

LESSON XII—March 22nd, 1898.

Faithful and Unfaithful Servants. LUKE 12: 37-48.

(Commit to memory verses 37 and 38).

GOLDEN TEXT: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."
Eph. 5: 18.

PROVE THAT—We should be ready for Christ's coming. Luke 12: 40.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 52. *What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?* A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal.* Nos. 71, 70, 169, 176.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Faithful and Unfaithful Servants. Luke 12: 35-48. *Tuesday.* Need of Watchfulness. Matt. 24: 42-51. *Wednesday.* Ready and unready. Matt. 25: 1-13. *Thursday.* Be Watchful. Rev. 3: 1-8. *Friday.* Walking wisely. Eph. 5: 6-21. *Saturday.* True service. Eph. 6: 1-9. *Sabbath.* Reward of integrity. Isa. 33: 13-17. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. The exact time when Jesus spoke the discourse in which our lesson occurs is a matter of much dispute, and is of no practical consequence to us in studying the passage. Some place it in the connection in which it stands here, immediately after the feast in the Pharisee's house; others think that it belongs to his last journey through Perea to Jerusalem. There are no parallel passages.

LESSON PLAN. I. Faithfulness and its Reward. vs. 37-44. II. Unfaithfulness and its Punishment. vs. 45-48.

I. FAITHFULNESS AND ITS REWARD. 37. Blessed are those servants—This implies a very high honor and reward for special virtue (Matt. 24: 46). Whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching—Christ's disciples are to be like loyal and devoted servants whose master has gone from home and may return at any moment. He must find them busy with the duties he has assigned to them as if his footsteps were even now heard on the threshold (Matt. 24: 42, 44, 50). Verily I say unto you, That he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them—He will honor them as they have honored him. Jesus did thus serve his disciples (John 13: 4) but not because he wished to reward their faithfulness. Compare Rev. 3: 21.

38. And if he shall come in the second watch—From nine o'clock to midnight. Or come in the third watch—From midnight to 3 a. m. And find them so, blessed are those servants—Christ is coming (Matt. 25: 5-19; 2 Pet. 3: 8, 9) and unexpectedly (ch. 21: 34-36; 1 Thess. 5: 2-6; Rev. 3: 3; 16: 15).

39. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through—R. V. marg. "digged through." The walls of the houses of the poor were of earth, or sun-dried bricks.

40. Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not—If we are ready for Christ's coming we are ready for death's coming.

41. Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?—Are these glorious rewards reserved for a choice few, or free to all?

42. And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward—Are you such a servant? Whom his lord shall make ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season?—At the proper time. The reason why God gives you any talent or position, or influence, is that you may use it for the good of others (1 Cor. 4: 2).

43. Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing—He will be rewarded abundantly. Those who love God and try to do always what is pleasing to him are blessed now with a foretaste of heaven's peace and joy in their hearts.

44. Of a truth I say unto you that he will make him ruler over all that he hath—The rewards which Christ bestows are for everyone. All will be kings in his kingdom. The better we serve him, the higher service will he bestow. The more we love him, the richer in love we become (Matt. 25: 21, 23; Luke 19: 17, 26; 22: 29).

II. UNFAITHFULNESS AND ITS PUNISHMENT. 45. But and if that servant say in his heart—Evil actions proceed from evil thoughts. Bad men will act wickedly if they think they are in no danger of being punished for it (Deut. 15: 9; 2 Kings 5: 26; John 13: 2; Acts 5: 3). My lord delayeth his coming—"The time of reckoning is far away, perhaps he will never come." Read Rom. 2.