Mrs F. D. Chase

AMOS, a devout herdsman

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON QUARTERLY

SENIOR DIVISION

Lessons From the Minor Prophets

Fourth Quarter, 1944; Number 198

Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly

Lessons From the Minor Prophets

Lesson 1, for October 7, 1944

Hosea—the Prophet of Love

MEMORY VERSE: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for Mine anger is turned away from him." Hosea 14:4.

KEY THOUGHTS: Jehovah's deep and constant love. Love suffers when sinned against. Retribution, the necessary consequence of sin. Apostasy from God is spiritual adultery. Lack of knowledge of God is destructive. The love of God, like the dew, refreshes, revives, and invigorates.

The Lord's Love for Israel

1. At what period of Israel's history did Hosea prophesy? Hosea 1:1.

NOTE.—Hosea's work for the church, covering more than thirty years, began under the prosperous but corrupt reign of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, and continued through the shameful political and moral conditions under several later kings, rulers whom the Lord disowned, saying, "They have set up kings, but not by Me: they have made princes, and I knew it not." Hosea 8:4. Hosea bore his message to the northern kingdom, and was contemporary with Isaiah, Micah, and Amos. It was a message of justice, tender mercy, and loving compassion—a pleading for regeneration and a return to the Lord.

Moral decay means political decay, as the history of the world reveals; inward corruption is more dangerous to a nation than external enemies.

2. How did the Lord express His early tender regard for Israel? Hosea 11:1, 3, 4.

NOTE.—"The object of God in choosing a people before all the world was not only that He might adopt them as His sons and daughters, but that through them the world might receive the grace that bringeth salvation."—*Prophets and Kings,* pages 231, 232. This ingathering of the Gentiles is indicated in Hosea 1:10 and 2:23. The apostle Peter realized this expectation when he cited Hosea 2:23 in 1 Peter 2:10.

3. How had Israel responded to Jehovah's love and its consequent responsibility? Hosea 11:2; 8:14, first clause.

Result of Forsaking God

4. Why did Israel forget God? Hosea 4:6; 13:6.

NOTE.—The knowledge of God's character is fundamental to worship. It is basic to right character and acceptable service. Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3. See also Jeremiah 9:24.

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"Scarcely can the human mind comprehend the breadth and depth and height of the spiritual attainments of him who gains this knowledge."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 531.

5. As a result of forsaking their allegiance to God, what sins developed in Israel? Hosea 4:1, 2, 12, 13.

NOTE.—The sins of Israel were many and varied. They were unstable (Hosea 6:4), proud (Hosea 5:5), prayerless (Hosea 7:14), they imagined evil (verse 15), made false profession (Hosea 8:2, 13), chose evil associates (Hosea 7:8), perjured themselves (Hosea 10:4), were deceitful and dishonest in their commercial dealings (Hosea 12:7), engaged in idolatrous revelries, were impure, and made worldly alliances (Hosea 9:10; 12:1). The favors Israel received from Jehovah they ascribed to false gods (Hosea 2:5, 8). Yet Jehovah loved them, and pleaded with them to return to Him.

6. What graphic picture is given of Israel's evil alliances and halfheartedness? Hosea 7:8.

NOTE.—Israel wasted and confused themselves among the Gentiles. "How better describe a half-fed people, a half-cultured society, a half-lived religion, a halfhearted policy, than by a half-baked scone."—*The Expositor's Bible,* vol. 14, page 273.

7. How did the Lord exclaim at Israel's instability? What perhaps was the most hopeless phase of their condition? Hosea 6:4; 7:9.

Retribution Inevitable

8. Because Israel did not repent, what did the Lord say was imminent? What definite calamity was threatened? Hosea 9:7, first clause, 17; 13:16.

NOTE.—Judgment is the necessary result of sin. Sin has no right to expect mercy. Hosea predicted the Assyrian captivity, but his warnings fell on deaf ears; and the nation rushed to its destruction within a few years from the time that the prophet's voice was stilled.

9. What was the most solemn and dire pronouncement made to Israel? Hosea 4:17.

NOTE.—"Fearful will be the doom of that soul of whom the pleading Saviour shall finally declare, He 'is joined to idols; let him alone.' "—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 165.

10. Though judgment was determined upon Israel, in what pathetic words did divine compassion reveal itself? Hosea 11:8, 9.

NOTE.—Admah and Zeboim were cities destroyed at the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah. Deut. 29:23.

It may be difficult to sense the fact that our God suffers deeply from the disloyalty of His professed children; but suffering is proportionate to love, and we cannot doubt the love of Him who gave His only-begotten Son to die for man.

Mercy Still Lingers

11. Though Israel had destroyed themselves by their iniquity, what gracious offer did the Lord make? Hosea 13:9, 10, first part.

NOTE.—The Lord offers to be their king, notwithstanding the fact that they had once rejected Him, choosing instead an earthly king, which He granted them, though against His will and purpose for them. "That which

the heart desires contrary to the will of God, will in the end be found a curse rather than a blessing."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 606.

12. What definite course did the Lord finally appeal to Israel to take? Hosea 14:1-3.

13. What gracious promises follow this appeal for repentance? Verses 4-8.

14. What everlasting truths are reiterated in the closing words of this prophecy? Verse 9.

NOTE.—This text sums up the spirit and teaching of the prophet's entire message.

Lesson 2, for October 14, 1944

Joel—the Prophet of Pentecost

MEMORY VERSE: "Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil." Joel 2:13.

KEY THOUGHTS: Disobedience brings judgments, while wholehearted penitence results in blessing. The "former" and the "latter" outpourings of the Spirit promised. The day of the Lord near. Signs of the second advent revealed.

The Judgment of the Lord

1. What had the Lord said would come to Israel if they failed to heed His voice? Deut. 28:15, 38-40.

2. In what condition was the land of Israel at the time Joel gave his prophecy? Joel 1:4, 10, 11, 16-18.

NOTE.—The prophet first makes reference to the severe plague of locusts that had devastated the land to such an extent that even the sacrifices and the temple worship had been cut off (Joel 1:1-4, 9). Four different names for the locust, according to *The Expositor's Bible,* are given (verse 4), each name representing some phase of the locusts' destructive power. Almost unbelievable damage is quickly wrought by the locusts which come in myriads. One investigator records a cloud of locusts forty miles long and three hundred yards in depth, which he estimated to contain nearly one-hundred-seventy billion insects. A witness of the plague which visited Palestine in 1915 testifies that in less than two months after their first appearance, not only was every green leaf devoured, but the very bark was peeled from the trees, which then stood out white and lifeless, like skeletons. The fields were stripped of vegetation.

3. What brings such a curse upon the earth? Isa. 24:5, 6.

4. When is Joel's prophecy to meet its final fulfillment? Joel 1:15; Isa. 24:1, 3. See *The Great Controversy,* page 628 (new edition, pages 709, 710).

NOTE.—"The day of the Lord is approaching with stealthy tread; but the supposed great and wise men know not the signs of Christ's coming or of the end of the world. Iniquity abounds, and the love of many has waxed cold."—*Testimonies,* vol. 6, p. 406.

5. What are the children of God to do when the day of the Lord draws near? Joel 2:1, 15-17.

NOTE.—"The day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" For this reason we are counseled to "sound an alarm throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Tell the people that the day of the Lord is near, and hasteth greatly. Let none be left unwarned."—*Testimonies,* vol. 6, p. 22.

The Wideness of God's Mercy

6. In view of the terribleness of the day of God, what loving entreaty comes from the Father above? Verses 12-14.

NOTE.—"Christians should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise, and this preparation they should make by diligently studying the word of God, and striving to conform their lives to its precepts."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 626.

7. Wherein does the Lord reveal His divine compassion? Verses 18, 19, 21, 23.

NOTE.—However great the apostasy of God's people, the Lord's love, compassion, mercy, and long-suffering cause Him to yearn for their repentance.

Here Joel promises "the former rain, and the latter rain," the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the opening of the gospel proclamation to bring about the upspringing of the precious seed, and "the latter rain" to be given at its close for the ripening of the harvest, to prepare the remnant church for the coming of the Saviour. It is for this added power that God's people are now to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest.

8. How inclusive are the Lord's invitations and promises? Verse 32, first part.

Future Events Foretold

9. What spiritual application did Joel make of the former and latter rain? Verses 28, 29.

NOTE.—Joel's prophecy formed the text of the apostle Peter's discourse on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21), and was cited by him as being fulfilled by the marvelous events of the day—"fulfilled, but not exhausted." The promise reaches to "the day of the Lord," and to the deliverance of God's people.

10. What view did the prophet have of events to take place near the end of the gospel dispensation? Joel 2:30, 31.

NOTE:—The prophets Isaiah (13:10, 13) and Amos (8:9), also the Saviour Himself (Luke 21:25, 26), foretold these same signs, which were designed to prepare a people for the soon-coming Saviour and the day of the Lord. The sun was darkened and the moon was turned into blood May 19, 1780, and the stars fell from heaven November 13, 1833.

11. What will be proclaimed among the Gentiles? Joel 3:9-11.

12. What false hope will be popular at this same time? Micah 4:1-3.

NOTE.—The sounding of this spurious peace message is a sign of the end, "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them." 1 Thess. 5:3. Heedless of the signs and indifferent to the future, the world will come up to the day of the Lord unprepared. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." Verse 4.

13. What graphic picture is given of the judgment of the heathen? Joel 3:12-14.

14. After telling of the great day of the Lord, what assurances are given God's people? Verses 15-21.

NOTE.—The redeemed of the Lord "shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever." Dan. 7:18. Our Saviour will "dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Rev. 21:3.

Lesson 3, for October 21, 1944

Amos—the Prophet of Justice

MEMORY VERSE: "But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Amos 5:24.

KEY THOUGHTS: Justice between man and man is one of the divine foundations of society. Responsibility varies according to light and knowledge received. Failure to meet responsibility brings punishment to nations as well as to individuals. There is but one God, Jehovah, a God of righteousness, who rules over nations, individuals, and nature.

The Prophet and His Prophecies of Judgment

1. Who was Amos? When did he bear his message? Under what circumstances did he receive his commission? Amos 1:1; 7:14, 15.

NOTE.—Amos was a devout herdsman. He prophesied during the eighth century, a few years, it is generally conceded, before Hosea began his work, though the two prophets were for a time contemporary. "Amos was a husbandman, a tiller of the soil, when God gave him a message to proclaim."—*Gospel Workers,* page 333. He was also "a gatherer of sycamore fruit," a fruit resembling small figs.

From the hills of Tekoa, some twelve miles south of Jerusalem, the land extends in a rolling maze of hills and shallow dales, forming the wilderness in which John the Baptist taught and where the Saviour experienced His temptation.

2. Against whom does Amos pronounce judgment? What charge was brought against each? Amos 1:3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13; 2:1.

NOTE.—Damascus, or Syria, was charged with extreme cruelty.

"The history of nations speaks to us today. To every nation and to every individual God has assigned a place in His great plan. Today men and nations are being tested by the plummet in the hand of Him who makes no mistake. All are by their own choice deciding their destiny, and God is overruling all for the accomplishment of His purposes."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 536.

3. What charges were brought against God's own people? Amos 2:4, 6; 8:4-6.

NOTE.—The Lord punishes heathen nations according to their dealings with humanity. He judges His own people according to this same standard, but especially their relationship to Himself. He charges Judah with having despised His law and broken His precepts. Against Israel was pronounced the most terrible of judgments. Because Israel's light had been great, so had their sin against their own people. See Amos 5:11, 12. While the rich lived in lux-

ury (Amos 3:15), they sold poor but righteous people into slavery for debts of the most trivial amount. Tradesmen made no secret of their dishonesty and their willingness to take advantage of the poor, who could not look for redress to the courts or "gates" where justice was supposed to be dispensed; for justice was openly bought and sold. Amos 5:7. The Lord is no less jealous for the poor now than in days of old. See Isa. 1:17; Ps. 41:1-3. He hates the small ephah, which was used in giving short measure, and the great shekel, which dishonestly raised the price. Amos 8:5. He hates, too, the avarice and worldliness manifested by those who begrudge the hours of the Sabbath by which business profits may be curtailed.

4. How did the Lord contrast His dealings with Israel with their treatment of Him? Amos 2:9-12.

Neglected Responsibility Brings Retribution

5. How does the Lord recognize the principle that special privileges bring special responsibility? Amos 3:1, 2.

NOTE.—The word "therefore" in verse 2 implies that the greater the love Israel had enjoyed the more heinous were her sins, and therefore the greater was the punishment. Herein is a solemn admonition to us who have been so marvelously directed and enlightened by the word of God and the spirit of prophecy.

6. By what figures of speech does the prophet indicate the certainty of the threatened judgments? Verses 4-6.

7. While judgment is sure, wherein does the Lord reveal His justice and compassion? Verse 7.

NOTE.—The statement of verse 7 has encouraged Bible students to believe that the great events of human history would be clearly pointed out in Biblical prophecy, and a careful study has revealed this to be true.

Call to Repentance in Vain

8. What is one revealed evidence of the low estate of Israel at this time? Amos 4:1.

9. What was the result of the Lord's various efforts to bring Israel to repentance and reformation? Verses 6-11.

NOTE.—"Every disaster is but a new call to repentance." By blessings bestowed, by blessings removed, the Lord calls to His people to return to Him. How disappointing and fateful are the words "and ye would not"!

10. Because of Israel's continued impenitence, what admonition did the Lord give? How did He identify the God of Israel? Verses 12, 13.

11. How did the Lord repeatedly appeal to the people? Amos 5:4, 8, 14, 15.

NOTE.—The way of life lies in seeking or worshiping the Creator of the universe. How can anyone forget God so long as the majesty of the heavens broods over him? "Our days and nights are sentineled by the splendid warders of God." What a wise provision for man was made when the Creator elected to control the evening and the morning Himself! Night is but the turning of the earth from the sun, and the day, its turning toward the sun, so the soul's

night is caused by its turning from Him, the Source of all light; and day breaks for it when it turns to the Sun of Righteousness.

Form Without Sincerity an Abomination

12. How does the Lord regard a worship consisting of forms when the life is not in accord with His standards of righteousness? In what does Jehovah find pleasure? Verses 21-24.

13. What definite retribution was pronounced upon unrepentant Israel? Verse 27; 7:9.

14. What course did Amaziah, an idolatrous priest, take in regard to the prophet's warnings? Verses 10-13.

NOTE.—Amaziah's course demonstrated the truthfulness of the prophet's own words, "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly." Amos 5:10. Amaziah, however, failed in his effort to hush the voice of the prophet. For more than twenty-five hundred years it has thus borne its sturdy message to the people of God, denouncing injustice, cruelty, slavery, dishonesty, formalism, hatred, and the oppression of the poor.

The Final Events Described

15. How did the prophet visualize the end of the world as well as the end of Israel? Amos 8:1-3, 11, 12.

NOTE.—The basket of fruit coming at the end of the season indicated that the harvesttime had come for Israel. In *The Great Controversy,* pages 628, 629 (new edition, pages 709, 710), verses 3, 11, and 12 are cited as applying to the time of trouble that precedes the second advent.

16. Despite Israel's sad failure, what bright picture of the future is presented? Amos 9:11-15.

NOTE.—At the council held in Jerusalem, James applied Amos 9:11, 12, as a prophecy referring to the building of the church (Acts 15:16, 17), and the psalmist says, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory." Ps. 102:16.

"The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening."—*The Great Controversy,* page 611.

Lesson 4, for October 28, 1944

Obadiah—the Prophet of Doom

MEMORY VERSE: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. 6:7.

KEY THOUGHTS: Sin unrepented of brings retribution: "As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee." The kingdom shall be Jehovah's.

The Hostility of the Edomites

1. Concerning whom did Obadiah bear a message from the Lord? Obadiah 1.

NOTE.—The Edomites were descendants of Esau. They lived in the rocky fastnesses of Mount Seir, about fifty miles southeast of the Dead Sea. In their seclusion and strength they felt that they were able to defy any invasion;

and for many years did resist all attempts to rout them from their well-nigh impregnable fortress.

2. How did the Edomites early reveal their opposition to the Lord's chosen people? Num. 20:14-21.

NOTE.—Between the Edomites and the Israelites, as between Esau and Jacob, there existed intense bitterness. See Gen. 27:41. No doubt the perfidy of Jacob in obtaining the birthright from his brother was largely responsible for the enmity of Edom, who felt that Jacob had cheated their ancestor out of his birthright blessings and privileges.

Edom's Sin and Overthrow

3. What was Edom's great sin as portrayed through the prophet? How did it reveal itself? Obadiah 3.

NOTE.—"Pride and ambition are widespread; and when these are cherished, they open the door to envy, and a striving for supremacy; the soul is alienated from God, and unconsciously drawn into the ranks of Satan."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* pages 403, 404.

4. Though the Lord had borne long with Edom in her pride, hatred, and insolence, what pronouncement was finally made? Verse 4.

5. How complete was to be the overthrow and by whom was it to be consummated? Verse 5; Jer. 49:17, 18.

NOTE.—Thieves would steal only as much as they wanted, and vintages would leave gleanings; but Edom was to be completely plundered. Jehovah must therefore be the author of such a catastrophe.

Reasons for Edom's Humiliation

6. Why was evil to be visited upon Edom (Mount Seir)? Obadiah 10; Ezek. 35:1-5.

NOTE.—"Esau grew up loving self-gratification, and centering all his interest in the present. . . . Jacob, thoughtful, diligent, and care-taking, ever thinking more of the future than the present" (see *Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 177), had his weaknesses,—deception and dishonesty,—but he stood for a spiritual ideal, and in the end upon the plane of a triumphant faith. Esau was a "profane person," one who acts independently of God. This difference in character made the Lord say, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." This difference in character in Esau and Jacob made a similar difference in the character of their descendants, and was the basis for the hostility between the two races, a hostility which found its climax in the attitude of the Herods, who were Edomites, toward Jesus of Nazareth, an Israelite indeed.

7. Of what specific acts is Edom accused? Obadiah 11, 12.

NOTE.—The reprehensible conduct of Edom toward his brother Jacob took place when the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem in 586 B. C.

8. What further charge is made against Edom? Verses 13, 14.

NOTE.—In the day of Jerusalem's overthrow the Edomites rejoiced over the calamity that had befallen Judah, grasped at a share of the spoil, lay in wait to cut off those who would escape from their enemies, and delivered these to the invader. Such treachery the Lord could not brook.

The Inevitable Verdict

9. What retribution must such a treacherous course bring? Verse 15.

NOTE.—"Every seed sown produces a harvest of its kind. So it is in human life. We all need to sow the seeds of compassion, sympathy, and love; for we shall reap what we sow. Every characteristic of selfishness, self-love, self-esteem, every act of self-indulgence, will bring forth a like harvest. He who lives for self is sowing to the flesh, and of the flesh he will reap corruption."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 84.

10. How was the treachery Edom showed to Israel to be returned upon her own head? Verse 7.

NOTE.—"The men of thy confederacy . . . have deceived thee" probably refers to the time when Edom and her allies, Moab and Ammon, invaded Judah in the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20); but Judah was saved from disaster through Moab and Ammon's turning upon the Edomites and slaughtering them, and finally falling upon one another.

"God was the strength of Judah in this crisis, and He is the strength of His people today. . . . In every emergency we are to feel that the battle is His. His resources are limitless, and apparent impossibilities will make the victory all the greater."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 202.

11. What else led to the undoing of Edom? Verses 8, 9.

NOTE.—Crafty Edom had not been shrewd enough to see through the treachery of her allies by which they prevailed over her.

12. How did the prophet Malachi corroborate Obadiah's prophecy as to the ultimate fate of Edom? Mal. 1:4, 5.

13. What comparison did the Lord make concerning the future of Esau and of Jacob? Obadiah 17, 18.

14. What is the final word of the prophet? Verse 21.

NOTE.—This is the final word of all prophecy: "The kingdom shall be the Lord's." "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." The seer of Patmos saw the ultimate revolution when he said: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ." Rev. 11:15.

Lesson 5, for November 4, 1944

Jonah—the Reluctant Missionary

MEMORY VERSE: "I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord." Jonah 2:9.

KEY THOUGHTS: Escape from God is impossible. Running away from duty harms others as well as oneself. No man lives unto himself. Light is given not for oneself alone; but for one to give to others. The love of God encompasses the entire world.

Jonah's Commission

1. What call from the Lord came to Jonah? Jonah 1:1, 2.

NOTE.—"God is not indifferent to the condition of cities, nations, and individuals. Behind the shadow He keeps watch over the world. Now, in far-

off Galilee the prophet Jonah receives the commission to go to Nineveh, and cry against it."—C. E. Macartney, *Sermons on Old Testament Heroes,* page 145.

2. What surprising response did the prophet make to this commission? Verse 3.

NOTE.—Israel's history at this period was more exclusive religiously than ever before; but she was endeavoring to make political alliances with the nations about her. The Lord desired her to be a light to the Gentiles, but forbade political alliances. Against the flinthearted Judaism which saw in the heathen only fuel for the fire of Jehovah's wrath, the mission of Jonah was meant to be a beautiful and powerful protest; and a supreme revelation of the far-reaching mercy of God.

Jonah, recreant to the lofty mission assigned him, thought to flee from God and duty by taking ship to Tarshish, a Phoenician mining colony in Spain. Since Jehovah is omnipresent, the futility of this venture should have been apparent to the perplexed prophet. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth?" Jer. 23:24. David voiced the same thought: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell [the grave], behold, Thou art there." Ps. 139:7, 8.

Experience on the Sea

3. What occasioned the anxious chiding of Jonah by the shipmaster? Jonah 1:4-6.

NOTE.—The fleeing prophet imperiled the lives of all on board with him; Paul was a savior to all on board the vessel with him. Acts 27:24.

4. Thinking the severe violence of the storm betokened the wrath of the gods, what suggestion was carried out by the mariners of the vessel? With what result? Jonah 1:7.

5. To what embarrassing interrogation was Jonah subjected? Verses 8, 9.

NOTE.—"Of what people art thou?" Admission that we belong to God's people either honors the truth of God or brings reproach upon it.

"What is thine occupation?" Each one should ask himself this question: Does my occupation accord with my profession?

6. In response to the request of the frightened mariners as to what should be done to better the situation, what did Jonah generously propose? Verses 10-12.

NOTE.—Jonah faced death with fortitude rather than further jeopardize the safety of others. His physical heroism surpassed his spiritual courage. Only the love of God can generate spiritual courage.

7. What shows the reluctance of the mariners to carry out the tragic suggestion made by Jonah? Verses 13-16.

The Commission Fulfilled

8. After Jonah's miraculous deliverance from the deep, what testified to his change of heart? Jonah 3:1-4.

NOTE.—"At last Jonah had learned that 'salvation belongeth unto the Lord.' With penitence and a recognition of the saving grace of God, came de-

liverance."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 269. When he did not stop to question or doubt, but obeyed unhesitatingly the second command to go and preach to Nineveh, a spiritual transformation in the disobedient prophet was evidenced.

9. What effect did Jonah's preaching have upon king and people? What resulted from their repentance? Verses 5-10.

NOTE.—Fresh from the thrilling experiences through which he had passed, Jonah no doubt bore his message with great power and conviction.

The Lord's threatenings as well as His promised blessings are always conditional. See Jer. 18:7-10. Because of the repentance of the Ninevites, "their doom was averted; the God of Israel was exalted and honored throughout the heathen world, and His law was revered. Not until many years later was Nineveh to fall a prey to the surrounding nations through forgetfulness of God and through boastful pride."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 271.

The Prophet Vexed by the Averted Doom

10. What strange effect did Nineveh's repentance and averted doom have upon Jonah? What spirit gave rise to such feelings? Jonah 4:1-3.

NOTE.—When Christ beheld the city of Jerusalem from the brow of the Mount of Olives, He wept over it. Had Jonah possessed this spirit, he would have rejoiced over the averted calamity to the great city.

"Jealous of his reputation, he [Jonah] lost sight of the infinitely greater value of the souls in that wretched city."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 271.

11. Relate the conversation between the Lord and the disappointed prophet after he had given expression to his feelings. Verses 4-11.

NOTE.—The fundamental truth of this book is that God is a God of mercy, of pity, of compassion. The Hebrew word for pity "literally means cover. Should not I cover Nineveh? The thought perfectly harmonizes with the revelation of God suggested in the words which Jesus uttered over Jerusalem: 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.' The idea is that of covering them, and so shielding them from danger. Should not I cover Nineveh, brood over it, protect it, feel its sorrows in My own heart, shield it from destroying forces? In that word we have His [God's] attitude towards sinning cities. That is the source of missionary endeavor in all the centuries, 'Should not I have pity?' "—G. Campbell Morgan, *The Messages of the Books of the Bible,* page 231.

12. What references did Jesus make to Jonah's experience? Matt. 12:38-41.

NOTE.—" 'There shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah.' . . . As the preaching of Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so Christ's preaching was a sign to His generation. But what a contrast in the reception of the word! The people of the great heathen city trembled as they heard the warning from God. Kings and nobles humbled themselves; the high and the lowly together cried to the God of heaven, and His mercy was granted unto them. 'The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation,' Christ had said, 'and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.' "—*The Desire of Ages,* page 406.

The peculiar glory of being a sign of the death and resurrection of the Saviour of the world has forever linked the prophet's name with that of the Son of God—no small honor. We feel assured that Jonah came to sense deeply the selfish and insolent attitude he manifested after accomplishing through the Lord a work such as no other preacher or evangelist has ever accomplished. His humiliation and repentance must be indicated in the graphic picture he presents of his stubbornness and bigotry, with no effort to minimize the gravity of his failures.

Lesson 6, for November 11, 1944

Micah—the Prophet of the Poor

MEMORY VERSE: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Micah 6:8.

KEY THOUGHTS: Jehovah's absolute condemnation of all corruption in secular and spiritual affairs. Judgment on corruption. Offerings acceptable only as they represent the heart's love and loyalty. Divine compassion delights in mercy to repentant sinners.

The Corrupted State of Priest and People

1. During the reign of what kings did Micah minister? For what purpose did he say the Lord was coming out of His place? Micah 1:1, 3-5.

NOTE.—The word "Micah" signifies, "Who is like unto Jehovah?" and the prophet stressed the fact that there is none like Him. He was a native of the country, and possessed the sturdy spiritual characteristics of Amos, Elijah, and Elisha. Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah. He makes known the authority behind his message of condemnation, saying: "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." Micah 3:8.

Jotham and Ahaz each reigned sixteen years; so Micah's ministry was not a brief one, some authorities according him forty or fifty years of service. Under Ahaz "both rich and poor suffered. The grasping, avaricious landlords used their power to oppress, confiscating the property of the poor and even evicting widows from their houses. All sorts of economic crimes were perpetrated, the plutocrats devouring the humbler classes as 'sheep crop grass.' . . . The custodians of the law abused their powers; nobles fleecing the poor, judges accepting of bribes, prophets flattering the rich, and priests teaching for hire. Lust of wealth ruled on all sides. The moneyed tyrants laughed at possible judgment. Commercialism and materialism were supplanting almost the last vestige of everything ethical and spiritual."—George L. Robinson, *The Twelve Minor Prophets,* pages 95, 96.

2. What wrong reasoning led to a false sense of security? How did Micah dispel this false idea? Micah 3:9, 11, 12.

NOTE.—God's judgment does not preclude judgment on sin. Micah told the Israelites plainly of the Lord's threatening judgment. The words cited in the texts answering these questions applied with equal force to the Jews in the time of the Saviour, and apply also to the people of God in the last days. See *The Great Controversy,* page 27 (new edition, page 28).

3. What is the only way to escape the results of sin? Isa. 55:7; Jer. 3:12.

NOTE.—"It is Satan's special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him there, helpless and hopeless, fearing to seek for pardon. But God invites, 'Let him take hold of My strength, that he make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.' In Christ every provision has been made, every encouragement offered."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 326.

"Invitation upon invitation was sent to erring Israel to return to their allegiance to Jehovah. Tender were the pleadings of the prophets; and as they stood before the people, earnestly exhorting to repentance and reformation, their words bore fruit to the glory of God."—*Ibid.,* page 325.

Messianic Prophecies

4. What encouraging picture of the future is presented by the prophet? Micah 4:6-8.

NOTE.—"The dominion that once was Adam's, passed to the usurper. But the Son of God proposed to come to this earth to pay the penalty of sin, and thus not only redeem man, but recover the dominion forfeited. It is of this restoration that Micah prophesied."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 682.

5. What reference does Micah make to the time of trouble through which the church of God is to pass before its final redemption? Verses 11, 12.

NOTE.—While this prophecy had reference to Israel of old, it also refers to the experience of the remnant church. "God will not fail His church in the hour of her greatest peril. He has promised deliverance. 'I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents,' He has declared, 'and have mercy on his dwelling places.' Then will the purpose of God be fulfilled; the principles of His kingdom will be honored by all beneath the sun."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 538.

6. What reference is made to the suffering, birth, pre-existence, and work of Him through whom alone redemption and restoration can be accomplished? Micah 5:1-4.

NOTE.—"With convincing power Paul reasoned from the Old Testament Scriptures that 'Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead.' Had not Micah prophesied, 'They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek'?"—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 225.

Here Micah gives the birthplace of the Messiah, and more than seven centuries later the Wise Men of the East obtained from this passage the direction in which to continue their journey. Matt. 2:1-6.

Man's Full Duty

7. What pathetic plaint does the Lord make to Israel? Micah 6:3-5.

8. What questions perplexed Israel? Verses 6, 7.

NOTE.—"In the words of Abraham, 'My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering,' and in God's provision of a sacrifice instead of Isaac, it was declared that no man could make expiation for himself. The pagan system of sacrifice was wholly unacceptable to God. No father was to offer up his son or his daughter for a sin offering. The Son of God alone can bear the guilt of the world."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 469.

9. In what terse statement did Micah outline our duty to God and man? Verse 8.

NOTE.—"These plain utterances of the prophets and of the Master Himself, should be received by us as the voice of God to every soul. We should lose no opportunity of performing deeds of mercy, of tender forethought and Christian courtesy, for the burdened and the oppressed."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 327.

10. What sins are definitely ruled out of the life by the foregoing statement? Verses 10-12.

NOTE.—"Toward those who fall into sin, the church has a duty, to warn, to instruct, and if possible to restore. . . . Deal faithfully with wrongdoing. Warn every soul that is in danger. Leave none to deceive themselves. Call sin by its right name. Declare what God has said in regard to lying, Sabbath-breaking, stealing, idolatry, and every other evil. 'They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' "—*The Desire of Ages,* pages 805, 806.

The Lord a Light and Strength

11. Despite the depravity, bribery, and treachery (Micah 7:1-6) all about him, what confidence did Micah express? Verses 7-9.

12. In what words did the prophet exalt Jehovah? Verses 18, 19.

13. How does the prophet express his absolute confidence in the fulfillment of all God's promises? Verse 20.

NOTE.—Surely, we, too, can say with the prophets of old: "He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." Deut. 32:4.

Lesson 7, for November 18, 1944

Nahum—the Prophet of Consolation

MEMORY VERSE: "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him." Nahum 1:7.

KEY THOUGHTS: As Nineveh sowed, so she reaped—a lesson for men and nations today. Behind God's wrath is His love. He is slow to wrath, but will not clear the guilty. The oppressor finds retribution; the oppressed, consolation. To His people the Lord is a tower of strength.

Majesty and Power of Jehovah

1. In what pronouncement was the destruction of Assyria and Nineveh threatened? Zeph. 2:13.

NOTE.—Judgment came upon Assyria because of her pride and cruelty, twin sins; for the more one loves self the less he thinks of God or his fellow man, and the more prone he is to mistreat his fellow man. Sennacherib, Assyria's great king, boasted that he had made the royal city shine like the sun. Zephaniah suggests the pride of Nineveh when he wrote: "This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me." Verse 15, first part.

2. What does the prophet Nahum first present in his message? Nahum 1:1-6.

NOTE.—The prophet declares Jehovah's character, His majesty and power, as revealed in nature. God is a jealous God, a jealousy based on love. The word "jealous" as here used means that the Lord is lovingly watchful of His

people, vigilant in guarding them, and sensitive to the honor of Himself and His people. Such jealousy can but lead to wrathful vengeance upon those who oppress and cruelly treat others. "We must not think of God as petulantly angry, selfishly ill-tempered. This is blasphemy. Behind God's wrath is the mystery of His love," His jealousy for His own.

The Equity of God's Dealings

3. How does the Lord discriminate between His own and those who refuse to recognize His sovereignty? Verses 7, 8.

4. How complete will be the final work of judgment? Verses 9, 10.

NOTE.—Long does justice wait while mercy pleads with sinners; but the Lord will not acquit the unrepentant. When He sets His hand to the work of destruction, He will make an utter end, whether of individuals or nations. In the final work destructive of sin and sinners, God's name will forever be vindicated, and sin will not rise up the second time.

5. What further statement is made concerning Judah's enemy? Verses 11-15.

NOTE.—In days gone by there went out of Nineveh one who planned villainous devices against Jehovah and His people. Now Jehovah has given commandment that that one's name shall be blotted out, his grave dishonored, and the temple of his gods robbed of its images. The reference here is doubtless to Assyria's king Sennacherib, who harassed Judah in the days of Hezekiah. See 2 Kings 19 and Isaiah 36.

The purpose of the downfall of Assyria is the restoration of Judah. Already their eyes could almost behold on the mountaintops the feet of the herald bringing tidings of salvation, for it seems that Nahum bore his message not many years before the fall of Nineveh in 611 B. C.

Nineveh's Ruinous Fall

6. To what is the second chapter of the book devoted? Nahum 2.

NOTE.—The prophet here "describes with wondrous energy the siege and capture of Nineveh. The battle array, the flaming spears and rushing chariots, the fierce attack, the opened gates, the heaps of slain, the flight of the living, the division of spoils, the utter ruin of the city, are brought before the reader's eye in a continuous panoramic vision. The enormous wealth, the infinite strength of Nineveh, her ample fortifications, and her numerous allies were of no avail against Jehovah of hosts. The magnificent city, once mistress of the world, is empty and void and waste. 'The heart melteth, the knees smite together, and anguish is in all loins.' "—*Jackson's Bible Dictionary*.

7. How strongly did the Lord express His disapproval of the wicked city? Nahum 3:1, 4-7.

8. How was Nineveh's boasting about her impregnability answered by the Lord? Verses 8-10.

NOTE.—The Lord had pronounced sentence against No, or Thebes, the capital and leading city of Egypt; and despite her strategic situation and her allies, she was overthrown by Assyria about 663 B. C. Her people were slain or bound in fetters and taken to distant lands. Nineveh could not expect to escape a similar fate, especially since her corruption was much darker than that of Thebes.

9. What fiat was pronounced concerning Assyria? Verse 19.

NOTE.—"Nineveh's destruction was made complete. All that remains today of the ancient city are two great mounds. . . . So complete, indeed, were Nineveh's ruins that Xenophon scarcely recognized the site; Alexander the Great marched by, 'not knowing that a world empire was buried under his feet.' Lucian wrote, 'Nineveh is perished, and there is no trace left where once it was.' Gibbon records that as early as A. D. 62, 'the city and even the ruins of the city, had long disappeared.' The traveler Niebuhr in 1766 passed over the site without knowing it. Only since Layard and Botta identified the site in 1842 has the city begun to be recognized by the modern world."—George L. Robinson, *The Twelve Minor Prophets,* page 111.

"The pride of Assyria and its fall are to serve as an object lesson to the end of time."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 366.

Lesson 8, for November 25, 1944

Habakkuk—the Prophet of Faith

MEMORY VERSE: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." Hab. 2:1.

KEY THOUGHTS: Faith triumphs. Righteousness by faith. Temperance and godly reverence enjoined. Omnipotence of God. Unbounded confidence in Him.

Why Evil Is Permitted

1. What problem caused the prophet much concern? Hab. 1:1-4.

NOTE.—The wicked reigns of Manasseh and his son Amon had led Judah far into sin. "The truehearted in Judah were questioning whether God's promises to ancient Israel could ever be fulfilled. From a human point of view, the divine purpose for the chosen nation seemed almost impossible of accomplishment. The apostasy of former centuries had gathered strength with the passing years; ten of the tribes had been scattered among the heathen; only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained, and even these now seemed on the verge of moral and national ruin."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 384.

2. What answer to the questioning of the prophet did the Lord give? Verses 5-7, 11.

NOTE.—"God answered the cry of His loyal children. Through His chosen mouthpiece He revealed His determination to bring chastisement upon the nation that had turned from Him to serve the gods of the heathen. Within the lifetime of some who were even then making inquiry regarding the future, He would miraculously shape the affairs of the ruling nations of earth, and bring the Babylonians into the ascendancy. These Chaldeans, 'terrible and dreadful,' were to fall suddenly upon the land of Judah as a divinely appointed scourge. The princes of Judah and the fairest of the people were to be carried captive to Babylon; the Judean cities and villages and the cultivated fields were to be laid waste; nothing was to be spared."—*Prophets and Kings,* pages 385, 386.

3. What does the prophet finally admit? What still troubles him? Verses 12-17.

NOTE.—"Confident that even in this terrible judgment the purpose of God for His people would in some way be fulfilled, Habakkuk bowed in sub-

mission to the revealed will of Jehovah. 'Art Thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One?' he exclaimed. And then, his faith reaching out beyond the forbidding prospect of the immediate future, and laying fast hold on the precious promises that reveal God's love for His trusting children, the prophet added, 'We shall not die.' With this declaration of faith, he rested his case, and that of every believing Israelite, in the hands of a compassionate God."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 386.

Waiting on the Watchtower

4. Notwithstanding the prophet's perplexity over the apparent injustice, what determination did he make? Hab. 2:1.

NOTE.—"I will stand upon my watch," or at my post. There is no better vantage ground for a man who watches for the dawn.

5. What command was given to the prophet? Verses 2, 3.

NOTE.—"The faith that strengthened Habakkuk and all the holy and the just in those days of deep trial, was the same faith that sustains God's people today. . . . We must cherish and cultivate the faith of which prophets and apostles have testified,—the faith that lays hold on the promises of God, and waits for deliverance in His appointed time and way. The sure word of prophecy will meet its final fulfillment in the glorious advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. . . . Let us ever hold in remembrance the cheering message, 'The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it.' "—*Prophets and Kings,* pages 386-388.

6. Wherein lies the strength and life of the just? Verse 4.

NOTE.—The words "the just shall live by his faith" are quoted by the apostle Paul in Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; and Heb. 10:38 as the bedrock of Christian living. Martin Luther while climbing "Pilate's staircase" at Rome had these words so impressed upon him by the Spirit of God that he saw the futility of seeking salvation by works, and so became the chief promoter of the Protestant faith. Because of this great principle stated by Habakkuk, he is called the Father of Protestant freedom.

7. Against what outstanding sins does the prophet express condemnation? Hab. 2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19.

NOTE.—While the nations that have been oppressed by the Chaldeans are represented as pronouncing woes upon that nation for its wrongs perpetrated upon them, Habakkuk really pronounces these five woes upon the sins of dishonesty (verse 6), covetousness (verse 9), bloody enterprises (verse 12), debauchery (verse 15), and idolatry (verses 18, 19), regardless of who commits them. The prophet also enumerates another principle: "Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee." Verse 8. Tyranny and selfishness carry within them the seeds of their own destruction.

8. In what beautiful words did the prophet teach godly reverence? Verse 20.

NOTE.—" 'Holy and reverend is His name.' Angels, as they speak it, veil their faces. With what reverence should we, who are fallen and sinful, take it upon our lips!"—*Education,* page 243. Read Psalms 95:3-6; 100:3, 4.

An Anthem of Praise

9. In view of threatening calamities, for what did Habakkuk pray? Hab. 3:1, 2.

NOTE.—The prophet has listened to the voice of God and understands that the Chaldeans are to be sent as a means of retribution for the sins of his people. Now he prays that the Lord would "in the midst of the years" work in behalf of Israel as He did of old; and again he prayed: "Be merciful, O Lord, unto Thy people Israel, whom Thou hast redeemed." See Deut. 21:1-8.

10. What marvelous description of the second appearing of the Saviour is given in this hymn? Hab. 3:3-10.

NOTE.—"The coming of Christ to usher in the reign of righteousness, has inspired the most sublime and impassioned utterances of the sacred writers. The poets and prophets of the Bible have dwelt upon it in words glowing with celestial fire. . . . And Habakkuk, rapt in holy vision, beheld His appearing. 'God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light.' "—*The Great Controversy,* page 300.

"Says the prophet, beholding Christ in His glory, 'He had bright beams coming out of His side: and there was the hiding of His power.' That pierced side whence flowed the crimson stream that reconciled man to God,—there is the Saviour's glory, there 'the hiding of His power.' "—*Ibid.,* page 674.

11. What reference is made to the Lord's providences in days gone by? Verses 11-13.

NOTE.—In *Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 508, these verses are quoted as referring to the time when the Lord caused the sun and moon to stand still in answer to Joshua's prayer in order that Israel might avenge themselves upon their enemies. See Joshua 10:12-14.

12. With what strong climax did Habakkuk declare the stability of his faith? Hab. 3:17-19.

NOTE.—The prophet concludes with an expression of "absolute and unbounded confidence in God, emphatically affirming that though all visible signs of His love should fail and he should be reduced to poverty and penury, he will yet rejoice in the God of his salvation."—George L. Robinson, *The Twelve Minor Prophets,* page 126.

Lesson 9, for December 2, 1944

Zephaniah—the Prophet of Judgment

MEMORY VERSE: "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Zeph. 2:3.

KEY THOUGHTS: The day of the Lord hasteth greatly. The righteous person as well as the sinner is counseled to seek God. God rejoices over the righteous. God's purpose for the world revealed.

Threatened Judgment

1. What did the prophet say the Lord had determined upon the world, and especially upon Judah? Why was judgment necessary? Zeph. 1:2-6.

NOTE.—Zephaniah's "prophecies of impending judgment upon Judah apply with equal force to the judgments that are to fall upon an impenitent world at the time of the second advent of Christ."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 389.

As the prophets warned Israel of coming judgment, so God's chosen people for this time must sound the warning of the coming judgments that those who will may be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.

"The Lord specifies the judgments that He will bring upon evildoers. . . . God cannot forbear much longer. Already His judgments are beginning to fall on some places, and soon His signal displeasure will be felt in other places."—*Testimonies,* vol. 9, pp. 95, 96.

2. What did Zephaniah exhort the people to do? What reason did he give for such counsel? Verses 7, 8.

NOTE.—Zechariah also urges all flesh to be silent before the Lord "for He is raised up out of His holy habitation" (Zech. 2:13)—a divine awakening that will bring punishment upon all evildoers. Those upon whom the Lord brings judgment are without excuse for their sins, so they should keep silence before Him.

3. Upon whom especially will the searching eye of God be found in the evil day? What retribution will be visited upon these impious and indifferent ones? Zeph. 1:12, 13.

NOTE.—The stroke of that judgment would fall first, the prophet said, upon the princes (verse 8), then upon extortioners and merchants (verse 11), and finally upon those who were "settled on their lees" (verse 12), that is, those who were selfishly living in idleness and indifference.

"Many who profess the faith are easily satisfied; if they come up to a few points of self-denial and reform, they do not see the necessity of going further. Why is there such a resting on the lees? There is no halting place for us this side of heaven."—*Testimonies,* vol. 5, p. 308.

4. To what great event did the prophet call attention? How is that day described? Verses 14-16.

NOTE.—While Jesus remains at the throne of grace as our High Priest, our Intercessor (Heb. 4:14-16), "the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2) will continue. This day, however, will close with the decree described in Revelation 22:11 and Zephaniah 2:1-3. Then "the day of the Lord" will begin, and will continue for a thousand years, at the end of which the wicked will all be destroyed in the lake of fire. Rev. 20:5, 7, 14, 15.

5. To whom is the day of the Lord darkness? Isa. 13:9.

NOTE.—"To them that cry, 'My God, we know Thee,' yet have transgressed His covenant, and hastened after another god, hiding iniquity in their hearts, and loving the paths of unrighteousness,—to these the day of the Lord is 'darkness, and not light, even very dark, and no brightness in it.' "—*The Great Controversy,* page 310.

Task of the Hour

6. What is the Saviour's admonition to those living near the beginning of the day of the Lord? Luke 21:34, 36.

7. What is another duty and privilege of the people of God as they approach this solemn hour? Joel 2:1.

8. What protection will riches be to one in the day of the Lord? Zeph. 1:18.

NOTE.—"Treasure laid up on earth will not endure. . . . The love of money was the ruling passion in the Jewish age. Worldliness usurped the

place of God and religion in the soul. So it is now. . . . The instruction is to 'lay up for *yourselves* treasures in heaven.' . . . Character is the great harvest of life. And every word or deed that through the grace of Christ shall kindle in one soul an impulse that reaches heavenward, every effort that tends to the formation of a Christlike character, is laying up treasure in heaven. . . . And at the final day, when the wealth of earth shall perish, he who has laid up treasure in heaven will behold that which his life has gained."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pages 133-135.

Exhortation to Return to God

9. What appeal did Zephaniah make to the people? Zeph. 2:1-3.

NOTE.—"It is not now too late for wrongs to be righted. Show your repentance for past wrongs by redeeming the time. Where you have wronged anyone, make restitution as it comes to your mind."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 549, 550.

10. What are some of the sins for which nations are held accountable by the Ruler of the universe? Verses 5, 8-10.

NOTE.—"With unerring accuracy the Infinite One still keeps account with the nations. While His mercy is tendered, with calls to repentance, this account remains open; but when the figures reach a certain amount which God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath begins. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. Mercy no longer pleads in their behalf."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 364.

11. What further dark record is given of the chosen people and their city? Zeph. 3:1-4.

NOTE.—"Only obedience to the requirements of Heaven will keep man from apostasy."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 83.

12. When people refuse or neglect to accept the offers of salvation so freely given, what only can divine justice do? Verse 8.

Future Glory of Israel

13. What precious promises does the Lord make to those who are loyal to Him and His precepts? Verses 9-13.

14. What should the richness of God's promised blessings constrain the people of God to do? Verses 14, 15.

NOTE.—"His [God's] praise should continually be in our hearts and upon our lips."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 64.

15. What timely admonition does the prophet give? Verse 16, last part.

NOTE.—"The Lord requires His servants to be energetic. . . . 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.' . . . They should keep before the mind the worth of souls, and the matchless depths of a Saviour's love. This will awaken the soul, so that with David they may say, 'My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned.' "—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 504.

16. In what knowledge lies the Christian's comfort and hope? Verses 17-20.

NOTE.—"The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the

vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love."—*The Great Controversy*, page 678.

Lesson 10, for December 9, 1944

Haggai—the Prophet of Temple Building

MEMORY VERSE: "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts." Haggai 2:4.

KEY THOUGHTS: God's promises are sure. The true value of a church is not in its external glory, but in the progress of its members in spiritual experience. Murmuring and unfavorable comparisons depress and weaken fellow workers, and delay progress of the work of God. Work despite opposition, and God will bless the effort.

God's Purpose and Promise Fulfilled

1. What remarkable edict did Cyrus, king of Medo-Persia, make soon after coming to the throne? Ezra 1:1-4.

NOTE.—Wonderful are the ways of the Lord. More than a century before Cyrus was born, inspiration had said: "He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." Isa. 44:28.

Daniel, whom Cyrus greatly esteemed and trusted, pointed out to the king the prophecies concerning him and the work to which he was appointed by the God of heaven. Cyrus, profoundly moved, determined to fulfill his divinely appointed mission by making a decree that all Jews who wished to return to Jerusalem to build the temple might do so.

2. What response was made to the edict of Cyrus? Ezra 1:5, 6; 2:64, 65.

NOTE.—The great majority of the Israelites chose to remain in the land of their exile rather than undergo the hardships of the return journey and the re-establishment of their desolated homes and cities. Even when Zechariah (Zech. 2:6) warned them to flee from Babylon without further delay, they did not heed the invitation. By failing to improve this opportunity, they subjected themselves to the trying experience that later came to them through the enmity of Haman, the Agagite.

3. How did the returned exiles early express their loyalty to God and His worship? Ezra 3:1-6, 8.

NOTE.—"Before separating to dwell in the homes they were endeavoring to restore, 'they kept also the Feast of Tabernacles.' "—*Prophets and Kings*, page 560.

The foundation of the temple was not laid until the second year after their return, the intervening time evidently being used in gathering material and making other necessary preparations.

"The setting up of the altar of daily burnt offerings greatly cheered the faithful remnant. Heartily they entered into the preparations necessary for the rebuilding of the temple, gathering courage as these preparations advanced from month to month."—*Ibid.*, page 560.

Opposition Brings Discouragement

4. What request was made by the Samaritans? Why was their request refused? How did the enemy retaliate? Ezra 4:1-5.

NOTE.—"It is not the open and avowed enemies of the cause of God that are most to be feared. Those who, like the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin, come with smooth words and fair speeches, apparently seeking for friendly alliance with God's children, have greater power to deceive. Against such every soul should be on the alert, lest some carefully concealed and masterly snare take him unaware."—*Prophets and Kings,* pages 570, 571.

5. How long was the work hindered? What was the effect of this opposition upon the builders? Verses 23, 24.

NOTE.—The opposition continued its evil work for about fourteen years. During the reigns of Cyrus and his son, Cambyses, the forces of evil were held in check by heavenly agencies, and the work went forward, though slowly. Finally the Samaritans induced Artaxerxes, an imposter on the throne, to issue a decree forbidding the Jews to continue work on temple and city.

"The opposition of their enemies was strong and determined, and gradually the builders lost heart. . . . Many of the Jews questioned whether, after all, the time had come to rebuild. The feeling soon became widespread. Many of the workmen, discouraged and disheartened, returned to their homes, to take up the ordinary pursuits of life."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 572.

6. What response was made to the prophet's call to arise and build? Haggai 1:12-15.

NOTE.—Haggai probably went to Jerusalem with the first contingent of exiles under Zerubbabel about 536 B. C. He delivered his messages to the people about sixteen years later.

"With fields lying waste, with their scant store of provisions rapidly failing, and surrounded as they were by unfriendly peoples, the Israelites nevertheless moved forward by faith, in response to the call of God's messengers, and labored diligently to restore the ruined temple. It was a work requiring firm reliance upon God."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 577.

Strengthened by Gracious Promises

7. How did the Lord recognize the disheartening experiences through which some of the older people were passing? What inspiring promises were given to hearten such? Haggai 2:1-9.

NOTE.—The church even now at times errs in seeking a glory too external. "The Christian always has a strong helper in the Lord. The way of the Lord's helping we may not know; but this we do know: He will never fail those who put their trust in Him. Could Christians realize how many times the Lord has ordered their way, that the purposes of the enemy concerning them might not be accomplished, they would not stumble along complainingly. Their faith would be stayed on God, and no trial would have power to move them."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 576.

8. Of what did the Lord remind the people? Verses 10-14.

9. Now that work upon the temple was eagerly and faithfully going forward, what assurance was given the builders? Verses 15-19.

10. Whom did Haggai's last prophecy concern? What promises were made in this prophecy? Verses 20-23.

NOTE.—Upon Zerubbabel, a descendant of King David, Cyrus placed the responsibility of being the governor of the returned Jews. Zerubbabel had been sorely tried during the years of opposition and struggle; but the Lord encouraged him by saying that his hands had laid the foundation of the house of God and his hands should finish it. "This personal word to Zerubbabel has been left on record for the encouragement of God's children in every age. God has a purpose in sending trial to His children. He never leads them otherwise than they would choose to be led if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose that they are fulfilling. All that He brings upon them in test and trial comes that they may be strong to do and to suffer for Him."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 587.

Lesson 11, for December 16, 1944

Zechariah—the Messianic Prophet—I

MEMORY VERSE: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." Zech. 3:7.

KEY THOUGHTS: Repentance urged. Love and compassion of God portrayed. Restoration of the church promised. Christ's robe of righteousness covers the repentant sinner. Not by man's power, but by God's Spirit do we serve acceptably.

Among the Myrtle Trees

1. When was Zechariah commissioned to bear a message to Israel? What was its nature? Zech. 1:1-6.

NOTE.—The name "Zechariah" means "God remembers," and this thought is the one emphasized by the prophet. He was a contemporary of Haggai, and encouraged the Jews in the work of rebuilding the temple. His ministry came in the years 520-516 B. C. He with Haggai and Malachi were the postexilic prophets. Zechariah's first message was presented in the eighth month of the same year in which Haggai first prophesied, and was a warning to Israel, citing the experience of their fathers upon whom the displeasure of the Lord had fallen heavily. He told his listeners the Lord was calling them to repentance and promising them reconciliation if they would return to Him. "Turn ye unto Me, . . . and I will turn unto you." "This is the pivot on which history has turned, the one condition on which God has been able to help men."—*The Expositor's Bible,* page 271.

2. What did the prophet see in his first vision? Verses 7-10.

3. What report was given by those who had been walking through the earth? What intercession did this report evoke? What response did the Lord make to this prayer of the angel? Verses 11-13.

NOTE.—The Lord "does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. . . . I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. . . . Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 483.

4. What did the Lord say He would do for His people? Verses 14-17.

NOTE.—The Chaldeans had inflicted a harsher punishment than God had seen to be needful; so the Lord was displeased with the heathen who had so erred. He encouraged His people by promising that the temple should be rebuilt, that the metropolis should be restored, and that there should be many cities throughout the land which would be blessed by Him.

Four Horns and Four Workmen—the Measuring Line

5. Outline the second vision. What was its design? Verses 18-21.

NOTE.—The four horns represented the enemies on all sides who had gored and harassed Israel; and the four carpenters represented "the agencies used by the Lord in restoring His people and the house of His worship."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 581.

6. Relate the third vision. Give its interpretation. Zech. 2:1-5.

NOTE.—The young man seen in the vision was ordered to desist in his work because Jerusalem in its coming growth and security should neither admit nor require walls. Jehovah Himself would be its wall, its protection.

7. What call did Zechariah make to the Jews still in exile? What did the Lord say He would do to Israel's enemies? Verses 6-9.

NOTE.—The Lord is the avenger of His people; "for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye." "God is the eternal guardian of right. He has a tender care for the beings whom He has so loved as to give His dearest Beloved to save. He will deal with every wrongdoer."—*Education,* page 257.

Joshua and the Angel

8. Relate the fourth vision. What was its special significance at that time? What is its broader meaning? Zech. 3:1-7.

NOTE.—While this vision was meant to strengthen the faith of Israel and to restore confidence in their priesthood and its ministry, it also portrays the judgment, with Joshua representing the repentant sinner, and Christ taking the sinner's part against the great accuser.

"Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing scenes of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will then be brought into great trial and distress. . . . They will be 'betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends,' even unto death. Their only hope is in the mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer. . . . As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, 'Take away the filthy garments,' and the encouraging words are spoken, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.' The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, faithful children of God."—*Prophets and Kings,* pages 587-591.

9. In whom lay the hope of Israel? Verses 8-10.

NOTE.—Speaking of the experiences of the remnant church at the time of her final deliverance, the spirit of prophecy says: "Now is reached the complete fulfillment of the words of the Angel" recorded in verse 8. "Christ is revealed as the Redeemer and Deliverer of His people. Now indeed are the remnant

'men wondered at,' as the tears and humiliation of their pilgrimage give place to joy and honor in the presence of God and the Lamb."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 592.

The Golden Candlestick

10. What did the prophet see in the fifth vision? Zech. 4:1-3.

11. For whose encouragement especially was the vision given? What was its message to Zerubbabel? What is its message to all of God's children? Verses 4-10.

NOTE.—"Often men are tempted to falter before the perplexities and obstacles that confront them. But if they will hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end, God will make the way clear. Success will come to them as they struggle against difficulties. Before the intrepid spirit and unwavering faith of a Zerubbabel, great mountains of difficulty will become a plain; and He whose hands have laid the foundation, even 'His hands shall also finish it.' 'He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.' "—*Prophets and Kings*, page 595.

12. What further questions did Zechariah ask his attending angel? What response was given? Verses 11-14.

NOTE.—The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Two living trees—an abundant and unfailing supply—a type of the fullness of blessing received from Jehovah. From the two olive trees the golden oil was emptied through the golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick, and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. "So from the anointed ones that stand in God's presence the fullness of divine light and love and power is imparted to His people, that they may impart to others light and joy and refreshing. Those who are thus enriched are to enrich others with the treasure of God's love."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 594.

"The capacity for receiving the holy oil from the two olive trees is increased as the receiver empties that holy oil out of himself in word and action to supply the necessities of other souls. Work, precious, satisfying work,—to be constantly receiving and constantly imparting. . . . All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil, to be a joy and a blessing to others."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 117.

Lesson 12, for December 23, 1944

Zechariah—the Messianic Prophet—II

MEMORY VERSE: "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart." Zech. 7:9, 10.

KEY THOUGHTS: Dishonesty brings a curse from God. Justice enjoined. Evil imaginations discountenanced. Messianic prophecies given. Divine protection promised. Kingdom of God established. Sin destroyed.

The Roll, the Ephah, and the Chariots

1. Relate the vision concerning the flying roll. What is its meaning? Zech. 5:1-4.

NOTE.—On this roll was inscribed God's curse upon dishonesty and profanity, as upon all other sins. In His own time He will "cut off" the sinner.

"Against every evildoer God's law utters condemnation. He may dis-

regard that voice, he may seek to drown its warning, but in vain. It follows him. It makes itself heard. It destroys his peace. If unheeded, it pursues him to the grave. It bears witness against him at the judgment. A quenchless fire, it consumes at last soul and body."—*Education,* pages 144, 145.

2. To what was the prophet's attention next directed? What explanation of the vision was given by the angel? Verses 5-11.

NOTE.—The ephah was the largest of Hebrew measures, of about seven gallon capacity; and is doubtless used here because it was so often connected with the evil of false measures. The woman personified wickedness; and the instrument which she used for much of her unholy work was to be the means of her confusion. Wickedness is represented as being taken from the Holy Land and borne to Shinar, the place where rebellion was at one time rife, and which at this time had the significance of the counterpart of the Holy Land.

3. Outline the eighth vision. Zech. 6:1-8.

NOTE.—The four chariots issuing from the presence of the Lord of all the earth show that God's protecting providence will be over His people and their sanctuary.

The Coronation of Joshua

4. What command was given Zechariah by the Lord? What far-reaching message was given the high priest? Verses 9-15.

NOTE.—The work of Christ as man's intercessor is here presented. By His sacrifice and mediation, Christ is both the foundation and the builder of the church of God, the temple of God. Zechariah "speaks of the Gentiles as helping in the work: 'They that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord;' and Isaiah declares, 'The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls.' " —*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 595.

" 'He shall bear the glory.' To Christ belongs the glory of redemption for the fallen race. Through the eternal ages, the song of the ransomed ones will be, 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, . . . to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.' "—*The Great Controversy,* page 416.

"Before the Father He pleaded in the sinner's behalf, while the host of heaven awaited the result with an intensity of interest that words cannot express. Long continued was that mysterious communing,—'the counsel of peace' for the fallen sons of men."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 63.

5. What question concerning fasts was troubling the people? What message did the Lord give Zechariah in answer to their questioning? Zech. 7:1-7.

NOTE.—For seventy years the Jews had been accustomed to fast on the great anniversaries of the outstanding events that had led to their exile. These were not heaven-appointed, but were self-appointed fasts. However, since they were now in their own land, and the city and the temple with its worship were being restored, mourning over past afflictions should cease, and they should hearken to the instruction given by the Lord to their fathers—instruction which their fathers had insolently refused to heed, and for which they had been sent into exile.

6. What was the unheeded instruction that had been given Israel by former prophets? Verses 9, 10; 8:16, 17.

NOTE.—This instruction accords with that of the Sermon on the Mount. "Rich were the rewards, both temporal and spiritual, promised those who

should put into practice these principles of righteousness. 'The seed shall be prosperous,' the Lord declared; 'the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.' "—*Prophets and Kings,* page 704.

7. How did Zechariah describe the triumphal entry of the Messiah into Jerusalem? Zech. 9:9.

NOTE.—Matthew says plainly that this text met its fulfillment in this act of Jesus. Matt. 21:4, 5. John also refers to the same text as meeting its fulfillment at that time. John 12:15, 16. This triumphal ride "was the dim foreshadowing of His coming in the clouds of heaven with power and glory, amid the triumph of angels and the rejoicing of the saints."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 580.

8. What precious promises are made to the followers of the Messiah? Zech. 9:12, 15-17.

NOTE.—"There is no excuse for the faith of our churches to be so faint and feeble. 'Turn you to the Stronghold, ye prisoners of hope.' Zech. 9:12. There is strength for us in Christ."—*Testimonies,* vol. 6, p. 418.

The Lord manifests His goodness to His children when they most need it. "When for the truth's sake the believer stands at the bar of earthly tribunals, Christ stands by his side. When he is confined within prison walls, Christ manifests Himself to him, and cheers his heart with His love. . . . 'The Lord of hosts shall defend them; . . . the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of His people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land.' "—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 85, 86.

9. For what blessing is the remnant church to pray? Zech. 10:1.

NOTE.—"Near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. . . . But unless the members of God's church today have a living connection with the Source of all spiritual growth, they will not be ready for the time of reaping. Unless they keep their lamps trimmed and burning, they will fail of receiving added grace in times of special need. Those only who are constantly receiving fresh supplies of grace, will have power proportionate to their daily need."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 55.

10. What was the spiritual state of the church at the time of the early rain? What will be its spiritual state at the time of the latter rain? Acts 1:14; 2:1, 2; 4:32, 33.

NOTE.—"As the disciples proclaimed the message of redeeming grace, hearts yielded to the power of this message. The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. Backsliders were reconverted. Sinners united with believers in seeking the pearl of great price. Some who had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its champions."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 48.

11. What was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost? Zech. 12:8.

NOTE.—"Before the prophecy can be fulfilled, The weak shall be 'as David,' and the house of David 'as the angel of the Lord' (Zech. 12:8), the children of God must put away every thought of suspicion in regard to their brethren. Heart must beat in unison with heart. Christian benevolence and brotherly love must be far more abundantly shown. The words are ringing in my ears, 'Draw together, draw together.' "—*Testimonies,* vol. 6, p. 42.

12. To what other phases of the Saviour's experience does Zechariah refer? Zech. 11:12; 12:10; 13:1, 6, 7.

13. What scenes of the coming of the King of kings to earth were shown to Zechariah? Zech. 14:4, 5, 9.

Lesson 13, for December 30, 1944

Malachi—Last of the Old Testament Prophets

MEMORY VERSE: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name." Mal. 3:16.

KEY THOUGHTS: Malachi seeks to rekindle the fires of faith in the hearts of a discouraged people by calling attention to the fullness and constancy of Jehovah's love. Form without obedience wounds the heart of God. True prosperity depends upon obedience to the law of God. Coming of the Messiah and the great judgment day.

Blessed Assurance

1. Of what does the Lord assure Israel? Mal. 1:2, first clause.

NOTE.—"Our translation," says G. Campbell Morgan, "does not quite convey all the forcefulness of the thought. . . . I do no violence to the declaration that fell from the lips of Malachi if I render it thus: I have loved you, I do love you, I will love you, saith Jehovah. It is a declaration of the continuity of His love. That is the opening statement; the burden of the book is that of the constancy of the love of God."—*The Messages of the Books of the Bible*, pages 341, 342.

2. What response was made by Israel to this declaration by Jehovah? What illustration did the Lord cite in proof of His love for Israel? Verses 2-4.

NOTE.—When our love for God begins to wane, then we question His love for us. As the prophet pointed out evils that were robbing Israel of temporal prosperity and spiritual power, he was met seven times with questions of unbelief and irreverence, and even insolence.

The Lord's answer to Israel's unbelief was to point them to the contrasting condition of Edom. Though Esau and Jacob were brothers, the Lord hated one and loved the other; and the difference between the hatred and the love was seen in the contrasting experiences of Edom and Israel.

The Lord in His love followed Israel into the land of exile, and influenced kings to permit their return to their own land, with silver and gold for rebuilding the temple. Surely further assurance of divine love should have been gratefully and humbly acknowledged!

Character of True Ministers of God

3. What is the character of the accepted priest of God? Mal. 2:6, 7.

4. In what ways had the priests of Israel departed from this high standard? When these evils were called to their attention, what did they say? Mal. 1:6-8, 10; 2:10.

NOTE.—The Lord delights not in mercenary service. While "the laborer is worthy of his hire," one who really loves the Lord will gladly serve even if remuneration is not forthcoming.

5. What definite sin was pointed out to Israel? What counsel was given unfaithful husbands? How did the Lord regard divorce and marriage with the heathen? Mal. 2:11, 14-16.

NOTE.—Many were guilty of intermarriage with idolatrous women. When one of God's chosen people contracts a marriage with an unbeliever, he does violence to what God desires marriage to signify, namely, the relation that exists between Him and His church. He declares: "I will betroth thee unto Me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies." Hosea 2:19.

The Investigative Judgment Foretold

6. Wherein did Israel blaspheme the Lord? Mal. 2:17; 3:13-15.

NOTE.—To say that one who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord and that He delights in him, or to say that our God is a God of love, but that there is no judgment—that is countenancing and excusing sin. It is an attempt to gloss evil and treat it lightly. This is high treason against the government of God.

"The very worst form of blasphemy is the misrepresentation of God by people who profess to love His name, and look apparently with exuberant delight for the coming of His kingdom."—G. Campbell Morgan, *Wherein Have We Robbed God?* page 60.

7. What solemn statement did the Lord make to those who scoffed at the idea of a judgment against sin? Mal. 3:1-4. Compare Mal. 2:17.

NOTE.—That is a false conception of love which imagines that God is not a God of judgment. It is because He "is a consuming fire to sin, and never signs a truce with it within the sphere of His own kingdom, or in the world anywhere, that He is a God of love."—G. Campbell Morgan, *Wherein Have We Robbed God?* page 56.

The coming of the Lord to His temple refers to His entry into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to begin the investigative judgment, the judgment spoken of in Revelation 14:7. "When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing. 'Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord.' "—*The Great Controversy*, page 425.

8. In what words does the prophet foretell the second coming of Christ to judgment? Mal. 3:5.

NOTE.—"Besides the coming of the Lord to His temple, Malachi also foretells His second advent, His coming for the execution of the judgment, in these words: 'And I will come near to you to judgment.' "—*The Great Controversy*, page 425.

Blessings Promised God's Children

9. What had the people withheld from the Lord? What challenge did the Lord make? Verses 8-12.

NOTE.—The tithe is the Lord's. To use it for ourselves is like using money that someone has given to us to pass on to another. There is but one name for such a course, and that is the one used by the Lord.

"As the Giver of every blessing, God claims a certain portion of all we possess. This is His provision to sustain the preaching of the gospel. And by making this return to God, we are to show our appreciation of His gifts. But

if we withhold from Him that which is His own, how can we claim His blessing? If we are unfaithful stewards of earthly things, how can we expect Him to entrust us with the things of heaven? It may be that here is the secret of unanswered prayer."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 144.

10. What is the secret of strength and favor with God? Verse 16.

NOTE.—"In the book of God's remembrance every deed of righteousness is immortalized. There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ's sake, is recorded. Says the psalmist, 'Thou tellest my wanderings: put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?' "—*The Great Controversy*, page 481.

11. What encouraging promise is given the people of God who will pass through the last great conflict? Verse 17.

NOTE.—"The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity. . . . Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming, and whose names are written in the book of life."—*The Great Controversy*, page 634.

12. When the Saviour comes, what will then be manifest? Verse 18.

Fate of the Righteous and the Wicked

13. What prediction did Malachi make relative to the eternal destiny of the righteous and the wicked? Mal. 4:1-3.

NOTE.—"Satan, the root of every sin, and all evil workers, who are his branches, shall be utterly cut off. An end will be made of sin, with all the woe and ruin that have resulted from it. Says the psalmist, 'Thou hast destroyed the wicked, Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end.'

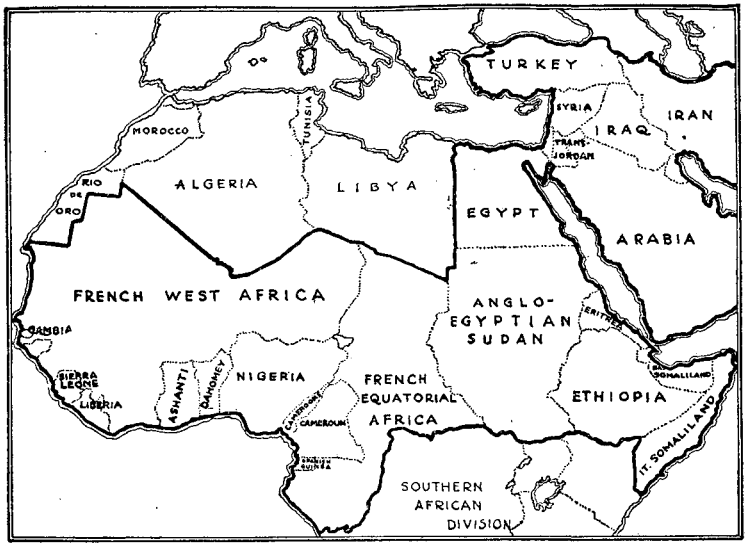
"But amid the tempest of divine judgment, the children of God will have no cause for fear. 'The Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.' "—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 341.

"The Sun of Righteousness has 'healing in His wings.' So from every true disciple is to be diffused an influence for life, courage, helpfulness, and true healing."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 419.

14. What are the people of this generation counseled to remember? What promise is given by the Lord? Verses 4-6.

The Sabbath school lessons for the first quarter of 1945 are entitled "The Remnant Church." The first lesson, for January 6, is a study of "The Church in All Ages." The memory verse is 1 Peter 2:9. The Study Help is "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 593-599. For anyone without a Lesson Quarterly for the first Sabbath, we give the following:

Ques. 1: Eph. 3:14, 15.
Ques. 2: Eph. 2:12, 13, 18, 19.
Ques. 3: 1 Tim. 3:15.
Ques. 4: Isa. 28:16; 1 Cor. 3:9-11.
Ques. 5: Eph. 2:19, 20.
Ques. 6: 1 Cor. 3:12-17.
Ques. 7: Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18.
Ques. 8: Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27.
Ques. 9: Gen. 17:4-8.
Ques. 10: Deut. 7:6; Acts 7:38; 1 Cor. 10:1-4.
Ques. 11: Ps. 22:22, 25.
Ques. 12: Luke 20:9-18.
Ques. 13: Matt. 16:18.
Ques. 14: Rev. 12:6, 14.
Ques. 15: Rev. 12:17; 14:12.



LAST THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING

Of the Centennial Year — December 30

"Overflow" Devoted to General Conference Missions

THE Middle East Union Mission and the West African Union Mission are the beneficiaries of the fourth quarter's overflow of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to be given in our Sabbath schools December 30. In Africa alone Mohammedanism is winning a million people every year directly from heathenism. What a challenge to us who have and know God's truth, His last gospel message for all nations!

Palestine and other Bible lands, such as Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and Iran, strongholds of Islamism, and such darkened peoples as those of Nigeria, Liberia, Gold Coast, French Equatorial Africa, etc., are to be benefited through this offering which will strengthen training schools for workers and extend medical missionary ministry.

Make your offering a generous one this last Thirteenth Sabbath of 1944.

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