



LESSON VII. — MAY 15.

Watchfulness.

Matt. xxiv., 42-51. Memory verses, 44-46.

Golden Text.

'Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.'—Matt. xxiv., 42.

Home Readings.

- M. Matt. xxiii., 1-12. — 'One is your Master, even Christ.'
- T. Matt. xxiii., 13-39. — 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees.'
- W. Matt. xxiv., 1-28. — 'Take heed that no man deceive you.'
- T. Matt. xxiv., 29-41. — 'My words shall not pass away.'
- F. Matt. xxiv., 42-51. — Watchfulness.
- S. Mark xiii., 24-37. — 'Take ye heed, watch and pray.'
- S. Rom. xiv., 1-13. — Every one shall give account of himself.

Lesson Story.

Our Saviour warns us to watch for his coming and to be ready the instant he calls. We can not know beforehand exactly when he is coming, but each day we may live in happy expectation, doing those things we shall be glad to be found doing when Jesus comes.

If a man expected thieves to come to his house he would have to be constantly on the watch, for fear the thief would come and find him asleep. So we must watch constantly and be ready for we cannot tell at what hour our Lord may come. A Christian is like a servant of a great king. The king leaves him in charge of the rest of the household, to give them their food and look after their welfare in every way. Blessed is the servant who shall be found faithfully, steadily, doing his duty when his lord suddenly returns! He shall be made ruler over all his master's goods.

But if the servant proves unfaithful and begins to think that his master is long in returning and perhaps will not come for a long time yet; he begins to smite his fellow-servants and to practise indulgence of all kinds. Then the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he least expects him and shall punish him most bitterly. He shall 'cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Lesson Hymn.

Watch and pray! that when the Master cometh,

If at morning, noon, or night,
He may find a lamp in every window,
Trimmed and burning, clear and bright.

Watch and pray! the tempter may be near us;

Keep the heart with jealous care,
Lest the door, a moment left unguarded,
Evil thoughts may enter there.

Watch and pray! nor let us ever weary;
Jesus watched and prayed alone;
Prayed for us when only stars beheld him,
While on Olive's brow they shone.

Watch and pray! nor leave our post of duty,
Till we hear the Bridegroom's voice;
Then with him the marriage-feast partaking,
We shall evermore rejoice.

F. J. CROSBY.

Lesson Hints.

'Watch therefore' — 'I have set thee a watchman.' (Ezek. xxxiii., 7-9.)

'The thief.'—(I. Thess. v., 2.)

'Be ye also ready'—(I. Thess. v., 6, 8.)

Be ready in heart and life, be clothed in the garments of salvation as a bride awaiting the Bridegroom. If you are doing your every day work for him you will have nothing to lose when he comes, but if you are involved in worldly affairs you may be so entangled that you will not want to leave them; or you will suffer great loss in doing so.

'Who'—who chooses thus to be found faith-

ful? Men choose differently, and when it comes to that day, 'one shall be taken, and the other left.' (Verse 40.)

'Give them meat' — spiritual food. The Sunday-school teacher is a servant set to feed the lambs. (John xxi., 15.) If he does his duty faithfully, great shall be his reward.

'Blessed'—he shall have the highest joy and reward: Faithfulness can never fail of a reward.

'Make him ruler'—the reward for faithful service is always a promotion to higher service and greater responsibility. 'He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.' (Luke xvi., 10.)

'Delayeth'—having been away so long the wicked servant says his lord may never come back at all, though he promised to come; or that at least he will not come for many, many years. But the faithful servant lives in glad readiness knowing his master may return at any hour.

'Smite his fellow-servants' — setting himself up above them, neglecting and persecuting them.

'Eat and drink' — indulging himself with the money left him to feed and care for the others.

'Cut him asunder' — this was an awful punishment actually practised by the Romans, the bodies of the living victims were cut or sawed into pieces. This typifies the punishment of the hypocrite who has tried to appear to be doing God's work while in reality he has been helping the enemy.

Primary Lesson.

Last week we learned about the King's marriage feast and the Golden Text was, 'Come; for all things are now ready.'

This week we learn that we are to be ready and waiting for our Saviour to come and take us to that feast.

Suppose you lived just next door to school, and you could get there in time if you started the minute the bell began to ring. If you were not ready when the bell rang, even if you had only your shoes to put on or your jacket to button, you would be late. Being very nearly ready would not do, you must be altogether ready. Suppose your father, when he went away in the morning left you a little task to do, would you think it better to do the work first and then have time to play? or to amuse yourself first and perhaps forget all about the work? Which would your father like best?

Suppose someone gave you some pretty little chickens, and you began to build them a coop. And while you were building the coop very elegantly you forgot to feed them and they all died. What would the person who gave you the chickens think?

Our first lesson is to be ready when Jesus comes. Not to be just nearly ready but quite ready. Suppose he were to come to-night would you be ready? Have you your 'wedding garment' on? Are you trusting Jesus to save you?

The next lesson is that we must be faithfully doing our duty when our Lord comes. If he were to come to-morrow would he find you doing your duty? Are you trying every day to grow more like Jesus, loving and sweet and helpful to all around, not trying to do things for show but because they please Jesus?

Suggested Hymns.

'Jesus bids us shine,' 'Are you ready?' 'Christian, seek not yet repose,' 'Lo! He comes,' 'Sound the battle-cry,' 'Loyalty to Christ,' 'Our blest Redeemer.'

Practical Points.

May 15. — Matt. xxiv., 42-51.

A. H. CAMERON.

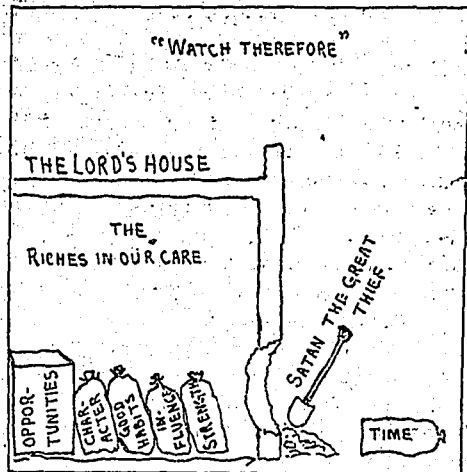
It is the policy of the world to be alert when danger threatens. It should be the practice of the Church to be vigilant at all times. Verses 42, 43, 44. The faithful and wise will secure promotion. Verses 45, 47. Prov. xxii., 29. 'The blessing of the Lord maketh rich.' Verse 46. They who revel in God's absence shall tremble at his presence. Verses 48, 50. The hypocrite and profligate shall at last find their own level. Verse 51.

The Lesson Illustrated.

We get our illustration to-day from the second verse of the lesson. Here is a section of the goodman's house showing his treasure-room with the good things in it, and

one bag of the very precious treasure already stolen. The words 'broken up,' are literally, 'to be dug-through,' for the walls there are often built of mud baked hard in the sun. The thief here has then chosen a time when the goodman was not watching and has dug through.

You may call the thief 'Procrastination' or 'Carelessness' or 'Selfishness,' and many other



names and the illustration will be just as good. You may, too, call him 'Liquor,' for the drink habit steals away just these very treasures and many others. But after all these are only different servants of the one great thief, Satan.

Watch and pray, and stand sentinel over your life, armed with the whole armor of God, and we shall keep our trust till the King comes.

Christian Endeavor Topic.

May 15.—Our bodies God's temples.—I. Cor. iii., 16-23.

A Wrong Practice.

It would be interesting to know how large a number of teachers in Sunday-schools put off preparation for instructing their classes until just before the hour of such service. It is also to be feared that not a few make no special preparation at all beforehand. It can hardly be said that such ones are, in any deep and vital sense, competent and accurate teachers. It is quite possibly true that those teachers who, through the week, are devoting themselves to general Bible study, are passably qualified for class instruction without special preparation. Certainly they are much better qualified than are those who do not make a daily practice of studying the Bible, and who do not make special preparation for meeting their classes.

Now, all will say that it is a wrong practice in any one habitually to go before the class without special, studious, preparation. Moreover, it is wrong for any teacher to practice depending upon the Holy Spirit to help in his work if he neglects any seasonable efforts to fit himself properly for his duties. It is quite probable that some teachers have the idea that even if they do not make studious and timely preparation for their class-work, the Holy Spirit will come to their aid and save them from making a failure. But we must think that such an idea is utterly repugnant to the Holy Spirit, and he will not work a miracle to rescue any Christian Sunday-school teacher from a failure in his class simply because he has been inexcusably negligent in making preparation for his duties.

It is a contemptible presumption to ask the Holy Spirit to make up for our slackness and unnecessary inefficiency. We are to do our very best to fit ourselves for our tasks, and at the same time ask the Spirit to help our infirmities and bless the work of our hands.—'Baptist Teacher.'

Good Names for Time.

The Burmese call twilight 'Brothers-would-not-know-each-other time,' Sunset is 'Sky-shutting-in time,' Seven o'clock in the evening is 'Children-feel-sleepy time,' and ten o'clock at night is 'Grown-up-people-lay-down-their-heads time.'

What a grand language that in one or two words can express each of these ideas! — 'Jewish Missionary Herald.'