Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Adapted from Peloubet's Select Notes.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson II. April 14. Mark 12: 1-12.

(EASTER LESSON.—1 Cor. 15: 3-14)

THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"They will reverence my son."—MARK 12: 6.

EXPLANATORY.

THE SECTION includes the whole of Jesus' experiences and discourses in the courts of the temple on Monday and Tuesday, April 3 and 4, A.D. 30, largely in Mark, chapters 11 and 12.

I. GOD'S SPIRITUAL VINEYARD.—V. 1. "And he began to speak unto them by parables," as the best method by which they could now be convinced of the truth. He held, as it were, a mirror before them in which they could see themselves as they really were.

THE OWNER. "A certain man." Called in Matthew a householder, a landed proprietor, owner of an estate. This householder represents God, who is the creator and owner of all things. He owns this world. He owns the church; he has planted in it.

THE VINEYARD. "Planted a vineyard." The image of the kingdom of God as a vineyard or as a vineyard runs through the whole Old Testament (Deut. 32: 32; Psa. 80: 8-16; Isa. 5: 1-7; 27: 2, 3; Jer. 2: 21; Ezek. 15: 1-6; 19: 10). We must think of Palestine as, from the remotest period, a land of vineyards. "The large clusters are from twelve to eighteen inches in length." "The largest vine that I have ever seen in Palestine was twelve inches in diameter.

THE VINEYARD represents the kingdom of God which was intrusted to the Jews, planted by God with the rich and fruitful vines of the knowledge of God, his commandments, the institutions of religion, and his revealed word. This vineyard was fertile in every good, infinite in possibilities of good for themselves and for the world.

II. WHAT GOD DID FOR HIS VINEYARD.—Vs. 1, 2. THE ENCLOSURE. "And set a hedge about it." A hedge is a row of perfectly dense thorn bushes (often in Judea the prickly pear), planted around a field, to fence it in and exclude all intruders. The word "hedge" here means a fence of whatever material made. These were to keep out robbers and wild beasts, especially foxes.

THE WINEPRESS. "And digged a place for the winefat": or wine vat, the vat or vessel into which the liquor flows from the winepress.

"The winepress" represents the various advantages conferred on the people to help them to bring forth good fruit, and present it to the Lord.

THE WATCH-TOWER. "And built a tower." A watch-tower, sometimes built forty or fifty feet high, and used for the watchman who guarded the vineyard, and during the vintage as an abode for the workers and a place of recreation, and perhaps for storing the fruit.

THE HUSBANDMEN. "And let it out to husbandmen." It is customary in the East, as in Ireland and in other parts of Europe, for the owner to let out his estate to "husbandmen; i. e., to tenants, who pay him an annual rent either in money, or, as apparently in this case, in kind.

"The husbandmen" "represent the rulers of the Jews (v. 12); but the people as a whole, a nation or a church, are included (Matt. 21: 43)."

THE ABSENCE OF THE OWNER. "And went into a far country": rather, as in the R. V., "another country." He went abroad. He left his tenants in charge with everything needful for their work, and thus by his absence tested their faithfulness, and gave them opportunity to develop their characters, and fulfil their duties. Luke says it was "for a long time." A glance at the history of Israel shows that the time from Moses to the prophets was long. Christ did not come till fifteen hundred years after the planting of the nation, and four hundred after the last prophet.

THE FRUIT EXPECTED FROM THE VINEYARD. 2. "And at the season he sent." At the time when the fruit was ripe, when he would naturally expect to receive the products of his vineyard.

III. TREATMENT OF THE MESSENGERS SENT FOR THE FRUIT.—Vs. 2-5. "He sent . . . a servant." The servants, that is, the prophets, and other more eminent ministers of God "were sent," being raised up at particular times, having particular missions.

3. "And they caught him." The gradual growth of the outrage is clearly traced in these verses. "And beat him." A verb which strictly means to flay or skin, but is secondarily applied to the severest kind of scourging. "And sent him away empty": that is, without the fruits for which he was sent. The Jews rejected the prophets for the same reasons that men now reject the Bible and the invitations of God.

4. "And again," with marvellous patience and unconquerable love, "he sent unto them another servant." God sent prophet after prophet to the Jews, message after message, as he sends many calls and influences to us. "Shamefully handled": or "dishonored." It is the generic summing up of all that the imagination naturally suggests when we think of what must have been done to the man in the affray in which his head was seriously wounded.

5. "And many others; beating some, and killing some." For an ample historical justification of this description, see Jeremiah, chapters 37, 38; 1 Kings 18: 13; 22: 24-27; 2 Kings 6: 31; 21: 16; 2 Chronicles 24: 19-22; 36: 16; and also Acts 7: 52; and the whole passage finds a parallel in the words of the Apostle (Heb. 11: 36, 37).

IV. GOD'S CROWNING WORK FOR THE SALVATION OF MEN.—Vs. 6-8. 6. "Having yet therefore one son." It is only by placing together the three accounts that we can understand the full beauty and power of this passage. "Then said the Lord of the vineyard, what shall I do? Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he said, I will send my beloved son. He sent him also last unto them saying, They will reverence my son." This was the last and crowning effort of divine mercy; after which, on the other side, all the resources even of heavenly love are exhausted; on the other, the measure of sins is perfectly filled up. "His well beloved": dear to him as his own self. This is said to show the greatness of God's love to man. (John 3: 16) "They will reverence my son." This he had a right to expect from gratitude, and from the blessings involved, and the loss that would follow rejection.

GOD SENDS HIS SON. In Jesus, his son, are the highest possible powers that can work together for the salvation of man,—the forgiveness of sin, the light of truth about God and immortality, the strongest motives, hope, fear, love, duty,—the influences of the life-giving spirit, a perfect example. There is no conceivable influence or power by which men can be drawn to God which is not found in Jesus Christ.

7. "But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir." Christ is the heir of all things (Heb. 1: 2). "Let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." The husbandmen are represented as relying upon the custom of the East, that, if an owner is not to be found, and the occupier pays the taxes to government for six years, the latter is looked on as the proprietor."

8 "And killed him": as the Jews did Jesus. They killed him that they might possess; and because they killed they lost. "Cast him out of the vineyard." The act of casting out denotes the whole rejection of our Lord, but perhaps with an illusion to the literal fact of his suffering without the holy city (Heb. 13: 11-13), which must not, however, be regarded as the whole sense.

V. THE CONSEQUENCES.—V. 9. "What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do?" Every possible method of leading them to right conduct had been exhausted. If they will not serve God, if they will not care for his kingdom and the salvation of the world, then they must be put out of the way, and made warnings to others. "He will come and destroy the husbandmen." There was nothing else to do. It was a simple matter of justice. And yet the justice was so terrible that the people, who seem first to have caught a glimpse of Jesus' meaning, cried out "God forbid," when they saw their rulers thus condemning themselves (Luke 20: 16). "Give the vineyard unto others." Expressed by the apostle when he said, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13: 46). The others are the Christian church, which is grafted upon the old tree from which the branches were cut off. Every one who believes in Jesus becomes a child of Abraham, and an inheritor of the promises (Gal. 3: 7, 9, 29). In the Christian kingdom of God are fulfilled the promises made of old. In the summer of A.D. 70, forty years after this parable was spoken, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the temple was burned and laid in ruins by the Roman army under Titus, after the most terrible seige on record. And the Jews have been dispersed over the earth ever since. Yet, if they had been faithful, they might have been the leading nation in the world, walking as kings and princes among men, the joy of the whole earth, shedding the light of God's truth and righteousness over the nations. But they would not; they rejected the Messiah and perished.

VI. THE REJECTED SHALL YET TRIUMPH.—Vs. 10-12. 10. "And," Luke says he here looked upon them, using a word which implies an intense, earnest gaze, as if he would see their very hearts, and pitied them. "Have ye not read this Scripture." Referring them to Psalms 118: 22, 23,—a Psalm which the Jews applied to the Messiah. Peter twice applied it to him (Acts 4: 11; Pet. 2: 7). In the primary meaning of the Psalm the illustration seems to have been drawn from one of the stones, quarried, hewn, and marked, away from the side of the temple, which the builders, ignorant of the head architect's plans, or finding on it no mark (such as recent explorations in Jerusalem have shown to have been placed on the stones of Solomon's temple in the place where they were quarried, to indicate their position in the future structure of the fabric), had put on one side as having no place in the building, but which was found afterwards to be that on which the completeness of the structure depended,—on which, as the chief corner-stone the two walls met and were bonded together. "The stone." The "stone" is the "whole kingdom and power of the Messiah summed up in himself." "The builders rejected." The builders answer to the husbandmen: they were appointed of God to carry up the spiritual building, as these to cultivate the spiritual vineyard. The rejection of the chief corner-stone answers exactly to the denying and murdering the heir.

11. "This." That is, this strange exaltation of the despised to be chief of all. "Was the Lord's doing." Or, as in the R. V., "This was from the Lord." "And it is marvellous in our eyes." It is one of the Lord's wonderful ways of working, and will come to pass because God rules and controls "all things."

"But feared the people": who had come from other parts of Palestine, and from other countries, and who were more free from prejudice, and had little at stake. Many of them he had taught and healed. Popular opinion is a great power for good or evil. "They left him," to await a time when the multitudes were not with him.

VII. MODERN APPLICATIONS, TO THE INDIVIDUAL.—(1) THE VINEYARD. God has intrusted to each of us a blessed and fruitful vineyard, which we are to culture for him. He has planted his new life in us. He has given us our life, our soul. He gives us each a portion of all those things he has committed to the church as a whole. He makes us fruitful by his Word and his Spirit. He gives us every means of grace by which to cultivate the vineyard. He gives us defences. He is our watch-tower. He gives grace for every time of need. He furnishes the armor against temptation.

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B. Y. P. U.

OUR OBJECT.

The unification of Baptist young people; their increased spirituality; their stimulation in Christian service; their edification in scriptural knowledge; their instruction in Baptist history and doctrine; their enlistment in missionary activity, through existing denominational institutions

OUR FELLOWSHIP.

All Young People's Societies of whatsoever name in Baptist churches and Baptist churches having no organizations are entitled to representation. We depend for our unity not upon any young people's name or method. Our common bond is in the New Testament, in the full affirmation of whose teachings

WE ARE ONE PEOPLE WITH ONE MISSION.

Kindly address all communications for this column to Rev. G. O. Gates, St. John, N. B.

Prayer Meeting Topics for April 7.

B. Y. P. U. Topic: "Gratitude."

CALENDER AND READINGS.

(These readings are copyrighted in the Baptist Union, and are here given by permission.)—G. O. G.

Monday, April 1.—"Our Supreme Inheritance," (vs. 16-17) Rom. 8. Read Eph. 1 11 and Col. 1 12.

Tuesday, April 2.—"We're in God's hands," vs. 18-24), Rom. 9. Read Isa. 45 9, Jer. 18: 1-6.

Wednesday, April 3.—"Whosover will, shall be saved," (vs 9 13), Rom 10. Read Jno. 3.36, Rev. 22.17.

Thursday, April 4.—"God's goodness conditioned on perseverance." (vs. 22), Rom. 11. Read Heb. 3.14, 3 6.

Friday, April 5.—"Our bodies living sacrifices," (vs. 1), Rom 12. Read Rom. 6.19, Eph. 5.23.

Saturday, April 6.—Our debt to every man," (vs. 8-10), Rom. 13. Read Lev. 19 18, Mk. 12 31.

Sunday, Apr. 7.—"Gratitude," Luke 7.40-7.

C. E. Topic: "Things to be consecrated.—Ezra 3. 1-7.

Founders' Day, April 21.

April 21st has been selected by the executive of the B. Y. P. U. as a day of prayer for the young people and their work. It is to be earnestly hoped that in all our churches this day may be specially observed. Read what the executive and our Maritime president have to say in re of this special appointment.

We hope each of our Societies of the Maritime Union will make some offering on that day towards the "Founding Fund." Of the $50 000 needed but little more than $25,000 have yet been paid in. If your society can send $1 or $5 or $20 or $100, do so through Bro. Stackhouse, our treasurer.

Founders' Day.

The International Committee Recommends the Observance of Sunday, April 21st, as a Day of Prayer for the Young People's Work and of Consecrated giving for Its Wide Extension.

In view of the large number of converts being added to our churches at this season of the year, and the numbers of young people in our memberships who should be enlisted in definite lines of Christian culture and activity; and believing that the Young People's movement contains great possibilities for the training of the rising generation of young Christians, the Executive Committee of the Baptist Young People's Union of America believes that the time has come for a definite and earnest advance on the part of our Baptist churches for the enlistment of all our young people in the Master's service.

We would, therefore, suggest that Sunday, April 21st, be observed as a day of special prayer for the Young People's movement and of particular effort to awaken our churches to the grave responsibilities which it has laid upon the denomination. We would suggest that pastors preach sermons on the morning of that day outlining the history of the Young People's movement and clearly defining its fundamental purpose—the training of the young Christian for usefulness. We would urge that pastors take particular pains to set before their people the Christian Culture Courses of our International Union. Literature fully explaining the courses will be provided free on application.

We would suggest that the day be known popularly as FOUNDERS' DAY and that in devout recognition of the wide benefits already realized by the churches from the organization of the Baptist Young People's Union of America and the still wider benefits promised in the near future through its educational plans, an offering be made for the International work in all our churches to complete what is known as the Founding Fund—the $50,000 needed to establish the International body with needed working facilities and enable it to push its valuable educational methods to the widest acceptance.

We would suggest that special effort be made to secure the largest possible rally of the young people on the evening of Founders' Day by using the time of the usual evening preaching service for a popular Young People's service. A suggestive program will be provided consisting of music, especially adapted to the occasion, recitations, profitable papers and short addresses by the young people. A feature of the evening program will be an address by the pastor. These programs will be provided free by the International Union to those Young People's societies which decide to observe Founders' Day and will make an effort to secure a suitable offering for the International work.

We would urge that prayer be offered on behalf of the Baltimore convention and the great interests represented in the summer meeting which will occur July 18, 19, 20, and 21. We hope that with all the financial necessities of the Baptist Young People's Union of America fully provided for we may make the convention significant as the beginning of a great onward movement on behalf of missions at home and abroad.

Praying that God may greatly bless these plans to the good of the churches and the furtherance of his kingdom,

JESSIE A. BALDWIN, JOHN H. CHAPMAN,
WM. M. LAWRENCE, H. W. REED
IRA M. PRICE, N. G. LENINGTON,
P. S. HENSON, ARTHUR D. DANA,
L. A. CRANDALL,
Executive Committee.

The above will be found suggestive to all our Maritime B. Y. P. U. Unions re "Founders' Day", and those proposing to contribute toward founding fund direct will do well to avail themselves of the offer of programs *free*.

There is a particular point in relation to our present standing with the B. Y. P. U. of America re "Founding Fund," viz: That at the Toronto Convention our representatives pledged $850, and it is suggested that on April 21, "Founders' Day," special collections be taken and sent to Rev. W. T. Stackhouse, Treasurer, thus redeeming our pledge. Let this be a day when the observance shall be "a real RALLY" of young people, when the entire church, young and old, shall shake hands heartily, and feel the true oneness of the Young People's Society with the church. Let the day be "a red letter day," when each active member shall bring an associate member to Jesus. Let there be greater activity all along the line. Let pastor and people enter deeply into the consecration service, with a greater longing of heart for larger measure of the Spirit—it's power upon our work. Let the Young People's column be all aglow with reports of our "Founders' Day" results. Full of good news, good cheer, and large blessing. Why not? May the Lord smile upon the humble efforts put forth by each Union.

Yours in the work,
GEO. A. MCDONALD,
Mar. Pres'dt.

Bro. J. P. Nelley, Sup. of C. E. work for Kings Co., N. S., reports that C. E. advances splendidly in that county. There are now under his care 17 societies—one an Epworth League of C. E. and one a Junior. These societies are found in Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches, and each society is loyal to its own church. Eleven of these societies are banded together in a Local Union and the meetings of this Union are good. Some of the societies have been cheered by having the *Associates* coming to Christ and then becoming *Active* members of the society. He hopes to have two or three more societies organized in the near future. We rejoice with our brother in this work. God bless all our young people. May every church in the land feel the stimulus their consecrated young christian men and women give when their lives are being trained in service for the Master.

Temple B. Y. P. U., Yarmouth, N. S.

On Friday evening, March 15, a very interesting and profitable meeting was held by our Union under the general title of a "Symposium of Modern Amusement," when some of the most common amusements and evils which surround young christians were discussed in short papers written in answer to questions previously distributed among members of the Union. The first question: "Is it right for christians to play cards?" This was answered in the negative by D. L. Kinney, under the following heads: (1) It is a great waste of time. (2) It introduces its votories to objectionable society. (3) It exposes young persons, especially young men, to the danger of gambling. (4) It is accompanied in its advanced stages almost universally by drinking and other vices. (5) It has led many thousands to irretrievable ruin, and its influence is greater today than ever.

Second question: "Is it right for christians to attend theatres?" This was answered in the negative by Berton Cain, for the following reason—(1) It is a worldly amusement and we are told "be not conformed to this world." (2) It sets an evil example. (3) The influence on one's self is injurious. (4) The moral effects upon the character of the individual are damaging.

Third question: "Is it right for christians to use tobacco?" Answered by H. E. Haly, who said the habit is wrong because (1) Imperious. (2) Unclean. (3) Unhealthy. (4) Expensive. (5) Ungodly. (See below.)

Fourth question: "Is it right to run the street cars on Sunday?" Answered in the negative by Willie Murray, with sufficient logic to annihilate the whole Sunday street car business on the continent of America. (1) It is our duty to set apart one day in seven for rest of man and beast—God sanctified the seventh day as a day of rest. (2) Only deeds of charity and necessity are lawful and right on this day. (3) Running street cars on Sunday can only be justified when it can be shown that it is done for either of the above purposes.

Question five: "Is it right for christians to dance?" This was answered by the pastor in the negative and for the following reason—(1) It is worldly amusement. "Be not conformed to this world." (2) It is a sinful waste of time and money which are not our own. "Ye are not your own." (3) It destroys bodily health. Your bodies are the temple of thy Holy Ghost. (4) Dancing christians are not spiritual—at least I never knew one. (5) The "round" dance is immoral. Young friends don't dance.

These points were all well defined by each speaker, anc the papers thus presented revealed a pleasing fact—that among the members of our Union we have a forth-coming generation of philosophers, logicians and orators, of no mean order.—COM.

We hope in our next issue to give one or more of the papers above referred to, that our readers may more fully know the kind of work done in Temple B. Y. P. U.—ED.

Osborne.

By the earnest efforts of our pastor, Rev. N. B. Dunn, a B. Y. P. U. was organized in this church on Feb. 1st, '95. Though late in organizing we have taken up "Struggles for Distinctive Principles" from the first, and intend, by extra study, to overtake the work before May examinations.

On Sunday evenings after preaching service, we have half hour social meetings led by members of the B. Y. P. U. These meetings are helpful and inspiring and are like a benediction at the close of a day of busy "going about our Father's business."

Our class numbers 25 active and a number of associate members, with the following officers: Rev. N. B. Dunn, president; Mrs. S. Allen, vice-pres.; Mrs. N. B. Dunn, treasurer; Mrs. L. F. Holden, secretary. At the weekly meetings of the C. L. Class the lessons are excellently taught by our president, who is an earnest and able teacher.

May God's blessing rest on the work.

LILIAN F. HOLDEN, Cor.-Sec.

March 6th, '95.

A long succession of stormy Sabbaths has crippled innumerable churches. Lighthouses veiled by the snow on many a coast have failed to warn of from the rocks the doomed frigate. Tens of thousands of Christians of nervous temperament by the depression of a snowy day almost despair of reaching heaven. Yet, in that style of weather Benaiah achieved his most celebrated victory; and let us by the grace of God become victors over influences atmospheric. If we are happy only when the wind blows from the east northwest, and the thermometer is above freezing point, and the sky is an inverted blue cup of sunshine poured all over us, it is a religion ninety-five per cent. off. Thank God there are Christians who, though their whole life through sickness has been a snowy day, have killed every lion of despondency that dared to put its cruel paw against their suffering pillow. It was a snowy day when the Pilgrim Fathers set foot not on a bank of flowers, but on the cold New England rock, and from a ship that might have been more appropriately called after a December hurricane than after a "Mayflower," they took possession of this great continent. And could morose chilly worldly circumstances many a good man or a good woman has taken possession of a whole continent of spiritual satisfaction, valleys of peace, and rivers of gladness, and mountains of joy. Christ landed in our world not in the month of May, but in the stormy month of December, to show us that we might have Christ in winter weather, and on a snowy day.—*T. De Witt Talmage.*

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A PECULIAR CASE.

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AN ANXIOUS MAN.

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N. MITCHELL, Carman, Man.

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