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## "THEY SHALL BE MINE."

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." – Mal. 3:16,17.

The Prophet Malachi, in connection with the above words, was foretelling, not only the coming of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ at his first advent, but also the coming of a greater, and in a fuller sense an antitype [R1440 : page 261] of Elias, before the great and notable day of the Lord's second advent. (See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., Chapter viii.) What, therefore, we find here addressed to nominal fleshly Israel, in view of the Lord's first advent and of the harvest work of sifting and separating and the final disposition of the wheat and chaff of that people in the close of the Jewish age, we find applicable now, in the harvest of this Gospel age, to nominal spiritual Israel – to the great sifting and separating work now progressing under the direction of the Lord of the harvest, who is now present.

While, therefore, we see the fitness of this prophecy in its application to fleshly Israel in the close of the Jewish age, and while we recognize its rebukes, its warnings and its promises to that people in the past, the important feature for our present consideration is its application now, in the closing days of this dispensation.

We see that the promised Elias has indeed come, and that the great "Messenger of the Covenant" in whom we delight – Jesus, our Lord and Savior – is now actually present. And truly his

presence is like the refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. (Verse 2.) All of those who profess to be his people are now under rigid inspection. The tests are being constantly applied to all professions of godliness, and are separating, with unerring precision, the pure gold of actual loyalty to God from the dross of mere profession and outward forms of godliness.

The condition of the nominal spiritual Israel was wonderfully mirrored in that of fleshly Israel. When the Lord says, "Return unto me, and I will return unto you" (verse 7), now, as then, the reply is, "Wherein shall we return." They will not own that they have departed from the right ways of the Lord: in their own estimation they are rich and increased in goods, spiritual as well as temporal, and have need of nothing, though actually they are poor and miserable and blind and naked. (Rev. 3:17.) In their own estimation they are whole and need no physician, though actually they are sick and full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. The Lord says to them, Ye have robbed me in tithes and offerings; your words have been stout against me; and ye have declared it a vain, unprofitable thing to serve the Lord and to keep his ordinances. But they answer, **[R1441 : page 261]** "Wherein have we robbed thee?" and "What have we spoken against thee?" and "What profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked contritely before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." – Verses 8,13-15.

In making profession of consecration to the Lord and yet living in pleasure and luxury with the world, conforming to worldly ideas, etc., the great nominal church has robbed God of that which they covenanted to give him – the loyalty and devotion of their hearts. Their words, too, have truly been stout against the Lord – their teachings have been in direct opposition to his Word, though they will not own it; and seeing no present profit in

following the Lord closely, and observing the temporal prosperity of the wicked, they are content to follow the Lord afar off and to make whatever compromises with the world may be necessary to secure their present advantage.

Such is the attitude of the great mass of nominal Christians to-day: they have a form of godliness, but the power has long since departed. They build magnificent temples of fashion, run in debt to the world for them, and tax even the poorest to pay the interest on the mortgage and to secure a grand organ, a paid choir and a pulpit orator. These they dedicate to God, and then open them for the festival, the fair, the grab game and church theatricals; and while all effort is made to court the favor and secure the patronage of the rich, the humble poor are shunned and slighted and elbowed first into corners and back seats and finally outside the gates.

Thus increased in worldly goods and flushed with pride and apparent prosperity, the masses of the nominal church of all denominations are at ease. They are satisfied with their position and attainments, unwilling to acknowledge their shortcomings and backslidings, and are enjoying their feasting and revelry with the world. And their words are stout against the Lord's **[R1441 : page 262]** truth, because the truth would expose their errors and sins and destroy their friendly relationship and alliance with the world.

But in the midst of all this confusion and error God's people have been developing. They are the mourners in nominal Zion whom the Lord promised in due time to comfort. (Matt. 5:4; Isa. 61:3.) They are the wheat in the midst of the tares or mere imitation Christians. They do not love the spirit of the world and cannot assimilate with it; they are not satisfied with the distorted creeds of human manufacture and deplore the fact that others are; they love the Word of God and make it their study; and they love

the spirit of God wherever they see it exemplified. And while the multitudes come together in the great temples of fashion, ostensibly to worship God, but really to worship Mammon, these prefer to meet one with another, and on every such occasion rejoice in the verification of that blessed promise of the Master – "Wherever two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

These reverence the Lord's words above the teachings and traditions of men, and it is their delight to withdraw from the great multitude and commune together concerning the Lord and concerning his promises. So these that reverence the Lord speak often one to another; they love to encourage and build one another up; they love to tell of the Lord's goodness and of his truth wherever they can find a listening ear; and when through them a neighbor or friend finds the truth they rejoice together, and together widen the circle for proclaiming the good tidings and for communing one with another with reference to their heaven-inspired hopes. Their hearts are full of love and loyalty to God, and though their opportunities to serve him and to spread abroad the honor of his name may be few, yet their loving zeal is not passed by unnoticed by the Lord; for, says the Prophet, "The Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that revered *the Lord* [not systems and creeds and traditions of men] and that thought upon *his name* [that were zealous for the honor of *his name*, not the names of Wesley, or Calvin, or Knox, or Luther]. And *they* shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels. And I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

Yes, the Lord is looking for loyal, loving, generous and noble hearts, for those who prefer the joy of his approval and of his promises to every earthly joy, and whose actions prove their zeal and devotion. Such, wherever we find them, are the Lord's

jewels; and these will all be spared when the overwhelming trouble shall shortly be visited upon the wide fields of Christendom. These ere long will all be gathered out from amongst the tares and exalted to glory and honor and dominion with Christ as his Bride and joint-heir.

"Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." Then, after the gathering and exaltation of the Church, and after the great time of trouble has accomplished its purpose of leveling all the proud and all the great systems – civil, social and religious – which have so long blinded and misled the world, then the new order of things will be established, wherein the order of the present time will be reversed. Instead of the proud being set up then, the meek shall inherit the earth, and life and prosperity and happiness and every blessing shall be the rewards of righteousness; and evil doers shall be cut off when the discipline of that time shall fail to effect a transformation, though none, we are informed, shall be thus cut off without at least a hundred years' trial under the favorable conditions of that time.

While we thus view our Heavenly Father's glorious plan and rejoice to declare it to others, what a comfort it is to know that he reads the loyalty of our hearts with reference to it; and though our talents may be few and weak, and really insignificant in our own sight, yet in the Lord's estimation the use of an opportunity even to speak to a neighbor about his truth and the honor of his name is not overlooked. "And the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written." Did you ever think of this when, perhaps with faltering **[R1441 : page 263]** speech, you tried to tell the good tidings of great joy to your next neighbor, or your shopmate, or your Christian brother or sister? or possibly to a larger company? – "The Lord hearkened, and heard it." Aye! and has not your heart burned within you as the heavenly benediction fell upon you, and sweet peace and joy filled your

soul and fired your zeal with an intense yearning to herald the good news to earth's remotest bounds? Yes, every loyal and faithful child of God has had some of this blessed experience and may have more of it, and will, to the extent that he is energetic in serving the truth.

And if our names be not blotted out of that book of remembrance through unfaithfulness, we shall surely be gathered among the jewels, though no mighty deeds have made us great in the eyes of our fellow-men. The tests of love and loyalty are not always great deeds, though, if we love with all our hearts, they will be as great and as far reaching in their influence as our talents and opportunities will permit; but the prompt and ready use of even the smallest talent is carefully noted by our loving Lord in his book of remembrance. And not the imperfect rendering of service, but the perfect intention with which it is rendered, is faithfully recorded.

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### **GOD'S BURDENS.**

I long had borne a heavy load  
Along life's rough and thorny road,  
And often-times had wondered why  
My friend walked burdenless, while I  
Was forced to carry, day by day,  
The cross which on my shoulders lay:  
When, lo, one day the Master laid  
Another cross on me. Dismayed,  
And faint, and trembling, and distressed,  
I cried, "Oh! I have longed for rest  
These many days. I cannot bear  
This other heavy load of care.  
I pray thee, Lord, behold this one –  
Shall I bear both while he has none?"

No answer came. The cross was laid  
On my poor back, and I was weighed  
Down to the earth. And as I went  
Toiling along and almost spent,  
Again I cried, "Lord have I been  
Untrue to thee? Is it for sin  
That I have done, that I must still  
Carry this cross against my will?"  
"My child," the Master's voice returned,  
"Hast thou not yet the lesson learned?  
The burden thou hast borne so long  
Hath only made thee grow more strong,  
And fitted thee to bear for me  
This other load I lay on thee.  
Thy brother is too weak as yet  
To have a cross upon him set.  
God's burdens rest upon the strong.  
They stronger grow who bear them long,  
And each new burden is a sign  
That greater power to bear is thine."  
So now no longer I repine,  
Because a heavy cross is mine,  
But struggle onward with the prayer,  
"Make me more worthy, Lord, to bear."

– *Mrs. B. M. Bailey.*

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