



The Prophecy of 'Malachi'

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Source: *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1898), pp. 1-15

Published by: The Society of Biblical Literature

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3268801>

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JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE.

SEVENTEENTH YEAR—1898—PART I.

The Prophecy of 'Malachi.'

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ANDOVER, MASS.

THE short prophecy known to us by the name 'Malachi' deserves more attention than it has generally received. Its real value as a source for the history of Judaism has hardly been recognized by students of the Old Testament. This is chiefly due, I believe, to the fact that one or two of the most important passages in the book have been generally misunderstood; but partly, also, to the fact that the problems presented by its title and the question of its date have tended to draw off the attention of students from its contents. The aim of the present investigation is to make some contribution to a new interpretation of the book. Without attempting any thorough criticism of the text, or even touching upon the many minor difficulties of exegesis, I hope to present in consistent outline the main features of the prophecy viewed from a standpoint somewhat different from that usually occupied.¹

It may be assumed that the prophecy is anonymous, the proper name 'Malachi' having originated in a misinterpretation of the word מלאכי in 3¹, aided perhaps by Hag. 1¹³,² as well as by Mal. 2⁷. The superscription 1¹, in which M. is evidently intended as a proper

¹ The numerous references to Wellhausen, in the sequel, are to the second edition of his indispensable 'Kleine Propheten' (*Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, v.).

² To the combination of this verse in Haggai with Mal. 1¹ 3¹ is probably due the addition of the words *θέσθε δὴ ἐπὶ τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν* in the LXX superscription. Similar words appear, to be sure, in 2²; and it might be argued, though with little plausibility, that we have here an old and independent superscription of the book; but Jerome is probably right in his opinion (*comm. in loc.*): "Hoc in Hebraico non habetur, sed puto de Aggaeo [2¹⁵, cf. v. 1⁸] additum." Cf. the similar proceeding in 1 Ki. 22²⁸ (MT.). The addition is thus one more witness to the tradition that the book was anonymous, and to the fact that its authorship was at an early date attributed to Haggai, as well as to Ezra, Mordecai, Zechariah, and others. Bachmann's *ישמו כלב* (*Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen*, 1894) hardly deserves serious mention in such a book as Cornill's *Einleitung*.

name, is not only a later addition,³ but stands quite outside the main line of Jewish tradition represented by LXX,⁴ Jerome and the Targum.

The book falls into two main divisions: 1, a rebuke addressed to the priests (1⁶-2⁹); 2, a series of oracles addressed to all the people, consisting mainly of charges brought against priest and layman alike (2¹⁰-3²¹).

The theme of the brief introduction (1²⁻⁵), *Israel God's peculiar people*, plays a very important part in the book from beginning to end. See 1⁶ 2¹⁰ 3^{6f.}, and cf. 2^{5f.}. That the prophet should choose here as his sole illustration of this truth a reference to calamities that have recently come upon Edom, Israel's brother nation (vs. 3⁵),⁵ is characteristic of the time at which he wrote (see below).

Of the charges brought against the priests, the foremost is that of gross misconduct in their performance of the temple service (1⁶⁻¹³). That which is holy they treat not only with indifference, but with open contempt (vs. 7¹²). Defective and worthless offerings are habitually offered upon the altar without scruple. The priests themselves provide, as they also readily accept from others, the crippled and diseased of the flock as good enough for the worship of Yahwè (vs. 8¹³). They have thus publicly desecrated the sanctuary and profaned Yahwè's name (vs. 6^{7, 12}; cf. 2²).⁶ Such worship as this is

³ No certain conclusion as to the origin and relative date of this verse can be drawn from the comparison of Zech. 9¹ 12¹. The phrase *מִשָּׂא דְבַר יְהוָה* in all three places is, or forms part of, a later superscription. The words following it in Zech. 9¹ are the middle of a sentence of which the beginning has been lost. It is possible that the two oracles in Zechariah may have received their superscription from Malachi.

⁴ The later Greek title *Μαλαχίας* (cited again recently by König, *Einleitung*), which is evidently made after the analogy of the preceding *Σοφορίας, Αγγαίος, Ζαχαρίας*, has no bearing on the question of the proper name.

⁵ In vs. 3, the reading *לְתַנִּית* is condemned both by its form and by the verb *שָׂם*, whose meaning here is already determined by the first clause of the half-verse (cf. also Jos. 8²⁸). The reading *נִאֲוִית*, proposed by Stade, *Gesch.* ii. 112, and adopted by Nowack, *Kleine Propheten*, has beyond question the support of both LXX and Syr., and seems certain also in view of Zeph. 2⁶ (where *כִּרְת* is out of place); cf. Ez. 25⁵. The form of the word, however, must be *נִוִּית*; without *א* (so also Zeph. 2⁶), and without the preposition *ל* (as shown by the preceding clause; cf. also Jos. 8²⁸, etc.). It is easy to see how this form, which looks like a mere ending, could have been joined by mistake to the last letters of the preceding word.

⁶ Wellhausen's interpretation of *נֹאֵל* in vs. 7¹², and his treatment of the text in vs. 7, seem to me to be unjustified. It is evident, to be sure, that the text is not sound in either verse. But the idea of 'pollution, uncleanness,' which is generally expressed by the word *נֹאֵל*, is present here, and in its full force. The prophet is

worse than useless ; it would be better that the service of the temple should cease altogether (vs.^{9, 10}). Even the heathen are not guilty of such mockery ; their service is at least reverent ; what is more, in all heathen lands where there is sincere worship of the supreme God, Yahwè accepts it, and his name is truly honored (vs.¹¹). But among the Jews, the chosen people, it is profaned (vs.^{12a}).

While it is primarily the priests who are addressed in this section, yet the prophet's rebuke concerns the people as well ; the sin of bringing unworthy offerings lies also at their door ; and in vs.¹⁴ it is they, the laymen, who are warned.

The second item in the indictment of the priests is the charge that they have betrayed their trust as the official guides of the people in religious matters (2⁴⁻⁹). This second accusation is made to grow out of the first. After the prophet has warned the priests of the punishment that awaits them if they persist in dishonoring Yahwè and his worship (2¹⁻³), he reminds them of the sacred trust which they inherit as members of the priestly tribe, and especially as bearers of the **תורה**, or (oral) teaching concerning the religion and worship of Yahwè (vs.⁷). In the days of old, the house of Levi was worthy of this trust, and walked in the right path ; the people were shown the way, and many were saved from error (vs.^{5, 6} ; cf. Dt. 33^{9, 10}). But now the priests have broken the covenant and turned aside from the path ; their teaching has become a stumbling block to the people (vs.⁸).

In vs.⁹, until the last clause is reached, we seem to have the announcement of the punishment which the priests are to suffer for the unfaithfulness just described ; but the last three words of the verse give it an unexpected turn, for they seem to contain an entirely new accusation, namely, that of *partiality* in the use of the 'teaching.' The meaning of the charge is not clear — especially in the present context, after this long and severe arraignment ; moreover, its position in the passage is a still greater difficulty, for it appears quite incidentally, as though it were an accusation that had been previously made or implied, and thus brings confusion into the whole context.⁷

speaking vehemently. The 'pollution' is due, not to the quality of the bread, but to the attitude of those who present it, as the prophet himself says. At the middle of vs.⁷, read, with LXX, **גאלי תורה**. In v.¹², it may be doubted whether **מנאל** is in the right place, if, indeed, it belongs in the verse at all. Notice the corrupt state of the text in the latter part of the verse, and the evidence of confusion with vs.⁷ (cf. LXX).

⁷ This is excellently illustrated by the note on this verse in Rosenmüller's *Scholia* : "Neque enim hic versus cum iis quae praecesserunt ita cohaeret, ut poenam subjungat peccatis vs. 8 commemoratis; sed novam poenam novo crimini

The cause of the difficulty is probably a scribal error, by which the original **פָּנִי** became **פְּנִים**; a very easy mistake because of the following **ב**. The true reading would thus have been: "because ye do not keep my ways nor regard me in your teaching"; the negative **אֵין** governing both **שְׁמֵרִים דְּרַכִּי** and **נִשְׂאִים פְּנִי**, as is natural.⁸

With 2¹⁰ begins the second main division of the book, containing admonitions designed for all the people. As in the part addressed to the priests the laymen were not forgotten, but were included in the rebuke, so in this second part it is evident that the priests still hold a prominent place in the thought of the writer (see especially 2^{12b, 13} 3^{3, 4}).

The passage 2¹⁰⁻¹⁶ is well marked off from the rest of the book, both by its isolated position and by its contents. Almost all interpreters since Jerome have seen in these verses the prophet's rebuke of two evils: marriage with heathen women (so also Targ.), and divorce.⁹ But this interpretation fails to meet the requirements of the text (see below). The rebuke is rather directed against the encroachment of some foreign cult in Israel (so LXX, Syr.).¹⁰ The

statutam indicit, videlicet *sacerdotum in jure dicendo injustitiae*, quod recte Grotius vidit."

⁸ The phrase **נִשְׂא פְּנִים** is here simply equivalent to 'regard, respect,' as not infrequently in the Old Testament; cf. especially Prov. 6³⁵: **לֹא יִשָּׂא פְּנֵי כָל כֹּפֵר**, 'he will not regard any ransom'; also such passages as 2 Ki. 3¹⁴ Lam. 4¹⁶ Is. 3⁸ 9¹⁴ Job 22⁸, etc. The charge **פְּנֵי אֵינֶכֶם נִשְׂאִים** is thus the same one with which this section was introduced: **לֹא שְׁמַעְתֶּם וְלֹא נָתַתֶּם כְּבוֹד לַשְּׁמַי**, vs.². As for the meaning of the word **תּוֹרָה**, as used by Malachi, it seems probable from the tone of the whole passage (see especially vs.^{6, 8}) that it refers to religious teaching in the broader sense; not merely instruction as to ceremonial requirements, but also guidance into the right way of life (see Baudissin, *Gesch. des AT. Priesterthums*, 256 f., 290 f.). This is the natural way of understanding **הִשִּׁיב הַשִּׁיב מִעוֹן רַבִּים**, vs.⁸, for example. The 'teaching' of the priest is not clearly distinguished from that of the prophet, in the Old Testament; nor could it well be, in the nature of the case. The **תּוֹרָה** as 'moral instruction' (often in a general sense; Prov. 13¹⁴ Ps. 119¹, etc.) belongs to the priest (Ho. 4⁶, cf. vs.^{1f.} Zeph. 3⁴) as well as to the prophet (Is. 9¹⁴ Zech. 7¹²). Malachi 2⁷ might be the description of a prophet as well as of a priest.

⁹ It is not clear in what way the beginning of vs.¹⁶ was understood by LXX and Targ. They seem to have translated, as the Massorettes pointed, with faithful adherence to an impossible text and in despair of making anything out of it. I can see no ground for the theory that the original meaning of the passage has been intentionally perverted.

¹⁰ LXX and Syr. have nothing here to correspond to the word **בַּת**, but use only the most general terms for idolatrous worship. It is quite possible, however, that their Hebrew text in this verse was not different from ours.

unfaithfulness of a part of the people threatens to forfeit for all the covenant of the fathers (vs.¹⁰). Judah has dealt falsely with the wife of his youth, the covenant religion, and is wedding a strange cult. The sanctuary of Yahwè is profaned (vs.^{11, 14}). The worshippers (who, of course, insist that they are still worshipping Yahwè) lament because their offerings fail to bring a blessing, and are strangely unable to see why ill fortune has come upon them (vs.^{13, 14a}).¹¹ Such sin merits the severest punishment, and Israel may well be warned (vs.^{12, 15, 16}; in each of these three verses the text is very difficult).¹²

The remainder of the book (2¹⁷-3²¹) is more homogeneous. The prophet is rebuking the distrust and indifference of the people, as

¹¹ In vs.¹³, the preposition בִּן in בִּיאִין must be rendered 'because.'

¹² The phrase עַר וְעִנְיָה (vs.¹²) has always been, and is still, a riddle. Wellhausen's argument in favor of עַר וְעִנְיָה (the text actually read by LXX) is ingenious, but not convincing. In the first place, the definite technical meaning which he claims for the nouns עַר and עִנְיָה, 'Kläger' and 'Vertheidiger,' cannot be deduced from actual Hebrew usage. עַר is simply a 'witness'; whether 'for' or 'against' is always determined by the context. The verb עִנְיָה, as a legal term, is also used in both ways, and more frequently for accusing than for defending. But even granting that these words *might* have the signification claimed, and that עַר וְעִנְיָה might be a standing expression (of which we have no proof), the chief objection still remains. The phrase would be more than far-fetched; it would be quite meaningless. The great majority of the people were not concerned in any way with courts of law. It can hardly be assumed that every Jew, as a matter of course, had his עַר and his עִנְיָה; nor is it plain, on any theory, how the 'utter destruction' of *these* should be a curse to him — it might rather seem to be a blessing. It does not appear, moreover, that the prophet is speaking of a legal tribunal at all. The עַר and the עִנְיָה are to be cut off, not from the judgment seat, but 'from the dwellings of Jacob.' The first half of the verse treats of the private life; the second half, of the religious privileges.

There can be no doubt as to what sort of an expression would best suit the context here. At the place where the two troublesome words stand we should expect the equivalent of 'all his house, remembrance, posterity,' or something of the kind. The Syr. has (as a mere guess, but a sensible one) 'his son and his son's son'; cf. the footnote to Marti's translation (in Kautzsch, *AT.*): "'wachenden und antwortenden,' d. h. wohl [!] 'jeden lebendigen.'" A comparison of 3¹⁹ suggests that the words that stood here originally may have been שָׂרֵשׁ וְעִנְיָה. There, where the writer is uttering a similar threat, he uses the words: 'it [the day of Yahwè] shall not leave them (לֵהֵם) *root or branch*.' A corresponding use of the same expression in 2¹² would complete the prophet's threat in as forcible a manner as could be imagined: כִּרְתַּת יְהוָה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה שָׂרֵשׁ וְעִנְיָה; מֵאֹהֶל יַעֲקֹב "Yahwè destroy, for the man who does this, *root and branch* from the tents of Jacob!" Some accident to one of the earliest MSS. rendered the words only partially legible. This is also the probable explanation of the corruption of the text in other parts of the book, especially in 2^{15, 16}.

shown in various ways. This naturally leads him to combine reassurance with his censure in the series of predictions ($3^{1ff. 10-12. 17f. 19-21}$) which play an important part in this portion of the book.

The two passages $2^{17}-3^5$ and 3^{13-21} are very much alike in character and contents. In each the starting point is an assertion taken from the mouth of some of the people: 'Yahwè does not interfere in human affairs; he does not take vengeance on evildoers, but treats all alike' (2^{17}); 'it is of no use to give time and pains to the service of Yahwè; the impious fare at least as well as the pious' ($3^{14f.}$ cf. vs.¹⁸). The prophet's answer is the same in each case. The great and terrible day will soon come, when the rewards and penalties shall be meted out, and the righteous shall finally triumph over the wicked (vs.¹⁹⁻²¹). Yahwè, preceded by the angel who announces his coming, will enter his temple (vs.¹), and the good shall be separated from the evil as by the fierce heat of a refiner's fire (vs.²⁻⁵). In the meantime, those who remain faithful to him are not forgotten (vs.^{16ff.}).

This oracle concerning the 'day of Yahwè' is interrupted by a characteristic passage (vs.⁸⁻¹²) in which the people, or a part of them, are severely censured for neglecting to pay their tithes. They are defrauding their God (vs.⁸), in spite of the curse that rests upon them because of just such sins as this (vs.⁹). Let them bring in their dues faithfully to the temple storehouse, and Yahwè will reward them with prosperity (vs.¹⁰⁻¹²). From the manner in which this passage is introduced (vs.^{6,7}), it might seem as though Malachi regarded the prompt payment of temple taxes as a religious requirement of the very first importance, and the evasion of this duty by the people as one of their most grievous sins (see especially vs.⁷). That this cannot be his meaning, however, is plainly shown by all the rest of the book; notice also in particular vs.⁵. It seems most reasonable to suppose that the train of thought upon which he enters in vs.^{6f.} was suggested to him by vs.⁵. It is then evident that this particular delinquency occurred to him while he was in the midst of his more general accusation (vs.^{6,7}), and that he at once seized upon it, abandoning (with vs.⁸) the main line of his thought.¹³ (See below, for a further discussion of the significance of this passage.)

¹³ I regard it therefore as a mistake to make a division in the book at the end of vs.⁵ in such a way as to deny to vs.⁶ any connection with the preceding, as is done by most recent commentaries. The whole section $2^{17}-3^{21}$ is continuous, and was probably composed and written rapidly, at a single sitting; the episode 3^{8-12} is itself proof of this fact. Cf. also Kuenen, *Onderzoek*², ii. 427, note 5. The exegesis here is important for our estimate of the prophet and his work.

It is probable that 3²²⁻²⁴ is a later appendix to the book. It has no natural connection with the preceding, but has all the appearance of an addition by another hand, having for its chief object the providing of an impressive close for the collection of the prophetic writings. It is hardly by accident that *Moses and Elijah*, the two great representatives of Israel's golden age, appear together in these disconnected verses *at the end of the last of all the prophets*. Obviously, the addition was made after the compiling of the *Δωδεκαπρόφητων*.¹⁴

The most interesting passage in the book from the theological point of view is 1¹¹: "For from the rising of the sun unto his setting my name is great among the heathen, and everywhere a pure oblation is offered to my name; for my name is great among the heathen, saith Yahwè of hosts." The prophet is rebuking the Jewish priests for the gross negligence with which they perform the service of the temple, and especially for their shameless practice of offering blemished things to God. He represents Yahwè as saying: 'I can take no pleasure in you or your offering (v.¹⁰). Even the heathen (who in worshipping the one God are truly worshipping me) bring worthy oblations to their altars. They truly honor my name (v.¹¹, cf. v.¹⁴); *ye alone* profane it in this manner' (v.¹²). This interpretation, apparently the one intended by the LXX, adopted by Theodore of Mopsuestia, and in recent times by Hitzig, Köhler, Baudissin, Kue-

¹⁴ Böhme, *ZATW.*, 1887, 210 ff., has attacked the genuineness of these verses, arguing chiefly from the language and style. Nowack, *Kleine Propheten*, has followed him to the extent of rejecting vs.^{23f}, while retaining vs.²²; a strange proceeding. Böhme's argument, perhaps not conclusive in itself, can be considerably strengthened. The writer of 3¹ is certainly not likely to have been also the author of 3²³, and the improbability is only increased by the proximity of vs.¹⁹⁻²¹, — from which vs.²³ is completely insulated by vs.²². The words **לפני בוא יהוה הגדול והנורא** in vs.²³ are plainly derived from Joel 3⁴. Cornill, *Einleitung*³, p. 181, says, "Joel 3⁴ ist offenbar Citat aus Mal. 3²³"; but nothing more than a comparison of Joel 3⁴ with 2¹¹ is needed to show that the evidence points just the other way. Again, vs.^{24b} sounds strangely indeed after vs.^{1ff.} 19 ff. But the chief argument against the genuineness of vs.²²⁻²⁴ is that derived from the juxtaposition in them of Moses and Elijah, combined with their lack of coherence with the preceding or with one another. The feeling that originally prompted the addition of this appendix may be recognized in the comments of later writers. Thus Abarbanel (preface of his comm. on Malachi) says of this prophet: **להיותו אהרון לכל הנביאים ובמותו נפסקה הנבואה מישראל לכן הוהיר ואמר זכרו תורת משה עבדי**. Ephrem Syr. (comm. *in loc.*) explains in similar words why Moses and Elias are both introduced in this place. It was this same reflection — Moses the beginning and the end of the Hebrew Scriptures — that led to the transposition of vs.²² in some Greek MSS. to the end of the book, after vs.²⁴.

nen, Cheyne, Smend, Wellhausen, Baethgen (on Ps. 65³), and others, is the one required by both the language and the context of the verse. To take the words as a prediction (Oehler, and most of the older commentators) is plainly inadmissible. To understand them as referring to proselytes (Ewald, Dillmann [*Hiob*⁴, p. xxxv.]), or to Jews of the Dispersion (W. R. Smith, Schulz), is to deny to the expressions 'everywhere,' 'in all the earth,' 'among the heathen,' their natural meaning, and to lose sight of the obvious contrast between גוים and אתם. See especially Kuenen, *The Hibbert Lectures*, 1882, p. 180 f., and cf. Wellhausen's masterly summary, *Israel. u. jüd. Gesch.*, S. 180 ff. It is no wonder that so many scholars should have hesitated to interpret the words of this verse according to their most obvious meaning, for the passage stands alone in the Old Testament as a clear and concrete statement of the belief that *all sincere worship of God* under whatever name, in whatever way, and by whomsoever offered, is accepted by Yahwè as offered to him. (In the New Testament, Rom. 1¹⁹f. [cf. 2¹⁰f. Wisd. 13⁶⁻⁹] Acts 10³⁵.)¹⁵ In Ps. 65³, which is sometimes cited as the nearest approach to a parallel, the language is much less definite, and it is not plain how much the writer meant by his words.¹⁶ Any psalmist might burst forth into such expressions of praise as this, without for a moment being willing to subscribe to the bold assertion in Malachi. Cf. also such passages as Ps. 145^{15, 16, 18}. Still, remarkable as the expression is, the idea was certainly not foreign to Judaism — it is quite in the spirit of the 'Wisdom' literature, for example — nor can it be said to be out of keeping with the character of this prophet as it appears in the rest of the book.

A passage of foremost importance for the right understanding of Malachi is 2¹⁰⁻¹⁶. These verses, which have always attracted especial attention, have been generally thought to contain a rebuke of the custom of intermarriage with gentiles; and it has been the well-nigh universal belief, at least since the first centuries of the Christian era,

¹⁵ It is hardly likely that Malachi had in mind any particular heathen nations, or that his attention had been attracted by any special signs of monotheism among the neighboring peoples. The utterance is a general one, like those above referred to (cf. especially Acts 10³⁵); and testifies to a remarkable theological development among the Jews themselves, — and perhaps especially in the heart of this prophet, — rather than to any progress, real or supposed, on the part of their gentile neighbors.

¹⁶ The words are: שָׁמַע תְּפִלָּה עוֹדֵךְ כָּל בָּשָׂר יִבְאֹו. According to Wellhausen (Notes to his Trans. in *SBOT*.) this psalm was composed for an assembly at a religious festival; vs.³ is parallel to vs.², and to be explained accordingly.

that the historical setting of this prophecy is to be found in the narratives contained in the Book of Ezra. But, as has already been said, the current interpretation here is untenable. The text of the passage is, unfortunately, very corrupt (in vs.^{15, 16}, beyond all remedy); but the greater part is intact, and it is not difficult to recognize the nature of the charge brought by the prophet against his fellow-countrymen. The sin which he is attacking is one of unfaithfulness, of false dealing with Yahwè (verb **בגד**, vs.^{10, 11} etc.; notice also **לחלל** **כרית אבותינו** in vs.¹⁰). The accusation is first stated definitely in v.¹⁵: "Judah has *profaned the sanctuary of Yahwè*,¹⁷ which he loves, and has espoused a **בת אל נכר** (daughter of a foreign god)."¹⁸ A few verses further on (vs.^{14, 15}) occur the words, "Thou hast dealt falsely with the wife of thy youth, the wife of thy covenant." To treat these expressions literally, as referring to actual marriage and divorce, involves one in insuperable difficulties. To assume, in the first place, that divorce of Israelitish wives stood in any necessary or even probable connection with the wedding of women from other nations is ridiculous. Jews occasionally married gentiles, not because they were dissatisfied with their own countrywomen, or with their religion, but because they found some of the gentile women attractive. Jewish women were married to foreigners for a like reason. Many modern commentators, in the desire to avoid this difficulty, have supposed a change of subject, from intermarriage with gentiles to divorce in general (Köhler, Orelli, Wellhausen, al.). But it is not possible thus to separate vs.¹³⁻¹⁶ from vs.¹⁰⁻¹². 'Wife of thy *covenant religion*' (that **אשת כריתך** cannot mean 'wife of thy marriage vows,' Kraetzschmar, *Bundesvorstellung*, 240 f., has shown conclusively) is plainly contrasted with 'daughter of a foreign god'; 'with whom thou hast falsely dealt' (vs.¹⁴) refers to the charge made with the same word in vs.¹¹; ¹⁹**כרית** in vs.¹⁴ is repeated from vs.¹⁰. Better evidence of continuity could hardly be desired. There is one, and only one, admissible interpretation of the passage; namely, that which recognizes the fact that the prophet is using figurative language. Judah, the faithless husband, has betrayed the wife of his

¹⁷ Or perhaps, 'that which is holy to Yahwè,' but the meaning of the passage is the same in either case. That the sin is one connected with the cult is plain from the words used; cf. especially **חלל קדש יהוה** in Lev. 19⁸ Zeph. 3⁴.

¹⁸ Not 'daughters' (plur.), as in Wellhausen; Marti, in Kautzsch's *AT.*; Nowack. It is not a mere accident that the Hebrew does not read **בנות**.

¹⁹ In *all* the cases where Malachi uses the word **בגד** (vs.^{10, 11, 14, 15, 16}) he is speaking of this same sin.

youth, the covenant religion, by espousing the daughter of a strange god, *i.e.* a foreign cult (cf. the striking passages in Is. 57-66 in which the Jews are accused of this sin). The whole passage, from beginning to end, is a telling rebuke of unfaithfulness to Yahwè, which would prove the suicide of the nation (vs.¹⁰). 'Wedding' a strange form of worship necessarily involved 'divorce' from the covenant religion. The figure employed by the prophet is a very natural and effective one; and was certainly better suited to his time than the form of the metaphor introduced by Hosea.²⁰ That the true meaning of the prophet's words should have been so long forced into the background has been due largely to the reflection that a community of 'returned exiles,' 'only' 80-100 years after the restoration, would have had nothing to do with foreign cults.

It is a very interesting feature of this brief, and at first sight not altogether attractive, composition, that it gives us in small compass such a many-sided view of the religious conditions in which the writer lived. Widely diverse characteristics, each one sharply drawn,

²⁰ As has already been remarked, the text of vs.^{15, 16} is hopelessly corrupt. The attempts at emendation that have been made are rather curious than plausible. In vs.^{15a}, a half-verse of quite respectable length, no two consecutive words can be connected so as to yield any satisfactory meaning. With vs.^{16a} the case is no better. Apparently, the figure of speech is still continued (divorce); but even this is far from certain, for, aside from the particle כִּי and the twice repeated phrase אָמַר יְהוָה יְנִי, there is not a single word in the half-verse that seems possible in its present surroundings.

Wellhausen proposes to read in vs.¹⁵ וְיֵשָׁר לְךָ וְיֵשָׁר לְךָ for וְיֵשָׁר לְךָ וְיֵשָׁר לְךָ (all these conjectures unsupported), and translates: "Hat nicht der selbe Gott uns den Athem geschaffen und erhalten? und was verlangt er? Samen Gottes!" But וְיֵשָׁר could not possibly mean 'erhalten,' in this sense. Nor would any shade of the proper meaning, 'übrig bleiben, übrig lassen,' be in place here. Thus the whole emendation falls. It may be added, further, that this translation puts a great strain on almost every part of the text. The unmodified אָהַר (LXX read אָהַר) is not a natural designation for God (in vs.¹⁰ the case is quite different). The combination רֹחַ לִי (לִנִּי) is as unlikely as possible; though it is perhaps not worse than זָרַע אֱלֹהִים.

In vs.¹⁶, Wellh. conjectures אֲשַׁנָּא, and omits the clause אָמַר יְהוָה יְנִי, translating: "Denn ich hasse es, dass man sein Weib entlässt und sein Gewand mit Frevel bedeckt." But this translation cannot be extorted from the Hebrew text. For 'ich hasse' we should expect שָׂנְאָתִי, not אֲשַׁנָּא. The phrase וּבְכַסֵּה חַמָּם עַל לְבוּשִׁי is mere nonsense. כַּסָּה is not an infinitive, moreover; and the suffix in לְבוּשִׁי has nothing to which it can refer.

Of the two verses only this can be said with confidence, that they are the continuation of vs.¹⁰⁻¹⁴, and are concerned with the same accusation (cf. vs.^{15b, 16b} with vs.¹⁴).

are put side by side, and form together a consistent picture. It was a time when Israel was beginning to feel the effects of her more intimate acquaintance with the great nations round about. The world had grown larger, and the perspective had changed. A new type of sceptics had arisen; men who belonged to the better part of the nation,²¹ but who doubted Yahwè's interference in human affairs (2¹⁷ 3^{13ff.}). The feeling that the old beliefs and observances were outgrown was gaining ground. The effect of these tendencies showed itself plainly in the public worship. A considerable number of the priests did their work in a merely perfunctory way, until their indifference (to call it by no worse name) became a public scandal. There were many of the people, moreover, who did not hesitate to 'betray the nation' (as Malachi insists) by openly espousing foreign cults (2^{10ff.}). On the other hand, the orthodox, the 'God-fearing,' formed a sort of inner church or sect by themselves (3¹⁶) in opposition to the growing scepticism of the others and their free attitude toward the prescribed forms of worship. 'Then those that feared Yahwè spoke with one another,²² and he heard, and a record was written before

²¹ So we may certainly conclude from Malachi's treatment of them. In their impatient questions and assertions, which Malachi somewhat impatiently repeats (and possibly exaggerates), there is no evidence of scoffing or of insincerity. It is plain from 3^{13ff.} that these free-thinkers whom Malachi is addressing, and against whom he is justly incensed, are quite distinct from the 'ungodly' in Israel (רשעים, vs.¹⁵ 18), as they are also from the pious orthodox (vs.¹⁶). The charge against them is similar to that with which Malachi assails the priests; in fact, all parts of the book contain one and the same accusation, in varying form. The prophet is not dealing with such forms of evil as receive passing mention in 3⁵, but with the more insidious evils which were threatening the church from within, and were all the more dangerous because not a few were ready to defend them. The people whom he is attacking are respected members of the community. This is probably the explanation of the abrupt transition at 3⁸. The prophet has begun in vs.⁶ 7 a soliloquy (perhaps suggested by vs.⁵, and at any rate directly connected with it) on the shameful conduct of the chosen people. But as he cries out, "Come back again to your God!" he can hear the retort of these respectable sceptics: "How shall we 'come back'?" We are not 'sorcerers,' or 'perjurers,' or 'adulterers,' or even irreligious." Then the prophet turns on them, and delivers a thrust that was not to be parried: 'Why is the support of the public worship so shamefully neglected by you?' We may easily believe that this was the one unanswerable argument at his disposal; certainly none of those with whom he was reasoning would have wished to have the temple service cease altogether. What the prophet then adds in vs.¹⁰⁻¹² is the soundest practical advice for these doubters.

²² To emend נא to ה, and regard the ר'א'י יהוה in vs.^{16f.} as the same Israelites whose utterances (in vs.^{14f.}) have just been rebuked (Wellhausen, with some

him for those that feared him and regarded his name.'²³ The promise is added, that these faithful few shall be 'Yahwè's own' in an especial sense (notice the emphatic position of **סגלה**) in the coming day of judgment. It must be evident that the prophet is speaking here of real, not imaginary, lines of division, more or less distinct, which have already been consciously drawn in the community. Cf. especially Is. 66⁵. That the pious orthodox were actually a small minority may, indeed, be doubted; they would naturally speak of themselves in this way. The situation closely resembles that which produced the two parties of the Pharisees and Sadducees at a later day; the liberal—often far too liberal—party, recruited largely from the priests; and the exclusive sect (**חסידים, פרושים**) made up of the pious, patriotic adherents to the traditional religion and worship. We have in this book a document of unique value for the history of this inevitable result of Israel's progress, the growth of distinct sects which become more and more widely separated from each other. Of course a somewhat similar contrast had existed in Israel since the earliest times; nor would it be difficult to imagine, from what we know of the Jews in the Greek period, what their previous history must have been; but in Malachi we have direct

hesitation), is to turn the whole passage upside down. As for the LXX reading *ταυτα*, it is simply a witness to the fact that the Greek translator also misunderstood the passage. That he had before him the Hebrew word **זה** is not at all probable. The presence of **אז** in our text, moreover, would be very difficult to account for on the supposition that the original reading was **זה**. In Gen. 4²⁶, which Wellh. cites in support of the possibility of such an accident, it is true that some have wished to emend **זה החלל** to **אז החלל** (or **הוא ה'**; Ball, in *SBOT*). But there also the emendation is unsound. If the LXX reading *οὗτος ἤλαπισεν* proves anything, it proves that the translator had before him **זה החלל** with **י**, not without it. The phrase **זה (הוא) החלל** is one that no translator could possibly misunderstand; and a theory of intentional perversion of the meaning would have very little plausibility here. On the other hand, the *Hophal* **היחלל**, which occurs only here, would not readily be recognized; we need no better demonstration of this than the Targum to this verse. The Greek translator, supposing this to be a verb in the active voice (and therefore from **יחלל**), and not knowing then what to do with **אז**,—possibly also misled by the following **הי**,—wrote *οὗτος ἤλαπισεν*; but we are certainly not therefore justified in suspecting our Massoretic reading, **אז היחלל**, which is at least as well suited to its context as are the proposed substitutes.

²³ For the 'record book,' cf. Is. 65⁶. The expression **השבי שמו** is exactly in line with the thought with which the prophet's mind is filled; cf. **לתת כבוד**, **לשמי**, 2²; **אינכם נשאים פני**, 2⁹, etc. For this use of **חשב**, cf. Is. 53³, etc. This is certainly not a place to think of emending the text. The verse division, too, is quite correct as it stands.

testimony from the Persian period, giving us, as it were in a single flash, a clear view of the actual course of events. The writer is not only one who is excellently well informed, but he is rebuking in unusually plain and unequivocal terms the heterodoxy of his day. His own point of view, under these circumstances, was that of one who could appreciate the new, while remaining faithful to the old; such a position as might have been held, for example, by a broad-minded Pharisee of the Maccabaeian age. The bold utterance 1¹¹ is not to be passed over lightly; it is one of the greatest things in the Old Testament. The tendency to abandon the worship of Yahwè, or to introduce into it foreign elements, was strong. It was inevitable that for many of the best of the people the significance of the phrases 'Yahwè the God of Israel' and 'Israel the chosen people' should be lost altogether. It was a momentous period in the history of the Jewish religion, and Malachi realized the fact. That under these circumstances he should have uttered such words as those in 1¹¹ shows the strength of his faith quite as strikingly as the breadth of his view. He saw that there was sincere worship of God outside of Judaism, but his grasp of the old article of faith, 'Yahwè the God of Israel,' was in no way loosened. There was only one chosen people. Israel stood in a peculiar relation to the God of all the world, as its history showed. This being the case, the thought of any negligence or unfaithfulness in the performance of the divinely appointed and time-honored religious observances was not to be tolerated. In the appreciation of this attitude, which is consistently maintained by the prophet, lies the key to the right understanding of the book.

As for the date of Malachi, this much seems certain, that it was written at some time in the Persian period (allusion to the 'governor' in 1⁸) after the completion of the temple (3¹⁰). Regarding the other criteria, it may be said that they all point distinctly to a late rather than an early date. The remarkable passage 1²⁻⁵ (Edom *the* arch-enemy of Israel) belongs with Am. 9¹² and Obad.^{21; 24} the apocalyptic passages 3^{1 ff. 19 ff.}, with their conception of the day of judgment as the day when 'the wicked' (רשעים) shall be destroyed out of Israel, remind of the Psalms (Wellh.); the theological development

²⁴ The passages Is. 34^{5 ff.} 63^{1 ff.}, which are probably to be dated in the fourth century (see Cheyne, *Introd. to Isaiah*), are also to be included here. The utterance in Malachi is characteristic of the time rather than of the prophet himself. See my article, 'The Edomites in Southern Judah,' in this number of the JOURNAL.

presupposed by the book finds its nearest parallels in the Psalter and the Wisdom literature;²⁵ and finally, the position of Malachi in the collection of the Prophets may be adduced, though the argument is not a weighty one. We may, therefore, assign the book with some confidence to the first half of the fourth century.²⁶

It has often been argued, from the fact that Malachi calls the priests by the name 'sons of Levi,' that he was not acquainted with the priestly law book (see, *e.g.*, Wellh., p. 203). But this conclusion is not justified. It is evident in all parts of the book that the writer is profoundly influenced by Deuteronomy (in which respect he has many companions among the latest Old Testament writers). Nothing could be more natural than that he should use this familiar designation of the priests in his solemn warnings addressed to them.²⁷ The same may be said of 3²² (probably not written by Malachi; see above) with its mention of Horeb instead of Sinai. The words are all taken from Deuteronomy. The 'laws and statutes' which were 'enjoined by Moses upon all Israel' were, of course, associated with the name 'Horeb' by all who were familiar with Deuteronomy (see, *e.g.*, Dt. 5^{1.2}; cf. also Sir. 48⁷ Ps. 106¹⁹). From 3¹⁰ (cf. Nu. 18^{21 ff.}) it is natural to suppose that the priestly law of tithes was already codified, as it was certainly recognized.

The diction of Malachi is pure; the style vigorous, though often prosaic and sometimes awkward. In more than one place the meaning is seriously obscured by an abrupt transition, due apparently to the writer's impulsive haste.²⁸ A personal peculiarity of his style is seen in his favorite way of opening an argument; by introducing the supposed objections of his hearers, which he then refutes (1^{2 ff.} 6 ff. 2¹⁷

²⁵ It must also be observed that the religious situation in Malachi is in many respects strikingly parallel to that in Deutero-Isaiah, especially ch. 57-66, as many have noticed. The extent and significance of this correspondence have hardly been realized, however. If I am not mistaken, a thorough study of Malachi will yield new and important material for the interpretation of the difficult poetry of these chapters in Isaiah.

²⁶ There is nothing to preclude the possibility that the פִּהָה mentioned in 1⁸ was Nehemiah himself. Nehemiah 5^{14 f.} does not speak of *gifts*, but of tribute and (especially) of exactions. But in the Malachi passage the reference can be only to voluntary gifts (made for the purpose of gaining favor; הִשָּׂא פִּינִיךָ). For the evidence that the date of Nehemiah's residence in Jerusalem as governor was in the early part of the fourth century, see my *Composition of Ezra-Neh.*, p. 8 (note 2), 65.

²⁷ Cf. perhaps Is. 66²¹.

²⁸ Accidental corruption of the text may be partly responsible for this, to be sure.

3^{7 f. 13 ff.}).²⁹ Originality and earnestness are marked characteristics of the book in all its parts. The estimate that pronounces it a monument of the degeneracy of Hebrew prophecy, the product of an age whose religious teachers could only imitate, but not attain to, the spiritual fervor of the old prophets (De Wette-Schrader, Duhm, Reuss), is in the highest degree unjust.

²⁹ It is a curious fact that many scholars, following Ewald, have seen in this (in itself by no means remarkable) habit of style a mark of the transition to the dialectic manner of the Jewish schools—although dating Malachi in the fifth century!