

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.

424-406.] LESSON XII. [March 21.

MESSIAH'S MESSENGERS.

Mal. 3. 1-6. L. 1-6. *Comment to mem. v. 1. 1-3.*

GOLDEN TEXT.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.—Mal. 3. 1.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The Saviour has come as the rising of the sun to bless and purify his people, and to destroy sin from the world.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Mal. 1. 1-14. T. Mal. 2. 1-17. W. Mal. 3. 1-18. Th. Mal. 4. 1-6. F. Isa. 40. 1-11. Sa. Isa. 60. 1-22. Su. Isa. 61. 1-11.

TIME.—Probably 424-408. At the same time with Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem (Neh. 13. 6).

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.—Darius II. (Nothus), Persian emperor, B.C. 423-404. Nehemiah, governor of the Jews. Socrates, teaching at Athens, with Plato for his pupil. Herodotus nearly through his travels, 484-400. Xenophon (444-354) leads the retreat of the 10,000 (400).

PLACE IN BIBLE HISTORY.—Malachi corresponds with the last chapter of Nehemiah.

MALACHI.—Means "Messenger of Jehovah." He was the last of the prophets. He was a Jew, contemporary with Nehemiah in his second visit to Jerusalem, lived between 444 and 400 B.C. Of his personal history nothing is known.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI.—Consists of the words of Malachi himself, aiding Nehemiah in his reforms, and encouraging the people with a vision of the future. Date of writing, about B.C. 400, at Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION.—Half a century after the story of Esther, we turn again to the reformation under Nehemiah (Les. 9, 10) in Jerusalem. After remaining there for 12 years he went back to Persia. How long he staid we do not know, but several years, and then he returned to Jerusalem. At this time Malachi appears and aids him in his reformation. What needed to be done can be seen from Nehemiah, chap. 13, and Malachi, chaps. 1-3.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. I.—God. My messenger—John the Baptist (Luke 7. 27). Before me—God in the person of his Messiah, Jesus Christ. Whom ye seek—They were looking for a deliverer and a king to bring the times promised by Isaiah (chaps. 60-63). Messenger of the covenant—The one covenanted or promised (Gen. 22. 15-18; Isa. 52. 13-15; chaps. 53, 60-63), and the one who would make a new and better covenant between them and God (Heb. 8. 6-13). 2. But who may abide—He will be very different from their expectations. A refiner's fire—Their trials were to purify. And Christ by his character and life and demand for faith would separate the good from the bad. Fullers—One who cleans or scours cloth. Soap—Lye. Our soap was not then known. 3. Sit as a refiner—The refiner sits that he may watch carefully the process of refining, and not heat the metal too hot or too long. 6. For I change not—I will keep the promises I have made, and adhere to my plan of making you the people of God. Therefore I refine, not destroy, by the troubles I send upon you. 1. The day cometh—This refers first to the troubles that come upon the Jews, especially the destruction of Jerusalem, and this is a type of the punishment of all sinners. 2. Sun of righteousness—Being to God's people what the sun is to the world,—a bringer of light, life, comfort, power, fruit. Wings—Rays. As calves of the stall—They should go out from their troublous times as joyfully as a calf shut up in the stall bounds and frieks when let out into the field. 5. Elijah—See Matt. 11. 14; Mark 9. 11, 12.

SUMMARY FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Malachi.—His connection with Nehemiah.—The evils that needed to be reformed.—"My messenger."—"The messenger of the covenant."—Refiner's fire.—Fullers' soap.—Christ as a witness against wrong.—The day that shall burn as an oven.—Christ as the sun of righteousness.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How many years after Esther was Malachi? Who was Malachi?

When did he live? When did he prophesy? What great man's reforms did he aid? Where in the Bible history does his prophecy belong?

SUBJECT: THE COMING OF THE SAVIOUR.

I. THE NEED OF A SAVIOUR.—How long did Nehemiah remain at Jerusalem? When did he go back to Persia? (Neh. 13. 6.) Did he return to Jerusalem? (Neh. 13. 7.) What evils did he find prevalent there? (Neh. 13. 4, 5, 7, 10, 15, 16, 23, 28, 29.) What ones are mentioned by Malachi? (Chaps. 1. 6-8, 13; 2. 8, 11, 17; 3. 8, 15.)

II. PREPARATION FOR THE SAVIOUR (v. 1, and chap. 4. 5, 6).—What is meant by "my messenger?" (Luke 7. 27.) What is he called in v. 5? (See Matt. 11. 14; Mark 9. 11, 12.) What is meant by preparing the way? (Isa. 40. 3-5.) Before whom?

III. THE COMING OF THE SAVIOUR (v. 1).—Who is meant by the messenger of the covenant, and why? How did Christ come? Where? Why were the Jews seeking him? (Isa. 40. 5-11; 60. 1-22; 61. 1-11.)

IV. THE MISSION OF THE SAVIOUR (vs. 2-6 and 1-4).—In what respect was Christ like a refiner's fire? Like fullers' soap? Why does the refiner sit at his work? What would be the result? (v. 4.) What would Christ be to sinners? Is his religion opposed to every sin? What day is referred to "that should burn as an oven?" In what respect is Christ like the sun? Meaning of last clause in v. 2? How does Christ cause men to keep the commandments of Moses?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. The world is full of sins, and needs the Saviour.
2. Conviction of sin and the fear of punishment lead men to Christ.
3. Christ coming purifies the good and casts out the evil.
4. Christ condemns and bears witness against all sins.
5. He is to his people what the sun is to the world,—the giver of light, warmth, comfort, life, and power.
6. Those who believe in Christ keep the law from love of right.

REVIEW EXERCISE.

15. Who was Malachi? *Ans.* The last of the prophets, in the time of Nehemiah. 16. What did he foretell? *Ans.* The coming of the Messiah, Jesus the Son of God. 17. What would he be like? *Ans.* A refiner and purifier of silver. 18. What would he oppose? *Ans.* All sins and crimes. 19. What would he be to his people? *Ans.* The Sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings.

LESSON XIII.

REVIEW AND EASTER LESSON.

REVIEW.

(Scripture lesson.—Ps. 107. 1-21.)

GOLDEN TEXT.

Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men.—Ps. 107. 8, 8.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God guides and controls the affairs of men for the upbuilding of his kingdom on earth.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 2 Kings 22. 1-13. T. Jer. 9. 1-16; 35. 12-19. W. Dan. 1. 8-21; 3. 16-28. Th. Dan. 5. 1-28. F. Ezra 1. 1-4; 3. 8-13. Sa. Neh. 1. 1-11; 8. 1-12. Su. Mal. 3. 1-6; 4. 1-6.

QUESTIONS.

I. Over how much time do the lessons of this quarter extend?

II. Name the ten most important events which occurred during these two and one-half centuries.

III. In what lands did these events take place? What changes were made during this time in the kingdoms of the world? Point out the places on the map.

IV. Name the most prominent persons whose acts are recorded in these lessons. The kings. The prophets. The other men of prominence.

SUBJECT: GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL DEALINGS WITH HIS PEOPLE.

I. THE SAD CONDITION OF THE JEWS. (Les. 1, 2, 3, 4).—What was the chief sin of

the Jews? Of what other sins were they guilty? Did the people grow better or worse? Had many things been done to make them better? Why were they so wedded to sin and idolatry?

II. THE REFINING AS SILVER IS REFINED (Les. 6, 7, 10, 11).—What did we learn in our last lesson about refining silver? How does God purify the hearts of men? Name some of the things God did to the Jews to purify them from sin? What great revival of religion? What two lessons show an increased interest in the study of God's word? What warning did they have in the fate of the kingdom of Israel? What warnings from prophets? What good men set them a noble example? What punishment did God inflict upon them? When was their city and temple destroyed? How many times were they made captive? To what lands were they taken? How long did the captivity last? What new trouble came upon them in Esther's time?

III. THE DAWNING OF A BRIGHTER DAY (Les. 5-12).—What change did the captivity work in their characters? Name some of the good men who showed the power of true religion. What times came of new interest in the study of God's word? What revivals of religion are recorded? When were they allowed to return from their captivity? How many returned? When was the temple rebuilt? What two great reformers came? What prophets aided? By whom were the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt?

IV. APPLICATIONS.—What does this history teach about God's dealings with us? What does God want us to be? Name as many as you can of the ways in which God is seeking to make you good and fit for heaven.

EASTER LESSON.

What is the meaning of *Easter*? What does the day celebrate? When does it occur?

SUBJECT: SCRIPTURE WORDS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION.

When and where did Christ die? How long was he in the tomb? (1 Cor. 15. 4.) When did he rise again? (Matt. 28. 1; John 20. 1.) How many times did Christ appear to his disciples? For how many days? (Acts 1. 3.) To how many persons did he appear? (1 Cor. 15. 4-9.) Was there sufficient proof that Jesus really rose again from the dead? What was his last act in his earthly body? (Acts 1. 6-11.) Where is he now? (Mark 16. 19; Rev. 1. 12-16.) What is he now doing? (Heb. 7. 25; Matt. 28. 20.)

What did Paul say he was seeking? (Phil. 3. 11.) What did Jesus promise his disciples? (John 5. 28; 6. 40; 11. 23, 24.) What proof of the resurrection did he give? (Luke 20. 37, 38.) What did Paul say to the Romans about the resurrection? (Rom. 6. 8, 9.) What to the Corinthians? (1 Cor. 6. 14; 2 Cor. 4. 14.) What to the Thessalonians? (1 Thes. 4. 16, 17.) What to the Philippian? (Phil. 3. 20, 21.) What was the frequent preaching of the apostles? (Acts 4. 1, 2; 24. 15; 28. 8.)

What does Paul say about the importance of the resurrection? (1 Cor. 15. 11-20.) What does he say about the change made by the resurrection? (1 Cor. 15. 35-54.)

What comfort and help can we derive from the resurrection of Christ? What from the promise of our resurrection? How may we attain to the resurrection of the just?

WHEN you are pained by an unkind word and deed, ask yourself if you have not done the same many times.

THE number of girls in the common schools of Japan in 1882 was 930,000, and there were 3,300 woman teachers. This does not include those studying with private teachers, or in private schools, which the higher classes mostly prefer. In many of those families whose sons are abroad in Europe and America, the daughters are receiving at home such instruction as they can get in those languages which will enable them to keep in communication with their brothers, and in sympathy with them. I know of a family where three or four sisters write to their brothers in this country in English.

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