

SLEEPING ON GUARD

Irma Kilmer

"Couldst thou not watch one hour?" Mark 14:37.

For us, Gethsemane has a call to watchful fidelity, that we may not fail our Lord as the three disciples failed Him. There are times when nothing can excuse unfaithfulness. Sentinels must not sleep. The mother watching over her sick child when a moment's forgetfulness may prove fatal, dare not drowse. Life contains many such moments. When temptation is near, when duty is pressing, when Jesus needs us, we ought to be vigilant and faithful. Sleeping on guard is one of the worst possible acts that is possible to a soldier. His neglect of danger does not only endanger himself, but his comrades, or even the whole army and its plans for victory. It is not an arbitrary thing that the punishment is death. So sleeping on guard for Jesus results in our spiritual death. Never, in all their lives could Peter, James and John wipe out that failure from their memories. And yet, we cannot blame them. Have we not also failed when our Lord has asked us to watch and pray?

Did you ever think how much Jesus depended upon His disciples? He had "no place to lay His head." He depended even for shelter and rest upon some one who loved Him enough to be kind to Him. His home at Bethlehem and at Capernaum were the homes belonging to His loving followers. The Upper Room—even Gethsemane, belonged to His friends; and He even rested in a borrowed tomb. He depended upon His followers to help in preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. He depended on the "other seventy" to go into the villages and prepare the way for His preaching. He depended on His followers to carry on His work after His death. What if they had failed Him? What if they had slept on guard during the years of trouble for His Church?

And Christ needs His disciples today to preach and to teach the Gospel to all mankind. No doubt. God could so plan the revelation of His will, and His love and the redemption which He has made for man, that there would be no need of the work of His followers. But He has not so planned it, and who are we to disobey Him?

At the beginning of the missionary career, Martin Luther was censured by the church body of his home, and this was given as the main reason for the attitude taken: "If the Lord wants the heathen to be converted, He can do it without the aid of you." The fact is true. But the opposite fact is equally true. He has planned that the Gospel shall be spread about the world by means of His disciples: He has commanded them to preach it and teach it throughout the world; and in so far are we neglecting the direct command of Christ. We are sleeping on guard.

There is always danger to a soul in sleeping when it should be watching. The hour which brought victory brought defeat to the sleeping disciples. So the same hour can bring victory to one soul who obeys the call of Christ, and prove the undoing of another soul who is sleeping on guard.

Every true disciple must be willing to take up his cross; to join, if need be, the sufferings of the prophets and martyrs; to do what Jesus would have him do without regard to present results. The end will bring far greater joy than neglect could have done.

The Lord Christ wanted a tongue one day,

To speak a message of cheer;

To a heart that was worn and weary and sad,

And weighed with a mighty fear.

He asked for mine; but I was busy quite

With my own affairs from morn till night.

And the dear Lord Christ—was His work undone  
For lack of a willing heart?

Only through men does He speak to men,

Dumb must He be apart.

I do not know but I wish today

I had let the dear Christ have His way."

Let us so live that we will never have to voice this wish, but ever watch and pray, ready at any time for the coming of the Master, confident that He will not find us "sleeping on guard."—The Holiness Worker.

TOMMY'S PRAYER

A poor little London slum child of about eleven developed a malady which demanded an instant operation. He was taken to Guy's hospital, where the great doctor who examined him had to tell him that there was just a fighting chance for his life.

The seats of the operating theater, rising tier after tier like the gallery of a church, were filled with long rows of students who had come to witness the greatest surgeon of his time use the knife. The little patient was brought in, and during some of the preliminaries, placed in a cushioned chair. Looking around at the great throng of men, he said timidly to one of the assistant doctors, "Please, sir, I should be very glad if one of you gentlemen would say just a little prayer for me."

There was a profound silence. Nobody moved, so the little slum child knelt down and said: "Dear Jesus, I'm only a poor, weak, little lad, but please, I'd like to live. So, dear Jesus, please help this kind gentleman, so that he shall do his work right. Amen." Having said that, the boy climbed on the table and lay back with a smile lighting up his face.

The great surgeon stood at the head of the table, fully aware that he was about to perform an operation that would test his skill to the utmost. For a moment or so he was visibly agitated. The students exchanged glances. Never had they seen their chief unnerved before, and this condition now argued but ill for the life of the waif. Yet as he looked on the still-moving lips of the prostrate boy, a great calm stole over the doctor. He commenced to operate, and immediately realized that the slum child's prayer was being answered. Coolness of head, steadiness of hand and delicacy of touch all came as they were needed. The boy's life hung on a mere thread, but the skilful surgeon did not snap it.

Next morning the surgeon stood in the ward by the bedside of his little patient. Taking his hand he said, "Well, Tommy, Jesus heard your prayer, and I need the prayers of one like you!"—Selected.

In resolving to do our work well, is the only sound foundation of any religion whatsoever; and by that resolution only, and what we have done, and not by our belief, Christ will judge us, as He has plainly told us He will.—Ruskin.

Some one has said: Should we take Christ out of the Bible, there would be no Bible left." Then why look for any other key to the interpretation of the Bible?—F. E. Brooks.—Free Methodist.

The distinction between preaching and testifying is not always clear, for there is no better way for the preacher to clarify and enforce his sermon than by personal testimony, and testimony is improved by being scriptural, sane and logical. In fact the Lord called Paul to be both a minister and a witness, and the preacher who is not a witness to the vital things of Christian experience is a poor preacher at best.—Herald of Holiness.

"DON'TS" FOR SUNDAY

STAY-AT-HOMES

Don't stay away because company came; bring them.

Don't let the Sunday paper keep you; we have something better.

Don't stay away because, it rains. That would not keep you from business.

Don't stay away because you won't be missed in the crowd. God misses you.

Don't stay away because it isn't your denomination; the same excuse would keep you out of heaven.

Don't stay away because you have no influence; the church-goer preaches a sermon as long as the way thither.

Don't stay away because you know more than the preacher; God may have something to say to you worth hearing.

Don't stay away because the church does not need you; never did the church need more and better men and women.

Don't stay away because the church is imperfect; should you find and join the perfect church its perfection would cease.

Don't stay away because you do not need the church; 'tisn't so. If you must look at the dirt six days, take one to examine the clouds.—Christian Age.

LORD HELP ME TO BE KIND

By Haldor Lillenas

Lord, help me to be kind to those who are unkind  
Compassionate in heart to those who cannot find

In me, what they have sought in vain.  
That I may have a love for those who love me  
less,

A patient tenderness for those who would not  
bless

But curse me, in their bitter pain.

Lord, help me to be kind to those who cannot see  
My motives, or my plans, nor yet why I should  
be

Just as I am and nothing more;  
That I may soon forget the words that seem  
unkind,

Full knowing that Thy grace each wounded heart  
can bind

And love can heal it as before.

Lord, help me to be kind along life's weary road,  
That I may never add more weight to someone's  
load,

To one who bears a heavy heart,  
That I may never add a tear to those that fall,  
Nor cause a heart to ache, or drink the bitter gall  
Because of my unthinking art.

Lord, help me to be kind to those who pass me  
by—

Succeeding, where I fail, no matter how I try,  
Rejoicing in their good success;

That I may cheerful be, content to follow Thee  
No matter what may come, if Thou wilt walk  
with me

Through shade or sunshine or distress.

Herald of Holiness

Dr. Lowry said: "Entire holiness is the extermination of all sin from the soul. The fountain of thought, affection, desire and impulse is pure."

There can be no despair while there is prayer. In any depth of trouble or remorse the way is still open to God's transforming love.—The Way of Faith.