

Sabbath School Lessons.

October 16th, 1864.

THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

Read Luke xx. 1-18.

Connection.—The incidents recorded here took place three or four days before Christ's death. His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, His authoritative expulsion of the traders from the temple, and the favour bestowed on Him by the people, had raised the jealousy of the chief priests and scribes, and led them thus to challenge His authority.

J. Christ's Authority Challenged, ver. 1-8. Christ taught in the temple from morning till night during those last days of His life, Luke xxi. 37. The chief priests seem to have come officially to put a stop to Christ's teaching. Christ's silence would have implied guilt or fear. How wisely He answered!—**The baptism of John**—meaning his whole teaching and mission. If they admitted John's inspiration, they could not deny Christ's, for John bore witness of Him.

They reasoned. Utterly regardless of what was true, they badly regulated their answer by their fear of man. Even the answer they gave, a deliberate lie, must have displeased the people, and tended to throw them more entirely on Christ's side. Christ's words were vouched by His works.

II. The Parable, ver. 9-15.

Christ evidently wished to break the evil influence the Jewish rulers had over the people, and to draw the poor people to Himself.

A vineyard—a beautiful figure of the constant, unwearying care with which God had watched over the Jewish nation. No species of husbandry requires such incessant labour as rearing vines. **Let it forth**—let His people to the care of their priests and teachers. **Went into a far country** may point to the fact, that God ceased so directly to interpose in the affairs of Israel after they had been separated in their own land.

The servants of the lord of the vineyard are vividly God's faithful messengers, who sought to bring the rulers and the people back to their allegiance to God—such as Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, and Zechariah; they were all disregarded and hated, though their sufferings were rewarded, Jer. xxxiii. 6; 2 Chron. xxiv. 21; Matt. x. 35.

My beloved son—Christ did not often so speak of Himself. He was more than a servant. He was hated in proportion to the kindness and boldness of His teaching, John iii. 20. The Jewish rulers thought if they could destroy Him there would be none left to disturb their usurpation, John xi. 47-50.

Cast him out. They would not recognize Him as the Son of God—incited the people

to reject Him, and at last to crucify Him "without the camp."

When the Lord cometh—He will come.—The rulers felt the force of the sentences people pronounced against the wicked husbandmen, and exclaimed, "God forbid." Christ turned His piercing eye on them, and quoted the 22nd verse of the 118th Psalm, which foretold all these things.

APPLICATION.

1. *When man dislikes the message, he is ever ready to question the authority of the messenger.* "By whose authority?" "Who made thee a judge?" was said to Moses; him who did the wrong, Acts vii. 19, 51, 52. "Is not this the carpenter?" Mark vi. 3. The question ought to be, "Is the message true?" If so, receive it even from an enemy, a child, or a fool.

2. *See how we learn to lie. We reason, "if we say this, so and so will happen." "We fear the people"—No love for truth, and no fear of God.* Peter's denial; Gehazi's lie.

3. *None will ever find the truth who love their sins better than it.* This kept the priests and scribes from receiving Christ. If you only believe what you like, you will often believe lies. The world loves darkness, John iii. 19. Do you? Luke xii. 53. The King, Jer. xxxvi. 23.

4. *Do we bear fruit to God? We are planted in God's vineyard. God has loved and cared for us more than for the Jews; given us Bibles, schools, churches.*

The fruit He expects is love and obedience. He has often sought it—He seeks it now.

5. *How do we treat those who try to make us do what is right? They are God's messengers, seeking fruit for God, whether they are parents, teachers, or companions. Do we listen and obey? or are we angry and disobedient, especially when an inferior tries to keep us right? Ahab and Micaiah; Herod and John.*

6. *Beware of the wrath of the Lamb, ver. 18.* This was threatened to the rulers who sought to make the people reject Christ. It will fall on some—beware lest it fall on you! Rev. vi. 16.

SUBORDINATE LESSONS.

1. God counts what is done to His messengers as done to Himself, Matt. xxv. 45; and will avenge their wrongs. Why persecutest thou Me? Acts ix. 4.

2. The closer God's claims are urged, the more will sinners rage against them and the messenger. Stephen—Christ.

3. Men use this world as if it was their own, as if they had no Master, and had no rent to pay.—*Edix. S. S. Lessons.*