

Malachi 3:13-18

JEWELS AMONG STOUT THORNS

- I. The thorns.
 - A. The people, in general, are still unchanged spiritually.
 - 1. This book speaks of an on-going exchange between the prophet of God and the people.
 - 2. Our text contains the last of seven questions the church raises to challenge God's charges of sin.
 - B. The words of church as a whole were "stout," i.e., strong, hard, resolute.
 - 1. They had spoken strongly against God before, but now it comes out even more forcefully.
 - 2. They bring two charges against God and His just ways of working.
 - 3. They assumed (wrongly) that grace is in things.
 - 4. This was the highest insult ("stout words") they could speak against God, resulting in God's severe judgment on them.
 - C. In reality they presented spiritual empty acts of service which were without the needed ingredient of humility.
- II. But God's words through Malachi do bear positive fruit (16,17).
 - A. There is always a remnant, as Noah, the judges, the 7,000 of Elijah's day.
 - B. "A book of remembrance was written."
 - 1. It records names and deeds so they can be remembered.
 - 2. "Written before him," i.e, before God: by His direction so that He will remember them and their deeds.
 - C. This was to keep an accurate account of their repentance and of their real observance of God's commandments.
 - 1. That they "spake often one to another" was the remarkable achievements which were recorded.
 - 2. And recorded what they spoke about: that "they feared Jehovah" and "thought upon His name."
 - 3. This shows how remarkable in God's eyes is such reverent talking about Jehovah.
- III. God keeps a record, for His will give a response in the judgment day of both the righteous and the wicked.
 - A. Then God will reveal what He always knows, viz, the difference between the righteous (serving) and the wicked.
 - B. In that day God will punish the wicked who did not serve Him.
 - C. Positively, His book was written before Him "for them," i.e., it shall be shown that they are His jewels.