

## TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

**For Teachers of Bible Classes**

The Lesson may be introduced by a brief talk about the Book of Malachi. The name Malachi means "My (that is Jehovah's) Messenger", ch. 1:1. The book was written at a time when the moral tone was low. The priests had lost zeal in their work and had become selfish, the people were stinting their sacrifices, scepticism was appearing and there were many intermarriages with heathen nations. The prophet sought to restore purity of worship and social justice. Bring out the following points:

1. *The rebuke for withholding God's tithes*, vs. 7-12. Two main lessons should be emphasized: (a) It was robbery to withhold the tithe. For the law, see Deut. 14:22-29. Dwell upon the punishment of disobedience, v. 9. (b) Faithfulness to the law of tithes will bring rich reward,—provision in abundance.

2. *Rebuke for scepticism*, vs. 13-15 (see Exposition). Bring out the source of unbelief in the fact that many of the pious were poor, while many of the proud were rich and apparently happy. In Old Testament times material blessing was associated with piety. But now the pious were suffering. How could this be explained?

3. *The vindication of the faithful*, vs. 16-18. The fulfilment of God's promise was to be looked for not in the present, but in the future. Then there would be social cheer, remembrance by God and vindication in His day, and the difference between the righteous and the wicked would be apparent.

The heart of this Lesson is that our attitude toward God will determine our real success. God will justify the faith of those who fulfil His will even in material things. How does the New Testament treat this ideal? Does our faith guarantee worldly success? Consider the definite relation of the tithe to worldly success. Has there been any change in this law? Does our largest worldly success depend upon giving God His tithe? How would the tithing system affect the revenue of our churches, and our missionary policy?

Press home the truth that if we are only faithful to God, we can trust Him for blessing. If sufferings do come upon us now for righteousness' sake, the time is coming when these will be over and our happiness will be made perfect.

**For Teachers of the Senior Scholars**

It would be well for the class to read this whole interesting little Book of Malachi. Draw attention to the fact that a good deal of the Book is in the form of questions and answers. It belongs to the last days of Nehemiah, or perhaps later. What impression do we get from the reading of the Book of the religious condition of the Jews at this time? The world was too much with them. Is this all we have in the end after so many centuries of divine instruction and discipline? It is a dark day, but there is still the hope of better things,—the hope of the coming Messiah, ch. 4:2. The conversation may be guided by the following outline:

I. *Severe Rebukes*, vs. 7-9. Deal with the charges which the prophet brought against his people. What were they? Note how little they themselves knew about the kind of life they were living, or how to make life what it ought to be. Is there any occasion for a rebuke of this kind to-day? A good many are forsaking divine ordinances and are robbing God in many ways and yet are not aware of what they are doing. Impress upon the class the danger of robbing God of our heads and hearts and hands as well as of our money. What is the result of forsaking divine ordinances and robbing God? (V. 9.)

II. *Precious Promises*, vs. 10-12. What were the promises? Upon what condition were these promises based? This condition implies renewed loyalty to God by the amount he gives to religious purposes? A mean giver is usually a mean Christian. Giving is a much surer gauge than the length of his prayers.

III. *Divine Revelations*, vs. 13-15. In these words God reveals sinners to themselves. They do not know that their words are stout against God. They think that they are doing only a little reasonable complaining. We seldom know the full meaning of our words of complaining.