

LESSON XII—March 22nd, 1896.

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.

37. Blessed—This implies a very high honor and reward for special virtue (Matt. 24: 46). 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). 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. The second watch—From nine o'clock to midnight. The third watch—From midnight to 3 a. m. 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. Broken through—R. V. marg. "digged through." The walls of the houses of the poor were of earth, or sun-dried bricks. 41. Unto all—Are these glorious rewards reserved for a choice few, or free to all? 42. Who then—Are you such a servant? To give them their portion of meat—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—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. 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. 45. Shall 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. Delayeth his coming—"The time of reckoning is far away, perhaps he will never come." Read Rom. 2: 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9 for the reason why Christ tarries. Beat....eat....drink—He ceases to care for the things entrusted to him, uses his position only to tyrannize over and abuse his fellow servants and gives himself up to self-indulgence. (1 Sam. 2: 13-15; Ezek. 34: 3; 1 Hil. 3: 19; 1 Pet. 5: 3; Jude 12). 46. Punishment usually comes unexpectedly. Prov. 29: 1; 1 Thess. 5: 3; Rev. 3: 3. Cut him in sunder—A terrific form of capital punishment. See 2 Sam. 12: 31; Heb. 11: 37; Dan. 2: 5; 3: 29; 1 Sam. 15: 33; 1 Kings 3: 25. 47, 48—Rewards and punishments will be apportioned with strict justice. There are degrees of penalty as well as degrees of glory. Read ch. 10: 13-15; Isa. 4: 17; 2 Pet. 2: 21; Jonah 4: 11; 1 Tim. 1: 13; John 15: 22; Lev. 5: 17; Rom. 2: 14, 15.

LESSONS. 1. Watching does not imply inactivity. 2. God's blessings to us should be shared with others. 3. Beware of self-indulgence, it leads to sinful excess. 4. God's punishments are sure and terrible. 5. The love of Christ in the heart is the only sure antidote against "fleshly lusts."