

4; 2 Pet. 3: 9 for the reason why Christ tarries. And shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken—He ceases to care for the things entrusted to him, uses his position only to tyrannize over and abuse his fellow servants and gives himself up to self-indulgence (1 Sam. 2: 13-15; Ezek. 34: 3; Phil. 3: 19; 1 Pet. 5: 3; Jude 12).

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—Punishment usually comes unexpected (Prov. 29: 1; 1 Thess. 5: 3; Rev. 3: 3). And will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers—A terrific form of capital punishment. See 2 Sam. 12: 31; Heb. 11: 37;

Dan. 2: 5; 3: 29; 1 Sam. 15: 33; 1 Kings 3: 25.

47. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

48. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more—Rewards and punishments will be apportioned with strict justice. There are degrees of penalty as well as degrees of glory. Read ch. 10: 13-15; Isa. 4: 17; 2 Pet. 2: 21; Jonah 4: 11; 1 Tim. 1: 13; John 15: 22; Lev. 5: 17; Rom. 2: 14, 15.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *Watching does not imply inactivity.* On the contrary, it means that we are to be active and alert. Few christians have ever been more useful in their day and generation than Leigh Richmond, and yet on his deathbed, so urgent appeared to him the call to earnest effort, that he said to one that stood by, "Brother, brother, we are none of us more than half awake."

2. *God's blessings to us should be shared with others.* The business of the steward was to serve out to the household what was necessary for their comfort and convenience. Instead of doing this he acted as if he were the absolute owner and had no duties of service to others. Whatever we possess is entrusted to us as stewards. Some have less and others more of the good things of life, not because God is partial, but because he wishes to test our fidelity, and give an opportunity for the exercise of charity on the one hand and gratitude on the other.

3. *Beware of self-indulgence, it leads to sinful excess.* One of the hardest things for young people to learn is when to stop. They have gone too far before they realize that they are even near the line of safety. The only safe plan is to practice self-restraint and self-control. It is a good thing to guide our chariot of life with a firm hand and a tight rein.

4. *God's punishments are sure and terrible.* The most awful words in Scripture regarding

the doom of the impenitent come from the lips of Jesus. He did not speak them because he liked to dwell upon such a theme but because what he said was solemnly true. There is but one way of escape. (Give your love and trust to Christ as your Saviour.

5. *The love of Christ in the heart is the only antidote against "fleshy lusts."* There is an "expulsive power" in love which drives out baser affections. When Christ is its object it teaches us to loath whatever is displeasing to him. No one is safe until he places himself in Christ's keeping, and lives under the constraining power of his love.

ADDED POINTS.

1. "Blessed" means far more than "happy." It points to the source of our joy.
2. Be ready for Christ's coming.
3. At his coming he will honor his faithful servants.
4. If we are faithful in little duties, larger responsibilities will be entrusted to us.
5. Abuse of God's blessings will be punished.
6. We are all stewards, accountable for the use we make of what God has given us.
7. Rewards and punishments will be apportioned with strict justice.

THE BLACKBOARD.

CHRIST IS COMING.

WAIT.
ORK.
ATCH.

BE FAITHFUL.
SOBER.
KIND.

"Behold I come quickly."