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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY ON
MALACHI

by Adam Clarke.

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

ON THE

HOLY BIBLE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

DESIGNED AS A HELP TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING
OF THE SACRED WRITINGS

BY ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.S.A., &c.

A NEW EDITION, WITH THE
AUTHOR'S FINAL CORRECTIONS

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.—Rom. 15:4.

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THE BOOK PROPHET MALACHI

Chronological Notes relative to this Book

- Year from the Creation, according to Archbishop Usher, 3607.
- Year from the vocation of Abram, 1524.
- Year since the destruction of Troy, 787.
- Year since the commencement of the kingdom of Israel by the Divine appointment of Saul to the regal dignity, 698.
- Year from the division of Solomon's monarchy into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, 578.
- Fourth year of the *ninety-fifth* Olympiad.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Varronian computation, 356.
- Year before the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 397.
- Cycle of the Sun, 5.
- Cycle of the Moon, 4.

CHAPTER 1

*This chapter begins with showing the great and free favour which God had manifested to the Israelites, above what he had done to the Edomites, who are threatened with farther marks of the Divine displeasure; alluding, perhaps, to the calamities which they suffered from Judas Maccabeus and John Hyrcanus, (see **1Macc 5:65**, and *Joseph. Antiq. xiii. 9.*) 1-5. God then reproaches his people, and especially their priests, for their ungrateful returns to his distinguished goodness, 6. They are particularly charged with sacrificing the refuse of beasts, 7-9, for which God threatens to reject them, 10, and choose other nations who will show more reverence to his name and worship, 11-14.*

NOTES ON CHAP. 1

Verse 1. The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.]
 This prophet is undoubtedly the *last* of the Jewish prophets. He lived after Zechariah and Haggai; for we find that the *temple*, which was begun in their time, was standing complete in his. See ³¹⁸¹⁰**Malachi 3:10**. Some have thought that he was contemporary with Nehemiah; indeed, several have supposed that *Malachi*, is no other than *Ezra* under the feigned name of

angel of the Lord, or *my angel*. John the Baptist was the link that connected Malachi with Christ. According to Abp. *Usher* he flourished B.C. 416, but the authorized version, which we have followed in the margin, states this event to have happened *nineteen* years later. Both the Hebrew language and poetry had declined in his days.

Israel.—Here means the Jewish people in general.

Verse 2. Was not Esau Jacob's brother?] Have I not shown a greater *partiality* to the *Israelites* than I have to the *Edomites*?

I loved Jacob] My *love to Jacob* has been proved by giving him greater privileges and a better inheritance than what I have given to *Esau*.

Verse 3. And I hated Esau] I have shown him *less love*; ^{<0290>}**Genesis 29:30, 31**. I comparatively *hated* him by giving him an inferior lot. And now, I have not only laid waste the dwelling-place of the *Edomites*, by the incursions of their enemies; but (^{<3010>}**Malachi 1:4**) they shall remain the perpetual monuments of my vengeance. On the subject of *loving Jacob* and *hating Esau*, see the notes on ^{<0272>}**Genesis 27:21-46**, and ^{<4013>}**Romans 9:13**. Let it be remembered, 1. That there is not a word spoken here concerning the *eternal state* of either Jacob or Esau. 2. That what is spoken concerns merely their *earthly possessions*. And, 3. That it does not concern the *two brothers* at all, but the *posterity* of each.

Verse 4. They shall build, but I will throw down] We have already seen enough of the wickedness of the *Edomites* to justify the utmost severity of Divine justice against them. The *pulling down* predicted here was by Judas Maccabeus; see **1Mac 5:65**; and by John Hyrcanus; see *Joseph. Antiq.*, lib. xiii. c. 9. s. 1.

They shall call them, The border of wickedness] A wicked land. Among this people scarcely any trace of good could ever be noted.

Verse 5. Your eyes] Ye *Israelites shall see*, in your succeeding generations, that—

The Lord will be magnified] By his kindness in Israel, and his judgments *beyond*.

Verse 6. A son honoureth his father] I am your *Father*—where, then, is my honour? Where your filial obedience?

If I be a master, where is my fear?] The respect due to me.

Verse 7. Ye offer polluted bread] The priests, probably to ingratiate themselves with the people, took the refuse beasts, &c., and offered them to God; and thus the sacrificial ordinances were rendered *contemptible*.

Verse 8. Offer it now unto thy governor] *tj p pechath*, a word signifying a *lieutenant*, or *viceroy*, among the Chaldeans, Syrians, and Persians; for neither at this time, nor ever after, was there a *king* in Israel.

Verse 9. Beseech God] There were evident marks of God's displeasure in the land, and it was occasioned by these pollutions through the priests. And now he exhorts *them* to pray to God that they may be pardoned: for, if this practice be persisted in, God will not accept any offering made by them.

Verse 10. Who is-among you] From this we learn that there was not one sincere or honest priest among them. They were selfish and worldly; and so basely so, that not one of them would even kindle a fire on the hearth of the altar unless he were paid for it.

Verse 11. From the rising of the sun] The total abolition of the Mosaic sacrifices, and the establishment of a *spiritual* worship over the whole earth, is here foretold. The *incense* of praise, and the *pure offering* of the *Lamb without spot*, and through him a holy, loving heart, shall be presented everywhere *among the Gentiles*; and the Jews and their mock offerings shall be rejected.

Verse 12. Ye have profaned it] Ye have desecrated God's worship; is it any wonder that God should cast you off, and follow you with his judgments?

Verse 13. Ye have snuffed at it] A metaphor taken from cattle which do not like their *fodder*. They *blow strongly* through their nose upon it; and after this neither *they* nor *any other cattle* will eat it.

Ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick] There had never been such abominations in the Divine worship before. What was of no worth in itself, and what could not be used by its owner, was brought to God's altar, and offered for sacrifice! Was not the punishment of these wretches less than their crimes?

Verse 14. Cursed be the deceiver] Those who act thus, as they cannot elude God's *notice*, so neither shall they escape his *curse*.

And voweth, and sacrificeth—a corrupt thing] The history of Ananias and Sapphira, ^{<4460>}Acts 5:1, &c., is a complete comment on this. It was high time to break up this corrupt service; and after this time God does not appear to have paid any regard to it, for he sent them no other prophet.

MALACHI

CHAPTER 2

The priests reprov'd for their unfaithfulness in their office, for which they are threatened to be deprived of their share of the sacrifice, (the shoulder,) and rewarded only with ignominy and ordure, 1-3. The degeneracy of the order is then complain'd of, and they are again threatened, 4-9. The rest of the chapter reproves the people for marrying strange and idolatrous women; and multiplying divorces, with all their consequent distress, in order to make way for such illicit alliances, 10-17. See ^{<16180>}Nehemiah 10:30; 13:27-30, &c.

NOTES ON CHAP. 2

Verse 2. If ye will not hear] What I have spoken, *lay it to heart*, and let it sink down into your souls.

Give glory unto my name] That *honour* that is due to me as a *Father*, and that *fear* that belongs to me as a *Master*, ^{<30106>}**Malachi 1:6.**

I will even send a curse upon you] I will dispense no more good.

I will curse your blessings] Even that which *ye have* already shall not profit you. When temporal blessings are not the means of leading us to God and heaven, they will infallibly lead us to hell. In speaking of the abuse of temporal blessings, one of our old poets, in his homely phrase, expresses himself thus,—

*Thus God's best gifts, usurped by wicked ones,
To poison turn by their con-ta-gi-ons.*

Yea, I have cursed them already] This may refer, generally, to *unfruitful seasons*; or, particularly, to a *dearth* that appears to have happened about this time. See ^{<570106>}**Haggai 1:6-11.**

Verse 3. Behold, I will corrupt your seed] So as to render it unfruitful. *Newcome* translates,— “I will take away from you the shoulder.” This was the part that belonged to the priest, ^{<080732>}**Leviticus 7:32;** ^{<61818>}**Deuteronomy 18:3.**

Spread dung upon your faces] Instead of *receiving* a sacrifice at your hands, I will throw your offerings back into your faces. Here God shows his *contempt* for *them* and their offerings.

Verse 4. This commandment] That in the *first* verse; to drive such priests from his presence and his service.

That my covenant might be with Levi] I gave the priesthood and the service of my altar to that tribe.

Verse 5. My covenant was with him of life and peace] These are the *two* grand blessings given to men by the *NEW Covenant*, which was shadowed by the *OLD*. To man, excluded from the favour of God, and sentenced to death because of sin, God gave **tyrb berith**, a *covenant sacrifice*, and this secured *life*—exemption from the death deserved by transgressors; communication of that *inward spiritual life* given by Christ, and issuing in that *eternal life* promised to all his faithful disciples. And, as it secured *life*, so it gave *peace*, prosperity, and happiness; *peace* between God and man, between man and man, and between man and his own conscience.

Verse 6. The law of truth was in his mouth] See the qualifications of Levi: 1. “He feared me;” he was my sincere worshipper. 2. “He was afraid;” he acted as in the presence of a *just* and holy God, and acted *conscientiously* in all that he did. 3. “My law of truth was ever in his mouth;” by this he directed his own conduct and that of others. 4. “No iniquity;” nothing contrary to justice and equity ever proceeded “from his lips.” 5. “He walked with me in peace;” he lived in such a way as to keep up union with me. 6. “He did turn many away from iniquity;” by his upright administration, faithful exhortations, and pious walk, he became the instrument of converting many sinners. This character suits every genuine minister of God. And as the priest’s *lips* should preserve knowledge, so the *people* should seek “the law at his mouth;” for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts, ~~3007~~ **Malachi 2:7**.

Verse 8. But ye are departed out of the way] Ye are become impure yourselves, and ye have led others into iniquity.

Verse 9. Therefore have I also made you contemptible] The people despised you because they saw that you acted contrary to your functions. This has happened repeatedly since, to several *classes of priests*. Not maintaining, by *purity of life* and *soundness of doctrine*, the dignity of the

ministerial function, they became contemptible before the people; their meager preaching was disregarded, and their persons at last cast out as a general loathing to the universe! See what happened to the truly abominable priesthood of France and Rome 1796-8. They were the *sole cause* of that *infidelity* that brought about the *revolution*. They are now partially restored; and are endeavouring to supply by *grimace, paltry superstition, and jesuitical cunning*, what they want in purity of morals, soundness of doctrine, and unction from God. They must mend, or look for another revolution. Mankind will no longer put up with the *chaff* of puerile and fanatical ceremonies in place of the *wheat* of God's word and worship.

Verse 10. Have we not all one Father?] From this to ^{<3126>}**Malachi 2:16** the prophet censures the *marriages of Israelites with strange women*, which the law had *forbidden*, ^{<1873>}**Deuteronomy 7:3**. And also *divorces*, which seem to have been multiplied for the purpose of contracting these prohibited marriages.—*Newcome*.

Why do we deal treacherously] Gain the affections of the daughter of a brother *Jew*, and then *profane the covenant of marriage*, held sacred among *our fathers*, by putting away this same wife and daughter! How wicked, cruel, and inhuman!

Verse 11. Daughter of a strange god.] Of a man who worships an idol.

Verse 12. The master and the scholar] He who teachers such doctrine, and he who follows this teaching, the Lord will cut off both the one and the other.

Verse 13. Covering the altar of the Lord with tears] Of the poor women who, being *divorced* by cruel husbands, come to the priests, and make an appeal to God at the altar; and ye do not speak against this glaring injustice.

Verse 14. Ye say, Wherefore?] Is the Lord angry with us? Because ye have been *witness* of the *contract* made between the parties; and when the lawless husband divorced *his wife, the wife of his youth, his companion*, and the *wife* of his covenant, ye did not execute on him the discipline of the law. They kept their wives till they had *passed their youth*, and then put them away, that they might get *young ones* in their place.

Verse 15. And did not he make one?] ONE of *each kind*, Adam and Eve. *Yet had he the residue of the Spirit*; he could have made millions of pairs,

and inspired them all with *living souls*. Then *wherefore one?* He made one pair from whom all the rest might proceed, that he might have a *holy offspring*; that children being a marked property of *one man* and *one woman*, proper care might be taken that they should be brought up in the discipline of the Lord. Perhaps the *holy* or *godly seed*, *pyhl a [rz zera Elohim, a seed of God*, may refer to the MESSIAH. God would have the *whole human race* to spring from *one pair*, that Christ, springing from the *same family*, might in his sufferings taste death for every *man*; because he had that nature that was common to the *whole human race*. Had there been *several heads of families* in the beginning, Jesus must have been incarnated *from each of those heads*, else his death could have availed for those only who belonged to the *family* of which he was incarnated.

Take heed to your spirit] Scrutinize the motives which induce you to put away your wives.

Verse 16. For the Lord—hateth putting away] He abominates all such divorces, and *him* that makes them.

Covereth violence with his garment] And he also *notes* those who frame idle excuses to *cover* the *violence* they have done to the wives of their youth, by putting them away, and taking others in their place, whom they *now* happen to like better, when their own wives have been worn down in domestic services.

Verse 17. Ye have wearied the Lord] He has borne with you so long, and has been provoked so often, that he will bear it no longer. It is not fit that he should.

Every one that doeth evil] Ye say that it is *right* in the sight of the Lord to put away a wife, because she has no longer found favour in the sight of her husband. And because it has not been signally punished hitherto, ye blaspheme and cry out, “Where is the God of judgment?” Were he such as he is represented, would he not speak out? All these things show that this people were horribly corrupt. The priests were bad; the prophets were bad; the Levites were bad; and no wonder that the people were irreligious, profane, profligate, and cruel.

MALACHI

CHAPTER 3

In allusion to the custom of sending pioneers to prepare the way for the march of an eastern monarch, the coming of Christ's forerunner is described, and then the coming of Christ himself, 1; with the terrible judgments which were to accompany that event, in order to refine and purify his people and his priests, 2-6. The following verses reprehend them for withholding the legal tithes and offerings, with large promises in case of their repentance and amendments, 7-12. The prophet expostulates with the people for their hard and profane speeches against the conduct of Providence, and declares God will one day make a fearful and final distinction between the righteous and the wicked, whose different characters are in the mean time carefully recorded, 13-18.

NOTES ON CHAP. 3

Verse 1. Behold, I will send my messenger] *ykal m Malachi*, the very name of the *prophet*. But this speaks of John the Baptist. I, the Messiah, the *Seed of God*, mentioned above, *will send my messenger*, John the Baptist.

He shall prepare the way] Be as a pioneer before me; a corrector of civil abuses, and a preacher of righteousness.

And the Lord, whom ye seek] The *Messiah*, whom ye expect, from the account given by the prophet Daniel, in his *seventy weeks*, ²⁷⁰⁹²⁴ **Daniel 9:24.**

Shall suddenly come to his temple] Shall soon be presented before the Lord in his temple; cleanse it from its defilement, and fill it with his teaching and his glory.

The Messenger of the covenant] He that comes to fulfil the great design, in reference to the covenant made with Abram, that *in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed*. See the *parallel texts* in the margin, and the *notes* on them.

Verse 2. But who may abide the day of his coming?] Only they who shall believe on his name; for they that *will not*, shall be blinded, and the unbelieving nations shall be destroyed by the Romans.

Like fuller's soap] *tyrbk keborith*, from *rrb barar*, to *cleanse*, any thing that deterges. *Kali*, or *fern ashes*, or such things. I doubt whether the *composition* which we call *soap*, was known in ancient times.

Verse 3. He shall sit as a refiner] Alluding to the case of a refiner of metals, *sitting* at his fire; increasing it when he sees necessary, and watching the process of his work.

The sons of Levi] Those who minister in their stead under the *NEW covenant*, for the *OLD Levitical institutions* shall be abolished; yet, under the preaching of our Lord, a *great number of the priests became obedient to the faith*, ^{<4007>}**Acts 6:7**; and, as to the others that did not believe, this great Refiner threw them as *dross* into the Roman fire, that consumed both Jerusalem and the temple.

Verse 5. I will come near to you to judgment] And what fearful cases does he get to judge! *Sorcerers, adulterers, false swearers, defrauders of the wages of the hireling, oppressors of widows and orphans, and perverters of the stranger* and such as *do not fear the Lord*: a horrible crew; and the land at that time was full of them. Several were converted under the preaching of Christ and his apostles, and the rest the Romans *destroyed* or carried into *captivity*.

Verse 6. I am the Lord, I change not] The new dispensation of grace and goodness, which is *now* about to be introduced, is not the effect of any *change* in my *counsels*; it is, on the contrary, the fulfilment of my everlasting purposes; as is also the throwing aside of the Mosaic ritual, which was only intended to *introduce* the great and glorious Gospel of my Son.

And because of this ancient covenant, ye Jews are not *totally consumed*; but ye are now, and shall be still, preserved as a distinct people—monuments both of my justice and mercy.

Verse 7. Gone away from mine ordinances] Never acting according to their spirit and design.

Return unto me] There is still space to repent.

Wherein shall we return?] Their consciences were *seared*, and they knew not that they were *sinner*s.

Verse 8. Will a man rob God?] Here is one point on which ye are guilty; ye withhold the *tithes* and *offerings* from the temple of God, so that the Divine worship is neglected.

Verse 9. Ye are cursed with a curse] The whole nation is under my displeasure. The curse of God is upon you.

Verse 10. Bring ye all the tithes] They had so withheld these that the priests had not food enough to support life, and the sacred service was interrupted. See ^{<61310>}**Nehemiah 13:10.**

And prove me now herewith] What ye give to God shall never lessen your store. Give as ye *should*, and see whether I will not so increase your store by *opening the windows of heaven*—giving you *rain* and *fruitful seasons*—that your *barns* and *granaries* shall not be able to contain the abundance of your *harvests* and *vintage*.

Verse 11. I will rebuke the devourer] The *locusts*, &c., shall not come on your crops; and those that are in the country I will disperse and destroy.

Neither shall your vine cast her fruit] Every *blossom* shall bear *fruit*, and every *bunch of grapes* come to *maturity*.

Verse 12. All nations shall call you blessed] They shall see that a peculiar blessing of God rests upon you, and your *land shall be delightful*; like *Paradise*, the *garden of the Lord*.

Verse 13. Your words have been stout against me] He speaks here to *open infidels* and *revilers*.

What have we spoken] They are ready either to deny the whole, or impudently to maintain and defend what they had spoken!

Verse 14. Ye have said, It is vain to serve God] They strove to destroy the Divine worship; they asserted that it was *vanity*; that, if they performed acts of worship, they should be nothing the better; and if they abstained, they should be nothing the worse. This was their teaching to the people.

Walked mournfully] Even *repentance* they have declared to be useless. This was a high pitch of ungodliness; but see what follows; behold the general *conclusions* of these reprobates-

Verse 15. And now we call the proud happy] Proud and insolent men are the only happy people, for they domineer everywhere, and none dares to resist them.

They that work wickedness are set up] The *humble* and *holy* are depressed and miserable; the *proud* and *wicked* are in places of *trust* and *profit*. Too often it is so.

They that **tempt God are even delivered.**] Even those who *despise* God, and *insult* his justice and providence, are preserved in and from dangers; while the *righteous* fall by them.

Verse 16. They that feared the Lord] There were a few godly in the land, who, hearing the language and seeing the profligacy of the rebels above, concluded that some signal mark of God's vengeance must fall upon them; they, therefore, as the corruption increased, cleaved the closer to their Maker. There are *three characteristics* given of this people, viz.:—

1. *They feared the Lord.* They had that reverence for Jehovah that caused them to depart from evil, and to keep his ordinances.
2. *They spake often one to another.* They kept up the communion of saints. By mutual exhortation they strengthened each other's hands in the Lord.
3. *They thought on his name.* His name was sacred to them; it was a fruitful source of profound and edifying *meditation*. The *name of God* is *God himself* in the plenitude of his power, omniscience, justice, goodness, mercy, and truth. What a source for thinking and contemplation! See how God treats such persons: *The Lord hearkened* to their conversation, *heard* the meditations of their hearts; and so *approved* of the whole that *a book of remembrance was written before the Lord*-all their names were carefully *registered* in heaven. Here is an allusion to *records* kept by kings, ^{<700>}**Esther 6:1**, of such as had performed signal services, and who should be the first to be rewarded.

Verse 17. They shall be mine] I will acknowledge them as *my subjects and followers*; in *the day*, especially, when I come to punish the wicked and reward the righteous.

When I make up my jewels] *hi gs segullah*, my *peculium*, my *proper treasure*; that which is *a man's own*, and *most prized* by him. Not *jewels*; for in no part of the Bible does the word *mean a gem* or *precious stone* of

any kind. The interpretations frequently given of the word in this verse, comparing *saints* to *jewels*, are *forced* and *false*.

I will spare them] When I come to visit the wicked, I will take care of them. I will act towards them as a *tender father* would act towards his most *loving* and *obedient son*.

Verse 18. Then shall ye return] To your *senses*, when perhaps *too late*; and *discern*-see the difference which God makes, *between the righteous and the wicked*, which will be most *marked* and *awful*.

Between him that serveth God] Your obedience to whom, ye said, would be unprofitable to you.

And him that serveth him not.] Of whom ye said, his disobedience would be no prejudice to him. You will find the former received into the kingdom of glory; and the latter, with yourselves, thrust down into the bitter pains of an eternal death. Reader, ponder these things.

In the great day of the Lord, at least, if not long before, it will be fully discovered who have been the truly wise people; those who took up their cross and followed Christ; or those who satisfied the flesh, with its affections and desires, following a multitude to do evil.

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CHAPTER 4

God's awful judgments on the wicked, 1. Great blessedness of the righteous, 2, 3. The prophet then, with a solemnity becoming the last of the prophets, closes the Sacred Canon with enjoining the strict observance of the law till the forerunner already promised should appear, in the spirit of Elijah, to introduce the Messiah, and begin a new and everlasting dispensation, 4-6.

NOTES ON CHAP. 4

Verse 1. Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven] The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

And all the proud] This is in reference to ^{<30B15>}Malachi 3:15 of the preceding chapter.

The day that cometh shall burn them up] Either by famine, by sword, or by captivity. All those rebels shall be destroyed.

It shall leave them neither root nor branch.] A proverbial expression for total destruction. Neither *man* nor *child* shall escape.

Verse 2. You that fear my name] The persons mentioned in the *sixteenth* verse of the preceding chapter, ye that look for redemption through the Messiah. {^{<30B16>}Malachi 3:16}

The Sun of righteousness] The Lord Jesus, the promised Messiah; the Hope of Israel.

With healing in his wings] As the *sun*, by the rays of *light* and *heat*, revives, cheers, and fructifies the whole creation, giving, through God, *light* and *life* everywhere; so Jesus Christ, by the influences of his *grace* and *Spirit*, shall quicken, awaken, enlighten, warm, invigorate, heal, purify, and refine every soul that believes in him, and, by his *wings* or *rays*, diffuse these blessings from one end of heaven to another; everywhere invigorating the *seeds of righteousness*, and *withering* and *drying up* the *seeds of sin*. The *rays* of this *Sun* are the *truths* of his *Gospel*, and the *influences* of his *Spirit*. And at present these are universally diffused.

And ye shall go forth] Ye who believe on his name shall go forth out of Jerusalem when the Romans shall come up against it. After Cestius Gallus had blockaded the city for some days, he suddenly raised the siege. The Christians who were then in it, knowing, by seeing Jerusalem encompassed with armies, that the day of its destruction was come, when their Lord commanded them to flee into the mountains, took this opportunity to escape from Jerusalem, and go to Pella, in Cœlesyria; so that no Christian life fell in the siege and destruction of this city.

But these words are of more general application and meaning; “ye shall go forth” in all the occupations of life, but particularly in the means of grace; and-

Grow up as calves of the stall] Full of health, of life, and spirits; satisfied and happy.

Verse 3. Ye shall tread down] This may be the commission given to the Romans: Tread down the wicked people, tread down the wicked place; set it on fire, and let the *ashes* be trodden down under your feet.

Verse 4. Remember ye the law of Moses] Where all these things are predicted. The *Septuagint*, *Arabic*, and *Coptic*, place this verse the last.

Verse 5. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet] This is meant alone of John the Baptist, as we learn from ^{<4017>}**Luke 1:17**, (where see the note,) in whose spirit and power he came.

Verse 6. And he shall turn (convert) the heart of the fathers (I [*al*, WITH) the children] Or, together with the children; both old and young. *Lest I come, and, finding them unconverted, smite the land with a curse, ׀רj cherem, utter extinction.* So we find that, had the Jews turned to God, and received the Messiah at the preaching of John the Baptist and that of Christ and his apostles, the awful ׀רj cherem of final excision and execration would not have been executed upon them. However, they filled up the cup of their iniquity, and were *reprobated*, and the Gentiles *elected* in their stead. Thus, the last was first, and the first was last. Glory to God for his unspeakable gift!

There are *three* remarkable *predictions* in this chapter:—1. The advent of John Baptist, in the spirit and authority of Elijah. 2. The manifestation of Christ in the flesh, under the emblem of the Sun of righteousness. 3. The

final destruction of Jerusalem, represented under the emblem of a burning oven, consuming every thing cast into it. These three prophecies, relating to the most important facts that have ever taken place in the history of the world, announced here nearly *four hundred* years before their occurrence, have been most circumstantially fulfilled.

In most of the Masoretic Bibles the *fifth* verse is repeated after the *sixth*—“Behold, I send unto you Elijah the prophet, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come;” for the Jews do not like to let their sacred book end with a *curse*; and hence, in reading, they immediately subjoin the above verse, or else the *fourth*—“Remembering ye the law of Moses my servant.”

In one of my oldest MSS. the *fifth* verse is *repeated*, and written at full length: “Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” In another, only these words are added: “Behold, I will send you Elijah.” It is on this ground that the Jews expect the reappearance of Elijah the prophet; and at their marriage-feast always set a chair and knife and fork for this prophet, whom they suppose to be invisibly present. But we have already seen that John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord, was the person designed; for he came in the spirit and power of Elijah, (see on ~~3001~~ **Malachi 3:1**.) and has fulfilled this prophetic promise. John is come, and the Lord Jesus has come also; he has shed his blood for the salvation of a lost world; he has ascended on high; he has sent forth his Holy Spirit; he has commissioned his ministers to proclaim to all mankind redemption in his blood; and he is ever present with them, and is filling the earth with righteousness and true holiness. Hallelujah! The kingdoms of this world are about to become the kingdoms of God and our Lord Jesus! And now, having just arrived at the end of my race in this work, and seeing the wonderful extension of the work of God in the earth, my heart prays:—

*O Jesus, ride on, till all are subdued,
Thy mercy make known, and sprinkle thy blood;
Display thy salvation, and teach the new song,
To every nation, and people, and tongue!*

In most MSS. and *printed Masoretic Bibles* there are only *three* chapters in this prophet, the *fourth* being joined to the *third*, making it *twenty-four* verses.

In the Jewish reckonings the *Twelve Minor Prophets* make but one book; hence there is no Masoretic note found at the end of any of the preceding prophets, with accounts of its *verses*, *sections*, &c.; but, at the end of *Malachi* we find the following table, which, though it gives the number of verses in each prophet, yet gives the *total sum*, *middle verse*, and *sections*, at the end of *Malachi*, thereby showing that they consider the whole *twelve* as constituting but *one book*.

MASORETIC NOTES

On the Twelve Minor Prophets

Hosea has — 197 verses.
 Joel — 73
 Amos — 146
 Obadiah — 21
 Jonah — 48
 Micah — 105
 Nahum — 57
 Zephaniah — 53
 Habakkuk — 56
 Haggai — 38
 Zechariah — 211
 Malachi — 55

The sum of all the verses of the Twelve Minor Prophets is 1060

The middle verse is Micah, ^{<3812>}**Micah 3:12.**

Number of Sections, 21.

**TO GOD THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST, BE ETERNAL PRAISES.
 AMEN.**

I have this day completed this Commentary on which I have laboured *above thirty* years; and which, when I began, I never expected to live long enough to finish. May it be a means of securing glory to God in the highest, and peace and good will among men upon earth! Amen, Amen.

ADAM CLARKE.

Heydon Hall, Middlesex,

Monday, March 28, A.D. 1825.