

## \* Sunday School \*

### Watchfulness. Luke 12:35-48.

LESSON FOR MAY 8, 1904.

The events of the journey through Perea to Jerusalem are not clearly indicated, and it is therefore impracticable to set them down in order. It was probably during this period that a man came to Jesus one day and solicited his aid in settling a difficulty about some property with his brother. "Who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" said Jesus; and turning to the crowd he proceeded to give a needed word of warning against the crying sin which the incident suggested. "Beware of covetousness," he said. "Beware of allowing yourselves to be carried away by the desire for gain, for life does not consist in the abundance of one's possessions." One may live richly without them, and one may have them and hardly live at all. And he gave them a parable ("The Rich Fool") to enforce this truth.

After urging his disciples not to be solicitous for riches Jesus exhorted them to seek heavenly treasures, assuring them that where their treasures were their hearts would be also. Then he added:

#### THE HEART OF THE LESSON.

If we are God's servants, if we are in charge of his household, if he is coming, if we do not know what hour he will come, it behooves us to watch. "Watch ye, therefore." Not as those pious but weak-minded people who periodically lay down their work, set their houses in order, clothe themselves in white garments and assemble in open field to welcome their returning Lord, but as faithful servants who labor day and night that they may keep everything in order, do the work given them to do, and be found busily employed when their Lord returns. Such servants do not spend the time looking out at the window, nor will they be caught gathered in idle knots about the door. We are not to watch in order to be first to discover the Son of man's approach, but that we may be found ready when he comes.

If we are faithful watchmen, we will keep things in order. We will keep our bodies in order. Our lips shall be free from every impure and hurtful thing. We will not go where we would be ashamed for God to meet us. We will keep our minds in order. We will not indulge in such thoughts as we would blush to utter to a friend, much less to God. We will not be caught with a hurtful book in our hands. We will not run the risk of going into his presence with an evil word half formed on our lips. And we will keep our hearts in order. We will make constant use of the cleansing blood. We will not dare to let a sin go unforgiven. We will not go to sleep at night until we feel that all is well within. We will keep our hearts fed with the Word and filled with all good desires and noble affections.

And we will keep busy. We will watch for the little foxes that spoil the vines. We will keep a lookout for temptations. We will see that our duty toward those around us is discharged. We will watch for opportunities to do good.

And we will watch in joyful confidence that whatever may betide us our Lord will surely come. If the Son of man should come tonight, would he find the house in order? Would he recognize our home as a Christian home? Would he find his altar in it? Would he find his memory cherished? Would he find his will obeyed? Would he find his Word read? Would he find everything going on according to his orders? Would he find the servants fed and all around us cared for according to our ability? Would he find the house swept and the vineyard full of grapes? If so, he would

find us ready to welcome him with joy, sure of our reward and of his approving smile. But if he came and found none of these things, would not his coming be like the cry of fire at midnight?—like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky?

#### OTHER TRUTHS TAUGHT.

1. The day is coming when the Lord will return to his household. Whatever interpretation we may place upon the passages which refer to his coming, we know that he will come. Whether in the flesh or in the spirit, whether before the day of judgment or in the day of judgment, he will come. Practically, the Lord does come to his people every day. He comes in daily calls to duty. He comes in the opportunities which open to us. And he comes at the end of life. Death rings the bell for us to stop work, and the recording angel draws a line at the bottom of our account. 2 "We ought to put on the whole armor of God," says Guthrie, "and since we know neither when nor where the adversary may assault us, we ought never to put it off. Live and die in harness, using such precaution as some say Cromwell did against the assassin's dagger: his dress concealed a shirt as mail." 3. "Christianity is more than a memory of the crucified and risen Savior; it is a joyous hope." 4. Peloubet notes that in Matt. 24 the same command to watch enforced by the same reason for watching follows a description of the dangers and temptations against which the disciples should be on guard. We are not only to watch therefore for the Lord's coming, but we are to watch against temptations. 5. Our relation to God is that of a steward to his master. Everything that a steward has belongs to his master, and of his master's goods he must give account. 6. As rulers over his household, it is our business "to give them meat in due season." This is not the duty of church dignitaries only: we are all rulers, with larger or smaller spheres of responsibility and influence. There is no servant of God who is not commissioned to give somebody meat. No man, no child, is so insignificant that he cannot help somebody else. All of us are surrounded by poor and suffering fellow-servants whose physical, mental and spiritual needs God expects us to supply; and none of us is too poor to do what God expects us to do.—Pell's Notes.

#### "Unionism."

The Southwestern Presbyterian discusses "Unionism" on the "present-day inclination toward consolidation." This, it says, comes "under various guises."

"Sometimes it is a confession of weakness and reaching out for greater strength. Sometimes it is a combination against encroachment. Sometimes it is a consolidation of interests for mutual support. Sometimes it is a pooling of issues, that unhealthy and unproductive rivalry may be stopped. Sometimes it is a combining that outside competition may be prevented. Sometimes it is an actual organizing to freeze out the lesser, to reduce production, to increase prices. Sometimes it is, in a better way, an effort to reduce the incidental expenses of separate maintenance. Sometimes, better still, it is an attempt of work and life, in the light of practical experience, and as called for by changing conditions. Sometimes it is from the sentimental desire for mere bigness. Rarest of all," our contemporary thinks, "it is from pure and genuine agreement in principles, doctrines, purposes, methods, or aim, a consolidation born of likeness of spirit, of community of lightest end."

We hope that our union with the Cumberland Church, if it should come, will be the result of genuine agreement, and the present discussion is in order to show whether there is such agreement.—Herald and Presbyter.

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