

**The Sunday-School.** **SECOND QUARTER,**  
**LESSON VI.—May 8.**

**WATCHFULNESS.**

Luke 12: 35-48.

A TEMPERANCE LESSON.

THE LESSON includes the verses selected, and the parables on Watching, in Matt. 24: 42-51; Mark 13: 33-37; Luke 21: 34-36.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching.*—Luke 12: 37.

**HISTORICAL SETTING.**—*Time*—Probably December, A. D. 29. *Place*—Somewhere in Perea, beyond Jordan.

*Place in the Life of Christ.*—The Perea ministry. The closing days of his third year of public ministry.

**THE NEED OF EXHORTATION TO WATCH.**—*First.* There were to be wars, persecutions, great iniquities, false prophets, the love of saints growing cold, fearful tribulations, great overturnings, which seemed like the end of all things, but were in reality the spring-time of the new kingdom.

*Second.* Hence they were in danger of losing their faith in God, in these terrible times. Only earnest watching could guard against the insidious spirit of worldliness.

*Third.* There was great danger of being deceived, by false Christs, by wrong expectations concerning the kingdom of heaven, by wrong interpretations of the signs of the times.

*Fourth.* They were left with a great work to do for the Master. They were to carry on the building up of the kingdom Jesus founded, and to preach the gospel to all the world.

*Fifth.* Jesus was soon to leave them by death on the cross.

*Sixth.* Jesus was coming again. He came in His resurrection, in the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit, in judgment at the destruction of Jerusalem, he comes at each crisis of our lives. He is coming at last to judge the world and to reign over all the earth.

*Seventh.* While his coming is certain the time of his coming is unknown.

**THE PARABLE OF THE MASTER'S RETURN.**—*Let your loins be girded about. Gathering up the flowing robes interfering with movement. And your lights burning.* Like the lamps which the virgins carried to meet the wedding procession. *Like unto men that wait for (are looking for) their lord, when he will return from the wedding of some friend,* the hour of return being unknown, the good servant would be ready with girded dress and lighted lamp to open the door immediately when the Master cometh and knocketh. *Blessed are those servants.* Because they have done their duty. *Shall find watching.* He (the master of the house) shall gird himself (take the place of the servant) and make them . . . sit down to meat. Giving them the same food and the same service as the master himself enjoys. *In the second watch.* From 9 to 12 o'clock at night, and *in the third watch,* from 12 to 3 o'clock, the most difficult of all. *Blessed are those servants.* Blessedness is more than "happiness," the joy that happens to us. It

is the joy that grows out of the soul itself.

THE HEART OF THIS PARABLE.

1. The loins girt point to a noble purpose in life, and the burning lamp to the spirit of hope. It is blessed to watch for the coming of Christ and of his kingdom, to carry out his plans.

2. *Application to Temperance.*—Not only those who are laboring and praying for temperance reform, but the young people especially should be wide awake and watchful. They should watch the effect of drink upon others, and upon the community. They should be on their guard against the smallest beginnings of the habit of drink.

**PARABLE OF THE THIEF'S ATTACK.**—**THE WATCHFULNESS THAT GUARDS AGAINST ENEMIES.**—Vs. 39, 40. *If the goodman. The master. Had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched.* In the East every one must be his own policeman. *And not have suffered.* Permitted. *To be broken through.* The Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

THE HEART OF THIS PARABLE.

1. We are like the city of Mansoul in Bunyan's allegory, surrounded by many enemies. The only way to be safe is to be always on guard, with spiritual armor on, and weapons at hand.

2. *Application to Temperance.*—There is need of watching against the temptation to drink. There are saloons. There are social attractions. There is appetite within. There is the temptation of the lighter drinks. There is the temptation which comes from the desire to be popular, and the fear of seeming peculiar and "righteous over much."

**THE PARABLE OF THE TWO STEWARDS.**—**WATCHFULNESS SHOWN BY THE FAITHFUL PERFORMANCE OF DAILY DUTIES.**—Vs. 40-48. *The Faithful Steward and his Reward. Then Peter.* The impulsive. *Speakest thou this parable unto us (the twelve alone; we alone as leaders to watch and be faithful, and have the glorious reward), or even to all?* Peter desired to know how widely he could apply these duties and promises. *Who then, etc.* The implication is that Peter's main business to see that he was *that faithful and wise steward,* without paying too much attention to the duties of others. *Give them their portion.* A ration, served out daily, weekly, or monthly. *Blessed . . . shall find so doing.* The faithful performance of duty, as if God himself were ever present. *Will make him ruler over all that he hath.* All forces, all good things, shall minister to him. Larger fields and wider spheres are given, greater opportunities for doing good, and a fuller reception of all that makes heaven what it is.

*The Unfaithful Steward and his Fate.*—*Servant say in his heart, in desire and purpose. My lord delayeth,* so that it seems safe for him to neglect his master's interests. *And . . . begin to beat the menservants.* In the spirit of a petty tyrant. They were abused because they were faithful. *And to eat . . . and to be drunken.* Carousing at his master's expense, instead of exercising a prudent economy. *The lord . . . will come.* Not expecting his coming will not prevent his coming. *In a day when*

*he looketh not for him.* His interest is absorbed in other things. *Cut him in sunder.* Execute him swiftly. *Appoint him his portion with the unbelievers (the unfaithful),* those guilty of gross abuse of their trusts, whose portion is a violent death. *And that servant, which knew, etc.* The punishment will vary according to the measure of light against which sin has been committed. *He that knew not,* an underservant who had not received direct commands from the master. *To whom much is given.* Compare the parable of the Talents.

THE HEART OF THIS PARABLE.

The way to watch for the coming of Christ is to be faithful to every duty, to live the daily life Jesus would have us live. Talent, wealth, power are never given to men for themselves alone, but that they may minister to others. All Christians are stewards of God, and are wise only when they make the best use of their time and talents, their money, their opportunities, their knowledge of the gospel, their prayers, their experiences of God's goodness and love.

Curious Bartering of the Scriptures.

BY F. KLICKMANN.

Curious things are offered in exchange for the Word of God. When the British and Foreign Bible Society sent out the Scriptures to the Hottentots in Namaqualand, South Africa, one lad said to the missionary, "If you will let me have a Bible, I will do three days' work in your garden." In the Sunday school, when the missionary announced that he had Bibles for sale, one child said, "I have a goat; I shall buy a Bible for myself." Another said, "I will run and ask my father for a goat." In this way goats were turned into Bibles.

In San Salvador, the Society's agent was offered candles in payment for the Scriptures. A beehive, potatoes, and a pair of wooden skates, have been offered to the colporteur in Scandinavia. In Uganda the natives bring their cowrie shells; in the New Hebrides they collect and prepare copra and arrowroot. In Morocco, a colporteur writes, "only a few of the people could pay in cash, the rest offered eggs or butter, and one boy brought a hatchet in exchange for a Gospel." In Kashmir, a Bible-man was offered honey. A Swiss missionary on the West Coast of Africa writes: "In payment for the Scriptures I have had to accept swords, daggers, sandals, armlets, or native-made straw hats."

In Mongolia, where the nomads have no money, the Society's Sub-Agent has had to barter the Scriptures for sour milk, rotten cheese, pieces of silk, and fuel. A translator in the Solomon Islands says, "You would smile if you could see the 'curios' paid for the Gospels,—dogs' teeth, shells, and combs." When the Gospel of St. Luke was being printed in Tahiti, the Tahitian islanders came to the mission with lengths of fishing-nets, and bamboo canes full of cocoanut oil, and waited patiently for days till their copies were printed off. The Eskimos on the coast of Labrador offered the Moravian missionaries seabirds' eggs and casks of seal oil in grateful acknowledgment of the Scriptures sent them by the Bible Society.—*S. S. Times.*

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We are very foolish to attempt to entertain two guests so hostile to one another as Christ and satan. Christ will not live in the parlor of our hearts; if we entertain the devil in the cellar of our thoughts.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

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Make it a rule and pray to God to help you keep it, never, if possible, to lie down at night without being able to say: "I have made one human being, at least, a little wiser, a little happier or a little better this day."—*Charles Kingsley.*

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Neither the Bible nor Christ ever taught men should be less than men; that a man should be a petty man; that he should have no deep feelings of indignation against the great, ugly brood of sin, against oppression, against tyranny.—*Rev. D. R. Babbitt.*

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