



LESSON XII.—September 19.

Paul's Address to the Ephesian Elders.

Acts xx., 22-35. Read vs. 3-38. Commit vs 22-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.—Acts xx., 35.

Home Readings.

- M. Acts xx., 1-16.—Paul's Journey to Miletus.
- T. Acts xx., 17-38.—Paul's address to the Ephesian elders.
- W. Eph. i., 1-23.—'To the saints which are at Ephesus.'
- Th. Heb. ix., 1-28.—The power of Christ's blood.
- F. Mark xiii., 19-37.—Warning against false prophets.
- S. I. Pet., i., 1-25.—An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled.'
- S. Luke vi., 37-49. — 'Give, and it shall be given unto you.'

Lesson Story.

Three weeks ago we saw how Paul left Ephesus after teaching there for three years. Travelling through Macedonia and Greece, he had revisited all the churches he had founded, and now, accompanied by seven delegates from the Gentile churches, he was hastening to Jerusalem with the collection for the poor Christians there. Arriving at Miletus, about thirty miles from Ephesus, Paul sends for the elders of the Ephesian church to come down to the coast, as he does not know at what time the ship may set sail again.

When the elders arrived, he delivered to them an earnest address on faithfulness, charging them to care for and feed the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers. Referring to his own life and conduct among them, he reminded them that he had done his duty faithfully and was free from all further responsibility.

Commending them to God, he knelt down and prayed with them all, and they sorrowfully and tearfully bade him farewell, knowing that they should see his face no more.

Lesson Hymn.

Principalities and powers,
Mustering their unseen array,
Wait for thine unguarded hours:
'Watch and pray.'

Gird thy heavenly armor on,
Wear it ever, night and day;
Ambushed lies the evil one;
'Watch and pray.'

Hear the victors who o'ercame;
Still they mark each warrior's way;
All with one sweet voice exclaim;
'Watch and pray.'

Hear, above all, hear thy Lord,
Him thou lovest to obey;
Hide within thy heart his word;
'Watch and pray.'

Watch, as if on that alone
Hung the issue of the day;
Pray that help may be sent down;
'Watch and pray.'

Lesson Hints.

'Bound in the spirit'—having as it were a foresight of the bonds and affliction which awaited him at Jerusalem. 'Not knowing, but having a foreboding of trouble. 'The Holy Ghost witnesseth'—with his own spirit, and through the prophecies of others. (Ch. xxi., 4, 11.) 'Abide me'—wait for me. 'None of these things move me,' from my onward course. The joy of proclaiming the

gospel of Jesus was even more sacred to him than life itself.

'I am pure from the blood of all men'—having labored faithfully I have discharged my whole responsibility. (See Ezekiel xxxiii., 6-9.)

'Overseers'—bishops, under-shepherds of the flock, not hirelings. (John x., 11, 12.)

'Grievous wolves'—Those who will destroy the faith and lead astray. As the wolf is the enemy of the shepherd so those that lead souls astray are the enemies of Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep. 'Not sparing the flock'—choosing the choicest. Tempting those who would do the most good. Seeking to spoil the influence of the most spiritual, by some little blemish of character. Deceiving, if possible, the very elect. (See II. Pet., ii., 1-3.) 'Perverse'—contrary to the truth.

'Watch'—an emphatic warning. A word which can not be too much emphasized. The need of vigilance in all matters is scarcely second to the need of prayer. We must watch that we may know how to pray, we must pray that we may know how to watch.

'Sanctified'—made holy and blameless before God by the power of his cleansing. (John xvii., 17. Heb. xii., 14. Ezek., xxxvi., 25-29.)

Search Questions.

Name Paul's travelling companions on his way to Jerusalem.

Primary Lesson.

In Paul's last address to the elders of the church at Ephesus, he warned them to be watchful and remember all the things he had taught them.

In some parts of Africa there is a disease called 'sleeping sickness.' When a person takes this disease he sleeps nearly all the time, if he is roused to eat he will go to sleep again with the food in his hand. Too sleepy to eat, too sleepy to drink, too sleepy to pay attention to anything, forgetting all in sleep.

Would you get such a person to be a watchman? No man can watch in his sleep, can he? It would be hard to remember things in sleep, would it not?

Sometimes there comes a kind of 'sleeping sickness' on the church. They forget to take their food—not the bread and butter that is needed to feed their bodies, but the word of God, which is necessary to nourish their souls. They forget to drink of the water of life, too sleepy to 'draw water out of the wells of salvation.'

All Christians are set to be watchmen over the souls of others, yet often they seem to be too sleepy to care about other people, too careless to help any one come to Jesus.

What is the remedy for this 'sleeping sickness'? There is no remedy for the kind they have in Africa, they cannot rouse themselves or be roused in any way, and they can not live long without food or nourishment, so they just sleep themselves to death.

But there is a remedy for the sleepiness which comes over the souls of Christians, they can be roused to see the selfishness of sleeping when souls all around them are needing their help. There is plenty to do everywhere if we would just open our eyes to see it. Jesus will show us what to do for him, and how to be watchful. 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light.'

SUGGESTED HYMNS.

'Sound the battle-cry,' 'Onward, upward,' 'Tell the glad story,' 'Bringing in the sheaves,' 'The Church's one foundation,' 'When Jesus comes to reward,' 'Why do you wait?' 'Do something for Jesus.'

Practical Points.

(BY A. H. CAMERON.)

(Acts., xx., 22-23.)

Sept., 19.

Neither ignorance of the future, nor knowledge of coming persecution will check the pilgrim's progress. Verses 22, 23.

These are truths of Holy Writ dearer to the consecrated Christian than property, or friends or life. Verse 24.

It is solemn to part with friends, to meet no more on earth, but this solemnity will be sweetened with holy joy, if, like Paul, we proclaim 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.' Verses 25 to 27.

How precious is the Church, since it was

purchased with the blood of Christ. Verse 28.

The wolves from without are not more dangerous to the life of the Church than the hypocrites within. Verses 29, 30.

Watchfulness is as useful as prayer. Prayer looks up, watchfulness looks within and around. Verse 31; compare Luke xxi., 36.

God's word is powerful. It convicts, then converts, then builds up, and finally becomes our passport into the heavenly inheritance, where it shall be our joy forever. Verse 32.

Paul was in a good position to declare the blessedness of giving, because his whole life after conversion, was given to the service of his Lord. Verses 33-35.

Tiverton, Ont.

Christian Endeavor Topic.

Sept. 5.—Our gifts from God; our gifts to God.—Rom. 8: 26-39.

Junior Prayer-Meeting Topic.

Sept. 5.—What does God give us, and what should we give God? Rom. viii., 31-39.

The Bad Boy.

It is both pathetic and amusing to note how often the question occurs, 'What can we do with the bad boy?' He it is who spoils the class, demoralizes the Sunday-school, and is the despair of superintendents and teachers. That must be a presumptuous speaker who assumes to answer this question with the assurance that he can propose a universal remedy, warranted to cure in all cases. But he may, with all diffidence, submit a few suggestions. Bad boys are not all of the same variety of badness. To apply one method indiscriminately to all troublesome boys works more harm than good. You must know your boy accurately. Perhaps his 'badness' is merely an overplus of energy. He is full of mischief for lack of something better to supply an outlet for his vitality. Obviously, this boy needs to be kept busy, and to be loaded with some responsibility that will employ his steam in a useful form.

If you capture the leader, you capture the rest. Watch a crowd of boys anywhere and you may detect that some one is the natural leader. Where he goes the others follow. If he chooses to spend Sunday in games, fishing or bicycling, his crowd are with him. If he attends Sunday-school, his cronies are there. If he creates disorder, they extend it. If he talks about the circus, that fills all their minds. But if perchance he turns to some question of right or wrong, or of biblical interpretation, they will keep still and listen. Capture the leader in order to get his companions.

But how get the leader? By setting him to work in some way, as before indicated. Make him interested and enthusiastic in some good thing. If he wants that good thing done, he will get the other fellows to help. He may be a trifle of a bully. Perhaps he will threaten to thrash the chap who opposes him. But his tongue and example usually suffice without the use of the fist.

A superintendent suggests that where there are two bad boys in a class it is best to separate them. If they are contesting for leadership in evil, each will provoke the other to worse things until the whole class is demoralized; yet neither will yield to good influences in the face of his opponent. When the second bad boy is only the echo and lieutenant of his leader, it is no less desirable to get him away. Divide and conquer.

Another superintendent collects all the worst boys of the school into one class. Thus he protects other classes from demoralization; and the bad elements wear each other out after a while, and may be ready for something better.—'Sunday-school World.'

The Sunday-school teacher should remember three things: 1. That his responsibility as teacher of that class is to God, and not simply to the superintendent. 2. That he is the teacher of that class seven days in the week and not simply on Sunday. 3. That he can not expect to raise his class spiritually to a higher plane than he occupies himself.