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**SUNDAY SCHOOL.**

Lesson VIII.—Second Quarter,  
For May 21, 1911.

**THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES.**

Text of the Lesson, Isa. v. 1-12—Matory Verse, 11—Golden Text, Isa. v. 22—Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

Our lesson title, "Song of the Vineyard," must be considered in the light of the first verse, "A song of my beloved touching his vineyard." In Ezek. xv we learn that the only use of the vine is to bear fruit, and, failing in that, it is good for nothing. In John xv we learn that fruitless branches are gathered by men and burned, like the salt which has no savor and is good for nothing but to be trodden underfoot of men (Matt. v. 13).

Verse 7 of our lesson tells us that the house of Israel is the Lord's vineyard here referred to and the men of Judah His pleasant plant, but instead of producing the desired fruit they were yielding only wild grapes, described in the sixfold woe of the chapter and in Hos. x. 1, as an empty vine bringing forth fruit unto himself. According to the six woes, they were mighty to drink wine, enjoy pleasures, gather property, call things by their wrong names and sin.

He brought them out of Egypt, cast out the nations before them and planted them in a good land, but because of their sin He had to turn His face from them, and their only hope was in the man of His right hand, the son of man strong for God (Ps. lxxx, 8-10). According to our lesson, He had done everything for them that could be done for a vineyard, but as in the parable of Matt. xxi, 33-41, they beat and killed His servants and even the heir to the vineyard also. According to our lesson chapter, they regard not the work of the Lord nor consider the operation of His hands, but cast away the law of the Lord of hosts and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel (verses 12-24).

His pitiful cry over them is always the same, whether through the prophets or through His Son. "I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it, but My people would not harken to My voice, and Israel would none of Me" (Ps. lxxxi, 10, 11). "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not" (Matt xxiii, 37). Such unbelieving people who turn away from God and His word are said to be "drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink" (Isa. xxix, 9).

It is most interesting to note that in the chapter following our lesson chapter we have a vision of the earth filled with the glory of the Lord. Compare verses 11, 12 and 22 with chapter vi, 3. Better say contrast the drunkenness with the glory. Then note the same contrast in Hab. ii, 14, 15, and Eph. v, 18, and observe that at Pentecost spirit filled people were said to be full of new wine (Acts ii, 4-13). There is no remedy for self righteous, self pleasing, unbelieving people, but such a sight of Jesus Christ dying for their sins as will break their hard hearts and lead them to cry, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." One cannot do this for another, but He who said "I am the true vine" said also concerning the Holy Spirit, "He will convince of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John xvi, 7, 8).

If we have been redeemed by precious blood and been caused to see something of the beauty of the Lord it is not for us to condemn other sinners nor think them hopeless, but so manifest Jesus Christ to them by word and deed that the Spirit may, through us if He will, reveal Jesus Christ to them and lead them to Him. There is just one thing that the vine is for, and if we are real branches of the true vine He will bear the desired fruit that God may be glorified if we truly abide.

That fruit may not be any great thing that will gain the admiration of people, but just a meek and quiet spirit, patient and long suffering. It may be, under great provocation or even cruelty. Think of the Lord's patience with Israel and with each of us and consider Him who endured lest ye be weary. Think of being strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering, with joyfulness (Col. i, 11). Remember that the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control (Gal. v, 22, 23), and all that is opposed is from the adversary.

By the word of God and the spirit of God we must first be saved and then by the same word and spirit abide and bear fruit. The question of verse 4, "What could have been done more to My vineyard that I have not done in it?" suggests the question for every sinner, drunken or sober, for all have sinned and all are guilty (Rom. iii, 19). What more could the Lord do that He has not done for your salvation? Consider John iii, 16, and answer as to what more is necessary.

If you do not yield to such love and receive Him as your personal Saviour and then so abide that He may bear fruit through you and gather fruit from you it must be true of you that you are despising His word and disregarding His great work on your behalf and thus continuing under the wrath of God (John iii, 36).

The above mentioned plan of study is a substitute for the regular study of the Bible in the Sunday School.

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