



**Smithsonian Institution**

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

## **The Teacher Vol. 52 No. 2**

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hast been covenanted, and who has covenanted with thee. There is an oat of God between you, which is not to be trifled with is to be played fast and loose with.

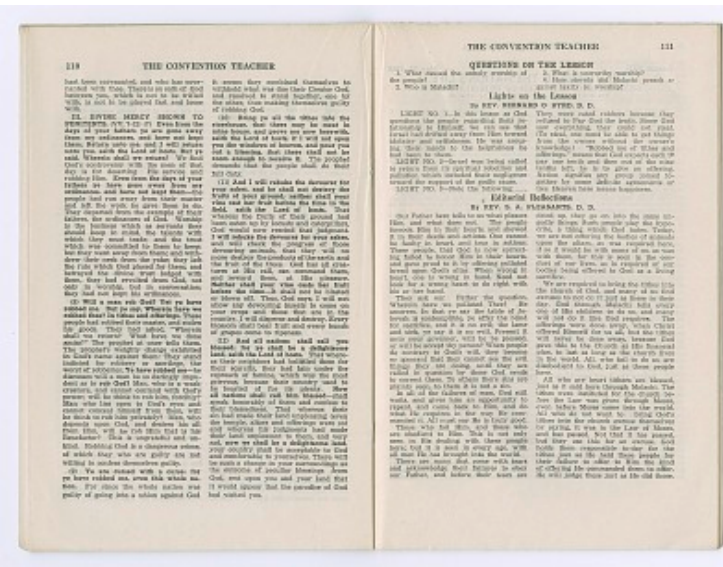
III. DIVINE MERCY SHOWN TO PENITENTS. (VV. 7-12) Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from my ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? We find God's controversy with the men of that day is for deserting His service and robbing Him. Even from the days of your fathers ye have gone away from my ordinances, and have not kept them - the people had run away from their master and left the work he gave them to do. They departed from the example of their fathers, the ordinances of God. Worship is the business which as servants they should keep in mind, the talents with which they must trade; and the trust which was committed to them to keep: but they went away from them; and withdrew their neck from the yoke; they left the rule which God placed for them; and betrayed the divine trust lodged with them, they had revolted from God, not only in worship, but in conversation; they had not kept his ordinances.

(8) Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. These people had robbed their master, and stolen his goods. They had asked, "Wherein shall we return? What have we done amiss?" The prophet at once tells them. The prophet's weighty charge exhibited in God's name against them: They stand indicted for robbery or sacrilege, the worst of robberies, Ye have robbed me-he discusses will a man be so daringly impudent as to rob God? Man, who is a weak creature, and cannot contend with God's power; will he think to rob him, forcibly? Man who lies open to God's eyes and cannot conceal himself from them, will he think to rob him privately? Man, who depends upon God, and desires his all from Him, will he rob Him that is his Benefactor? This is ungrateful and unkind. Robbing God is a dangerous crime, of which they who are guilty are not willing to confess themselves guilty.

(9) Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. For since the whole nation was guilty of going into a union against God it seems they combined themselves to withhold what was due their Creator God, and resolved to stand together, one by the other, thus making themselves guilty of robbing God.

(10) Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. The prophet demands that the people shall do their full duty.

(11) And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. That whereas the fruits of their ground had been eaten up by locusts and caterpillars, God would now rescind that judgement. I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and I will check the progress of those devouring animals, that they will no more destroy the products of the earth and the fruit of the trees. God has all creatures at His call, can command them, and reward them, at His pleasure. Neither shall your vine casts her fruit before the



time-It shall not be blasted or blown off. Thus, God says, I will not allow any devouring insects to come on your crops and those that are in the country, I will disperse and destroy. Every blossom shall bear fruit and every bunch of grapes come to ripeness.

(12) And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts. That whereas their neighbors had belittled them for their scarcity, they had lain under the reproach of famine, which was the most grievous, because their country used to be boasted for its plenty. Now all nations shall call him blessed-shall speak honorably of them and confess to their blessedness. That whereas their sin had made their land unpleasing (even the temple, altars and offerings were so) and where as his judgments had made their land unpleasant to them, and very sad, now ye shall be a delightsome land, your country shall be acceptable to God and comfortable to yourselves. There will be such a change in your surroundings as the outcome of peculiar blessings from God, rest upon your and your land that it would appear that the paradise of God had visited you.

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THE CONVENTION TEACHER 111

#### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. What caused the unholy worship of the people?
2. Who is Malachi?
3. What is unworthy worship?
4. How sternly did Malachi preach against laxity in worship?

#### LIGHTS ON THE LESSON

By REV. BERNARD O BYRD, D.D.

LIGHT NO. 1-In this lesson as God questions the people regarding their relationship to Himself, we can see that Israel had drifted away from Him toward idolatry and selfishness. He was arousing their minds to the helpfulness he had been to them.

LIGHT NO. 2-Israel was being called to return from its spiritual rebellion and pollutions which included their negligence toward the support of the godly cause.

LIGHT NO. 3-Note the following:---They were rated robbers because they refused to Pay God the tenth. Since God saw everything, they could not steal. (To steal, one must be able to get things from the owner with the owner's knowledge.) "Robbed me of tithes and offerings." means that God expects each to pay one tenth and then out of the nine tenths left, he is to give an offering. Nation signifies any group joined together by some definite agreements or ties. Heaven here means happiness.

#### Editorial Reflections

By REV. S.A. PLEASANTS, D.D.

Our Father here tells to us what pleases Him, and what does not. The

people forsook Him in their hearts, and showed it in their deeds and actions. One cannot be faulty in heart, and true in actions. These people, that God is now correcting failed to honor Him in their hearts, and gave proof to it by offering polluted bread upon God's altar. When wrong in heart, one is wrong in hand. Need not look for a wrong heart to do right with his or her hand.

They ask our Father the question, Where in have we polluted Thee? He answers. In that ye say the table of Jehovah is contemptible, ye offer the blind for sacrifice, and it is no evil; the lame and sick, ye say it is no evil. Present it unto your governor, will he be pleased or will he accept they person? When people do contrary to God's will, they become so ignorant that they cannot see the evil things they are doing, until they are called in question by those God sends to correct them. To others there sins are plainly seen, to them is is not a sin.

In all of the failures of man, God still waits, and gives him an opportunity to repent, and come back to Him, and do what he requires in the way He commanded it. All must say He is truly good.

Those who fail Him, and those who are obedient to Him. This is not only seen in His dealing with these people here; but is is seen in every age with all men He has brought into the world.

There are many that come with tears and acknowledge their failures to obey our Father, and before their tears are dried up, they go on into the same ungodly things. Such people play the hypocrite, a thing with God hates. Today, we are not offering the bodies of animals upon the altars, as was required here, if so it would be with man of us, as was with them, for this is seen in the conduct of our lives, as is required of our bodies being offered to God as a living sacrifice.

We are required to bring the tithes into the church of God, and many of us find excuses to not do it just as theses in their day. God through Malachi tells every one of His children to do so, and many will not do it like God requires. The offerings were done away, when Christ offered Himself for us all, but the tithes will never be done away, because God gave this to the Church as His financial plan, to last as long as the church lives in the world. All, who fail to do so, are disobedient to God, just as these people here.

All who are heart tithes are blessed just as it said here through Malachi. The tithes were instituted for the church before the Law was given through Moses, even before Moses came into the world. All who do not want to bring God's tithes into the church excuse themselves by saying, it was in the Law of Moses, and has passed. Not that it has passed, but they use this for an excuse. God holds them responsible to-day for the tithes just as He held these people for their failure to offer to Him the kind of offering He commanded them to offer. He will judge these just as He did those.

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