



LESSON XIII.—Sept. 23.

The Duty of Watchfulness.

Luke xii., 35-46. Memory verses 43-44.
Read Luke xii., 35-59.

Golden Text.

'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.'—Matt. xxvi., 41.

Daily Readings.

M. Deceived. Mt. xxiv., 6-10.
T. Sleeping. Mt. xxv., 1-13.
W. Fearful. Mt. xxv., 14-30.
T. Faithful. Mt. xxiv., 42-51.
F. Unto All. Mk. xiii., 28-37.
S. Portion. Rev. ii., 12-17.

Lesson Text.

(35) Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; (36) And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. (37) Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them. (38) And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. (39) And this know, that if the goodman 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. (40) Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. (41) Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? (42) And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? (43) Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. (44) Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. (45) But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; (46) The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

Suggestions.

Our Saviour commands us to be faithful and wide awake in our service. A man may be able to do very good work, but if he sleeps all the time he will accomplish nothing, so a soul or a church that is asleep accomplishes nothing for God nor for the uplifting of humanity. In Oriental countries where a long robe is worn it has to be fastened up about the waist by being tucked into the belt or girdle when one is working or running, this is called girding the loins. Therefore, having the loins girded, is the symbol of preparation for service. In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, (vi., 14) he charges them to stand, having their loins girt about with truth. Also we find in I. Peter i., 13, the charge to gird up the loins of your mind, showing that it is a spiritual readiness that is required.

Let your lamps be burning, filled with the oil of the Spirit, trimmed with prompt attention to the little duties of life. Every Christian is to be looking for the coming of the Lord, not standing idly round like servants gossiping with one another instead of attending to their work, but diligently attending to duties so that at the coming of the Lord they may run to meet him and render a good account of themselves. This may be illustrated by a little incident which came under the notice of the writer. A lady was

one afternoon visiting a home where the father had been away all day doing some trading. The three little boys kept running to the window and to the door and sometimes a little piece down the road to see when father was coming. At last he arrived and was welcomed with joyous shouts by his little family. The lady visitor remarked to the father that she had thought it very sweet to see the children so eagerly watching for him, she thought it a picture of the way that Christians should be watching for the coming of their Lord. Well, said the father, it was nice to have them so anxious to welcome me, but I left them some work to do this morning and they have not done it. I would a good deal rather have had them doing the work than looking out of the window for me all afternoon.

God wants us to be sincere. God wants us to be faithful, no amount of praise will make up for disobedience. God wants our first love and absolute obedience more than he wants anything else. Special blessings are to be given to those who shall be found faithful and obedient at the coming of our Lord. He may come to-day, he may not come for a hundred years, but he will surely come some time, and the only way to be ready at his coming is to be ready and watching every day. We can only be ready to meet our Lord by being washed by his precious blood from all sin, and having on the pure garments of his righteousness. Every day is a judgment day, for every day our Lord comes to test us by some opportunity. If we are ready at his coming we will seize the opportunity and glorify him in our daily life. But if we are not ready, we will not recognize his coming and so we will lose the joy of meeting him in our daily life.

Questions.

How can we be ready for the coming of our Lord?

How did Christ command his disciples to wait?

What reward will the faithful servant receive?

How must the unfaithful be treated?

Lesson Hymn.

Christians, seek not yet repose,
Cast thy dreams of ease away;
Thou art in the midst of foes,
Watch and pray.

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

C. E. Topic.

Sept. 23.—Tares in your field. Matt. xiii., 24-30, 36-43.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Mon., Sept. 17.—Selfishness. Rom., xii., 3.
Tues., Sept. 18.—Scolding. Prov. xxix., 20.
Wed., Sept. 19.—Unkindness. Prov. xvii., 5.
Thu., Sept. 20.—Covetousness. Heb. xiii., 5.
Fri., Sept. 21.—Robbery. Mal. iii., 8.
Sat., Sept. 22.—Sabbath-breaking. Amos, viii., 5, 6.
Sun., Sept. 23.—Topic—Some tares that get into our fields. Matt. xiii., 24-30, 36-43.

It may seem to be a trifle whether or not the teacher comes quickly to order when the signal is given, yet failure to respond is the cause of many a disorderly class. Taking the cue from the one who should be their leader, the members of the class do not attend to the signal from the platform, and likewise they neglect the efforts of the teacher when he wishes to get them into order for the study of the lesson. It may seem to be a trifle to take part promptly and heartily in the devotional exercise of the school, but here again the difference between an orderly and a disorderly school is largely due to the action of the teachers in this respect. Where the teachers do their part, the scholars, as a rule, are apt to follow their examples. Contrariwise, failure on the part of the teacher in this respect generally results in the pupils' doing as they please.—A. H. McKinney.

**Bible Wines.****CHAPTER V.—CHRIST TURNS WATER INTO WINE AT THE MARRIAGE FEAST AT CANA OF GALILEE.**

(Dr. R. H. Macdonald, of San Francisco.)

1. Q.—What is recorded in the second chapter of St. John?

A.—That Christ turned water into wine at the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee.

2. Q.—Of what is this the first instance?

A.—It is the first miracle performed by Christ.

3. Q.—What is a miracle?

A.—It is an exhibition of God's power, and not according to the ordinary laws of nature.

4. Q.—What is the miracle here?

A.—The unfermented wine, or pure juice of the grape which is slowly made by nature, was by Christ made at once.

5. Q.—What was this wine—the fermented and alcoholic wine, or the unfermented and non-alcoholic wine?

A.—It was the unfermented and non-alcoholic wine—the pure juice of the grape.

6. Q.—How do we know this?

A.—The governor of the feast said, upon tasting it: 'Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk then that which is worse, but thou hast kept the good wine until now.'

7. Q.—What was the universal custom of using wines at the time of Christ?

A.—The best wines were served first, and the poorest at the last of the feast.

8. Q.—What was considered the best wine in the New Testament?

A.—The new sweet wine, the fresh juice from the wine press being the best.

9. Q.—What is meant by well drunk?

A.—Not intoxicated, but that they had drunk a large quantity of the wine furnished.

10. Q.—What was the object of this miracle?

A.—St. John says 'this beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested forth his glory.'

11. Q.—Why are we sure that this wine was the pure juice of the grape?

A.—This was his first miracle, and Christ would take great pains not to have his mission and character misunderstood.

12. Q.—What other reasons have we for believing this to be the pure juice of the grape?

A.—Alcohol is nowhere in nature, but the result of fermentation, and a deadly poison.

Alcoholic wines are a curse, and the Son of God, who came to save the world from sin, never made that which would kill the soul.

A Non-Temperance Testimony.

The 'Lancet' (which is not a 'temperance organ') less than two months ago stated that for every hundred women dying from excessive use of stimulants in 1878, there were no less than two hundred and forty-five in 1898! Think of it, readers! For every ten women drunkards twenty years ago, there are twenty-five now! Whereas thirty years ago drink could only be obtained at places specially established and licensed for the purpose, now, any respectable woman can get it with her ordinary articles for household consumption. It would seem, we are threatened with a still more dangerous increase in the future of such facilities for secret drinking. Surely the modern desire to make life as smooth as possible goes too far when it is thought desirable to make it easy for a woman to forget her womanhood, and to become that most awful creature on God's earth, a hopeless drunkard!—'Temperance Monthly.'