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SABBATH-SCHOOL LESSONS *from*

GALATIANS *and* MALACHI

For SENIOR CLASSES

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SABBATH-SCHOOL LESSONS

FROM

Galatians and Malachi

FOR

SENIOR CLASSES

FIRST QUARTER 1901

LESSON I.—DEBTORS TO DO THE WHOLE LAW.

January 5, 1901.

(Gal. 4:30, 31; 5:1–8, R. V.)

"What saith the Scripture? Cast out the handmaid and her son; for the son of the handmaid shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman. Wherefore, brethren, we are not children of a handmaid, but of the freewoman. With freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that, if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing. Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace. For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love. Ye were running well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion came not of Him that calleth you."

DONATIONS THIS QUARTER GO FOR WORK IN THE MOST NEEDY FIELDS.

Remember that this whole epistle is devoted to showing the difference between the flesh and the Spirit. The trouble with the Galatian brethren was that, having begun in the Spirit, they were seeking perfection through the flesh. See chapter 3:3. In the fourth chapter we have a sharp contrast between the flesh and the Spirit. The flesh is bondage, the Spirit is freedom. If we have been baptized into Christ, we have put on Christ, and Christ through the Spirit abides in us. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Rom. 8:9. "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free;" for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Cor. 3:17. *Not to Sinai, but to Mount Zion, do we come* for life. See Heb. 12:18-24.

QUESTIONS.

1. What saith the Scripture?
"Cast out the bondwoman and her son."
2. What is the bondwoman? To what does she bring forth? Who is the child of the bondwoman? According to what was he born?
3. What is true of them who are in the flesh?
"They that are in the flesh can not please God." Rom. 8:8.
4. Then what of the son of the bondwoman, born after the flesh?
"The son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."
5. Whose children are we?—"We are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." How so?—With freedom did Christ set us free. Compare John 8:31, 32, 34-36.
6. What, therefore, should we do?
"Stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."
7. What is said to those who receive circumcision?
"Christ will profit you nothing."
8. What is true of every man that is circumcised?
"He is a debtor to do the whole law."
9. What of those who would be justified by the law?
"Ye are severed from Christ." "Christ is become of no effect unto you." "Ye are fallen away from grace."
10. How only may we expect the hope of righteousness?
"Through the Spirit."
11. Is the mere question of circumcision then so vital a matter?

"In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision."

12. What is the only essential thing?

"Faith working through love."

13. Had the Galatians ever been in the right way?

"Ye did run well."

14. What is indicated by the question, "Who did hinder you?" In what had they been hindered?

"That ye should not obey the truth."

15. What is truth? Where and where only is it found? How only may we know it? What will it do for us?

NOTES.

1. "If ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing." "Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law." These two statements, together with a remembrance of what circumcision signified, and also the controversy that was being waged in the churches by the false brethren, make the case very clear. Why were some now turning to circumcision?—Because false brethren had taught them "except ye be circumcised, ye can not be saved." It was for justification, salvation. Circumcision was a sign of righteousness, of the keeping of the law, but only of righteousness by faith. Rom. 4:11. Those, therefore, who were trusting to circumcision for justification, were seeking righteousness by their own works of the law.

2. "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision." That is, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any power. Neither condition can help any person to gain righteousness. Circumcision was never designed as a help; it was never intimated by the Lord that it had any power. It was given merely as a sign of the righteousness already possessed through Christ. What every person needs is *power*, but neither circumcision nor anything else, except Christ, can give that. The cross of Christ is the power of God, and in that we get the righteousness of God.

3. The original purpose of God in giving the sign of circumcision had been lost sight of, and the thing had been wholly perverted. It was given to Abraham as a sign of the righteousness which he already had, through faith, after he had made the vain attempt to fulfil the promises of God by his own flesh. It was to be a sign, a reminder, that "the flesh profiteth nothing." Therefore in a warning against

those who are of the circumcision—who trust in their own works for salvation—we read, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil. 3:3.

4. Circumcision was given as a sign of righteousness, a sign of perfect commandment-keeping. It is evident, therefore, that wherever there was circumcision, we should expect to find the law fully kept, and whoever was circumcised in order to secure righteousness, thereby pledged himself to do the whole law, to make himself wholly righteous through the flesh. But this is an impossibility, for righteousness can be obtained in no other way than through faith in Christ—faith which receives and appropriates the life of Christ. Therefore the man who undertakes to make himself righteous is in debt to the law; he is *debtor* to do the whole law. He has assumed obligations which he can never fill, and he is everlastingly a debtor. He owes perfect righteousness, and has not the first thing wherewith to pay. It is a terrible condition in which to be. Read Rom. 8:3-7. To seek righteousness through the flesh is to seek righteousness by that which is diametrically opposed to righteousness. It is like seeking reconciliation with God by making a league with the devil. Of course every man on earth is in debt to the law, in that nobody has fulfilled the law's just demands; but when one has acknowledged the claims of the law, and has set himself to discharge the obligation, the condition is emphasized.

5. The hope of righteousness is the inheritance. "The promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Rom. 4:13. See also Gal. 3:18; 2 Peter 3:13. It is through the Spirit that we wait for this; for the Spirit is "the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Eph. 1:14. Only through the Spirit of God can righteousness be obtained. "The righteousness of the law" is fulfilled only in those "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:4.

6. "Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" What is truth? "Thy Word is truth." John 17:17. Christ is the Word, and He is "the Truth." John 14:6. Therefore, only in Him is there sanctification. John 17:17, 19; 1 Cor. 1:30. In Him dwells the law in perfection. Ps. 40:8. He sets the captive soul at liberty, a liberty which is

found only in seeking God's precepts. Ps. 119:45. In Him is "the perfect law of liberty." The freedom which Christ the Truth gives, is freedom from sin, from disobedience to God's holy, righteous, and good law. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

LESSON II.—THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW.

January 12, 1901.

(Gal. 5:7-12, R. V.)

"Ye were running well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion came not of Him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have confidence to you-ward in the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded; but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? then hath the stumbling-block of the cross been done away. I would that they which unsettle you would even cut themselves off."

QUESTIONS.

1. How did the Galatians begin the Christian race?
"Ye did run well." See also Gal. 3:3.
2. In what had they allowed themselves to be hindered?
"That ye should not obey the truth."
3. From whom did the apostle say this persuasion did not come?—"Not of Him that calleth you." From whom, then? Gal. 1:7; 2:4.
4. What is involved in admitting a single error?
"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."
5. What does the apostle say would result if he preached circumcision?
"Then is the offense of the cross ceased."
6. What wish is expressed for those who were troubling the brethren?

"I would they were even cut off which trouble you." Compare Gal. 1:7, 8.

7. To what have all been called in Christ?

"Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty."

8. What must be guarded against?

"Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh."

9. What should be done?

"By love serve one another."

10. What will thus be fulfilled?

"All the law."

11. In what is all the law fulfilled?

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

NOTES.

1. Verse 7 shows that in the beginning the Galatians obeyed the truth, that is, kept God's commandments through faith in Jesus. Now they were ceasing to obey. Professor Boise gives this rendering of the last part of the verse: "Who did hinder you from continuing to obey the truth?" Make special note of the fact that the seeking of righteousness by the law, through the flesh, results in disobedience to it. "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone." On the other hand, "the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith." Rom. 9:30-32.

2. "Then is the offense of the cross ceased." The Greek is *skandalon*, scandal. The preaching of the cross is to the Jews a stumbling-block, a scandal, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to those who believe, it is the power of God. 1 Cor. 1:23, 24. If Paul had preached circumcision, that is, justification by the law, through one's own efforts, there would have been no trouble with either Jew or Greek. The heathen would have applauded the high morality even of the law of God. Righteousness by works meets with universal acceptance. All men are willing to have as much righteousness as rests in the power of their own flesh. All systems of religion extol "morality," in name, but only the Christian religion has it in fact. It is only when Christ is preached, when it is shown that in the flesh dwelleth no good thing, and that all real righteousness must come from without as a gift, that men rebel. Their pride and self-confidence are

wounded. To admit that they are nothing, and that Christ is all, is too much for them.

3. It is good always to believe the best concerning men. Love "thinketh no evil." Paul expressed his confidence that in spite of their error, the Galatians would still have no other mind than that of Christ. They wished to do right; they had a zeal of God, although not according to knowledge. Now that they were shown so plainly and so forcibly Christ as the only way of righteousness and life, he believed that they would again run into it.

4. Christ calls to liberty, not liberty to the flesh, but liberty *from* the flesh. Keep this distinction always in mind.

5. God is love, and His law, which is His life, is love. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. 13:10. Whenever men either wilfully or through ignorance depart from the law of God, the law of love, it is evident that dissensions must ensue. Then there is danger that they will devour one another, for having departed from God, they are doing the will of Satan, whose work it is to devour. 1 Peter 5:8. Love, the keeping of the commandments of God, "worketh no ill to his neighbor."

6. Love is the fulfilling of the law, and all is fulfilled in one word, even in this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This is indeed the second of the two great commandments which sum up the whole law (Matt. 22:37-40), yet it comprises the whole law, because it is love, and love is of God. The man who loves his brother, must love God also, for without the love of God, he could have no love for anybody. He who loves at all loves all.

LESSON III.—THE FLESH AGAINST THE SPIRIT.

January 19, 1901.

(Gal. 5:13-18, R. V.)

"Ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

QUESTIONS.

1. To what have all been called in Christ?
"Ye have been called unto liberty."
2. What must be guarded against? What caution is given?
"Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh."
3. What should we do instead?
"By love serve one another." "Through love be servant one to another."
4. How complex is the law of God?—"All the law is fulfilled in one word." What is that?—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."
5. If men instead bite and devour one another, what result may be expected?
"Take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."
6. Against what does the flesh strive?
"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit."
7. Does the Spirit yield to the flesh?
"The Spirit [lusteth] against the flesh."
8. How do the flesh and the Spirit stand as regards each other?
"These are contrary the one to the other."

9. What is the condition of the man in which both are striving for the mastery, and neither one fully yielded to?
"Ye can not do the things that ye would."
10. How can we escape the lust of the flesh?
"Walk in the Spirit."
11. What is sure if we walk in the Spirit?
"Ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."
12. What, then, is our state?
"If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

NOTES.

1. The student can now, as we come near the close of the epistle, see more clearly the practical character of it. It is not that the apostle now takes leave of the "doctrinal," the argumentative, and gives some "practical" exhortation, but we have here the conclusion of the whole matter. All true doctrine is intensely practical, it is given for nothing else but practise. This epistle was not written to furnish ground for controversy, but to silence it; its purpose is to reclaim those who are sinning against God by trying to serve Him in their "own weak way," not knowing that "they that are in the flesh can not please God." Rom. 8:8. Do not relax any diligence in study. Let every word be indelibly printed on your mind. Read the verses scores of times, not forgetting that which we have already passed over.

2. The contrasts in this epistle are the true and the false gospel; the power of God and the power of man; living, active faith, against dead works; reality against forms; trust in the promises of God, against confidence in one's self; freedom against bondage; the Spirit against the flesh; justification, righteousness by faith, against attempted righteousness by works; the blessing of perfect righteousness by the cross of Christ, against the curse of outward obedience, which at best is but sin; complete submission to the Spirit of God, against wavering between the flesh and the Spirit; peace with God, the peace of God, against human strife.

3. Christ came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. Matt. 20:28. He "emptied Himself, taking *the form* of a servant." Phil. 2:7, R. V. The *mind* of a servant He had already. "I am among you as he that serveth." Luke 22:27. Perfect knowledge of Christ, appreciation of His life and character, is shown in service. Thus the law is fulfilled.

4. Compare verses 16-18 with chapter 2:20 and Rom. 8:8-10. If the life that we live in the flesh is lived by the faith of the Son of God, who lives in us, and whose life alone is manifested in us, then we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; for He is a "quickening Spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45), with "power over all flesh" (John 17:2).

5. The Spirit and the flesh are irreconcilable. They are "contrary the one to the other." Literally, they "lie over against" each other; they are diametrically opposed. The picture here presented is very striking, when we consider the force of the word "lusteth." It is from a compound Greek word meaning to "rush eagerly against" or upon; to "strive vehemently." The picture is of two armies encamped over against each other, each sharply watching the other, eager to find some advantage, and both in deadly opposition. They have nothing in common. The Spirit is given by God to strive with all flesh, so that every man is a battle-ground. It is easy to see that a man who knows something of the working of the Spirit, and wishes to do right, yet who is still in bondage to the flesh, can not do the things that he would.

6. But there is the greatest hope, for the Spirit is as much opposed to the flesh as the flesh is to the Spirit, and the Spirit is the stronger. Christ has "power over all flesh." John 17:2. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." John 1:12. The promise is sure. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." There is complete deliverance.

7. "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Note carefully the connection. See how manifest it is that to be under the law is to be in bondage to the flesh. But that is to be in a state of war against the law, not of obedience to it, because "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8:7. Christ has come to save not only those who know nothing of the law, and who are known as open sinners—heathen—but those who are in bondage to the law which they acknowledge, and are vainly striving to keep. He will deliver such from their bondage to the law to freedom in it. Whoever walks in the Spirit, will not be under the law, and will not be in bondage to the flesh; for "the law is spiritual." Rom. 7:14.

LESSON IV.—THE WORKS OF THE FLESH.

January 26, 1901.

(Gal. 5:16-21, R. V.)

"But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, revelings, and such like; of the which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they which practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

QUESTIONS.

1. What positive assurance have we?—"Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." How may we be saved from the lust of the flesh?—"Walk by the Spirit."

2. What is sure if we walk by the Spirit?

"Ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

3. How does the flesh regard the Spirit?

"The flesh lusteth against [rushes against, strives against] the Spirit."

4. How is it with the Spirit?

"The Spirit [lusteth] against the flesh."

5. What agreement is there between the flesh and the Spirit?

"These are contrary the one to the other."

6. What, then, is the result when we do not fully yield to either?

"Ye can not do the things that ye would."

7. What is our condition if led by the Spirit?

"Ye are not under the law."

8. What can not be hid when they are present?

"The works of the flesh are manifest."

9. What are they?

10. Of what are we repeatedly forewarned?

"That they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

NOTES.

1. Note the deadly opposition between the flesh and the Spirit. So long as there is any compromise with the flesh on the part of any professed Christians, "ye can not do the things that ye would." "They that are in the flesh can not please God." Now recall chapter 3:3 and see that just this practical instruction is the subject of the epistle all the way through. The Galatians were not apostates; they had not deliberately turned their backs on God and righteousness, but were still striving to do right. But they were striving to perfect themselves by the flesh. They were substituting their own power for the power of God. This thing is attempted in these days as much as it was then, and the danger is the same. That is why the Lord had this epistle preserved for us. There is absolutely no hope of righteousness through the flesh. No matter how good one's desires, or how earnest the resolves, it is impossible for them to be fulfilled by means of the flesh.

2. "If ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Note the context very carefully. Let all this portion of Scripture be indelibly fixed in your mind, and there will not be the slightest difficulty in seeing that to be "under the law" is identical with fulfilling the lust of the flesh. It was from this state that Christ died to redeem us. Chapter 4:4, 5. In verse 13 we see that the flesh is in sharp contrast with love, which is the fulfilling of the law. The law is love, but the flesh is hate and strife. The law forbids hatred; therefore all who are in the flesh are under the law.

3. The works of the flesh can not be hid; they are manifest. Enumerate them, and study each word carefully. Take the word "divisions." How many think it a very serious matter to get up a division, and to form opposing parties in society, and even in the church? But it is one of the works of the flesh, and "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." It is of the same class as fornication, idolatry, sorcery, "and such like." The student will notice that the list differs somewhat in the Revision from that given in the common version. That is because

some of the Greek words may be rendered by several words which are quite similar. Indeed, the text itself shows that all the things named are of one class, and the object is not to give a complete list of the works of the flesh, but simply to show their nature.

4. "The works of the flesh are manifest." They consist in externals. All that the flesh does, even when it assumes to keep the law, is for outward show; but this profits nothing, for God desires truth in the inward parts, and the flesh itself is sin. There is no hope except in "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible" (1 Peter 3:4), and the destruction of the flesh, with all its works.

5. The person who cherishes enmity or jealousy, who makes divisions, or who is swayed by a spirit of emulation, desiring to get ahead of somebody else, may be considered a very "moral" man as compared with the drunkard, the adulterer, the murderer, the sorcerer, etc., but he is one of them, and has no more prospect of inheriting God's kingdom than they have.

6. All these are "the works of the flesh." They are common to all human flesh. Whenever we hear of a gross crime, we may truly say, "That is what I should be doing if it were not for the grace of God." Read Mark 7:21-23. If any unconverted person has not openly committed all the sins mentioned here, it is simply because of education, surroundings, freedom from temptation, lack of opportunity, or from cowardice—fear of consequences. The evil is in all human flesh, and no person can boast over another.

7. But while there is no hope that anybody can be saved while still in the flesh, there is the clearest hope that any may be saved from the flesh. The Spirit is stronger than the flesh, and Christ has power over all flesh, and if yielded to, will free us from all iniquity. He "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Jude 24.

LESSON V.—THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

February 2, 1901.

(Gal. 5:22-26, R. V.)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. Let us not be vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another."

QUESTIONS.

1. What are the works of the flesh?
2. What of those who do such things?
3. What is the fruit of the Spirit?
4. With what are these things in harmony?
"Against such there is no law."
5. What have those done who belong to Christ?
"Crucified the flesh."
6. And what have they crucified with it?
"The passions and the lusts thereof."
7. By what do we live?
"By the Spirit."
8. By what, then, ought we to walk?
"By the Spirit let us also walk."
9. If we walk by the Spirit, in what state shall we not be?
"Not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another."

NOTES.

1. Note the contrast between the flesh and the Spirit, not only in the nature, but also in the way in which the nature manifests itself. We have the *works* of the flesh and the *fruit* of the Spirit. The flesh is restless and agitated, always striving, yet never attaining. It works, but works itself to death, even while struggling for life. The Spirit is calmness

and peace and rest. Its life is as the life of a tree, quietly bearing fruit to life eternal.

2. The law is spiritual (Rom. 7:14), therefore it can not be against the fruits of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is the fulfilling of the law, for *love* sums it all up. Compare this lesson with chapter 3:21. The law is not against the promise of God, but is just what God has promised to put into our hearts, that its fruits may be borne by us.

3. Each of the words used in describing the fruit of the Spirit might well be the subject of an entire lesson. Whoever studies this lesson exhaustively will find work for many months or even years. The best we can do now is but to make a beginning. Let us make a good beginning.

4. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Rom. 8:9. And if any man have the Spirit of Christ, this fruit *must* be borne. Therefore if any man is not loving and joyful, if he does not exercise faith, or is not temperate, he is none of Christ's. But do not let anybody therefore immediately resolve to be joyful, or to have peace. This fruit of the Spirit is not worked out; it comes as a necessary consequence of yielding to the Spirit. Christ has left His peace with us, and God alone can put gladness into the heart. But it must be there if God reigns there, for in His presence there is fulness of joy. Ps. 16:11.

5. "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk." But do we live by the Spirit?—Certainly, there is no other source of life. "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Job 33:4. "As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul; all the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils; my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit." Job 27:2-4. The fact that anybody has breath, is reason enough for him to serve God, who "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." Acts 17:25; 1 Tim. 6:17. The fact that God gives us breath, makes us dependent on Him, and constitutes His claim on us. Whoever would be independent of God, must cease to breathe God's breath. But there is still more in this. We often hear that "while there's life there's hope;" this is so because life is hope. We live only by the Spirit; therefore, all we have to do is to yield to "the

power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20), and the fruit of the Spirit will be brought forth "above all that we ask or think." We think that it is easy to do wrong, and so it is; but God has made the way of righteousness much easier, even to the extent that He is stronger than Satan, and life is stronger than death.

6. It is possible for one to live in the flesh and yet be wholly free from the flesh. See Gal. 2:20. There is no Christ except the crucified One, and if we are His, it is by being baptized into His death. Rom. 6:3, 4. We are crucified with Him, but we also rise with Him, to live a new life, even a spiritual life. He does not raise the flesh—the old man. If we build up the things once destroyed, we make ourselves transgressors. But "if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Rom. 8:10. That which is impossible with man is possible with God, and whatever He has made possible for us, He has a right to expect to see in us.

LESSON VI.—FULFILLING THE LAW OF CHRIST.

February 9, 1901.

(Gal. 6:1-5, R. V.)

"Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of meekness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor. For each man shall bear his own burden."

QUESTIONS.

1. What verses in chapter 5 indicate that the members of the Galatian churches had begun to quarrel with one another?

2. What should rather be done even if a brother were in the wrong?

3. In what spirit should the brethren proceed to restore him?

4. Who only should do this work?

5. What should they consider? Why?

6. What should we do for one another?

7. In so doing what do we fulfil?

8. When does a man deceive himself? Is such self-deception common? What is man at his best state? Ps. 39:5. Then what is the case with every man who thinks himself to be something?

9. What should every man do to his own work? What will then be the result? For what purpose should a man prove himself? 2 Cor. 13:5.

NOTES.

1. Before beginning the study of this lesson, review the preceding one, and indeed the whole of the fifth chapter carefully. From the last part it is evident that the Galatians had begun to quarrel among themselves. They had allowed themselves to be drawn away from God, and disunion among themselves must necessarily follow. Having set out to gain justification by works, they naturally became critical, as each thought that the other's works did not reach his standard. Their mutual criticisms, intended of course to set one another right, resulted only in mutual provocation to retort. There were envyings and emulations, and they were biting and devouring one another. A vainglorious spirit was taking the place of the meek and gentle Spirit of Christ. Having seen this from what we have already studied, we can readily see the pertinence of the exhortation that is given in the scripture composing this lesson. Study every word of it most carefully. It is as applicable to us as it was to the Galatians.

2. The Bible presents the sinner as sick and bruised. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." Isa. 1:5, 6. Christ came "to bind up the broken-hearted" (Isa. 61:1); "to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18); and He "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts 10:38). His work is to

heal and restore. A very tender Physician is He. "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the dimly burning wick shall He not quench." Isa. 42:3, R. V., margin.

3. He says, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." John 20:21. All His followers are His ambassadors (not executioners), praying men in Christ's stead, "Be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5:20. He Himself is not sitting as judge, but as pleader. He "came not to judge the world, but to save the world." John 12:47. When He is lifted up, He does not repel, but draws all to Himself. John 12:32. Consequently, His disciples are, with Him, "to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10. They are to instruct in meekness even those who set themselves in opposition to the truth. 2 Tim. 2:25. Much more, then, are they to be considerate of a brother who has been pursued by a fault and has fallen into its power.

4. The word here rendered "restore" means *to adjust, to set in order.* It is used with reference to a bone that has been broken—to *set* it. This reminds us of Ps. 51:8: "Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice." If a brother has fallen and bruised himself, he is to be treated carefully, so that he may recover. The carefulness with which a man with a broken leg should be handled represents the treatment that should be accorded to one who has fallen into sin.

5. Who is to restore him?—"Ye who are spiritual." Some one will say, "But suppose I don't know that I am spiritual?" Evidently then the thing to do is to find out. If there is any doubt in the matter, our business is with ourselves, rather than with the other man. "But suppose there is no one in the church who is spiritual; is the erring brother to be left to go his way without correction?" The question suggests its own answer. If there is no person spiritual enough to restore the faulty brother, then it is evident that all the rest are at fault as well as he, and each needs a personal work done for himself.

6. It is plain that the first question for each one to ask when he sees a brother in error is, "Am I spiritual? Am I walking in the Spirit?" It can be seen that if the exhortation of the Spirit through the apostle Paul were followed, the sight of a brother in the church who has fallen into sin, would be the signal for a general revival; and it would be

strange if, by the time all the rest got into a live spiritual condition, the specially erring one were not also restored. But let no unsanctified, unspiritual man presume to try to restore an erring brother. If he does, the work will be done in the most bungling manner. Christ said, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be truly sanctified." John 17:19, margin.

7. "In the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Remember that no temptation comes to any one but such as is common to all men. Our brother is the same flesh as we are, and we are liable to the same sin that has caused his fall. Christ helps us, because He places Himself by our side, as sharer of our weakness, and oppressed by the same temptations. If we would help a sinner, we can do far more by confessing to him our own weakness, perhaps our own fall into the very same sin that has snared him, and telling how the Lord gave us the victory, than we can by any stern rebuke. He knows that he is a sinner, but does not know the way out of his trouble. Spend more time telling him what he does not know than in telling him what he already knows.

8. Christ bears the sin of the world. Whether we acknowledge Him or not, our sins are on Him, and He bears them. The law is in His heart; it is His life, and it is love. The law of Christ is that of self-giving. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." We can fulfil the law only by coming into "the fellowship of His sufferings." Christ associates His true followers with Himself as saviours of the world. We are, therefore, to bear the burdens of others' sins in so real a manner as to lift the sins from their shoulders.

9. "If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing." Better rendered, "though he is nothing." In the Greek the participle is used, "If a man think himself to be something, being nothing." We are nothing. "Every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Ps. 39:5. Compared with God, all nations together are "less than nothing, and vanity." Isa. 40:17. Therefore, if any man think himself to be something, he deceiveth himself. That is not the way to bear one another's burden of sin. Christ, the Sin-bearer, says, "I can of Mine own self do nothing." John 5:30. The thought of the first two verses is still continued. We bear one another's burden of sin, thus relieving him of it, and

restoring him, by acknowledging in the spirit of meekness that we are as weak and as helpless and sinful as he is. This is the only way; it is Christ's way.

LESSON VII.—SOWING AND REAPING.

February 16, 1901.

(Gal. 6:6-10, R. V.)

"Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. So then as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith."

QUESTIONS.

1. What is the one who receives instruction in the Word to do?—"Communicate unto him that teacheth." In what respect?—"In all good things."

2. What warning is given?—"Be not deceived." Why not? "God is not mocked."

3. What shall every man reap?

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

4. What will a man reap who sows to the flesh?

"He . . . shall of the flesh reap corruption."

5. Who will reap corruption?

"He that soweth unto his own flesh."

6. What will be reaped by the one who sows to the Spirit?

"He . . . shall of the Spirit reap eternal life."

7. Who will reap life everlasting?

"He that soweth unto the Spirit."

8. From what will he reap life everlasting?

"Of the Spirit."

9. To what does this encourage us?
"Let us not be weary in well-doing."
10. What will come in due season?—"In due season we shall reap." On what condition?—"If we faint not."
11. What should we therefore do?—"Do good unto all men." Under what circumstances?—"As we have opportunity."
12. Who should especially profit by our good acts?
"Them that are of the household of the faith."

NOTES.

1. There is probably no one who has ever read the sixth chapter of Galatians who has the slightest doubt that the exhortations in verses 1, 9, 10 are addressed personally to us, or that the statement in verse 8 is of universal application. This should show us that the whole epistle concerns us. The same conditions exist to-day, and all the instruction is as applicable to us, and as necessary, as it was to the Galatians. The question is between faith which works, and works which produce nothing, and is as vital a one to-day as it ever was.

2. "Communicate." Have in common. Compare 1 Cor. 9:7-14; 2 Cor. 9:1-8. From these it is very evident that the reference is to the sharing of temporal goods with those who are instructors in the Word. We do not buy our way to the favor of God. True giving is the result of the grace of God already in the heart. The brethren in Macedonia, who are presented as models in Christian giving, "first gave their own selves to the Lord." 2 Cor. 8:1-5. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. Ps. 51:17. When this is present, God is "pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness." When this is absent, all gifts are an abomination to Him. Amos 5:22-24; Micah 6:6-8. True Christian giving,—giving because of love of the truth,—is therefore one form of sowing to the Spirit.

3. "God is not mocked." The Greek word here rendered "mocked" is not used elsewhere in the New Testament. It means "deceived," thrown off the track, just as our word "mocked" often does. See Matt. 2:16. Ananias and Sapphira tried to deceive the Lord, but failed. Acts 5:1-9.

4. There is great danger of becoming weary in well-doing, especially when we see no immediate fruit of our labor. We need to remember how patiently God waits upon us. He is continually supplying us with good things, yet very few appreciate His efforts sufficiently to thank Him. How often we ourselves have murmured when we ought to

have been returning thanks! When men treat us with only a portion of the indifference and disrespect that we show to God, we say that they are unworthy, and are inclined to do nothing more for them; but God does not do that way with us. We are to learn patience from Him.

5. "In due season we shall reap." "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days." Eccl. 11:1. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." Verse 6. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Ps. 126:5, 6. There is no doubt about the reaping; it is sure. No act of kindness is ever wasted. God's Word shall not return to Him void, even though many to whom it is sent reject it. Christ did not die in vain. He gave Himself for all the world, and none of His love is thrown away. Every act done for love of God is sure to bear fruit to life eternal.

6. We are not to be partial in our good deeds. The household of faith standing nearest, will naturally be the first partakers of our service, but no opportunity to do good is to be slighted. Read Matt. 5:43-48. We are to do good "as we have opportunity." It is to be considered a privilege, not a task.

7. There is no doubt that in these verses the apostle is speaking of rendering temporal assistance; yet since no gift is recognized by the Lord unless it comes from the heart in which His love is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit, it is evident that what is said about sowing and reaping applies to every act of life. He who lives for the flesh, will reap only corruption; from the Spirit alone can life everlasting come.

LESSON VIII.—GLORYING IN THE CROSS.

February 23, 1901.

(Gal. 6:11-18, R. V.)

"See with how large letters I have written unto you with mine own hand. As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they compel you to be circumcised; only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For not even they who receive circumcision do themselves keep the law; but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen."

QUESTIONS.

1. What is there of peculiar interest about the Epistle to the Galatians?

"I have written unto you with mine own hand."

2. What was the object of those who were troubling the Galatians?

"To make a fair show in the flesh."

3. To this end what were they trying to do?

"They compel you to be circumcised."

4. For what reason?

"Only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ."

5. How did these circumcised ones regard the law?

"Not even they who receive circumcision do themselves keep the law."

6. What profit, then, was there in their circumcision?

"If thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." Rom. 2:25.

7. Why did these persons wish to have the Galatians circumcised?

"That they may glory in your flesh."

8. Under what condemnation were these false teachers thus bringing themselves?

"Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." Matt. 23:15.

9. In what alone will the true Christian glory?

"Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

10. What is done by the cross of Christ?

"Through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

11. How much power is there in circumcision?

"For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision."

12. What is the only thing that is of value?

"A new creature."

13. What is sure to rest upon all such?

"Peace be upon them, and mercy."

14. What do all new creatures, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, constitute?

"The Israel of God."

15. What warning did Paul give concerning himself?—"From henceforth let no man trouble me." Why not?—"For I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus."

16. What is the apostolic benediction?

NOTES.

1. Paul doubtless, partly at least on account of the weakness of his eyes, was accustomed to dictate his letters to an amanuensis. This epistle, however, was so important, and he was so full of earnestness, that he was obliged to seize the pen and write with his own hand. If we turn to 2 Thess. 2:2 we shall see that some zealous persons took advantage of Paul's custom, to write letters in his name, thus troubling the brethren. This forging of documents was very common in the first centuries after Christ, for there were many who wished to go beyond that which was written by the authority of the Holy Spirit. In the Epistle to the Thessalonians the apostle told the brethren how they could tell whether an epistle was from him or not. "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token

in every epistle, so I write." He always signed his own name, and wrote the salutation with his own hand. In writing to the Galatians, however, he wrote the whole epistle with his own hand, and therefore there could be no chance for misunderstanding. No one could say that some man's ideas were incorporated along with Paul's writings.

2. Circumcision was given as a sign of righteousness—the keeping of the law. Rom. 4:11. It was a sign of righteousness by faith, of course, for in no other way except by faith can the law be kept. But the people who were misleading the Galatians were making it a substitute for faith, and so of course they did not keep the law. An outward show was all that they desired. They would entice their victims with fair words, and afterwards boast over their mere formal religion. "Meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips." Prov. 20:19. "A flattering mouth worketh ruin." Prov. 26:28.

3. Compare verse 12 with 5:11. Attempted righteousness by works means self-glory and boasting. Righteousness by faith in the cross of Christ means humility and meekness, the acknowledgment that there is no goodness in the flesh. A man can preach "morality" of the highest kind by the year, and meet with nothing but approval from all classes of men, if he does not preach righteousness through the cross. If he assures his hearers that they can do it, there will be no persecution; but when he assures them that in them is no good thing, and that only through confession and self-renunciation and perfect dependence on Christ can they ever attain to any goodness, there will be plenty of opposition.

4. But there is glory in the cross of Christ. It is all glory. People talk of the "shadow of the cross," but it casts a shadow only in the same way that the sun does. The sun is light; from itself alone there comes no shadow; it casts a shadow only when something comes before it. Whenever we get out from behind any object interposed between us and the sun, we are no longer in the shadow, but only in the light. So from the cross itself no shadow comes. The shadow comes only from the things which people's unbelief has interposed between them and the cross. When they cast aside unbelief, and their own works, which are the result of unbelief, and come into full view of the cross, they find that "the darkness is past, and the true Light now shineth." 1 John 2:8. Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of life." John 8:12.

5. In Christ Jesus only a new creature availeth anything; and "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Cor. 5:17. Then "all things are of God." God's law will, therefore, be fully manifested in the life, even as in Christ's life. It is not our works that save us, but God's own works, which He has done, and laid up for us. Eph. 2:8-10; Ps. 31:19, 20.

6. "I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus." The Greek word rendered "marks" is the plural of "stigma," which we have incorporated into our own language. It was used specially of marks pricked or branded into the skin of a slave, to show to whom he belonged. Paul was crucified with Christ, and so bore the marks of the cross. The word "stigma" has with us the idea of shame, and so the cross was considered. The slave who had any fineness of feeling would naturally wish to conceal the evidence of his servitude. But the Christian will glory in that which shows that he is indissolubly linked to Christ. Let none presume to trouble such an one, for his Master will protect him.

LESSON IX.—GENERAL REVIEW.

March 2, 1901.

We have now devoted eight months to the study of the Epistle to the Galatians, and should in that time have acquired a thorough acquaintance with it, since we have had an average of less than one verse a day. It ought, therefore, to be a pleasant task to review the whole epistle in one lesson. It is self-evident that if this is done no one can stop to go into details. That has been done in preceding lessons, and it is to be supposed that our knowledge of details is now sufficient to enable us to take in any chapter or even almost the whole epistle at a glance. It is to be hoped that the interest aroused by this study is so great that every one will make the epistle the subject of much more study in the time to come.

QUESTIONS.

1. What important truths are mentioned in the salutation?

2. What verses show the reason for the writing of the epistle? Quote them. Cite some verses in the third chapter that show the same thing. In the fourth and fifth also.

3. How confident was the apostle Paul of the Gospel which he preached?

4. What ground had he for this confidence?

5. To what is the greater portion of the first chapter of the epistle devoted? Give a brief outline of it.

6. How did Paul get his preparation to preach the Gospel to the heathen? What do you know about the first seventeen years of his Christian experience? Tell the occasions of the visits to Jerusalem, which are mentioned in this epistle.

7. Who accompanied him on the second visit mentioned?

8. What caused him to go? What question was then under discussion?

9. What strong position did Paul take?

10. Who were making the trouble? What was their object?

11. Why would he not allow Titus to be circumcised? What then was at stake?

12. What was Paul's standing among the brethren assembled in Jerusalem? To what were he and Barnabas formally commissioned by them? Who also was recognized as having a special work committed to him?

13. Relate what happened after the return to Antioch from Jerusalem. Of what were some of the leading brethren guilty? How did Paul deal with the matter? Give the substance of his talk. What did he make most prominent in it? How only did he declare that righteousness could be obtained? What is the believer's relation to Christ?

14. With what exclamation and question does the third chapter (as we have it divided) begin? From the first verses of this chapter, what can we learn as to the condition of the Galatians at the time of the writing of the epistle, and previously?

15. What character is now introduced? What relation does he sustain to believers? What words to Abraham sum up the whole Gospel? What is the condition of those who believe? Who are cursed? Why? How can nobody be justified? How is this made to appear?

16. From what has Christ redeemed us? How did He do it? What do the Gentiles receive as the consequence? What do we receive through faith?

17. Tell what is said about a covenant in general. What

covenant in particular is referred to? What is promised in this covenant? To whom were the promises made? What is the relation of the law to the promise? Under what does the law hold all? To what are they shut up? What, therefore, is the relation of the law to Christ? What does faith do for us? When we believe, whose children are we? (Compare John 1:12.) How do we put on Christ? What are all who are in Christ? What is their relation to the promise?

18. What is under consideration in the whole of the fourth chapter? What two states? Why was Christ sent forth? Tell what is said about the two covenants? How are they represented? Where does bondage come from? Where freedom? What is to become of all bondservants? Whose children are we? (Are we really?)

19. If we are free, what should we do? What only is of profit?

20. To what have we been called?

21. What is the prominent feature of the last part of chapter 5? What things are described and contrasted? What is the condition of all who are spiritual, or led by the Spirit?

22. Give an outline of the sixth chapter.

23. Mention some of the most striking exhortations of this epistle.

Lessons from Malachi.

The name Malachi is a contraction of Malachijah, meaning "Messenger of Jehovah." The term indicates the prophet's office, rather than his name. He was Jehovah's last inspired messenger among the prophets of that age to announce the coming of God's great messenger. He reproves certain sins in the close of that age, which are paralleled by the same sins in the close of this age. The date was about B. C. 420 to 390. His work followed that of Nehemiah. The grand scope of the book will be developed in our study of its lessons.

LESSON I.—UNHOLY OFFERINGS.

March 9, 1901.

(Mal. 1:1-14.)

QUESTIONS.

1. To whom is the prophecy addressed? How much does Israel include? Verse 1. Note 1.

2. Of what does the Lord assure them? Verse 2.

3. What proof does He give of His love? Verses 2, 3. Note 2.

4. What does rebellious Edom declare? How does the Lord reply? Verse 4.

5. What will the faithful see and acknowledge? Verse 5.

6. What common truth does the Lord state? Verse 6, first part.

7. What class does He reprove? How does He reprove them? What do they in their blindness reply? Verse 6.

8. How had God's name been despised? What did they virtually say by this? What had His table become to them? Verses 7, 12. Note 3.

9. What further proof does the Lord give of His people's unfaithfulness? By what common facts does He appeal to them? Verse 8.

10. What had the Lord's service become? How had they regarded it? How did they show their feeling? Should the Lord accept such service? Verse 13.

11. Upon whom rests the curse? What does the Lord declare Himself to be? Verse 14.

12. What appeal does the messenger make to these sinful people? How earnestly does he press it home upon them? Verse 9. Note 4.

13. What is the longing of his heart? What is the Lord's final sentence upon those who continue to regard Him with such disrespect? Verse 10. Note 5.

14. Where does the Lord declare His name will be honored? Verse 11. Note 6.

NOTES.

1. "Israel." Israel is a comprehensive term, including all God's people. The study of the book will show that the general term at the beginning includes not alone the people of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, but all who have come in among God's people from the Gentiles. See Rom. 9:6-8; Eph. 2:11, 12, 19, 20; 3:6.

2. "Jacob—Esau." It is not of the individual men, but of the characters represented by these men, that the prophet speaks. Despite all Jacob's imperfections, he believed God, and longed to be like Him. He finally obtained the victory, and became prevailer with God. His character was manifest in his descendants. God hated the selfish character of Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, whose descendants exercised intense hatred toward their brethren and rejoiced in their downfall. God loves the sinner that He may save him, but He hates of necessity the sin, and the character that is formed by cherishing sin. These men stand as types of characters in all ages—the one of the imperfect man who desires to reform, and does so by God's grace; the other of those who despise God's blessings and reject His character.

3. "In that ye say." They probably did not say it in words, but their deeds spoke more loudly. If it was worthy only of their poorest offering, of their unclean bread, surely it was contemptible and unclean. We have considered some of these verses out of order, so as not to repeat the same thoughts, but it is well to note the repetition. It shows how emphatically and clearly the Lord reveals their sin.

4. "Entreat the favor of God." God reproved that they might repent. It was not in His plan that they had failed

and their trouble had come upon them. It was all by their means, and God could not accept of half-hearted service. The repentance must be deep and lasting.

5. "Oh, that there were one among you!" The Lord longed for one brave man, according to the Revised Version, who would rise up and close the house of God against the unholy, polluted, imperfect offerings, which were degrading God before the eyes of all that saw. God did not accept the imperfect, cheap offerings, and the fire upon His altar was kindled in vain.

6. "My name shall be great." (Margin.) God's name will be honored. He desires that it shall be honored by the holy, faithful, earnest, true lives of His people. If they will not do this, His name will not the less be honored. He will get honor from their unfaithfulness. He desired to be honored by Pharaoh's conversion, but Pharaoh would not have it thus, so God used his overthrow to honor Him. He longs to get honor and spread abroad His name through His people's success, but if He can not do this, He will get glory through their downfall.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS.

When was it that Edom was beaten down? What kind of offering does the Lord desire? What kind of offering did He make for us? If we have only the lame, yet give our best, will He not accept it? What is the state of our piety when the regular service of God becomes a "weariness"?

LESSON II.—WEARYING GOD.

March 16, 1901.

(Mal. 2:1-17.)

QUESTIONS.

1. To whom is this message specially addressed? Verse 1. Note 1.

2. What is our duty respecting this message? What is the result if we do not lay it to heart? What results if the message is not heeded? What has already resulted? Why? Verse 2.

3. What further judgments are threatened? Verse 3.

4. What would these judgments show? Are these judgments necessary to impart such knowledge? Verse 4.

5. With whom did God covenant? What was the nature of this covenant? What was God's object in giving Levi these blessings? In what did they nominally result? Verse 5.

6. What was in his mouth? What was not found in his lips? How did he walk? Before whom? What was the result? Verse 6.

7. What should the priest's lips teach? What have the people a right to do? Why? Verse 7.

8. But what had the Lord's priests done? What had they caused many to do? What had they corrupted? What was the character of this covenant? What, then, had they corrupted? What are corrupted life and peace? Verses 4, 5, 8.

9. What had the Lord done to save His honor? In what proportion had He done this? What evil thing does He mention? Verse 9.

10. By what questions does the prophet show man's equality and God's impartiality? How, then, ought man to treat his fellow? What do those do who deal treacherously with their brethren? Verse 10.

11. What has Judah done? What was in Israel and Jerusalem? In what particulars? Verse 11. Note 2.

12. What will the Lord do to the man who thus separates from Him? Verse 12.

13. What hypocrisy did Judah and Israel show in their sins? How does God regard it? How does He receive their offering? Verse 13.

14. What question do they ask in their blindness? What specific sin does the Lord point out? For what purpose was the wife given? Verse 14. Note 3.

15. How did God make man and woman? Why? To what should every one give heed? What should not be done? Verse 15.

16. What two things does God here say that He hates? What warning does He repeat? Verse 16.

17. How had their words affected the Lord? Why? In what two things had they especially sinned? Verse 17.

NOTES.

1. "O priests." This chapter is especially addressed to priests; but because of this no one need give it away. God designs that His people—all of them—should be priests unto

the world. "And He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father." Rev. 1:6, R. V. "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, . . . that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 1 Peter 2:9, R. V. And this was God's design with Israel of old. "And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests." Ex. 19:6. All God's children should be priests to the world, ministering the grace and knowledge of God to the needy. And the world has a right to expect this of them.

2. "Abomination is committed." The Lord counts Himself as husband to His people. See Jeremiah 3, especially verse 14; Rom. 7:4. He takes poor humanity in their vileness, gives them His own royal name, and His glorious robes of righteousness. When those who have been thus honored depart from Him and unite with another, they are as truly committing adultery as is a woman who leaves her own lawful husband to become the wife of another. When the church unites with the state, she is profaning God's holiness and committing abomination.

3. "Thy companion." God did not give man a wife to satisfy his lust, nor to be his slave or servant, nor to occupy an inferior position, even though a different one. The original expression is "a help, meet for him," one fitted to be his *companion* in a noble service for God and humanity. Husband and wife are to be one, but neither he nor she is to be *the* one. Both are to blend in one purpose, in one life, but neither to be the slave of the other.

LESSON III.—RENDERING THE LORD HIS OWN.

March 23, 1901.

(Mal. 3:1-12.)

QUESTIONS.

1. Whom does the Lord promise to send? What would he do? Who would come? Where would He come? What is He called? How is He regarded? What is again said of this Messenger of the covenant? Verse 1. Note 1.

2. What questions are asked concerning His coming? To what is He likened? Verse 2. Note 2.

3. As what shall He sit? Whom will He purify? How thoroughly? What will be the result? Verse 3.

4. How will the Lord regard these righteous offerings? Verse 4. See Lev. 9:22-24.

5. In what also will He come near? Against what class will He be a witness? What kind of witness? Of what are all these transgressions? What is His rule of witness and judgment? Verse 5.

6. What only has saved the wicked from destruction? Verse 6. Note 3.

7. What had the people done? For how long? What invitation does the Lord give? What promise does He make? What question is asked by the disobedient? Verse 7.

8. What solemn question does the Lord ask? What statement does He make? How does unbelief again question? How does the Lord reply? Verse 8.

9. What is the result of robbing God? How many are affected? Verse 9. Note 4.

10. What duty does the Lord urge? Why? What does He ask us to do as respects Himself? With what are we to prove Him? What will He do if thus proved? How great will be the blessing? Who says this? Is His word good? Verse 10.

11. What will He rebuke? For whose sake? What further promises does He make? Verse 11.

12. What will be the ultimate results of such blessing? Who thrice declares all these promises? Verse 12.

NOTES.

1. "My messenger." Christ's messenger, John the Baptist. Mark 1:2; Luke 7:27. "The Lord, whom ye seek." Jesus Christ, the Desire of all nations. "Come to His temple." Including all His first coming, to the temple at Jerusalem, to the people of God, to the sanctuary on high, where He ministers His own life for His people, and confirms His covenant in every soul that accepts. "Behold, He cometh." His second coming, including the work of judgment, when He comes before the Father, as well as His appearing in glory.

2. "Abide." No one, save only in Christ's righteousness, may abide that day, or stand before Him acquitted in the judgment. That they may do it then, He is now like a refiner's fire to burn away all dross, like soap to cleanse.

He is not only the fire through His Spirit, but He watches over the process, that the fire may not be too fierce, and yet that the dross may be consumed. "A refiner." When the refiner of silver can see his own image perfectly reflected in the molten metal, the silver is pure. So Christ waits, yea, even kindles the furnace fires, that the dross may be consumed. "Sons of Levi." God's own spiritual priesthood, of which Levi was a type.

3. "Therefore." It is because God does not change, because "His mercy endureth forever," that men are spared in their sins. Not until there is no hope, till the sinner identifies himself with the sin, does the sinner die.

4. "The curse" is not an arbitrary curse pronounced upon the disobedient. It inheres in the very transgression itself; and it keeps back the blessing of God, not alone from the transgressors, but from those associated with them in church capacity. They are diseased members, affecting the whole body, and not until they are separated or healed will the blessing of God come in its fulness.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS.

How much is a tithe? To whom does the tithe belong? God tests man in respect to time and means. What is a test with respect to time? What in respect to means? Where is the tithe to be brought? If after we have paid it honestly, it is wrongly used, shall we lose the blessing? What is the tithe?—A debt we owe? a self-assumed obligation? or God's share in the revenue of our partnership with Him?

LESSON IV.—THE FINAL RECKONING.

March 30, 1901.

(Mal. 3:13-18; 4:1-6.)

QUESTIONS.

1. What charge does the Lord again bring against His people? What do they respond? Verse 13.

2. What things does He enumerate? Verse 14. Note 1.

3. What do they say of the proud? What of the wicked? What of those who tempt God? Verse 15.

4. What do those do who truly fear God? How does God regard them? What does He cause to be done? Verse 16.

5. What promise does He make concerning them? When will this be manifest? How will He spare them? Verse 17. Note 1.

6. What will the faithful know in the great day of God? Verse 18.

7. What will be the character of that day in this world? What will the proud and the wicked then be? What will become of the stubble? Verse 1.

8. What shall rise to those who fear God? What will be its influence upon them? Verse 2. Note 2.

9. What then will be their relation to the wicked? What will the wicked then be? Verse 3. Note 3.

10. In view of all this, what are we enjoined to remember? Verse 4. Note 4.

11. Whom will God send before that day comes? Verse 5. Note 5.

12. What will he do? What will be the result of rejecting his message? What will be the result of accepting the message? Verse 6.

NOTES.

1. "It is vain." This is the sight of the fleshly eye, the worldly view, the darkness of unbelief. David said that he was envious when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, until he went into the sanctuary of God, where he looked at them as the Lord saw them; then he saw their latter end. "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and prolong his days, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God; . . . but it shall not be well with the wicked." Righteousness is always gain, even though it seems to end in defeat. It is not yet revealed what the children of God shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. They are here now, but they are not revealed. What they suffer makes it seem as though they were counted as sheep for the slaughter; but in all these things they are more than conquerors through the love of Christ.

2. "Healing in His wings." From the time of Adam the race has deteriorated, and God's people have gone down in death through wasting disease, starvation, and in every conceivable ill way; but when Christ comes, He will heal all these defects and restore man to his normal size and beauty.

3. "Leave them neither root nor branch." God gives to

all existence and life that He may be glorified. His glory is always for His creatures' best good. If man will not use God's life aright, he will revert to his original elements, the dust of the earth. They who have triumphed over and oppressed the good have perished with the sin they have chosen; sin can not exist in the unveiled presence of God when He comes into His own, and they perish in the burning glory of His presence. Satan, the root of all, and the wicked, the branches, perish forever in what they have chosen.

4. "Remember ye." The law of Moses for all Israel, with the statutes, would include all typical offerings, all the truths connected with the sanctuary, and the significance of the ceremonies, as well as the nature of the moral precepts. Remembering this would lead to the development of all the truth of the great threefold message of Revelation 14. It would show the service of the Levitical priesthood to be no meaningless service, but replete with Gospel truth, a service unto the shadow and example of heavenly things.

5. "I will send you Elijah." "But did not God send Elijah in John the Baptist?"—Yes, in a sense. Matt. 11:14; 17:10-12. But John declares that he was not Elijah. John 1:21. What, then, are we to understand?—Simply this: Elijah in his work of reform was a type of John, who went before Christ "in the spirit and power of Elias." Luke 1:17. But the "great and terrible day of the Lord" did not then come, save to that one people as a nation. All these were types of the great and terrible day of the Lord upon the world. We have in Elijah's time the apostasy of Israel through the influence of Jezebel, a sun-worshiping Zidonian. We have the antitypical Jezebel in the great apostate church. We have the union of that church with the state, even as Jezebel with Ahab. There is demanded the spirit and power of Elijah to reprove of sin, preach again God's down-trodden truth, be very zealous for His law, and reprove the sun-worshipers of Baal. These will be manifest, not through one person, to one country, but through all God's true people to the world.

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