

• The Quiet Hour •

The Rich Man and Lazarus, *

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It is very important that we get the connection between the parable of the unjust steward and this parable. See verse 14: "And the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things and they scoffed at Him." Our Lord having shown the wrong of a simply selfish use of wealth in the parable of our last lesson, now to these covetous and scoffing Pharisees goes on to show the results in the future life of such selfishly covetous use of earthly possessions.

Rich man (v. 19). Riches are not in themselves blameworthy. Abraham was the richest man of all the Israelites while living, yet his bosom is a name for Paradise; only the bad use of riches is wrong.

Dogs (v. 21). The scavengers of Eastern cities; it may mean Lazarus was so faint and sick he could not keep them off; it may mean that the homeless dogs were kinder than the selfish rich man amid his luxuries.

He was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom (v. 22). "To lie in Abraham's bosom was a Jewish phrase for felicity in Paradise, because it implied nearness to the great Father of the Faithful." All statements concerning the future state must be necessarily figurative, since as yet we have no experience of that state. Our Lord figuratively uses the Jewish notion of highest felicity—feasting next to Abraham—to set forth the happiness of the blessed life beyond. Yet I am sure there is a truth of delightful companionship with the noblest lurking beneath the figure.

The rich man also died and was buried (v. 22). Notice how the contrast between the destinies glares out. Lazarus, whose burial was not worth the mentioning, so poor and mean was it, in such felicity; the rich man—the thing that bulked most about him was his burial. How poor a thing it is when about all you can say of a man is, "Well, he had a great funeral!"

In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom (v. 23). Our Lord in the strongest way implies the fact of instant consciousness into that future life; There is no hint here as to "soul-sleeping". "Hades" is the place of departed spirits, the intermediate state between death and the final judgment. In Hades departed spirits are at once classed according to their characters, some in Paradise, others in what our Lord calls here "torments". The teaching plainly is that different characters, as the selfishly rich man and Lazarus, get different destinies. The previous injunction of our Lord, "Make to yourself friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness," will help us. Just this, this selfishly rich man had not done; now, in the future life, he has no friends, he is condemned to a hopeless loneliness.

Send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue (v. 24). The selfish man now passionately longs for help from others, Abraham, Lazarus. His awful isolation and solitari-

ness is as an anguishing flame to him. "The language is metaphorical. It is as absurd to deduce from this language a doctrine of physical torment in an actual flame, as it would be to conclude that the separation between the lost and the saved is one interposed by a mere physical gulf, across which conversation can be carried on and which could be easily bridged by the resources of modern engineering. But the metaphor means something. What? It is certain that our Lord, who knew whereof He spoke, would not have used such a symbol if it were not an apt one to designate the mental and spiritual suffering of the condemned."

Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things (v. 25). Out of the solemn figures of these verses we may surely pluck such facts as these: There will be condemning memory in the other life—"Son, remember." The earthly lifetime is the destiny-making time—"thou in thy lifetime." We make destiny by the way in which we use what God gives—"receivest thy good things"; we all receive, how do we use? Divine destinies spring from divine lives—"here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish." There is a difference of state in the other life; there is no hint here of further probation—"great gulf fixed."

If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead (v. 31). For the rich man, for those Pharisees, the selfish life was in excusable because they had Moses and the prophets; how much more is such life inexcusable for us when we have the light of Christ! They had, and certainly we have, light enough. As Bengel says, "We are saved by faithful hearing, not by apparitions." In these verses our Lord condemns all so-called spiritualism. Do not go hunting about for further revelations. Accept the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Meeting of the Century Fund Executive

The Executive of the Century Fund Committee met on the 23rd inst., and carefully considered the Agent's report of the prospects of the common fund. He estimated that possibly \$550,000 might be reached but as yet not over \$375,000 had actually been subscribed and reported, the deliberate opinion was that scarcely anything over \$500,000 could be counted on as the result of the present canvass. The impression is abroad that a million and a quarter will certainly be reached, and that all's well; but all is not well when there is danger of coming short by \$100,000 in raising the \$600,000 which the Assembly asked for the Church's great and pressing common work. Rather, strenuous and united and prayerful effort and much remembrance and heart searching are needed and for these the committee plead. They still believe that our people will respond when they know the need, and in that belief have made the following suggestions:

1. That Presbyterian Agents and Conveners and Ministers appointed to visit certain congregations should be pressing on the work of organization and never resting till the canvass is completed in each congregation. God has crowned the year with

His goodness, and never a better time than now to have the work done. It can be done in two weeks in almost any congregation,—every family seen and sums small and great gathered in. By the 1st of December let all be done, and then report to the Presbyterian Convener *at once*.

11. That congregations in which the canvass is well forward should use the month of November in seeing those who delayed, those not yet overtaken and those who promised more, if they should have a good year. Special appeals should also be made to well disposed and staunch friends, many of whom would do more rather than that we should fall short. Thus let the work be pressed everywhere and reported promptly at December 1st.

111. So many Sabbath Schools have been delighted with the Century Fund banks that it is urged that many more should secure them *at once*, and use them up to May next; ordering from F. Allan, Esq., Old Upper Canada College, Toronto, or Rev. E. A. McCurdy, Halifax, N. S. The committee have been much helped by the children, and to give further encouragement to them, it was agreed that, in schools where the average of one dollar a scholar is reached, the privilege be granted of having the name of every scholar on the historic roll.

It was also suggested that Y. P. Societies, and even many families, might use these Century Fund banks and find them very helpful in assisting the work.

IV. A sub-committee was appointed to present the needs of the Common Fund to the personal consideration of a number of the well to do members of the church. This committee will seek counsel and co-operation from the authorities of congregations, and will second their efforts, and it is believed that very generous responses may, in this way be secured. At the same time, it is desirable that the work suggested already to congregations should be faithfully and completely done, before special appeals are made. To secure the sympathy of those who can give largely, it should be made evident that the great body of the membership have done some thing for the fund. Then we need not doubt that what may be lacking shall be supplied.

V. The convener emphasized the urgent necessity of having an instalment of subscriptions already made, paid in to local Treasurers and, by them, to the General Treasurer, before December 1st. In all congregations a call for part payment should be made now. If any Congregational Treasurer desires specially prepared envelopes to aid them in this, these can be had by addressing Rev. Dr. Campbell, Perth.

Presbyterial and congregational agents are urged to keep the above mentioned points in mind, and especially to be forehanded with the reports asked, so that they may reach the General Agent by December 5th, the full meeting of the committee being appointed for the 12th December.

Special attention was given to means to be used for impressing the spiritual side of the movement on the attention of our people. Various suggestions were discussed and remitted to a sub-committee who shall advise with the special committee to whom this matter was entrusted by the Assembly. It was felt by all that the transition from the 19th to the 20th Century should be marked by very solemn gatherings of our people and no doubt these two committees will be guided of

*S. S. Lesson VI., November 11, Luke 16: 19-31.—Golden Text.—Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.—Matt. 6: 20.