

LESSON III—April 21st, 1895.

Watchfulness. MATT. 24: 42-51.

(Commit to memory verses 46-48).

GOLDEN TEXT: "Take ye heed, watch and pray." Mark 13: 33.

PROVE THAT—Our foe is untiring. 1 Peter 5: 8.

SHORTER CATECHISM. *Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?* A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

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

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Watchfulness. Matt. 24: 42, 51. *Tuesday.* The ten virgins. Matt. 25: 1-13. *Wednesday.* Ready. Luke 12: 31-40. *Thursday.* Not ready. Luke 12: 41-48. *Friday.* Pray always. Luke 21: 29-36. *Saturday.* Spiritual watchfulness. 1 Thess. 5: 1-11. *Sabbath.* The day will come. 2 Peter 3: 9-18. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. As Jesus departed from the temple for the last time the disciples drew his attention to the magnificent stones and architecture of the building, but the Saviour's mind was full of sad thoughts, for he knew that he had spoken his final message to heedless ears. His answer was a prediction of the destruction of the edifice. To the three questions in one which followed—"When shall these things be? What shall be the sign of thy coming? And of the end of the world?"—Jesus replies in the graphic apocalyptic discourse which follows. The horrors of the siege and final overthrow of Jerusalem are painted in colors no more lurid than those of the historian who described the awful scenes fifty years afterwards. Intermingled with this and rising out of it, as one dissolving view takes the place of another, appears a vision of the final judgment of the world. The time of either event is left indefinite, and the warning to watchfulness is enforced by the parables of the Ten Virgins and The Talents. The whole closes with that solemn dramatic representation of the judgment scene, whose rhythmic sentences fall upon our ears like the tolling of a bell. Jesus was standing with his little group of disciples on the spot where a few days before he had wept over the doomed city. Probably it was late in the evening and the refulgent light of the paschal moon bathed the marble walls and glittering roof of the temple in a silvery lustre. It rose out of the deep shadows of the valleys with a beauty which must have deeply impressed the imaginations of the beholders. Parallel passages, Mark 13: 33-37; Luke 21: 34-36. The whole connection should be read Matt. 24: 1-25; 46; Mark 13: 1-37; Luke 21: 5-36.

LESSON PLAN. I. Faithfulness and its reward. vs. 42-47. II. Unfaithfulness and its punishment. vs. 48-51

I. FAITHFULNESS AND ITS REWARD. 42. Watch therefore—"What the Saviour enjoins is not curiosity straining to be the first to see the returning Master, but the wakefulness and diligence that overlooks no duty, indulges no indolence. The last thing that would please a master would be the idle curiosity which would make the servants neglect their work to stand outside the door gazing to catch a glimpse of his return. What the master desires is wakeful work." (Glover). Watching is joined to prayerfulness (Matt. 26: 41; Mark 13: 33; 14: 38; Col. 4: 2), to steadfastness (1 Cor. 16: 13), with "thoughtfulness" (1 Thess. 5: 6; 1 Pet. 5: 8). Ye know not what hour—Mark says: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but my Father only" (13:32). The date is absolutely unrevealed. "Christ does not know it as man, and it is not his office to declare it as the Son of God. By saying that the angels do not know it, he checked the disciples from desiring to know it. The times and seasons are in the Father's own power, and they are not therefore for the Son to reveal. It is in this sense

only that he says that they are not known by him." (Wordsworth). "We explain this want of knowledge as connected with the self-imposed limitations attendant upon the assumption of human nature by the Son of God." (Dwight).

43. But know this—A prudent man who is warned that a robber will visit him watches against him. Be not less wise in regard to the coming of Christ. Do not expect that his approach will be heralded by strange sights and sounds. He will come when everything is going on as usual. See also Luke 12: 39; 1 Thess. 5: 2; 2 Pet. 3: 10; Rev. 3: 3; 16: 15. The good man of the house—R. V. "the master of the house." "Good man" is a term applied in old English to such as were of humble rank, but respectable character. Watch—The night was divided into four watches or periods. As we use the word "hour" for an indefinite, but limited, portion of time, so the word "watch" is used here. If the goodman knew about what hour the thief would come. Broken up—R. V. margin "dugged through." Most of our Saviour's illustrations are drawn