

Lesson XII.

PREPARATION FOR THE MESSIAH

December 17, 1905

Malachi 3: 1-12. Study chs. 3, 4. Commit to memory vs. 8-10. Read the Book of Malachi.

GOLDEN TEXT—I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.—Malachi 3: 1.

1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap;

3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

5 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.

6 For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore

Revised Version—¹Omit will; ²and the; ³cometh; ⁴soap; ⁵and they shall; ⁶offerings; ⁷ancient; ⁸the Lord change not; ⁹Omit Even; ¹⁰have turned aside; ¹¹say; ¹²rob; ¹³the; ¹⁴the whole tithe; ¹⁵happy.

LESSON PLAN

- I. The Lord's Coming, 1-5.
- II. The Lord's Rebuke, 6-9.
- III. The Lord's Promise, 10-12.

DAILY READINGS

(By courtesy of I. B. R. Association)

M.—Preparation for the Messiah, Mal. 3: 1-12.
T.—The Sun of Righteousness, Mal. 3: 13 to 4: 6.
W.—Good tidings, Isa. 40: 1-10. Th.—Turn ye 1 Zech. 1: 1-6. F.—The messenger, Luke 3: 1-9. S.—The purifier, Matt. 3: 7-12. S.—A pure offering, Mal. 1: 6-11.

Shorter Catechism—Ques. 107. What doth the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us? A. The

ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you; saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts.

conclusion of the Lord's prayer (which is, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen*) teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him. And, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, *Amen*.

The Question on Missions—48. Is medical work important in missions? Yes, through it, in many cases, the missionary is enabled to gain access to the people with the gospel. Medical work is done at all our stations in either dispensary or hospital, or both.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise, 438 (Supplemental Lesson); 125; 122; 23 (Ps. Sel.); 35 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY); 151.

EXPOSITION

Time and Place—About 425 B.C.; Jerusalem.

Connecting Links—In 433 B.C., Nehemiah returned to the court of Persia, Neh. 13: 6. In his absence many evil practices sprang up among the people (see Neh. 13: 7-31). Nehemiah, on his return, set about stopping these evils. Even before his return the prophet Malachi had been speaking against the wrong-doers. The Lesson is from his prophecies.

I. The Lord's Coming, 1-5.

V. 1. Behold I (that is, God) will send my messenger. Who is the "messenger"? There may be a reference to Nehemiah. "He came suddenly to the temple" and cleansed it (Neh. 13: 8); he was a "swift witness" (Neh. 13: 25) against all wrong-doers (v. 5); he appeared in the spirit of Elijah (ch. 4: 5) enforcing the law of Moses." (Dods.) But the prophecy

points also to John the Baptist, who prepared the way for the coming of Christ, the Old Testament Messiah. Prepare the way. Compare Isa. 40: 3-5. In the East when rulers traveled, men were sent ahead to prepare the road for them, hence the idea is, that the great Ruler is coming and men must prepare a way for Him. Before me. God speaks of the Messiah as One with Himself. The Lord... even the messenger (or angel) of the covenant (to be distinguished from "My messenger," the forerunner); the angel who brought God's promises to men, mentioned in Ex. 14: 19; 23: 20; Zech. 1: 11. "He represents God to man so directly and fully, that when he speaks or acts God Himself is felt to speak and act." In the highest sense Christ is the Messenger of God to man. Whom ye (the Jews) delight in; because they thought that, by the mere fact of His coming,