

SEPT. 12, 1900

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The Sabbath School.

INTERNATIONAL L.E.S.O.N.

Third Quarter Lesson 18. Sept. 23, 1900

THE DUTY OF WATCHFULNESS.—Luke 12: 35-46.

MAY BE USED AS A TEMPERANCE LESSON.

Read Luke 12: 35-59.

Commit Verses 43, 44.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.—Matt. 26: 41.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—November, A. D. 29

Place.—In Pera, somewhere between Galilee and Jerusalem.

Watchfulness is of three kinds, each of which is taught by a parable

THE WATCHFULNESS THAT IS AWAKE TO DUTY AND OPPORTUNITY.—Vs. 35-38. Let your loins be girded about. The long Oriental robe requires to be taken up and skit fastened under the girdle to allow freedom in walking. And Your Lights Burning. Like the lamps which the wise virgins carried or the lamp in the house, all ready to welcome the returning master. A symbol of being ready for duty. Like unto men that wait for their Lord. The faithful believer is described as a servant waiting over night for the arrival of his master. That there may be no delay in opening the door, he keeps awake. The lighted lamp is at hand; he has even food ready against the time of his return. Blessed are those servants. Because they have done their duty, their conscience is at ease, their Master is pleased. Shall find watching. The watcher is ever on guard, like the lookout on a ship or the outposts of an army.

The word watching expresses not a mere act, but a state of wakefulness and watching. What the Saviour enjoins is not curiosity, straining to be the first to see the returning master, but the wakefulness and diligence that overlooks duty, indulges no indolence. We watch by serving the Lord as faithfully as if he were ever looking upon us. We watch by being on our guard against every temptation and danger. They were to be awake to every duty, to every opportunity to serve their Master and his cause.

He shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat. They shall be his guests "at the marriage supper of the Lamb," shall be welcomed and served by the Lord himself. The best of companionship under the most delightful circumstances shall be theirs. This shall not only be true in heaven where Jesus welcomes his disciples, but also all through their earthly lives Jesus serves his faithful ones infinitely more than they serve him, and does for them all that his perfect love can do. Second. . . . or . . . third watch. Always watching, whether it be early or late. Sometimes the Lord seems to delay his coming, but the faithful ones watch to the very end.

Not only those who are laboring and praying for temperance reform, but the young people especially should be wide awake and watchful in regard to temperance. They should watch the effect of strong drink upon others. They should watch its effect upon the community. They should be on their guard against the smallest beginnings of the habit of using intoxicating liquors. They should watch for opportunities of helping on the cause of temperance by word and by example in public and in private.

WATCHFULNESS AGAINST ATTACK.—Vs. 39, 40. If the Goodman. The master, the owner. Had known (in) what hour the thief would come, he would have watched. In the East, which knows not the happy and secure municipal arrangements of Western lands, every one must be his own policeman. And not have suffered. Permitted. To be broken through. Literally it is to be dug through, a graphic word, appropriate to describe the action that would be required to get into a house whose walls consisted in a great measure of mud. Be ye therefore ready also. Watch not one night, but all the time. The Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. The coming of the Lord are ever unexpected to us,—his coming at death, his coming to judge the world, his coming in his kingdom, his coming in the crises of our lives, his coming with opportunities and open doors, his coming with the power of the Holy Spirit.

There is need of watching against temptation to use intoxicating drinks. There are open saloons. There are social attractions. There is appetite within. There is the temptation that comes in the guise of the lighter drinks, and such candies as brandy drops. There is the temptation which comes from the desire to be popular, and the fear of seeming peculiar and "righteous over much." There is need to

watch against the attacks of those who would make money by selling liquor; their money power; their violations of law; their attempts to modify the laws in their favor; their political affiliations.

The wise man ever looks around in life, and reads in history to see the effect of any course, before he tries it himself. An English physician calls strong drink The Devil in Solution. "The drunkard puts an enemy in his mouth" to bewitch his sons—as well as to steal his brains.

THE WATCHFULNESS OF PREPARATION.—Vs. 41-46. Then Peter said. He wished to know if this great duty belonged only to the leaders, or to all. How wide was the duty and the rewards? And the Lord said. Applying the duty and promise to all. Who then is that faithful and wise steward. Our Lord here puts honor upon those who serve him, by comparing them not to menial or ordinary slaves, but to the intelligent, faithful, and trusted head slave of the household, like Joseph in Potiphar's house. Shall make ruler over his household. While he himself went abroad. This power was conferred on account of previous faithfulness and ability. To give them their portion of meat. A measured portion of food, a ration. Talent wealth, power are never given to men for themselves alone, but that they may minister to others. Not only these, but the most ordinary Christians are stewards of God, and are wise only when they make the best use of their time and talents, their money, their opportunities. Blessed. He possesses all the Beatitudes. Shall find so doing. We see by this illustration of Christ what he means by watching; not gazing up into the heaven for signs, but faithful performance of duty, as if God himself were ever present. Will make him ruler (or set him) over all that he hath. Over all his property of every kind. Larger fields and wider spheres are given, greater opportunities for doing good, and a clearer perception of God, a fuller reception of all that makes heaven what it is. Say in his heart. Because he would be ashamed to say it openly. My lord delayeth his coming. So that the time of reckoning is far away; nor will he ever know of the evil doings of his servant. Beat the menservants. Like a petty tyrant. Eat and drink, and to be drunken. The two forms of sin most common to those in high places are oppression and self-indulgence. Come. . . . when he looketh not for him. The Lord knows all that is being done, and at the right time will come. Appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. The unfaithful to their trusts. Each person must go to his own place where he belongs. And "weeping and gnashing of teeth" is the portion of the unfaithful and the hypocrite. Many an unfaithful man knows what hell is long before he dies.

To a Discouraged Teacher.

There are some teachers, I suppose, who would do well to be discouraged. It would be a mark of grace, and indicate progress. Such teachers, however, go lightly and smoothly on. But you do not belong to that class. Discouragement is for you a real hindrance to effective work. As a permanent attitude toward one's work self-doubt means the loss of freedom, hope, enthusiasm, and it finally means defeat. Hence discouragement should be vigorously fought down. But how shall this be done?

One way is by reflecting on the true use of an ideal. Your description of a successful class as one, each member of which accepts Christ as his leader, and grows from week to week in a sympathetic understanding of the Bible, and in a more vital and discriminating application of Christian principles to life, is a representation of what a class might be if teacher, pupils, and conditions were themselves ideal and ideally related. Such a conception is a shining vision by which the teacher may be inspired and directed. Even an imperfect approach to your ideal should give you joy. In work that has to do with human character results are always fragmentary and seldom distinctly traceable. Christ was a great teacher. Paul was a great teacher. But the immediate result of their teaching must have been often most disheartening. If an ideal is a high one, it may inevitably be a distinct one, and in that case failure to secure immediate results is not a legitimate ground for discouragement.

A second way of fighting down discouragement is by refusing to allow your mind to remain enveloped in a haze of difficulty, and by seeking out definite points of difficulty upon which there may be an intelligent concentration of effort. To see the exact point of failure is to go half way toward success. For example, you say that your boys refuse to be interested in the regular lessons. Well, then, since you cannot change the nature of

the boys, can you not teach these lessons from a point of view better suited to the needs of the boys? Boys of fifteen are usually interested in men whose lives have been marked by heroic and stirring adventure. Why not seek to enter the boy's mind by this obviously open door? Very lively and profitable discussion might grow out of a study of Peter, John, Matthew, Paul, Silas, Timothy and others, trying to answer in each case just two questions: What qualities of deeds in this man's life were heroic? What ones fall short of heroism? A series of Old Testament characters would need much more caution, though not less frank study. But I should not confine my list to men of Bible time. Carey, Johnson, John G. Paton, Father Damien are typical of a line of heroes that boys would find both fascinating and inspiring.

But this work in the class, however valuable, is probably subordinate in value to the work that may be done out of the class. By a genuine friendship and comradeship with the boys a teacher can go far toward overcoming the most discouraging features of the problem before her. A class of boys fifteen years old should certainly have a kind of club or fraternity organization, with elected officers who carry actual responsibility concerning class management. Every effort should be made to stimulate the feeling that the class is a unit, that the shame of honour of one member reflects on all. A just pride in the reputation of the class as generous, fair-minded, intelligent, should be cultivated. To attain this end the class should have united interests aside from the Sunday session. Suppose the teacher had a room—any sort of room not too fine or inaccessible—which should be the club or reading-room of the class. There could be kept the books on heroes and reference books; there the boys could keep specimens of any sort; there could be the formal meetings of the club for reports and plans; and there they could go informally for study or talk. The social life of the club could also centre there. There the teacher could learn to know the boys on the genuine footing of real life. Out of the interest awakened here would come many other sorts of companionship; walks over the hills, tours of investigation, pleasant hours of reading together. Some such personal relation, close, sincere, varied in opportunity, give the teacher insight into a boy's real thoughts and needs, and gives incalculable force to what he says on Sunday.

I am well aware that such work as is here outlined both in the class and out of it makes great demands upon the teacher. But the successful full class belongs only to the teacher who puts himself into his work. High ideals are not attained without sacrifice. And a work so great as the right management of a class of boys at an important formative period of their lives is worth all the mind and heart and time one can devote to it.—Sunday-School Chronicle.

The Scotch Thistle.

An old legend gives this account of the origin of the national badge of Scotland:

The Danes had invaded Scotland in considerable force. They were a brave, warlike race, and scorned to take what they considered an unfair advantage of the enemy; it was one of their axioms that it was dishonorable to surprise a foe under cover of the darkness.

Silently and unobserved they crept as near as they dared to the sleeping camp, and then sent forward scouts to discover the weak points of the enemy's position.

One of the scouts was stealing cautiously round the camp, when he trod with his bare foot upon the thistle! The unfortunate man did exactly what you would have done in similar circumstances—gave an agonized howl!

In an instant the Scotch were aroused; they at once attacked the invaders and completely routed them.

Out of gratitude to the prickly little plant they dubbed it Scotch thistle, and made it the national emblem, with the motto, "Nemo me impune lacessit."—No one annoys me without getting hurt.

Who Were They?

One of the embarrassments of life, says The Christian Advocate, is to meet a person whom you cannot definitely locate as to name, place, condition, or relation, and be compelled to engage in conversation with him. And if he is as much in the dark as to your exact identity as you are concerning his, the situation passes from the amusing to the desperate, as in this case:

Why, how do you do? Smilingly the man in the bridge suit and brown derby hat held out his hand to the little woman in the gray traveling dress.

Well, this is a surprise, returned the little woman, shaking him by

the hand, and saying to her—if I ought to know this man. Where have I met him before?

It has been about a year since I saw you, I think, he said.

Y—yes; I believe it has, she answered. By the way—or—where are you living now?

Some old place, he replied, waving his hand.

She hadn't made any progress. She tried again.

What are you doing these days? Oh, just the same old business, he said airily, as before. Wasn't it too bad, the way they treated you?

You mean that—that time—Yes, that time, you know. It was a shame, wasn't it?

Oh, y—s, she rejoined. It was too bad. It—it was a shame.

It was indeed. Well, I am very glad to have met you again. Good-bay.

Thank you. Good day.

I don't think I could have been mistaken, he muttered, as he walked along; and yet—

I wonder, now, mused the little woman in the gray traveling suit, as she hurried down the street, if I ever did meet that man before; and I'd give worlds to know who the people were that treated me so badly, and when and where they did it!

Knowing How.

BY ARTHUR BURMEY.

A member of the graduating class of a high school went to the principal, who was known to be a man of great practical wisdom, and asked him to write in an autograph album the most helpful and timely advice which he could put into the form of a motto. The teacher quickly wrote two words, with his autograph, and returned the book. The two words were these, Know how.

Ten years later the pupil and his former teacher met again. The young man was then holding an important and highly remunerative position in a great shipbuilding establishment. He had achieved the most brilliant success of all the members of his class, thus far. In response to the congratulations of his old high-school master, he said, gratefully: I owe it all to those two words you wrote in my autograph album, ten years ago, Know how. It did not take me long to realize that that was indeed the supreme demand of this age, and I met it as earnestly and as faithfully as I could. I chose my profession, and then gave myself to it day and night, until there was not a detail from first to last with which I was not perfectly familiar. I hope I do not say this boastfully. What I have to be thankful for is simply the result of the honest following of wise advice.

The writer knows another young man—not so very young now, however—who started out with a different conception of the demand of the age. He thought, and used often to assert, that all one needed in order to succeed in life were push and cheek. He did not believe in the supreme practical value of equipment. Self-assertion was his reliance. What you assume to be, the world will grant you, he declared. All you have to do is to demand it. But when he was thirty-two years he concluded to give up his grand game of bluff and accept himself at the world's stern valuation—on the basis of practical equipment. He is now working in a furniture store in Omaha—and gradually learning how.—Chris. Observer.

A young man, the morning after his conversion, was asked to drink. No, I can't; I have a friend with me. Oh, that's all right. Bring your friend with you. No; I cannot bring him in. Then come without him. No; I will not go without him. Looking among the bystanders the man said: Where is your friend? My friend is the Lord Jesus Christ. He would not go into that barroom to take a drink, and, by the grace of God, I do not mean to go anywhere or do anything that will make me part company with Jesus Christ.

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