

to believe than the S. and P. (S. Luke xv. 1, S. John vii. 45-49). The second son's answer is descriptive of ease of Ps., who addressed God by the most honorable titles and professed greatest zeal and readiness in His service, while their whole lives were marked by disobedience and rebellion. See their character depicted by Christ Himself, S. Matt. xxiii. 2, xv. 8.

Application. We saw in last P. how God calls us all to work for His cause. Recapitulate how. Be careful not only to say "I go," but to *act*. Think (1) how Jesus loved to do the will of His Father, as a boy (S. Luke ii. 49), as a man (S. John iv. 34, vi. 38), (2) of the reward of faithful service.

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*For 1st Sunday in Advent.*

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**The Thief in the night, and the Faithful and Evil Servants.**

*S. Matt. xxiv. 43-51.*

As the season of Advent, in wh. we prepare for a due celebration of Christ's First Coming, and remind ourselves of His Second Coming, has now begun, it will be well that we should take the Ps. in wh. our Lord spoke of His Second Coming, and of the preparations needed for it.

These Ps. are the two short ones for to-day, wh. teach us the duty of constant watchfulness owing to the suddenness w. which the Lord will come: the *Ten Virgins*, warning of the constant preparation of *heart* required: and the *Talents*, wh. remind us of the *work* we have to do before that Day.

Our Lord had been speaking of His Second Coming (from v. 23)

and He had warned that it would be sudden even as lightning (v. 27), and men would be as unprepared as they were in the time of Noah for the flood (v. 37, 38). Now He impresses this truth by two short Ps. In one He compares His coming to that of a thief. How strange a comparison! It reminds us that we must not press the particulars of a P. too minutely. But it teaches v. forcibly how sudden and unexpected that coming will be. Enlarge on fancied security of household, &c.

The next P. of the "faithful and evil servants" seem specially applicable to those placed in authority in Ch.—"the ministers and stewards of Christ's mysteries"—but it is applicable to all who have any duty assigned to them in K. (and who has not?) It, like the other, teaches duty of *watchfulness*, and in addition faithful performance of duty.

Think of the Day when the sign of the Son of Man shall appear. How we ought to long, and pray, and watch for it! It is the Day when Jesus shall be fully glorified before the world, when all His servants shall receive their reward from Him, when all trials, and sorrows, and sufferings shall be over.

Do you pray for it? Yes—"Thy K. come." Ask God *earnestly* to "hasten that Day," to make and keep you ready for it. "Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me," says Jesus "to give every man as his work shall be." "Even so come Lord Jesus, come quickly." "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He cometh shall find watching."