

**LESSON NOTES.**

**FOURTH QUARTER**

**STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

**LESSON XI DECEMBER 10**

**LESSONS IN GIVING.**

Mal. 1. 6-11 and 3. 8-12 Memory verse  
Mal. 3. 10

**GOLDEN TEXT.**

God loveth a cheerful giver.—2 Cor. 9. 7.

**OUTLINE.**

1. False Worship of the True God v. 6-11.
  2. Curses, or Blessings? v. 8-12
- Time—About B.C. 433  
Place—Jerusalem

**LESSON HELPS.**

Malachi was the last of the Jewish prophets. He lived after Zechariah, for the temple, begun in Zechariah's time, was now completed. Hebrew language and poetry had declined in the days of Malachi.

6. "A son honoureth his father"—The chapter opens with a statement of the favour God had shown to the Israelites, and then the thought is, What gratitude have they shown in return? Jehovah is a "father." Where is your filial love and obedience? He is a "master." "Where is my fear?" that is, the respect which is due unto me. "Wherein have we despised thy name"—A strange question for the priests to ask. Sin must have obscured their mental vision.

7. "Polluted bread"—To please the people, or because of cheapness, the priests offered refuse beasts. What was worthless or of little worth was placed upon the Lord's altar, and so the priests seemed to say, "The table of the Lord is contemptible." The priests are dead but it may be that something of their spirit lingers in the Christian church. What we offer to God should be something of worth, even if much self-sacrifice is necessary. He is worthy of our best.

8. "Unto thy governor"—The viceroy, who ruled in place of the king. Neither at this time nor after this was there a Jewish king in Judah.

9. "Beseech"—Pray that your sins may be pardoned, else God will not accept any offering you make.

10. This verse shows that God is insulted by hypocritical worship. The worldliness of the worshippers made their sacrifices worthless. It is the giver which sanctifies the gift.

11. "Among the Gentiles"—The non-Jewish, the heathen world. A remarkable prophecy, not understood by the prophet himself in its fulness of meaning. Mosaic sacrifices were to be abolished, a spiritual worship was to be established, and the incense of praise from Gentiles should ascend, and the "pure offering" would be the Lamb of God.

8. "Will a man rob God"—A question to startle, followed by a serious charge, and the proof. "In tithes" (or tenths)—That is, in tributes, voluntary gifts for the maintenance of worship. Religious service was generally neglected or regarded as of slight worth.

10. "Bring ye all the tithes"—That the priests may be supported and the sacrifices carried on. "Prove me now"—Make test of. "Open ye the windows of heaven"—That is, send abundant rain, so that the harvest should be so plentiful that the barns and granaries should be too small to store it.

11. The devourer. The locusts and the caterpillars, which were an army to devour, and greatly dreaded. "Cast her fruit." Every blossom shall come to fruition, every bunch of grape shall ripen.

12. All nations shall call you blessed—Seeing that the land was like a garden in its prosperity.

**HOME READINGS.**

- M. Lessons in giving—Mal. 1. 6-11, 3. 8-12.  
Tu. "As he is able."—Deut. 16. 9-17.  
W. The reward.—Luke 6. 30-38.  
Th. Christ's example.—2 Cor. 8. 1-9.  
F. A willing mind.—2 Cor. 8. 10-21.  
S. A cheerful giver.—2 Cor. 9.  
Su. Ready to distribute—1 Tim. 6. 6-19

**QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.**

1. False Worship of the True God, v. 6-11.  
How can we honour God?  
With what did the Lord of hosts charge the priests?  
Did the priests know that they "despised" God's name?  
How did they "despise" it?  
Why did people offer polluted bread? (It was most easily got.)



**MOSQUE OF THE PIGEONS.**

At one of the mosques of Constantinople, the pretty scene shown in the picture may any day be witnessed. Mahomet's life having on one occasion been saved by pigeons, it is thought a religious act to care for and protect them. They are fed at a certain time every day, and flock in thousands to the feeding-place—graceful, pretty things, fluttering and hopping about. It would be as much as a man's life is worth, almost, if he were to hurt one of them.

A similar custom prevails at Venice. Every day at two o'clock, a great bell is rung to call the pigeons to dinner—and instantly the air is full of the whirr of their wings, as they flock to the appointed spot. Six hundred years ago, the Doge of Venice won a victory over the Turks at Candia, and the news was brought to Venice by carrier pigeons. The grateful Senate decreed that they and their successors for ever should be fed by the State—and the custom is kept up to the present day.

Why did they offer lame and sick animals as sacrifices? (They were cheaper.)

Did these priests and people treat God as well as they treated their governor?

Are we as reverent and loving towards God as we are towards some of our fellow-beings?

Would God hear the prayers of these irreverent priests?

Will he hear our prayers if we are irreverent?

What does God say about his name among the Gentiles?

How can we make "pure offerings" unto God?

2. Curses, or Blessings? v. 8-12.

How had Judah robbed God?

How many had been thus guilty?

What was the penalty on them?

What does God command in verse 10?

What sort and degree of blessing were conditioned on obedience to this command?

What material blessings are promised?

How would others regard Judah?

Does God need our gifts to-day?

Does he want them?

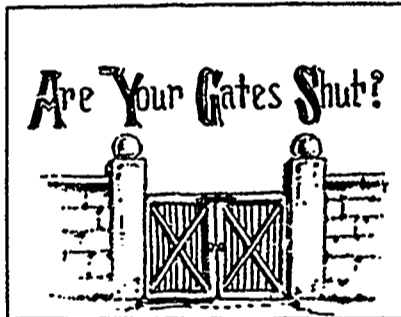
How does he regard the cheerful giver?

**PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.**

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That the Lord wants no gifts which we do not value?
2. That the prayers of those who shut their hearts and pockets against God are not answered?
3. That our best blessings are conditioned on "bringing in the tithes"?

Do we shut the gates? How is it? Are the gates of the heart shut on the



**CONSTANTINOPLE BUTCHER.**

The above picture shows the queer way in which the butchers of Constantinople carry on their business. A any of the streets are so narrow that there is no room for carts, so most of the traffic is by means of donkeys. You see this fellow takes his whole establishment with him. His shop and stock-in-trade are borne by his donkey, and he

carries his scales in his hands and shouts his wares as he goes along. No picture of street life in Constantinople would be complete without one or more of its hungry curs. So here we have some of them prowling round in hope of getting some scraps of meat, and another is sleeping in the shade oblivious of even this boon.

Sabbath against the week-day work and plans and play, and against all wrong, angry, unkind thoughts? Do we remember God's day and call it a delight because we love the dear Lord who gave it? Are we as glad to have Sabbath come as we are to go to a beautiful garden? Do we keep it holy by pleasing him in prayer and praise and in learning about Jesus? Then the gates that shut out all wrong things shut in love and joy and peace and all things good and sweet.

**Advice to Boys.**

Whatever you are, be brave, boys!  
The liar's a coward and slave, boys!  
Though clever at ruses,  
And sharp at excuses,  
He's a sneaking and pitiful knave, boys.

Whatever you are, be frank, boys!  
'Tis better than money and rank, boys!  
Still cleave to the right;  
Be lovers of light;  
Be open, candid, and frank, boys!

Whatever you are, be kind, boys!  
Be gentle in manners and mind, boys!  
The man gentle in mien,  
Words and temper, I ween,  
Is the gentleman truly refined, boys!

But whatever you are, be true, boys!  
Be visible through and through, boys!  
Leave to others the shamming,  
The "greening" and "cramming";  
In fun and in earnest, be true, boys!  
—Leisure Hour.

**TRUE BRAVERY.**

Between twenty and thirty years ago, three little English boys were amusing themselves together in a woodlodge one summer forenoon. Suddenly one of them looked grave and left off playing. "I have forgotten something," he said; "I forgot to say my prayers this morning; you must wait for me." He went quietly into a corner of the place they were in, knelt down, and reverently repeated his morning prayer. Then he returned to the others, and was soon merrily engaged in play. This brave boy grew up to be a brave man. He was the gallant Captain Hammond, who nobly served his Queen and country, till he fell headlong leading on his men to the attack on the Redan, at the siege of Sebastopol. He was a faithful soldier to his earthly sovereign, but better still, a good soldier of Jesus Christ, never ashamed of his service, ever ready to fight his battle.

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