Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Adapted from Peloubet's Select Notes.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson VI. Feb. 10. Matt. 18: 1-14.

CHRIST AND THE CHILDREN.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

EXPLANATORY.

On the way home from the Mount of Transfiguration the disciples had a sharp discussion among themselves as to who should be the greatest.

At Capernaum Jesus asked them about their dispute by the way, but the guilty ones held their peace from shame. After Peter had returned from paying the tribute, "at the same time," either these having thought it over, or the others, "came unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Will you settle the question for us? "Their question was not, What elements of character make true greatness? who of us "is" greatest? but, Who of us shall occupy the highest place in your coming kingdom?

II. THE CHILDLIKE A FIRST THE WAY INTO THE KINGDOM.—Vs. 2, 3. Mark 9: 35, 36. In answer to their question Jesus gathered the twelve around him, and taught them that they had wholly mistaken the way to greatness, for "if any man desires to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all"; simply because the desire to be first is the exact opposite to the spirit which is the law of Christ's kingdom,—the spirit of love, of self-denial, of helpfulness of others, of humility. Therefore, the more any one has of the desire to be first, the less he belongs to Christ's kingdom. So that the very desire to be first "makes" him last by the very nature of things.

But DISTINGUISH between the strong desire to improve, to have large usefulness, to grow in holiness and love; and the desire to have more honor and power, or even to be better than others. To do the very best we can in everything is our duty. The song, "Oh! to be nothing," is right if it means that we seek nothing for ourselves, but wrong if it means that we are willing to be ciphers in God's work.

AN OBJECT LESSON. 2. "And Jesus called a little child unto him." His calling shows that he was old enough to walk. "Set him in the midst." As an illustration, as a living parable. He then took him in his arms in loving embrace, to make the lesson more impressive, and to show his sympathy with childhood and his love for children. How many who have children in heaven have been comforted by this loving act of Jesus, remembering that he is the same now in heaven as on earth eighteen hundred years ago.

3. "Except ye be converted." The word here rendered "be converted" means "turn about so as to face in the other direction." It always signifies a radical and complete change in method, spirit, or course. Here it is: Unless you turn entirely away from this habit of self-seeking, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven; much less be greatest in it. "And become as little children": not sinless, for no children are sinless. They all need to be saved from being lost, as we see a little further on (vs. 11, 14). And if none but the sinless could enter the kingdom of heaven, that kingdom, on earth, would be empty. The meaning is, you must have those qualities which are characteristic of childhood, which make the ideal childhood. As Dr. Robinson puts it, "what you would have your child be to you, that be yourself to God." "Shall not enter": not only could not be first, as they were seeking to be, but could not even "enter" the kingdom, and have any part in it. Why? (1) Because the kingdom of heaven is a spiritual kingdom, and the self-seeking spirit is diametrically opposed to its spirit. The childlike spirit is the only gate to that kingdom, just as a musical taste is necessary to entering into the kingdom of music, and a love of literature into the kingdom of learning. Sitting in a music hall, or in a library, does not give entrance into those kingdoms. (2) Because without the spirit, one will not even seek to enter by the only door. He will be self-confident in his own wrong way.

III. THE CHILDLIKE SPIRIT THE WAY TO GREATNESS IN THE KINGDOM.—Vs. 4, 5. 4. "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself (so as to be) as this little child." To humble one's self is not to think meanly of one's self, not to be unconscious of our powers or knowledge; but not to think highly of ourselves on this account, not to seek honor or greatness for ourselves; but simply to use whatever we have, or are, in the humblest service, with no thought of ourselves. Christ knowing that he was the Son of God, yet washed the disciples' feet, is a true example. "The same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" for he has most of the heavenly spirit. Only disinterested love can be great. Selfishness dims the crown and diminishes the throne of those who otherwise would be great.

4. "Whoso shall receive": welcome, show kindness to. Receive into spiritual fellowship. Into his home, and into his heart. "One such little child": referring both to children in years, and to those of a childlike spirit; all who are apparently small, humble, needing instruction. "In my name": for my sake, from love to me, from sympathy with Jesus' spirit and love. "Receiveth me": (1) whosoever appreciates childlike lowliness, "when he meets it in others," appreciates Christianity and Christ. (2) Has taken into his heart my spirit, the characteristics which I love, and which make me what I am. (3) He shall be accepted as having done me a favor in my representative. The act proves that he loves me, and this is the way in which he can express his feelings.

IV. PUTTING STUMBLING BLOCKS IN THE WAY OF THE LITTLE ONES.—Vs. 6 9. 6. "Whoso shall offend": cause to stumble, or fall into sin. "One of these little ones which believe in me": the weakest and feeblest of God's flock, not merely the "children," but the little ones in intellectual and spiritual power, and in ecclesiastical position and earthly honor.

"OFFENDING THE LITTLE ONES. Our Lord does not mean "vexing them," "making them angry," or "ill-using them"; but "tempting or leading them into evil." It comes through example, reproaches, and laughter. "That boy has gone a good ways in the devil's service who will dare to influence another against his father and mother." There are many other ways, such as tempting to lie, to drink intoxicating drinks, suggesting religious doubts, breaking down religious habits, sneering at strictness of Sabbath-keeping and obedience to parents. "It were better for him that a millstone." The word for "millstone" indicates the larger stone mill, in working which an ass was commonly employed, as distinguished from the smaller handmill of Luke 17: 35. "And that he were drowned in the depth of the sea": which was within sight. It is better to die a thousand deaths than to lead another into sin, and thus "to murder his soul." The offender gains a millstone, but loses his life.

7. "Woe unto the world": not a wish, but a statement of the fact. "Because of offences": because there are so many stumbling-blocks and temptations to evil placed in men's way by the worldly spirit. "For it must needs be that offences come": it is unavoidable in this sinful world that those who would serve Christ should be tempted. They cannot live in the world and not meet all manner of temptations and hindrances. "But woe to that man by whom the offence cometh": who is guilty of this most awful of sins,—the leading of others into sin. He that sins himself is weak, but he that leads others into sin is devilish. It is a fiend's business.

8. "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee (lead thee into sin), cut them off." The meaning is, if objects dear as the right eye and useful as the right hand,—honors, possessions, enjoyments,—stand between us and the righteous heavenly spirit, not merely tempt us, but cause us to fall into sin, if we are unable to battle with and overcome the temptation, we must give them up rather than the heavenly life.

9. "Hell fire": the hell, or Gehenna of fire. The literal Gehenna was a valley to the south of Jerusalem, a former scene of Molech worship, and later the place where the refuse of the city was burned with perpetual fires. "Altogether, the uses to which the place had been put made it a graphic symbol for the refuse place of the universe." This terrible warning comes from the most loving heart in the universe. It is love, not hate, that points out the danger of sin. Love's hand rings the warning fire bell. Love lights the beacon to keep men from being wrecked. He that refuses or neglects to warn is the one who is cruel.

V. HEAVEN'S CARE FOR THE LITTLE ONES.—Vs. 10-14. 10. "Take heed": for "evil comes from want of thought as well as want of heart." "That ye despise not," look down upon, feel contempt or indifference towards. "These little ones," the children, the childlike believers, the unnoticed, insignificant, lowly. The greater one's needs and weakness, the more sure he is of the notice of Christ. His very weakness is "the" argument that should encourage him to go to his Saviour. "In heaven their angels": "their angels in heaven," who are their ministering spirits (Heb. 1: 14). "There is in this no sufficient warrant for the popular notion of 'guardian angels,' one angel especially assigned to each individual; it is simply said of believers as a class that there are angels which are "their angels." "It cannot be positively asserted that the idea of guardian angels is an error, but there is no scripture which proves it true." The Jews favored "the notion of a guardian angel for each individual, as in the beautiful story of Tobit, and in the rabbinical writings. Compare the Greek fancy of a guiding and protecting 'daimon,' as spoken of by Socrates, and especially by Epictetus (1. 14)." "Do always behold the face of my Father": i.e., children are under the care of the highest order of angels, of those that stand continually in the presence of God and have most direct and immediate access to him.

"The Son of man is come to save that which was lost": the lost race of men. Men are lost, because they are away from Father and home, and do not know the way back; because they are exposed to danger and death, and are unable to rescue themselves.

AN ILLUSTRATION. 12. "If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray." This parable is given more fully in Luke 15: 3-7. The lost sheep is a type of the sinner going away from a loving shepherd and the green pastures and still waters he provides, wandering at its own will after forbidden delights, till it is lost in the wilderness of sin, and surrounded by a thousand dangers; unable to find the way back, yet sure to perish unless it does.

14. "It is not the will of your Father . . . that one of these little ones," children, and the weakest, humblest believer, "should perish": fall of holiness and heaven. God's desire is that all men be saved. He has done everything for their salvation which wisdom and love can do. And those who are lost, are lost because they refuse to be saved. They will not come to Jesus. They resist every effort divine love can make to redeem them. Every lost soul is a moral suicide. They stumble over the very steps to heaven.

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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 Feb. 3.

B. Y. P. U.—Topic: "The true measure of life," Luke 12:13-21.

C. E. TOPIC: "*Advance Endeavor*," (Christian Endeavor Day), Ex. 14: 15-31; 15: 1,2.

The Social Prayer Meeting is one of the special features of the Young People's Societies. I have purposely used the two words 'Social" and "Prayer." It may not be out of place just here to urge that the Social aspect of the meeting is not the least important. Our young people may in this way do more good than they think. If possible arrange your prayer meeting room as for a Social. Religion is not stiffness. There ought to be no back seats. Let it be the privilege of some to be at the place of meeting some time before the hour of opening. See that your room is warm and well ventilated. Greet in a true Christian way all who attend. Be specially on the watch for a stranger and introduce him to some one who in turn will make him acquainted with another. It may be some word or two spoken on his entrance with some one who has been a little on the back ground —or to one seeking light may be greatly blessed. If the leader of the meeting could be one of those to welcome attendants, a gentle reminder that he will need sympathy, prayer and practical support will do good.

During the hour of service give yourself up to the meeting.

Sing—all of you—Pray with those who pray. If you cannot kneel be sure you bow your head, close your eyes, and pray.

Be full of sympathy with the leader, give him to feel you are one with him. Do not be afraid to say an audible *Amen* to his words.

Be no less sympathic with those who take part. If you are helped by the prayer of a brother or sister or if some word of theirs has come home to you, say so.

Above all things do not whisper. It matters not how trivial or important the matter is that you wish to communicate do not whisper it in the prayer meeting. Many a young Christian has lost his influence over others simply because he has gotten in the way of whispering, when another is at prayer or speaking.

After the meeting! Ah that is a problem. Well do not hurry out. Do not be boisterous. We have just been communing with God. Hearts ought to be aglow. The soul should be full of Holy joy. Now for a word to some who did not take part. Now some promise to pray for another during the week. Now some planning to go and see our sick and absent ones.

Be careful on your way home. You have been in close touch with Heaven. Do not grieve from your soul the Holy Spirit. Think the meeting over again. Begin to plan and pray for the next one.

Our readers will be glad to see the report of the Y. P. Union of St. Stephen, rear at the 25th anniversary of the Church.

Pastor Goucher is to be congratulated on having such a grand corps of young people to aid him, and one need not be a prophet to predict a bright future for an already prosperous and united Church.

Springhill, N. S.

Another year has passed away, and our Union is still in a bright and prosperous condition. We enter upon the New Year with glad and thankful hearts for what God has done; and a prayer that we may be blessed and be a blessing to others throughout the year that lies before us. Our Union is composed of twenty-three active and several associate members. At last night of meeting the following officers were elected: President, Miss E. M. Hunter; Vice President, Herbert Fox; Treas., Miss Nettie Purdy; Secretary, Miss Mary Black.

As it was not thought advisable to establish another week night prayer meeting, our meetings are held on Sunday, after the evening service. They are well attended and spiritually helpful. A class of fifteen are taking the Christian Culture course, under the energetic and efficient leadership of our pastor. The lessons are very interesting and instructive, and we trust they will be of lasting benefit.

HELEN E. HUNTER, Cor. Sec.

Jan. 16, 1895.

Chance Harbor, N. B.

DEAR MR. GATES:—We have organized a B. Y. P. U. in connection with the Baptist church at Chance Harbor. We have thirteen active members and four associate. The president is Bro. Jesse Belding, sec.-treasurer E. A. C. Hargrove. The society was organized by Bro. J. P. Stackhouse, Dec. 11th, '94. The meetings of the union have been held regularly and each member is trying to do the best possible to advance the Master's cause. We hope, with God's blessing, our union will prosper.

ELIZA HARGROVE, (Sec'y.)

Jan. 14, 1895.

Shelburne, N. S.

We organized a B. Y. P. U. in December with seventeen active members. Officers as follows: Pres. Mrs. D. E. Hatt, vice-pres. Mrs. Rufus Utely, sec.-treas. Alvin Harlow. We hold our meetings at the close of the Sunday evening service. They have proved very helpful and encouraging. Nine arose for prayers the first night. We look for better things "knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." We are observing the monthly conquest meetings. Topic for this month was Grand Ligne. A very pleasant and profitable evening was spent in its study. Pray for us.

ALVIN HARLOW, Sec.

Jan. 18, 1895.

Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Union Street Baptist Church, St. Stephen, N. B., Jan. 7th, 1895. W. C. Goucher, Pastor.

Reports from Young People's Society, prepared and read by the Cor.-Sec'y, Miss Mabel Smith.

Although one of the younger children of the church, none of the older sister societies come to the silver anniversary of the mother church more gladly than the Baptist Young People's Union of Christian Endeavor or to give us the shorter name by which we are better known the B. Y. P. U.

The first step toward forming the young people of our church into a society was taken in 1884 when fourteen of the younger members of the church met for a prayer meeting in the primary class room. From this small beginning the attendance increased until it was found necessary to hold the meetings in the larger vestry, and they then became known as the Monday night prayer meetings which were held to prepare the young people for the regular prayer meetings of the church. But it soon became apparent that the young people were very rapidly taking upon themselves a part of the burden of church work, and as they were meeting with success in their labors it was thought that they might materially aid the church if organized into a society.

Just at the time when most needed, the Christian Endeavor movement came to our notice and after careful consideration the Society of Christian Endeavor of the Union St. Baptist church was organized with twenty members on Feb. 4th, 1889.

The society prospered under its new name and management, for a time but still something seemed lacking. It was felt that we needed something which would unite us in a closer bond not only as young people, but as Baptist young people. Then from other societies in the denomination came glowing reports of the B. Y. P. U., which was binding the young people together, educating them in the history of the Bible and in the church, not in anyway crowding out older organizations, but having for its object, the federation and education of Baptist young people. The question of joining the B. Y. P. U. A. was carefully considered and it was decided that Baptist methods were best for Baptist young people and in March 1893, we became the Baptist Young People's Union of Christian Endeavor by which name we are now known.

The society has now 73 members, 42 active and 31 associate. Thirty copies of our paper the Baptist Union are taken in the society, and a class of twenty-five are studying the Christian Culture courses, which are laid down from week to week in that paper and which are proving very helpful to us in the study of the Bible and church history and particularly helpful in the study of the missionary work of our own denomination.

Perhaps one of the surest ways to tell whether or not, a church, a society, or an individual soul is alive and growing is to find their attitude toward missions. Missions are the gospel in operation, so we Baptist young people are taught, and if we are truly members of Christ's kingdom we must be interested in the extension of that kingdom, and so the last Monday night in each month is given to the study of missionary work on some field on which we are especially interested. Every week our paper brings to us fresh material, in the form of missionary literature and suggestive programmes of which the best use is made by our missionary committee, and the results are our very profitable monthly Conquest meetings, and if any one is struggling with the question which puzzled us for a long time: (How can we make a missionary meeting interesting?) comes to our vestry the last Monday night of each month and you will see how we have answered the question and why we so heartily thank God for the Christian Culture course and especially for the Conquest Missionary Course.

Beside the work among the young men and women of our church, we have in connection with our society a junior union where the boys and girls under sixteen years of age are being trained by efficient leaders for the work which will come to them in a few years.

Our progress as a society has not always been unimpeded; failure has very often been mixed with our success and brightest hopes, and bitterest disappointments have travelled hand in hand through the few years of our history. But we know that God's hand has led us through it all, from a few young people met "in His name," to an active prosperous society which stands among the first in the list of societies of the Maritime Provinces.

Such has been the development of the young people's movement in our church. We cannot tell in words of the work which has been done during the ten years of our existence. It is not a question of money collected and expended but of souls saved for God's kingdom, and only our great Leader who has seen the faithful work of each individual member, the little words spoken for His sake, the little deeds of kindness done in His name, and has watched over those who have gone to other places bearing with them the blessed influences of the home society—to bring forth fruit in other hearts—only God Himself can tell how far reaching the results of our labor will be. As we look back over the few years of our history we can see many unimproved opportunities and many ways in which we might have been of more service in the Master's vineyard. But the work is as yet only in its childhood and tonight we take a long look forward and predict that those who come to help our mother church celebrate her golden anniversary will find here a band of consecrated young Christians, standing by the church supporting her in all her efforts, doing far better work than we have done, meeting with results that we have not even hoped for, but doing it all for the same master, under the same banner of B. Y. P. U. A., with the same motto, Loyalty to Christ in all things, at all times, and with the same inspiring thought, "we are saved for service."

The Paschal Lamb Was a Type, of Which Christ is the Antitype.

It was a type of Jesus' blood,
Sprinkled on every Hebrew shed,
That saved them from the wrath of God,
When Egypt's first-born were struck dead.

The guiltless Lamb must needs stone,
Ere Israel could be redeemed;
That sprinkled blood, and that alone,
Those Israelites from danger screened.

Thus, ancient Israel was freed
From Pharaoh's cruel tyranny,
And God, supplying all their need,
Led them to perfect liberty.

So, when our God, designed to save
His chosen people from the fall,
His own beloved Son, He gave,
To make atonement for them all.

The Lamb of God, on Calvary
Poured out His all-atoning blood,
Through which, by faith, we are made free
From the condemning law of God.

And being fully justified
By faith in Christ's redeeming blood,
We surely shall be sanctified,
And are in truth the sons of God.

And, when we stand before God's throne,
All clad in raiment pure and white,
We'll praise the Lamb, whose blood alone,
Washed us, and made us *shine so bright*,

And through eternity we'll sing
Of *Christ* and *His redeeming blood*,
Which made us each, a priest and king,
A perfect saint, a child of God!

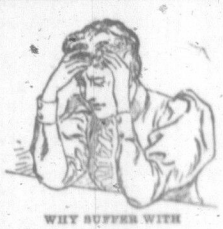
R. S. MORTON.

Millville, Dec. 13, '94.

AN END OF SORROWS.

God has promised that a period shall be put to the reign of sorrow: "God will wipe away tears from all faces." (Isaiah xxv. 8) Can we not wipe away our own tears? Never. If any man dry his own tears, he shall weep again; but if God dry our tears, our eyes shall never lose the light. It all comes, therefore, to a consideration of this solemn question: What shall put an end to this sorrow? Shall we by frivolity drown our sorrows? Shall we banish our griefs by pre-engaging our memory with things that die in their using? Or shall we say: Thou living God of all joy, thou only canst put an end to human woe; make my heart glad, and then my face will shine; take my guilt away from my conscience and my nature, and then my tears will cease to flow?" This is interior work; this is a spiritual miracle; this belongs to the reign of God and the ministry of grace. We resign ourselves, not passively and murmuringly, but actively and thankfully to God, that he may make us glad with his own joy. The Lord awaits our consent to the drying of our tears.—Joseph Parker.

The United States Government spends $300 a year to buy valuable coins and medals for the collection of the Philadelphia Mint. The Mint is about to issue a new index of the collection, and these are some of the rarities it will disclose: Gold half sovereign, England, struck during reign of Henry VIII., very rare; gold half sovereign, England, reign of Edward VI., still rare; John Brown bronze medal, very rare, struck in facsimile of gold medal made in Paris commemmerative of his death and presented to his widow; medal of Hernan Cortez.



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