. And the Ancient Church loved that wisdom. The Lord was not invisible to them. He was visible through Divine Representatives.

The Ancient Churches, in their prime, did not have their worship of the Lord overlaid with self-serving rules. Profit and self-love were not a hindrance to worship. The offerings were meal-offerings of righteousness. Both churches saw the Lord. He was not invisible. The promise of the New Church carries with it the message that what was “invisible” will be made “visible” again. Like the Ancients, we will see the Lord as the Divine Human, and there will be an everlasting conjunction of life and peace with Him.

Can you feel the uplifting words of the messenger sent by the Lord? Probably, those who heard it in the days of Malachi were anxious. “When, O Lord, will this happen? We have waited many, many years. Why do You tarry? Come quickly with cleansing of the temple and our souls!”

The answer as given in the Word is: “Wait patiently for the Lord.” “Be thou strong and courageous.” It will happen in the fullness of times. We need to trust and rely on the Lord as to the fulfillment of the promise. In the meantime, we can read His Word and trust in the providential leading of His wisdom. Why? Because the words and promises, like those of Malachi and the Writings, tell us:

“The church, doctrine and worship will then be as they had been among the ancients.” (*P&P*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:4*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Does it feel good to be away from the negative debate between the people and the Lord?
- There is a comfort when the Lord is in charge. He steadies the course. He gives a view from eternity. But for some reason, we, at times, resist giving in to His providence. Why? Is it just our proprium, or is it a fear of letting go? We do get comfortable with our ways. Change is not easy for us.
- Have you ever had a celestial experience? What is meant by that is: have you ever “sensed” that something was right or wrong? You couldn’t speak words to explain why you felt this or that. It just was a powerful feeling. Not all of these experiences are celestial, but when we look back and see that one of these feelings was correct, we rejoice in the fact that we listened.
- Have you ever looked at the magnificent sunset or a view from the mountain and felt the presence of the Lord? Do you, in the quietness of a walk through nature, think about the correspondence of things? If you do, what insights did you get? If you don’t, what keeps you from trying to do so?

- Do you ask the Lord to hurry with His New Church? Do you find your heart aching for its arrival?
- In the fullness of times, the Lord says, it will happen. Maybe we need to concentrate on the job of preparing the way of the Lord.
- The passage from *Malachi* has a message we might reflect on: “Then the offering...will be pleasant to the Lord...” I like the wording. It doesn’t emphasize the offering being pleasant for us, or for other people. It will be **“pleasant to the Lord.”**

MALACHI 3:5-6

“And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, against adulterers, against perjurers, against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, and against those who turn away an alien—because they do not fear Me,” says the Lord of hosts. ‘For I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.’”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “The Lord will then execute judgment upon all who have adulterated and destroyed the truths of the church.”

AC 4844 [5-9]

- “...by ‘widows’ in the good sense are signified those who are in truth without good, but still desire to be led by good...by the ‘sojourner’ are signified those who wish to be instructed in the truths of faith...by the ‘orphan’ are signified those who are in good without truth and desire to be led to good by means of truth...” *Malachi 3:5* is cited.

AC 7297

- “By ‘sorcerers’ and ‘enchantments,’ when mentioned in the Word, is signified the art of presenting falsities so that they appear as truths, and of presenting truths so they appear as falsities, which is especially done by means of fallacies...” *Malachi 3:5* is cited.

AR 764

- “By ‘a widow’ in the Word is meant one who is without protection, for by ‘a widow’ in the spiritual sense is signified one who is in good and not in truth. For by ‘a man’ is signified truth, and by ‘his wife,’ good; hence by ‘a widow,’

good without truth is signified, and good without truth is without protection; for truth protects good..." *Malachi 3:5* is cited.

AE 608 [7]

- "As the ancients were allowed to swear by Jehovah God, it follows that it was an enormous evil to swear falsely or to swear to a lie, as is evident from these passages. In *Malachi...3:5...*"

AE 695 [20]

- "In *Malachi...3:5...*Hired servants were forbidden to eat of the Passover and of things sanctified because they represented those that are natural and not spiritual, and the spiritual are of the church, but not so the natural... Nevertheless, as those signified by 'hired servants' still do good, although not from a spiritual affection but from a natural affection, which is obedience, and then think of heaven as a reward, they are mentioned with the 'poor,' the 'needy,' the 'sojourners,' 'the fatherless,' and 'the widows,' because they are in spiritual poverty; for genuine truths are obscure to them, because light from heaven does not flow in through their spiritual man into the natural..."

Derived Doctrine

"And I will come near you for judgment..."

- To come "near" signifies the perpetual conjunction" of love (*AC 5911*). Why would the Lord draw "near us" with His love when judgment takes place? *AC 8159 [3]* gives us a powerful answer: "the hells fight against man, and the Lord [fights] for man; to every falsity the hells inject, there is an answer from the Divine." So judgment requires that the Lord be perpetually "near us" to keep all things balanced. The good and the evil will get a fair hearing in the time of judgment because love brings a fair resolution to each judgment.
- *AC 2335* describes "judgment" as twofold. "The faithful are judged from good, but the unfaithful from truth." "The Lord never judges any one except from good...Mercy itself and good itself can never condemn any one; but it is the man who condemns himself, because he rejects good."

"...I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, against adulterers, against perjurers..."

- "Swift"ness" in the Word has reference "to intelligence, signifying the affection of truth." (*AE 281 [7]*)
- "Swift"ness," in the negative sense, refers to "their avidity for reasoning against truths and destroying them, and pleasure in it...'swift'ness' and 'haste' in the Word signify being stirred by affection and lust..." (*AE 281 [10]*)

- “Sorcerers” signify the abuse of divine order. They represent the perversion of law by practicing cunning and deceit (*AC 7296*).
- “Adulterers” signify those who deny the Lord and profane the Word (*Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures 67*).
- “Perjurers” (liars) signify those who “scrutinize those things which are called goods and truths...which nevertheless are evils and falsities.” (*AR 79*) In other words, liars give the impression that they seek good and truth, but their lives are otherwise—they love falsity and evil.

“Against those who exploit wage earners...”

- We have no direct teaching on the meaning of these words. But a story in the Word comes to mind that might illustrate the issue. Was Laban’s deceit of Jacob an example of the misuse of a wage earner? Laban used Jacob’s love for Rachel to trick him into marrying Leah before winning the hand of Rachel. Do the hells trick people into believing they can win, or merit, heaven through “good works” apart from repentance and regeneration? What would you call using the “good intentions” of others for personal gain? Isn’t this a form of exploiting “wage earners”?
- This now brings us to our consideration of the Lord as the swift “witness.” The Lord, in the Word, is called “the faithful and true witness.” “Witness” signifies the Lord in respect to the Divine truth and the church (*AE 228*). The Lord will not twist or misuse truth. He is able to see clearly intentions, motives, and affections. What might appear to us to be a paradox, an oxymoron, a black hole, an unexplainable mystery, is to the Lord clear, lucid, and knowable. He is the light of heaven. There is no darkness in His presence. He views the totality of the universe. Nothing escapes His notice. This true and faithful witness of heaven will show us, from beginning to end, the motives, intentions, and desires of our hearts. There is no misreading or projection in the Lord’s report to us of the core of our feelings and choices. Our “ruling loves” will unfold before Him with accuracy and impartiality. Is this a scary thought? Or is it a truth that brings a sense of comfort? Maybe we feel a sense of both fear and comfort.

“...widows and orphans, and against those who turn away an alien—because they do not fear Me...”

- “Widows and orphans” signify those who are in good and not truth and desire to be instructed in the truths of faith. What then is the meaning of turning away an alien, foreigner, or stranger? *AC 10287* has sixteen subsections dedicated to explaining why the Lord warned Israel to keep strangers out of the church, their homes, their lives and marriages. Strangers (foreigners) signified the evils of falsity and profanations of all kinds. Why then would the Lord come swiftly in judgment against Israel for turning aliens away? Weren’t they doing what He had told them to do?

- As a representative church of the Lord, what was to be Israel's use in the world? Isolationism? Jonah believed he was not to preach repentance to Nineveh. What happened to him? When he finally did go to those strangers of Nineveh, what happened to them upon hearing the Word of the Lord? Repentance occurred in spite of Jonah's dislike of his mission. The point here is that we need a goal of protection and profession to all who desire instruction. We need to protect against and shun the falsities of profanation from aliens, **and** we need to spread the Word of the Lord to areas of alien falsity and profanation. Israel wanted exclusivity of the Word. They had a nationalistic pride that they were the favored people of the Lord. Aliens, strangers, and foreigners were anathema to them. Love (fear) of the Lord goes beyond a favored nation. The New Church will be inclusive. It is to become the crown of all churches.

"...says the Lord of hosts."

- Please note the repetition of this phrase. Why? Because it signifies the Lord's zeal to save all and to redeem His church.

"For I am the Lord, I do not change..."

- Is there any question about the spiritual meaning of these words? The Lord is the same today as He was in the past and as He will be in the future. He does not have alternating states. His nature is not capricious. He doesn't say one thing but mean another thing. As finite beings, this is hard for us to grasp in its totality because of our fickle nature. But here are the words of the Lord: "I am the Lord, I do not change..."

"...therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob."

- "Consumed" signifies the last time of the church when there is no longer any good left (*AC 1857*).
- "Sons" signify truths as they were in the Ancient Church, which had genuine truths (*AE 724 [11]*).
- "Jacob" signifies various things. In the beginning, Jacob represented the Lord's natural as to truth, in the progress, the Lord's natural as to the good of truth, and in the end the Lord as to good (*AC 4538*). Jacob represents the doctrine of the church (*AR 137*). In essence, the Lord is announcing that in spite of what had been done to the church by evil and falsity, the "remnant" of good and truth was still alive and present because of Him.

Putting It All Together

The Lord's prophecy informed Israel of a coming judgment. What issues were significant enough to have the Lord send Malachi as His angel messenger?

Our text focuses the reader's attention on sorcerers, adulterers, perjurers, exploiters, those who ignored widows and orphans and extended harsh treatment to aliens (strangers). In reality, the Lord was exposing the lack of respect for His Word and the spiritual effects it was having on the minds and hearts of the people. Israel just wasn't giving the Word serious attention. They were not zealously studying the Word and were not feeding the hungry souls with eternal truths.

How vital is the Word for us? Let's look at two passages that answer the question with simplicity and directness:

- *AC 1361* states that the Word "was established...that heaven might be joined in some measure to the earth."
- *AC 1775* states that "it has been necessary that of the Lord's Divine Providence some revelation should come into existence, for a revelation or Word is the general recipient vessel of spiritual and celestial things, **thus conjoining heaven and earth;** and that **without it they would have been disjoined, and the human race would have perished.** And besides it is necessary that there should be heavenly truths somewhere, by which man may be instructed, **because he was born for heavenly things, and, after the life of the body, ought to come among those who are heavenly; for the truths of faith are the laws of order in the kingdom in which he is to live forever.**" (*emphasis added*)

How much of an idea do we have regarding the amazing power of the Word and what our lives would be like without the Word? The connection of heaven and earth, through the Word, is essential. Without the Word, "disjunction" would occur. Our spiritual life is vitally tied to the Word. We were born for heavenly things. That being a truth from the Lord is quite a powerful point. We must have the Word to survive spiritually.

So let's look at and reflect on the examples given by Malachi and question the ways we need to heed the words of the Lord and amend our lives. Here is the list:

- Sorcery: the clever art of presenting falsities so they appear as truths.
- Adultery: unfaithfulness to the good and truth of the Word.
- Perjury: giving lip service to the Word with the mouth but denying, within the heart, that the Word reigns.
- Exploiting: using the Word for one's own ends to justify falsity.
- Widows: the affection longs to be instructed in the truths of faith. The affection of the widow lacks its helpmate—truth.
- Orphans: innocence is unable to be cared for by father (truths) and mother (affections).
- Strangers or aliens: carrying the Word to the external church (outsiders) for those who lack a spiritual conjunction but long for it.

- Lack of fear of the Lord: Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Loving the Lord and not wishing to do anything that would harm Him is essential.

We need to reverently hold the Word in great esteem; searching it for the connections between heaven and earth; studying it because we know that this is what we will read to eternity; the Word has the laws of order that will make up our eternity. Ignoring the Word is serious. The rippled effect of spiritual ignorance is incalculable.

The love the Lord has for us will press to touch us. The Word is for the amendment of our mind and heart. The Word is for the building up of His Church. If we remain aloof and violate good and truth, these words indicate what will happen to those of a hard heart:

“The Lord will then execute judgment upon all who have adulterated and destroyed the truths of the church.” (*P&P*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:5-6*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you evaluate what your loyalty is to the Word?
- Next, can you estimate how well you are dealing with sorcery?
- How about the adulteration of the Word?
- Have you experienced events in which perjury of the Word might have occurred?
- Are you able to identify with the widow or orphan state?
- Can you think of a time when you exploited the “wage earner” of the mind?
- What is your view or feeling about the stranger in the external church?
- The Word teaches that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Fear means love, in this context. Do you have a healthy fear of the Lord? An unhealthy fear is not what the Lord seeks. He wants us loving Him so much that we don’t want to do anything that would do harm to Him and His Word. Is your love healthy or unhealthy?
- Use your imagination; what kind of reception do you think Malachi got from the people when he spoke these words of judgment? He was the last of the 12 Minor Prophets. The people had heard things like this from other prophets. Do you think they might have built up a feeling of immunity to the judgment warnings?

- The feeling of spiritual immunity is a kind of “numbing out” state. We hear the words, we sing the words, we speak the words, but not much is going on in our affections. What is the best way to break out of the immunity state?

MALACHI 3:7

“Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord of hosts. But you said, ‘In what way shall we return?’”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “They have done this from the beginning, and do not desist from it...”

Derived Doctrine

“Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them.”

- Before we look at derived doctrine, let’s review some of the ways Israel went away from the Lord’s ordinances:
 - The worship of the golden calf.
 - Israel’s bitter complaining about the lack of water.
 - Their complaints about the manna and quail.
 - Their wish to go back to Egypt.
 - The rebellious nature of their hearts, as reflected by the Lord calling Israel a stiff-necked people.
 - The desire to have a king like all other nations, a desire that showed they had rejected the Lord as their King.
 - Every man doing that which was right in his own eyes.
 - The mistakes of Saul and David.
- “Days” signify the successive state of regeneration (*AC 6*).
- “Fathers” in this instance seem to reflect that which is negative. Therefore, it appears that the spiritual sense is drawing our attention to the rebellious nature of inherited **tendencies** toward evils and falsities.
- “Ordinances” are all things of the Word in general such as precepts, statutes, and laws that provide a framework for order (*AC 3382*). Any departure from the commands and “ordinances” of the Word “turns the Word into a wilderness.” (*AC 3900*)

“Return to Me, and I will return to you...”

- Let’s consider the meaning of this verse in the context of an important universal law: There is a “**universal law** that **influx** adjusts itself according to **efflux**, and if efflux is checked influx is checked. Through the internal man there is an influx of good and truth from the Lord, and through the external there must be efflux, namely into the life...in the exercise of charity. **When there is this efflux then there is continual influx from heaven...through heaven from the Lord**; whereas if there is no efflux, but **resistance** in the external or natural man...it follows from the universal law...that the **influx adjusts itself to the efflux**, consequently [if] the influx of good draws back...influx is closed.” (*AC 5828, emphasis added*)

“...says the Lord of hosts.”

- Is there a need to restate the meaning of this phrase? We have given the meaning often. Check your memory regarding the intent of the Lord.

“But you said, ‘In what way shall we return?’”

- We are **back to the rebuttals** of the people of Israel. Do the questions signal a return to the negative doubt state? What part of “Return to Me” do they not understand? It is almost as if they felt put off by the Lord’s audacity to question their loyalty to Him and their worship of Him.
- Spiritual affirmativeness (sanity) would have inspired a different attitude; the people would have asked the Lord to show them how they needed to change.

Putting It All Together

The long tradition of being rebellious and stiff-necked had not worked well for Israel. Their ignoring of the Lord’s ordinances carried the Word into a wilderness state. Now it was time to change their ways. Israel needed to give up on their “traditions” and focus on the ways of the Lord.

To help Israel find a new direction, the Lord offered a “universal law” as the framework for spiritual reformation. “Return to Me and I will return to you.” *AC 5828* gives us the words “influx” and “efflux.” Essentially, we are taught that influx is proportional to efflux. If the heart gives little to the Lord, then little comes into the heart. The Lord doesn’t limit our influx—we set the adjusting controls. “Return to Me and I will return to you” is an important spiritual “ordinance” to know and to love. Forget all of the other traditions we have followed from our “fathers.” Rebellious ways lead the Word into a wilderness state. Now it is time for new beginnings. *Isaiah 35:1* offers a picture of what the Lord’s influx can do for our wilderness states:

“The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them,

and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;
It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:7*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- When we discuss “inherited tendencies toward evil,” we must also be ready to talk about “inherited tendencies toward good.” Both are passed on to us by our fathers. The presence of the good tendencies helps us pull out of rebellious states. Do we spend enough time thinking of both, or do you think we spend too much time focusing on the negative tendencies?
- It seems prudent to have as a rule of thumb that we will not discuss the evil tendencies without also discussing the good tendencies. Do you think this might be a guideline the church could follow more often?
- Did you notice the return of the negative questions from Israel? Any reaction to the presumptuous arrogance of the people? How might they have asked positive questions?
- Please read *AC 5828* again. How many insights are you able to pull forth from this number? There are many. This is a great universal law to commit to memory.
- “Return to Me and I will return to you” is a positive message. We need to keep it positive because the hells will surely try to paint a negative picture of the process.
- Israel didn’t listen to the invitation of the Lord, as we will see in the next verses. How can we learn from their resistance and adjust and change our directions?
- *P&P* records for us a sad summary: “They have done this from the beginning, and do not desist from it...” We need to commit ourselves to the rewriting of this spiritual legacy: “They did this from the beginning, **and now desist from it...**”

MALACHI 3:8-9

“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...nor do they desist from adulteration, therefore this will bring about their ruin."

Derived Doctrine

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me!"

- When we consider the meaning of the word "rob," we must carry with our thoughts the words "plunder," "steal," and "theft."
- "Rob" signifies priests who teach but do not lead to the life of good (*AC 10794*). "Rob" signifies the profanation of the church and of worship (*AE 325 [10]*). "Rob" signifies the evil of life validated by the twisting of doctrine in the church (*AE 410 [8]*).
- Is it right that "man" robs the Divine? We know the answer to this question.
- "Yet you have robbed Me!" The priesthood and the church taught for doctrine the commandments of people and made the Word of no importance. This was a serious theft of spiritual goods. The blind were leading the blind, and both were falling into the pits of ignorance.

"But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?'"

- *Isaiah 55:8-9* reminds us of our limitations: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts higher than your thoughts.'"
- Given this as a truth, why couldn't Israel humble itself to ask for forgiveness and the leadership to correct their failings? Apparently, their robberies were not a concern to them and they intended to follow their own prudence.

"In tithes and offerings."

- "Tithes" signify "the goods and truths which are stored up by the Lord in man's interiors, and which goods are called 'remains'..." (*AC 3740*)
- "Offerings" signify worship grounded in charity (*AC 350*).

"You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation."

- The Lord is not the one putting a curse on Israel. The curse occurs when the sensuous yearnings of this world avert themselves from the celestial (*AC 245*). To be "cursed with a curse" seems to signify what is presented in *AC 378*, where a curse is defined as referring to schisms. Being cursed with a

curse seems to speak of a schism within a schism working to turn away from the order of the Lord.

- “Even this whole nation” denotes the enormity of the spiritual problem.

Putting It All Together

The meaning of this passage is clear. The church and its priesthood were not concerned about the good and truth of the Word. Nor were they concerned about the souls of the people. Status and man-made rules were of greater importance to them. The New Testament shows us that the Lord saw the same condition in the Scribes and Pharisees. He remarked how they loved to be seen. He noticed how they sought to take the higher seats in church and at public events. They made every effort to distance themselves from the laity. Learned in the laws, they used their knowledge to court and favor their own riches. They feigned piety with mourning, sackcloth, and ashes. But their hearts were not on repentance and obedience. Robbery, fraud, stealing, and plunder came from their ministrations in the sanctuary of the Lord.

When the Lord called these things to the attention of Israel, the people acted as if they did not know what He was referring to. The schisms of disunity brought curse upon curse to the people and the church. Is it any wonder that the collective conscience of the people saw no wrong in what they were doing? The words “How have we robbed You?” are symptomatic of the deeper problems within.

The answer from the Lord was couched in the words of “tithes and offerings.” Tithes signify remains. These forms of innocence, guarded and protected by the Lord, were not being appreciated nor encouraged to come into worship and charity. Deceit and hatred abounded, filling the minds of the people so that there was no “room for the Lord” in the goods and truths of the offerings.

P&P sums up the results of their opposition with these words: They did not “desist from adulteration; therefore this will bring about their ruin.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:8-9*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do we have customs and man-made rules in the church today that seem to supersede the Word?
- Is there the influence of fame, fortune, and prestige present in the church?

- If you are thinking of the church as a building, try expanding your idea to that which we carry around with us all the time. This internal church has a priest and values that influence our thinking and choices. Does this give us a different perspective on these questions?
- Did the passage about being cursed with a curse (schism upon schism) bring any examples of real-life situations to mind?

MALACHI 3:10-12

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,’ says the Lord of hosts; ‘and all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “If they had lived according to the statutes, they would have been in the good of the church.”

AC 576 [3]

- “Hence it appears also that ‘tenths’ represent remains. And so in Malachi... 3:10...‘that there may be booty in My house,’ signifies remains in the internal man, which are compared to ‘booty,’ because they are insinuated as by stealth among so many evils and falsities; and it is by these remains that all blessing comes. That all man’s charity comes by the remains which are in the internal man, was also represented in the Jewish Church by this statue: that when they had made an end of tithing all the tithes, they should give to the Levite, to the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow...”

AC 680 [5]

- “...in Malachi...3:10...‘tithes’ denote remains.”

AC 9408 [3]

- *Malachi 3:10* is cited with this explanation: ‘In these passages, and in many others, by ‘the heavens’ are signified the angelic heavens; and as the Lord’s heaven on earth is the church, by ‘heaven’ is also signified the church...’

AR 101

- “As ‘ten’ signify what is full, they also signify much and many...for by this was signified that thus all they had was from Jehovah, and was sanctified (see Malachi 3:10).”

AE 675 [19]

- “That the ‘tenth’ signified a blessing in all things, thus that every thing was holy and blessed, is evident in Malachi...3:10...‘To open the windows and pour out a blessing’ signifies the inflowing Divine from which is intelligence and life eternal; the like as is signified by ‘rain’...and this also is properly meant by the ‘blessings’ that would be given if the tithes were brought; so ‘tithes’ here signify that every thing was thus blest.”

AC 5113 [9]

- “In Malachi...3:11...the ‘vine’ denotes the intellectual part; the vine is said ‘not to be bereaved’ when the intellectual part is not deprived of the truths and goods of faith; on the other hand, it is said to be ‘empty’ when there are falsities therein and consequent evils...”

AC 566 [4]

- “In Malachi...3:11, 12...where ‘land’ denotes the containant, and therefore it plainly denotes man, who is called ‘land’ when ‘ground’ denotes the church, or doctrine.”

AC 9325 [5]

- “In Malachi...3:11, 12...by ‘the vine in the field not miscarrying’ is signified that the truths and goods of faith with those who are in the church shall proceed in their order; for ‘the vine’ denotes the truth and good of the spiritual church...and ‘the field’ denotes the church...‘A well-pleasing land’ denotes a church that is pleasing to the Lord; for everyone within the church who has been regenerated through the truth and good is a church; which shows what is meant by ‘ye shall be a well-pleasing land.’”

AE 304 [39]

- “In Malachi...3:11, 12...These things are said of those with whom is the church; and because ‘the fruit of the ground,’ and ‘the vine in the field,’ signify the goods and truths of the church (‘fruit’ goods, and ‘the vine’ its truths), therefore they are called ‘a land of good pleasure.’”

AC 1066 [2]

- “That by ‘earth’ or ‘land’ is signified man, may be seen in Malachi...3:12...”

AC 9334

- “A regenerate man is called ‘a land’...in Malachi...3:12...”

AR 285

- “...by ‘earth’ here and elsewhere is meant the Lord’s church in the heavens and on earth...It is important that it be shown from the Word that the earth signifies the church...this may be seen from the following passages...Malachi 3:1...”

Derived Doctrine

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in My house...”

- “Bring” signifies to be conjoined (AC 5543). “Bring” indicates some kind of introduction or offering (AC 5645).
- A “storehouse” signifies “the first state of the man who is being regenerated, or in whom truth is being conjoined with good...and in its storehouse called the memory, there are amassed the doctrinal things...” (AC 3316 [2]) A storehouse signifies things stored up in the memory (AE 427 [4]). AE 790 [5] relates that the spiritual mind has a storehouse from which it draws supplies.
- “Food” signifies spiritual and celestial nourishment, which is faith in the Lord (AC 680 [4]).
- “My house” signifies the Lord’s house (kingdom) in the ultimate of order (AC 3739).

“...and try Me now in this,’ says the Lord of hosts...”

- To “try” means to test or to make a trial. “Try” means to settle by a test so as to come to some conclusion. “Try Me now” seems to indicate that the Lord saw that the state of humanity was such that “now” (and not later) was the moment to take action.
- “...says the Lord of hosts” signifies the zeal of the Lord to save all people and the church.

“...If I will not open for you the windows of heaven...”

- “Windows” signifies the thorough investigation of truth (AE 282 [5]). AE 675 [19] teaches that “to open the windows of heaven” signifies the Divine inflowing from which comes intelligence and eternal life.

“...and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

- So that we may understand what “pour out” represents, we need to note the various kinds of “pouring out” mentioned in the literal sense. The Lord says He will “pour out” His Spirit; He promised to “pour out” water upon the dry desert; He promised to “pour out” broth for the hungry; He said He would “pour out” indignation on the evil; He said that He would “pour out” the anger of His people; He promised to “pour out” whoredom; for those who lived the life of evil, He promised to “pour out” His wrath. Now our text says that the Lord will “pour out” “such **blessing**.”
- “Blessing” signifies a wish for happiness and success (*AC 3185*). A “blessing” signifies to enrich with spiritual and celestial good (*AC 981*). A “blessing” signifies fructification and multiplication (*AC 43 and 273*).
- How much will the Lord “pour out” in His “blessing”? The literal sense gives us the answer: “There will not be room enough to receive it.” This same idea is present in the Twenty-Third Psalm, in the words “my cup runneth over...” The Lord’s wish for our happiness and success knows no limit.

“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground...”

- The word “rebuke” carries with its meaning a sense of making right or vindicating wrongs.
- A “devourer” signifies one who wants to destroy goods and truths (*AC 9348 [4]*). A “devourer” signifies the destruction of doctrine at its inception (*Revelation 12:4; AR 542*).
- The Lord promises to do this “for [our] sakes.”
- “...so that [the devourer] will not destroy the fruit of your ground...” “Fruit” signifies everything that has life from the Lord (*AC 43*). “Fruitful” signifies the increase of goods in the interior man (*AC 1018*). “Fruit of the ground” signifies the mind of each individual of the church—each one in the church is a church (*AC 872*).

“...nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field...”

- A “vine” signifies the Lord. A “vine” signifies the spiritual church in charity in which the Lord is present, and the branches are the people of the church (*AC 1069 [5]*). The “harvest of fruit” signifies the church bringing forth truth and good (*AE 374 [4]*).
- A “field” signifies the church as to good, for the church receives the seeds of good and truth (*AC 3766*). The “harvest of the field” signifies the church related to the reception and bringing forth of truth and good (*AE 374 [4]*).

“...says the Lord of hosts...”

- This phrase occurs three times in the section under study. Question: is the occurrence of this phrase correspondential? The number three corresponds to love, wisdom, and use. Is the Lord calling our attention to His zeal to save all and especially the church?

“...all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

- “Blessed” represents the state of being happy, peaceful, and enriched with celestial and spiritual good. “Delightful” represents the consequent joys that come to an orderly church. Thus, the Lord is indicating to the people that others shall see their works and how the fruit of the Lord is in all that they do.
- Who says this? The Lord of hosts. He is the one who has the zeal to save the church and all who are within it.

Putting It All Together

The summary from *P&P* starts out with the word “If.” If Israel had lived according to the statutes of the Lord, they would have been in the good of the church. What good things would they enjoy “if” they complied with the Lord’s words?

- The windows of heaven would open.
- There would be a pouring out of blessings.
- So many blessings would come to them there would be no room capable of holding them all.
- The devourer, hell, would be rebuked. The church would be vindicated.
- The fruit of the ground would not be destroyed.
- The fruit of the vine in the field would yield a great crop. All nations would look at them as a blessed (happy) land. Other nations would notice their blessedness and delightfulness.

The Lord said to them, “Try Me. Give Me the opportunity to bless you. Let me show you the results of making a commitment to follow Me.” How would they get started on this blessing? By “bringing” all of their remains to the storehouse of the mind. They were to let the remains, or tithes, be food for the Lord’s House out of which the spiritual mind could draw its supplies (sustenance).

“If”: A conditional word that indicates Israel had a big decision to make. Would it be their way or the Lord’s way? Their way led to spiritual death. The Lord’s way led to eternal bliss.

We can't leave this summary without applying the same "if" condition to our internal church. If we "try" the Lord "now," the Lord will make us a blessing the likes of which no room can contain. Every day, in millions of ways, the Lord blesses us with manifold gifts. How can we know this is so? Because thus "says the Lord of hosts." These oft-stated words serve as a reminder that the Lord has a Divine zeal to save His church and all who are in the church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:10-12*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- The opening portion of verse 10 starts out with the command to bring tithes into the storehouse. How do we bring "remains" into the mind? Isn't this what the Lord does for us? He alone knows where remains are. Do we need to help Him bring them to mind?
- "Try Me now" has a sense of urgency to it. Do we let the Lord show us His power? Or do we allow the hells to minimize His awesome power? Give Me a test trial and I will show you, says the Lord.
- Opening the windows has wonderful correspondences. What thoughts or images come to mind with opening windows?
- The "pouring out of blessings" is a Divine promise. Looking back over our lives, can we see any of these blessings? How about the "there will not be room enough to receive them" statement? Anything come to mind that testifies to this point?
- How have you fought against the "devourer" of fruit of the ground?
- Are you able to identify with the meaning of the vine and fruit correspondences?

MALACHI 3:13-15

"Your words have been harsh against Me," says the Lord, "Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?' You have said, 'It is useless to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the Lord of hosts? So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt God and go free.'"

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “They have confirmed themselves in this, that good is of no profit and that evil does no harm, because the good and the wicked are alike prosperous.”

AE 372 [6 & 7]

- “Since in the churches before the Lord’s coming, which were representative churches, mourning represented spiritual grief of mind on account of the absence of truth and good, for they mourned when oppressed by an enemy, on the death of a father or mother, and for like things, and oppression by an enemy signified oppression by evils from hell, and father and mother signified the church in respect to good and in respect to truth, because with them these things were represented by mourning, they at such times went in black. As in...Malachi...3:14...That ‘to be made black’ signifies spiritual grief of mind...”

Derived Doctrine

“Your words have been harsh against Me,’ says the Lord...”

- “In its origin...the good of love and of charity is most gentle, consequently it is so in its advance into heaven; but when it sinks down to the hells, it becomes **harsh and severe**, because **it is turned into this** by those who are there...”
(AC 7679, emphasis added)
- Falsities “...if applied to good...become mild, but if to evil, they become **hard [harsh]...**” *(AC 8311, emphasis added)*
- These numbers are cited so that we can picture the gentleness of the Lord’s providence being turned into harshness by hearts that are opposed to Him. The “harshness” is not representative of the Lord but of the people speaking offensively about the Lord.

“Yet you say, what have we spoken against You?”

- One would think that if the Lord, who knows all and sees all, said these things to anyone who had a sense of humility, the person would feel remorse for the misspoken words. You would think the people would want to put on a cloak of “black” to mourn the loss, or lack, of good and truth. Instead, the people of Israel took on a confrontational attitude. They questioned the Lord and doubted His assessment of their intentions. Their question “What have we spoken against You?” carries with it a sphere of hardness and disrespectful pride.

“You have said, ‘It is useless to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance and that we have walked as mourners...”

- What constitutes a life of usefulness? Let’s consider this quote from *AC 503*: “The life of love...is life while in the performance of use...in the good and truth of use: from use, by use, and according to use, is life given by the Lord; **there can be no life in what is useless, for whatever is useless is cast away.**” (*emphasis added*)
- Consider also this teaching from *AC 1100*: “It is utterly useless for a man to know many things if he does not live according to what he knows. For knowing has no other end than that the man may thereby become good. When he has become good, he has much more than one who knows innumerable things and yet is not good; for what the latter seeks by much knowledge, the former already has.”
- What then are we to glean from the above quoted passages? The people of Israel, because of their cold hearts, felt it was useless to serve God. They saw no end. They saw no rewards. Keeping the ordinances of the Lord was meaningless to them. Therefore, what had no meaning to them in life was being cast away as superfluous.
- The question “What profit is it that we have kept His ordinances?” seems to indicate they felt no gain or enrichment coming to them from the Lord. “Profit” or gain has a signification of a love of the world that destroys a person’s soul (*AE 750 [5]*). Gain, in a negative sense, signifies falsity from evil **perverting judgment** (*AC 8711*).
- To “walk” signifies to meditate on doctrine (*AR 137*). To “walk” signifies to live by enlightenment from the Lord (*AR 75*). Apparently, these things were not happening with Israel. The people walked in their own prudence and failed to seek the Lord, so their hearts grieved with the requirements of repentance and regeneration. Spiritual work wearied and stressed them to the point of “mourning” because the Lord did not validate their desire for power, ease, and profitability.

“So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt God and go free.”

- Their flimsy charges against the Lord are listed: the proud are happy (blessed); the wicked are heroes among the people; the wicked “try” the Lord and get away with it. Can’t we hear a “poor me” attitude? The people saw themselves wearing sackcloth with their faces darkened by ashes, and what did they get for their efforts? Nothing. So they asked, what’s the point of serving the Lord? They thought, He doesn’t care, nor does He punish the proud, the wicked, and their derision of His ordinances. *Psalm 73* carries the same theme, except that in this *Psalm*, a resolution occurs in the case of arrogance: “It was too painful for me—**until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end.**” (*emphasis added*)

- Israel was into complaining but not going into the sanctuary, so they never saw “the end” of the proud, the wicked, and those who tempted the Lord.

Putting It All Together

We have an expression, “Try to convince a man against his will, and he will be of the same opinion still.” Israel’s will wanted to confirm the belief that being good was not advantageous. To Israel, good and evil seemed no different in terms of profitability. They believed the evil were not being checked or punished by the Lord. They saw arrogance flaunt itself before the Lord and get away with it. So, they asked, what benefits do we get for being “faithful” to the Lord? We follow the rules and mourn before the Lord, and we see no advantages coming out of our adherence to God’s laws. “It is useless to serve the Lord.”

Don’t we hear some of this in our day? When tragedy strikes, it plays no favorites. The Lord causes his sun and rain to fall equally upon the just and the unjust. A church will burn down just as easily as a den of iniquity. No special Divine intervention for the faithful. Why isn’t it different? Couldn’t the Lord spare the good and punish the wicked? That certainly would restore some order and get world-wide respect for the Lord. With the Lord’s Divine power, He could easily bring the arrogant and evil under His control. But He doesn’t move toward such ends for a good reason: Spiritual Freedom.

Harsh words are still spoken against the Lord. False perceptions get formed in the mind and heart of those who doubt His providence. The rigidity of falsity perverts judgment. What this lesson illustrates for us is the need to put aside extreme cases and poor examples and to read about the love of the Lord and how He seeks to protect our freedom. Forced belief, forced protection, and favoritism to the faithful would not preserve freedom. A forced love removes spontaneity from us. How many times have we melted when a child, on their own, told us they loved us? The thrill of their words comes from the open response that is free and genuine. This is also what pleases the Lord the most.

Let’s be done with the harsh words. Let’s be done with the thoughts of profit (what’s in it for me?). Instead, let’s be committed to walking in the way of the Lord, taking on whatever life brings our way. We need to overcome the “poor me” syndrome. We need to believe that whatever happens to us, the Lord will bring good out of it. Life needs less comparing of who gets the most or least. The Lord’s providence specifically has us in mind in all the incidents of life. Hell sends evil to us. It is not a gift from the Lord, but He can turn the experience of evil into a joy. How can we think about this happening?

Can you recall the words of Joseph to his brothers? “...you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good...” (*Genesis 50:20*) These words of truth are like one of David’s

smooth stones that can slay the mocking giant of falsity that seeks to pervert and make our judgments harsh.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:13-15*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- A stubborn will can be hard to change. If our will wants to remain unchanged, how can we learn to soften its harsh stance?
- The “poor me” attitude seems to hit us the hardest when we are tired and irritable. Do you have a policy of not making important decisions when tired?
- Have you ever watched or noticed if others get more, or are blessed more, than you?
- Does it seem that the evil get away with much, and do you wish the Lord would put them in their place?
- Is the profit motive (what’s in it for me?) present in your spiritual value system?
- If health, wealth, and happiness were granted to only the faithful, would that be a good thing for us? Might health, wealth, and happiness become a means to brag and finger point at the “evil” people? If so, then a danger would exist when a proud state took over within. Our health, wealth, and happiness would immediately be taken away. Would that be a good system?
- The words “It is useless to serve the Lord” are harsh and devoid of any spiritual hope. Do we hear these words being expressed in our times? Is the assumption that the Lord is not there, not caring, and not responsive?

MALACHI 3:16-18

“Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name. ‘They shall be Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘on the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.’ Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “It is otherwise with those who trust in the Lord: they will be blessed of the Lord when He comes. Then the difference will be seen.”

Derived Doctrine

“Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another...”

- The fear mentioned is a positive “fear.” It is a holy fear that good people experience because of longing for the Lord and also because they have a desire not to offend the Lord (*AC 3718*).
- “Speaking” signifies influx and compliance from faith and love, or living as the Lord taught in the Word (*AC 9312*). Note, too, that their compliance was shared. They did not hide or hoard their faith and love.

“...the Lord listened and heard them...”

- Listening and hearing when spoken of the Lord signify the Divine Providence bringing help. He brings help to the will of faith that inspires perception and obedience in the things of the Word. See *AC 2691, 3869, and AR 87*.

“...so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name.”

- The words “book of remembrance” are not explained in the Writings. However, we can use references to the “book of life” or “the little book” that was to be opened and eaten as a reference point. *AE 306* explains that the “‘book’ signifies all things with man, spirit, and angel, or all the states of their life in respect to love and faith; therefore ‘to open the book’ signifies to know these things; ‘to read the book’ signifies to recognize them, and ‘to look upon the book’ signifies to explore them.”
- To “meditate” means to think, to recall, and to reflect. The “name” of the Lord signifies the essence or qualities of the Lord. In other words, those who love the Lord will think, recall, and reflect on the sum of all by which the Lord is to be worshiped. See *AC 2724*.

“‘They shall be Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts...”

- Do we need to search for the signification of these words? The Lord will draw near to Him those who love (fear) His name.
- “...the Lord of Hosts” signifies the zeal the Lord has to save His church and the people within the church.

“...on the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them...”

- “The day of Jehovah” signifies the Lord’s vastation in the last time and state of the church (*AC 488 [3] and 1839 [5]*).
- The meaning of “My jewels” might be best understood by reading *TCR 618*: “There are three means whereby man is regenerated, the Lord, faith, and charity. These three [are] like the most costly jewels...”
- “Sparing them” signifies the Lord’s intercession from love (*AC 2253*). “Sparing” signifies salvation (*AC 2262*). “Sparing” signifies the destruction of falsities before they are confirmed (*AE 573 [11]*).

“...and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.”

- To “serve” signifies an intention to subjugate (*AC 6650 and 8169*). What seems to be at issue in these passages is the difficulty that exists with a corrupted church in serving the Lord. The corrupted church seeks to obliterate the truth. But our verse talks about a remnant of “sons” who wanted to and intended to subjugate themselves to the (father) Lord. The Lord knew of and accepted their intentions and therefore was able to spare, and correct, the actions of their ignorance.

“Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.”

- Is there any doubt as to the spiritual sense here? *AC 3428* notes the difference between those who debate with the Lord and the “simple people.” Anyone who is devoid of good is unable to have an intelligent discernment of truth and doesn’t even wish to know. Whereas simple people in whom good is present have a common-sense discernment of truth.
- Discernment shows up the righteous and the wicked, the one who serves the Lord and the one who serves not. This discernment is a gift from the Lord.

Putting It All Together

Out of a long series of negative attitudes toward the Lord there comes a bright note of optimism for the church and the future. **There are people who fear the Lord.** They communicate their love for the Lord to each other. The Lord makes note of it, and He is going to make them His jewels. Even though it has been hard to meditate on the things of the Lord, this group has an intention to serve the Lord with gladness. To encourage them, the “messenger” of the Lord tells them that the Lord is going to spare them. In the day of the vastation of the church, the Lord will help this remnant. He is going to enhance their discernment. They will know the difference between the righteous and the wicked. They will know who wants to serve the Lord and who doesn’t want to serve the Lord.

We need this message, too. We live in a time where discernment of right and wrong is called narrow-mindedness. Speaking to a disorder is viewed as not being “charitable.” One writer described our times with the word “whatever.” Users of this word seem to mean that it is preferable to let everything pass by without any concern. “Whatever,” they say, and with that, they go on about their own agenda.

The “simple,” who trust in the Lord and fear breaking His laws, have the gift of discernment. Providence will lift them up and spare them from ignorance. Those who follow the good and truth of the Lord will become “His jewels, precious jewels.” The prophecy of the Lord announces the coming of the sparkling rays of hope for the New Church. The son that serves his father will be spared from the mistakes of ignorance. The book of remembrance will have all the names of the faithful, and they will meditate on the name of the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:16-18*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Those who trust in the Lord will be blessed when He comes. How does trusting in the Lord carry more commitment than the “whatever” attitude?
- Discernment is a necessary tool when doing battle against evil. Fearing the Lord is the beginning of a discerning influx. What kind of fear exists within your heart and mind? Is it a fear that freezes you up, or does it free you from the tyranny of hell?
- Jewels are part of the prophecy of the New Church. How do you understand the meaning of their correspondence?
- The Lord’s zeal is to save the church and all who are within the church. Can you share some of the ways you see this happening?
- Being “spared” is a gift from the Lord’s Providence. Do we have a feeling of protection and specialness when we read these words?
- How about the book of remembrance? Do you see it in a positive light? Is it an aid to reflection? It contains all of the good and truths we have loved in our life. If we intend to do the will of the Lord, will we be remembered by the Lord?

Chapter Four

MALACHI 4:1-3

“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘that will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “...and the good will be saved, and then the evil will be cast into hell, because they have annulled the Word.”

AC 1861 [5]

- “In Malachi...4:1...A ‘burning furnace’ here denotes [burning cupidities]...the ‘root’ denotes charity; the ‘branch’ truth, which shall not be left.”

AC 7519 [5 & 6]

- “...the evils of cupidities are signified by ‘fire,’ they are also signified by a ‘furnace,’ which is the containant, and this frequently involves the same... Malachi 4:1...‘burning as a furnace’ denotes the cupidities of evil, ‘setting them on fire,’ a kindling with cupidities.”

AC 9141 [5]

- “...in Malachi...4:1...‘the day that cometh’ denotes the last time of the church, when the loves of self and of the world shall reign, and shall consume all the truths and goods of the church, until nothing survives in the man’s internal and external, which is signified by ‘shall leave them neither root nor branch.’ The ‘root’ of good and truth is in man’s internal, and the ‘branch’ is in his external. From this then it is evident that ‘to desolate’ signifies to consume through cupidities, as is the case elsewhere in the Word.”

HH 570

- “Infernal fire [and love of self], therefore, is the lust and delight that spring from these two loves...The evils flowing from these loves are contempt of others, enmity, and hostility against those who do not favor them, envy, hatred, and revenge, and from these fierceness and cruelty; and in respect to the Divine they are denial and consequent contempt, derision, and detraction of the holy things of the church...Such is the meaning of ‘fire’ in the Word... some passages from which I will here quote in the way of proof...Malachi 4:1...”

AE 540 [3]

- “In Malachi...4:1...This, too, was said of the last time of the church, and the Last Judgment at that time; both these are signified by ‘the day that cometh.’ The ‘oven’ means the hell where those are who confirm themselves in falsities by doctrine, and confirm themselves in evils from earthly and corporeal loves by their life; that such on account of their own loves will perish is meant by ‘all who sin presumptuously, and every worker of wickedness shall be stubble, and the oven shall set them on fire,’ ‘all who sin presumptuously’ meaning those who by doctrine confirm themselves in falsities, and ‘the worker of wickedness’ those who by life confirm themselves in evil.”

AC 9263 [5]

- The righteous are they who “are in the good of love from the Lord; for the Lord is the sun in the other life, and that which is from the Lord as the sun there is the good of love ...Hence the Lord is called ‘the Sun of Righteousness’ (Malachi 4:2).”

AC 9391 [5]

- “...in the prophetic Word, it is usual to treat of truth wherever good is treated of, on account of the heavenly marriage...and also to speak of external things where internal things are spoken of. Moreover the ‘stall’ [used for fattening] and ‘fat’ signify the good of interior love...Malachi 4:2...”

AR 242

- “In Malachi...4:2...They are compared to ‘fatted calves’ because by them are signified those who are filled with the knowledges of truth and good from the affection of knowing them.”

AR 245

- “That by ‘flying’ is signified to perceive and instruct, and in the highest sense to look out for and provide, is also evident from these passages...Malachi 4:2...”

AE 279 [5]

- “In Malachi...4:2...The ‘Sun of righteousness that shall arise to them that fear the name of Jehovah’ signifies the good of love; and ‘healing in His wings’ signifies the truth of faith; therefore ‘to go forth, and grow up as fatted calves,’ signifies the increase of all good, ‘fatted’ and ‘fat’ also signifying good.”

AE 283 [9]

- “In Malachi...4:2...‘The sun of righteousness’ signifies the good of love, which is the celestial Divine; and the ‘wings of Jehovah, in which there is healing,’ signify truth from that good, which is the spiritual Divine; ‘healing’ is reformation thereby.”

AE 401 [28]

- “Because ‘the sun’ signifies the Lord in relation to Divine love, He is called ‘the Sun of righteousness’ (in Malachi 4:2)...”

AE 632 [10]

- “In Malachi...4:3...‘To trample down’...signifies to destroy, which is done by those who are corporeal-sensual, for those who are such ‘trample down’ all things of heaven and the church, for they are in what is lowest, and their thoughts cannot be elevated by the Lord, for they themselves let them down to the earth, and there they lick the dust. Such are all those that deny the Divine...unless he suffers himself to be elevated out of them [corporeal-sensual things] by the Lord, which is effected by Divine means...he tramples down the celestial and spiritual things belonging to heaven and the church.”

Derived Doctrine

“...and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.”

- Who are the proud? Are they the people who seek the power of dominating over the things of the church? See *AC 8678*. Are they those who glory in their learning? See *AE 376 [31]*. Are they the people who love to confirm falsities that favor self-love? See *AE 518 [34]*.

- Wickedness is far more than evil. “Wickedness” signifies a desire to have complete destruction of good and truth within a person (*AE 257 [7]*). “Wickedness” signifies a deep malice with those who infest (*AC 7590*).
- “Stubble” denotes such truth as is accommodated to memory knowledges (*AC 7131*). “Stubble” being devoured signifies the consequent devastation and damnation the wicked bring upon themselves (*AC 8280*).

“...for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

- “Ashes” signify something condemned because the fire from which the ashes came signifies infernal love (*AE 441*). “Ashes” signify lustful falsities excited by the presence of infesting spirits (*AC 7519 and AE 962 [8]*).
- The meaning of the words “Under the soles of your feet” presents us with a challenge. *AE 632 [2]* teaches that “the soles of the feet” correspond to the external sensual of a person which is what tramples down. *AC 4943* teaches that “The soles of the feet are also those who have placed merit in good deeds and in works.” *AC 4944* teaches that “they...who have led a good moral life, and have had something of charity toward the neighbor, but have had little concern about spiritual things, are for the most part sent into the places under the feet and the soles of the feet.” **Question:** Is the Lord telling us how simple it will be to overcome the burning lusts of the hells? Is all of their intense desire to destroy the Lord not a real threat if the lower external sensual of a person is able to trample them down? The comparison seems to be there for us to see the message of hope and redemption in the day of the Lord.
- Please note “says the Lord of hosts.” What does it mean, and why is this phrase used so often in *Malachi*? It states the zeal of the Lord to save His church and all who are in the church.

“...that will leave them neither root nor branch.”

- “Roots” signify the proprium as the source of infernal falsity (*AR 410*). *The Doctrine of the Lord 93* teaches “this Own [proprium] of man constitutes the first root of his life...And this root is not removed and a new one set in its place unless the man regards the evils that constitute the root as injurious to his soul...” This “root” needs to be plucked up.
- A reference to the “root and branch” teaches about the internal and external person. The “root” signifies good and truth in the internal person, whereas the “branch” represents good and truth in the external person (*AC 1861 [5] and AC 9141*).

Putting It All Together

AC 8214 describes a series of laws that are important to the understanding of the verses we are now studying: the law of retaliation, the law of order, and the “Law and the Prophets.”

The law of retaliation: “...the evil who by means of injections of falsity and evil desire to inflict violence on the good cast themselves into the penalty of retaliation, which is, that the falsities and evils which they endeavor to inflict, fall back on themselves.”

The law of order: This law is stated in *Matthew 7:12*. “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them...”

“This is the Law and the Prophets”: The laws of retaliation and of order are complementary. Those who are in order do to others what they wish to have done to themselves; those who break the law of order still experience the results of what they intended for others. The verse from *Matthew* is followed by the words “This is the Law and the Prophets.” This suggests that we need to apply these laws to our understanding of Malachi’s prophetic message as to why the evil will be “burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.” Their self-love desired to totally violate the good and faithful things of the Lord’s church. Every negative wish they had returned to them. “Stubble” is the left-over useless part of a plant. A contributing use of life is gone, and the remaining stub of the stem is a symbol of uselessness. As a dried-up stalk, what is useless is vulnerable to the heat and fire of self-love.

We need to be reminded that the above laws have a positive side as well. The good we wish to the Lord and the neighbor will also return to us. Doesn’t this also apply to the passage in the Word that teaches us we will reap what we sow?

Following the way of the Lord will bring us to the “stall,” and we will be “fattened” with the good of interior love. There will be “healing” in the wings of the Lord, and the “Sun of righteousness” will warm the very depths of our souls.

The power of self-love is not as strong as it would have us believe. Our daily external walk through life, the moral deeds and charity toward our neighbor can trample down evil. Like ashes under “the soles of our feet,” the wicked will be overcome with the Lord’s help.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 4:1-3*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- What do you think about the Law of Retaliation? Is it a fair law? Does that law put any pressure on us in our daily interaction with others?
- Remember the positive side of the law, too. If we have love for the Lord and the neighbor and wish well toward them, we have nothing to fear. The good we intended returns and blesses us. How do we do these things without a sense of earning “merit”?
- The “oven” of self-love sounds intense. Like a fever burning within, it must put a tremendous strain on the soul. The soul wants to serve the Lord and delight itself in the fatness of the Lord’s truths. But the fire rages out of control, consuming all that stands in its way. Have you ever experienced this fire in some way? Didn’t it want to have free reign? If anyone sought to speak words of warning, did it seem to add fuel to the fire?
- Did the words of the Lord about His healing and lifting us up in His wings offer encouragement to renew our efforts of reformation?
- Being led to the stall and becoming fatted calves—did that correspondential imagery catch hold in your mind?
- What did you draw from the teaching about the “soles of your feet” tramping down the ashes and stubble of the evil?

MALACHI 4:4

“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Hereby for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “...because they have annulled the Word.”

AR 3

- “By servants, in the spiritual sense, are meant those who are in truths; and because truths are from good, by servants are meant those who are in truths from good...Now as truths are serviceable to good by teaching it, therefore, in general, and properly, by servant, in the Word, is meant what is serviceable... in this sense not only the prophets are called the servants of God, but also the Lord as to His Human...[this] is evident from the following passages...Malachi 4:4...”

AR 662

- *Malachi 4:4* is cited, among other examples. “It may be evident from these passages, that by ‘Moses’ in the wide sense is meant the Word that was written by him, which is called the Law. It follows from this that the Law which is the Decalogue is meant by ‘Moses’; and the more so, because Moses hewed out the tables after he had broken the former ones...”

AE 409 [6]

- “Since the Lord in respect to Divine truth is called in the Word ‘a servant’ from serving, so those who are in Divine truth from the Lord and thereby serve others are there called ‘servants,’ as the prophets are in these passages...*Malachi 4:4*...”

Derived Doctrine

“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel with the statutes and judgments.”

- “Remember” has reference to recalling, reflection, a reminder and reassessment. To what end? A renewal of the covenant between the Lord and His people. This was a command to assess their commitment to the laws of the Lord. Was there a need to fix any breaches? Did they need to clear away blockages to facilitate conjunction in every way possible? Did they have a desire for the preservation of the church? And, lastly, were they looking for those things of infinite and eternal value?
- “‘Horeb’ signifies the Lord as to the truths of faith.” (*AC 8572*) “...Horeb signifies the external things of worship, of the church, and of the Word.” (*AC 10534*)

“...for all Israel with the statutes and judgments.”

- We need to note the word “all.” The Laws were for the Northern and Southern kingdoms. The Laws of the Lord know no boundaries. They are universal laws for “all” people of the church.
- “Statutes” signify externals of the Word, the rites of the church enjoined by the Lord. “Statutes” signify continual revelations from the Lord (*AC 3382*). “Statutes” signify the external goods and truths of the church while laws signify the internal goods and truths (*AC 8706*).
- “Judgment” relates to the doctrine of truth, whereas justice relates to the doctrine of good (*AC 2231*).

Putting It All Together

P&P points the way to understanding the Lord's call to "remember the Laws" given to Moses. The dead church had "annulled the Word." The faithful remnant was being called back to the essentials of the Commandments. Because the Decalogue is "in a brief summary a complex of all things of religion by means of which there is conjunction of the Lord with man and of man with the Lord, **they were so holy that nothing is more so.**" (*Doctrine of Life 54, emphasis added*) The two tablets teach the proper way to love the Lord and love the neighbor.

The call to remembrance was a Divine injunction to review and repair the conjunction between the Lord and the church. Disjunction was evident, and the quality of spiritual life in the church was dead. The remnant, all of Israel, must renew its commitment to the essentials of faith. Out with dead and uninspiring ritual and in with vivified and inspiring forms of worship.

The Lord, as the Servant, promises to renew the truths of faith, first in the external things of worship, then the church, and then the Word. His statutes and judgment, the doctrine of truth and good, will be brought to their rightful place in the center of the church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 4:4*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- What ways would be effective for us to "remember the Laws" of the Lord? We teach the commandments in the church's elementary schools. They are studied briefly in high school. There is the course of study called "Rise Above It," but not all adults have a course of study to review the inner meaning of the Decalogue. So what incentive might get us to read either *Apocalypse Explained* or *Doctrine of Life* wherein the spiritual meanings of the Commandments are taught?
- The Lord's Word makes it clear that His Law is for all of His people. His commandments are the epitome of all things of religion. There is nothing more holy. So what keeps us from the study of them? Do we believe we know everything about the Decalogue? Is there a subconscious feeling that keeping all of the commandments is impossible? Do we shy away from them because we feel like a failure in keeping most of them?
- Our study of doctrine and derived doctrine makes it clear that annulment of the Word brings disjunction and death to the spiritual church.

- The New Church has more to offer regarding the Decalogue than other religions have provided. Do you think the Commandments suffer in the churches outside the New Church?
- We have had a recent legal case in several states to remove replicas of the Ten Commandments from display in public places. The physical removal of them brought reaction from Christians. Does it seem to you that the initial concern has died down and the order to remove them has achieved tacit acceptance? What will be the consequences of this?

MALACHI 4:5-6

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “John the Baptist will be sent before the Lord, lest that nation should then perish.”

AC 5620 [12]

- “As John the Baptist represented the Lord as to the Word, which is the Divine truth on earth, in like manner as Elijah...he was therefore the ‘Elijah who was to come’ before the Lord...” *Malachi 4:5* is cited.

AC 9372 [7 & 8]

- “That the Word was represented by John, as by Elijah, is signified by his being ‘Elias who is to come.’...From all this it is now evident what is meant by the prophecy about John in Malachi...4:5...”

AR 704

- “That ‘the great day of God Almighty’ signifies the coming of the Lord, and then the New Church, is evident from many passages in the Word as from these...Malachi 4:5...”

AC 3703 [9]

- “In Malachi 4:5, 6...the goods and truths of the church, which the Lord was about to restore.”

TCR 688

- “It is written in Malachi...4:5, 6...that...John was the prophet sent to make ready the way of Jehovah God, who should descend into the world and accomplish redemption; and that he made ready that way by baptism, and by announcing the coming of the Lord; and that without such preparation all on earth would have been smitten with a curse and would have perished.”

AE 624 [22]

- “That Elijah represented the Lord as to the Word is evident from the miracles done by Him, all of which signified such things as belong to Divine truth or the Word; and as John the Baptist in like manner represented the Lord as to the Word he was called ‘Elijah,’ as can be seen in Malachi...4:5, 6...”

AE 724 [7]

- “...in Malachi...4:5, 6...John the Baptist was sent before to prepare for the reception of the Lord by baptism, because baptism represented and signified purification from evils and falsities, and also regeneration by the Lord by means of the Word. Unless this representation had preceded, the Lord could not have manifested Himself and have taught and lived in Judea and in Jerusalem, since the Lord was the God of heaven and earth under a human form, and He could not have been present with a nation that was in mere falsities in respect to doctrine and in mere evils in respect to life; consequently unless that nation had been prepared for the reception of the Lord by a representation of purification from falsities and evils by baptism, it would have been destroyed by disease of every kind by the presence of the Divine Itself; therefore this is what is signified by ‘lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.’”

AC 6752 [10]

- “And as both Moses and Elias together represented the whole Word, therefore where it is said of Elias that he should be ‘sent before the Lord,’ mention is made of both...Malachi 4:4, 5...these words involve that one would go before to announce the advent according to the Word.”

AE 937 [6]

- “Because Moses and Elijah taken together represented the Word, where Elijah is spoken of as the one sent before the Lord, both are mentioned, as in Malachi...4:4-6...Elijah the prophet means John the Baptist; because he, like Elijah, represented the Word...”

Derived Doctrine

"Behold..."

- This word is defined in the dictionary as "to have or keep in sight; look at; watch; to view or survey; to discern."
- In the Writings, "behold" is used when there is a call to reflect on "an interior acknowledgment and confession of the Lord's Divine Human..." (AC 2329)

"...I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

- The Lord sending angels, prophets, or disciples signifies a revelation from the Lord to "those who are in the good of love..." (AE 8 [2])
- Elijah "represented the Lord as to the Word." (AC 2762)
- "The prophets represented those who teach, and hence the teaching of good and truth from the Word." (AC 3540)
- "The great and dreadful day of the Lord" is a message for those who are not in good. "The 'dread' is mentioned because the Divine truth is meant, for the Divine truth carries with it fear, dread, and terror to those who are not in good; but not so the Divine good, which terrifies no one." (AC 4180)

"And he [Elijah] will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers..."

- AC 10490 explains a teaching of the Lord regarding hating father, mother, wife, and children. It cites a passage in *Matthew* stating that unless people hate these members of their family, and their own soul, they cannot be a disciple of the Lord. The Lord was not teaching hatred for people, AC 10490 [6] tells us; He was referring to "...things belonging to man" and the origin of evils and falsities and the lusts that arise from the beginnings of one's own (proprium).
- Turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers represents the plucking out of the first root of the proprium and the implanting by the Lord of a new root, or His Proprium. The coming of the Word is a spiritual day of the Lord when all things will be put into a loving family of order.

"...lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

- In *Exodus 3:20*, the Lord said that He would "strike [smite] Egypt with all My wonders..." which "signified that they would be overcome by power from the Divine, and by the means of this power." (AC 6908)
- The "earth" signifies "the external man." (AC 89)

- “To be a fugitive and a wanderer in the **earth** signifies not to know what is good and true.” (AC 380, *emphasis added*)
- The “earth” signifies “the love of self and whatever is contrary to the celestial church.” (AC 636)
- The word “curse” has a negative and positive correspondence. In the negative sense, it means “to turn one’s self away...” (AC 927) This same number uses “curse” in the positive sense to mean that the Lord will provide “for man’s upbuilding...that he might be reformed and regenerated in respect to the second or intellectual part of the mind, in which there might be implanted a new will which is conscience, and through which the Lord might work the good of love...and the truth of faith. Thus of the Lord’s Divine mercy has man been restored.”

Putting It All Together

Why was it necessary for the Lord to send Elijah (and John the Baptist) prior to the coming of the day of the Lord? *AE 724 [7]* states that “unless this representation had preceded, the Lord could not have manifested Himself...unless that nation had been prepared for the reception of the Lord...” The Lord’s baptism signified the work of purification He would win for us over evils and falsities. If the Lord had not prepared the way for His advent, humanity’s spiritual life would have been destroyed with diseases of every kind.

So we need to “behold,” to have or keep in sight, to view and discern what the Lord does for us every day. How much does the Lord’s infinite preparation do for us? Consider this teaching in *AC 3854*: “...how greatly the man errs who believes that the Lord has not foreseen, and does not see, the veriest singulars appertaining to man, and that in these He does not foresee and lead; when the truth is that the Lord’s foresight and providence are in the very minutest of these veriest singulars connected with man, in things so very minute that it is impossible by any thought to comprehend as much **as one out of a hundred millions of them....**” (*emphasis added*)

We do well to reflect on the Lord’s great love for each of us. This is especially so when the hells work on us to feel hopeless and beyond the Lord’s power to save and redeem us. The Lord comes to pluck up the first root of life. He wants to remove our selfish, unregenerate proprium. In its place will be a new and magnificent Proprium from the Lord.

For the unregenerate proprium, it is a “great and dreadful day of the coming of the Lord.” It is a day to be feared. For the soul, it is a day of great joy and liberation. It is a day of release and spiritual cleansing from evils and falsities. It is a day of new beginnings.

Our view of the Lord's care and attention to the details of our life is limited. We see maybe "one out of a hundred millions." Is there a way we can come to see more of the Lord's ways of purifying our hearts? Can we believe that His power is in the very minutest things of our life? The pursuit of seeing more of the millions of spiritual benefactions from the Lord could be time well spent. Let's begin the process of discovery with a heart filled with a sense of how great and merciful the Lord is in the ways of His salvation. No detail escapes His cleansing work. No hidden connection of evil and falsity escapes the "disconnecting" work of His hands. Thorough and meticulous are the redemptive ways of the Lord. The coming of the Lord's New Church is a certainty. Let the people hear the "messenger" of the Lord say "Behold."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 4:5-6*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Our verse begins with the word "Behold." The Lord calls us to take notice of His message. About how long do you think we will do the work of beholding? This is not a criticism. It is a call to begin expanding our period of reflective beholding.
- Did you notice that for the evil people, the day of the Lord is a day of great dread? But it is not so for the good and faithful. The removal of the "first root of life" may appear to be an unpleasant occurrence, but it is not as traumatic as imagined. The Lord has a "painless" procedure that is thorough and effective. What do you think about this preparation of root removal in the day of the Lord?
- Have you ever done any counting of your blessings from the Lord? Did the "one out of millions" teaching come as a surprise to you? Could we even be missing much within the one that we see?

Epilogue: A Summary of the Book of Malachi

The following summary draws and expands on the outline given in the Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms .

CHAPTER ONE

After the destruction of Solomon's Temple and the return of the exiled people, another temple was built. Was it as beautiful as Solomon's temple? Probably not. But Israel once again had a temple to worship in. There it stood before the children of Israel as a symbol of their religious heritage.

Did the years of Babylonian captivity and depravation strengthen Israel's resolve to be a faithful people of the Lord? Had they learned important lessons of what happens when a proud heart strays from the ways of the Lord? Were the worship of the Lord and the rejoicing of freedom central in the services at the temple? Were the ministrations of the priests and people for the Lord and to the Lord?

The external ceremonies, sacrifices, and rituals abounded with great detailed pomp and circumstance. The Lord, looking within the hearts of the people, saw evil and falsity thriving under the cloak of tradition. He sent Malachi the "messenger" to expose the sham and spiritually dangerous things going on in His temple. What did Malachi report to them was the Lord's assessment of worship? From the *Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms*, we have the following summation of chapter one: It is the Lord who institutes a church. The Lord said that although the church was there, the people in it did not acknowledge the Lord. He told them they worshiped from evil and not from good; therefore, their worship was not accepted. Those outside the church worshiped the Lord, but those within the church profaned worship. External good had been destroyed, and therefore, their external truth was destroyed as well.

CHAPTER TWO

Things within the church had to change. If the people of Israel didn't listen to the Lord and change their ways, all worship would be perverted and profaned. The Word was given to them that they might have conjunction with the Lord. They departed from the Word and, therefore, dissolved the conjunction. They were worshipping another god, whence came the profanations. Following other gods would not lead to life but death. Therefore, their external worship was not accepted, and they were severing themselves from the church by calling evil good.

CHAPTER THREE

The destructive choices of the people would not go unchecked by the Lord. The Lord's advent into the world would be to teach the Word in its purity. The church, doctrine, and worship would be like they were among the ancients. The Lord would execute a judgment upon all who adulterated and destroyed the truths of the church. Those who had done this from the beginning, and who would not desist from it, nor would they desist from adulteration, now would bring about their own ruin. If they had lived according to the Lord's statutes, they would have been in the good of the church. Instead, they confirmed themselves in the belief that good is of no profit and that evil does no harm because, to them, it appeared that the good and the wicked prospered equally.

Those who trusted in the Lord would find it otherwise. They would be blessed by the Lord when He came. When the Lord came, the difference would be seen.

CHAPTER FOUR

The good would be saved by the Lord. The evil would choose to leap into hell because they annulled the Word. The Lord's preparation of the way by John the Baptist made it possible for the Lord's purification of evils and falsities. The Lord's foresight and providence enter into most minute singulars of human life. He takes care of things so minute "that it is impossible by any thought to comprehend as much as one out of a hundred millions of them..." *(AC 3854)*

The Lord's New Church will bring us a church that not only is present but will offer sincere services of praise, purity, and devotion to the one God of heaven and earth.