

## Notes on the S. S. Lessons.

### Messiah's Messenger.

Malachi 1-6 and 4: 1-6.

**T**HERE is a curious custom still to be seen in Egypt, and it is one of the first things that strikes an English person when visiting a city in that land. Whenever anyone drives along the street in his carriage, a servant runs in front to clear the way. In narrow streets, where there are no policemen, and where carriages are not common, this is necessary. The servant is always a young man, dressed in a thin white robe with open sleeves that fly like wings as he runs. This robe is fastened round the waist by a belt, or girde, and hangs down to his knees, the rest of his legs being bare. He carries a long white stick with which he drives donkeys or even people out of the way of his master's carriage. As he runs he cries out "make way for his Highness," or "for the Pasha" or if his master is not one of the nobility he only shouts "make way" or some such warning. Should there be a cart standing in the way he will remove it, or if a large stone or piece of timber should bar the progress, or run the risk of jolting the carriage as it goes over it, he will roll it to one side, so that no one who sees this servant running and performing his duties without at once thinking of what John the Baptist tells us he was sent to be. A

*fore runner, preparing the way of the Lord, and making his paths straight.*

Our lesson to-day contains words written four hundred years before John was born, but it tells us exactly what he was to be, God's messenger or the *fore-runner of Jesus.*

Malachi was the last of the Old Testament prophets. He lived in the land of Judea about a hundred years after the Jews came back from captivity. He foretold the coming of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world, though he lived four hundred years before Christ was born.

He said: "The Lord shall send His messenger, who shall prepare the way before Him. He shall be like Elijah the prophet, to turn the people from wickedness to serve God." This pointed to John the Baptist, who was like Elijah in the boldness of his words, and who lived like Elijah in the wilderness.

He said, too: "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly return to His temple. But who shall stand

when He comes? For he shall sit as one who refines silver, and separates the precious metal from the dross."

See the question which is put in verse 2, "Who may abide [endure] the day of His coming?" What does this mean? It means that men must be prepared for His coming beforehand, or it will prove to them a dreadful day. If Christ should come to us in person to-day, would we be able to abide His presence? or if He should not come to us, but by the messenger of death call us to Him, would we be ready? Many will frankly answer, "No; we are not ready yet; but we hope to be before the time of calling really comes." Well, look at verse 1, see, it says He will come "suddenly," that is, unexpectedly. So He did come in Judea, and He will come again suddenly and unexpectedly, and therefore the warning comes to us direct from the Master's own lips, "What I say unto you I say unto all, 'Watch.'"

Dear children, ask yourselves these questions:—Do I listen to God's messages? Do I want to be healed of my sins? Am I ready for Jesus to come again? Will I be among those who fear His name, or among the stubble? Am I trying to grow like Jesus?

### Suffer Children to Come.

Luke 10: 4.

**I**N a family, near Amoy, in China, a little boy, the youngest of three

children, on asking his father to allow him to be baptized, was told that he was too young, that he might fall back if he made a profession when he was only a little boy. To this he replied,—“Jesus has promised to carry the lambs in His arms. As I am only a little boy, it will be *easier* for Jesus to carry me.” He was allowed to be baptized, and soon after the whole family became members of the Mission Church at Amoy.

“Suffer the children!” Oh, hear His voice!  
Let every heart leap forth and rejoice;  
And let us freely make Him our choice;  
Do not delay, but come.

### “OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.”

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