

Above the high-priest no lay ruler is thought of. Now this is in accord with the priestly code which says absolutely nothing about a possible being, and which evidently does not contemplate such possibility. But admitting that the underlying legal conception of the Book of Malachi is Deuteronomic rather than Levitical—and this we willingly admit—is there anything surprising in it? Is this not what we would expect? The prophet's long familiarity with this old code, it seems to us, would naturally and necessarily make his language Deuteronomic. Furthermore, the people whom he was addressing would be more familiar with it. It had been their professed guide and standard not for a few years merely, like the priestly code with which it was now incorporated, but from the days of Josiah, nearly two hundred years before. It was this ancient, long-established law which they were violating, a law which was hallowed by the associations of the past; and by calling them to a remembrance of this fact the prophet seeks to emphasize the enormity of their sin, and to re-awaken within them a sense of national honor.

It is possible, too, that the old quarrel between the priests and Levites, which was still unappeased, would lead the prophet to base his appeals on the Deuteronomic law. This for the reason that the priests regarded the new code as too favourable to the Levites. Malachi's rebukes would thus gain strength, and his efforts to reform the priesthood prove more successful, if the law to which he appealed was the Deuteronomic.

Further, the relation of Malachi's Messianic conception to the religious condition of the time must be remembered. Disaster and disappointment and worldly loss had led the people to complain that Jehovah had broken his promises. This they argued from Deuteronomy, which said that prosperity followed obedience, disaster disobedience. In opposition to this Malachi insists on Jehovah's righteousness. That righteousness may not be manifest now, but the day is coming when it will be manifest. It is here that the Messiah is to find his peculiar mission, which will be to declare that