

the relations of men to God and to their fellowmen. If it points towards heaven, earthly duties are not forgotten. There is a passage in the third chapter in which the duties of man towards man are presented with wonderful vividness and power. God says: "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Ch. iii. 5, 6.)

From the sins that are here the objects of divine condemnation and threatened punishment, we may learn what is the conduct which God approves and requires. What are the opposites of these forms of sin? Intelligent faith, chastity, truthfulness, just and upright dealing by masters towards servants, and kindness towards all who are friendless and needy. All this is to be rendered in the fear of the Lord. That is, with a constant recognition that we are acting under the eye of our Father in heaven, to whom the rights and interests of His lowliest children are dear. It is often said that the Church shall never have the influence with the toiling masses which it ought to have, until all Christians manifest greater practical sympathy with the rights and interests of that class. Those who maintain this idea may find here a religion that strongly emphasizes this duty. It is instructive to note how all through the Old Testament Jehovah represents himself as the friend and helper of the oppressed.

These lessons for the conduct of life are unchangingly adapted to the people of all times and nations, because the sinners of Malachi's day are types of sinners that have existed in all ages. In those who questioned and disbelieved the divine faithfulness, and those who rested in outward rites that had lost their spiritual significance, we see the beginnings of the full-blown skepticism and formalism of the Sadducees and Pharisees of our Lord's day. And still, questioning disbelievers who repudiate God's claims on their homage and service, and nominal Christians who substitute outward conformity for the faith and love of the heart, like the poor, we have always with us.