

Milk & Honey

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Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

Watchman: Be Aware: It Is Night

J. R. Caldwell; H. A. Ironside;
William MacDonald; F. B. Meyer

It is the duty of the watchman to be the guardian of his master's property through the long night when dangers of thievery are very real. At anytime through the night, whether at the beginning or the end, he is to be aware and alert. As Christians we are in the midst of a world of darkness; it is night. We do not know how much of the night remains, but we need to be awake and ready to guard against whatever may strike. "Watchman, what is left of the night? Watchman, what is left of the night?" (Isa. 21:11) Here is a list of verses with comments for the Christian and his responsibilities as a watchman.

1. "**Watch** (Be cautious) and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matt. 26:41) Let us challenge our own hearts as to how far we have entered into the fellowship of Christ's suffering. Are we able to watch and pray in this time of His rejection by a godless world? No man will be able to stand in the moment of severe temptation who has been slothful instead of watchful, and indolent instead of prayerful. If only we realize that prayerlessness is as truly sin against God as cursing or swearing, because it is positive disobedience to His word, would we not be more alert to use the opportunities He gives to draw from heaven needed grace for testing times? (H. A. Ironside)

2. "Therefore **watch** (be always alert and on your guard), and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (Acts 20:31,32) Why is it that many Christians today make such slow progress in the Christian life and are so weak when they ought to be strong? It is because they give so little time to the reading of the Word of God. I would like to press the question home upon your minds, dear friends. How much time do you really give to the Bible day by day? Do you study the Word? Do you take time to

meditate on the Word? There are professing Christians who rarely open their Bibles from one Sunday to the next unless perhaps to read the Sunday-school lesson. There are many Christian homes which no longer have a family altar, where husband and wife and children never sit down to read the Word together and lift up their hearts to God in prayer. Is it any wonder that the Church of God is so weak? Is it any wonder that worldliness is coming in like a flood? Is it any wonder that false doctrines are so readily accepted when God's own beloved people are not acquainted with His holy Word? (H. A. Ironside)

3. "**Watch**, stand fast in the faith (stand firm in your faith), be brave, be strong." (1 Cor. 16:13) They were to "watch," for in the presence of a subtle foe whose wiles and strategies are many and ever changing, no attitude but watchfulness could possibly avail. They were to "stand fast in the faith," for Satan is constantly, by some means or other, seeking to loosen the hold we have of "the faith." We see in Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation that they all tell the same tale of Satan's devices to undermine the faith and shake the confidence of saints, thus turning them aside from the way of truth. And still it is the same warfare with the same deceitful and powerful adversary. Well may we in these last evil days give heed to the exhortation, "Watch, stand fast in the faith." (J. R. Caldwell)

4. "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant (alert, **watchful**) in it with thanksgiving." (Col. 4:2) Paul never tires of exhorting the people of God to be diligent in their prayer life. Doubtless one of the regrets we all will have when we get to heaven will be that we did not spend more time in prayer, especially when we will realize the extent to which our prayers were answered. Not only are we to continue earnestly in prayer, but we are also to be vigilant in it. This immediately reminds us of the Lord Jesus' request in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation." They were not vigilant, and so fell sound asleep. Not only are we to watch against sleep, but also against wandering thoughts, listlessness, and unreality. (William MacDonald)

5. "Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us **watch** (keep wide awake) and be sober." (1 Thess. 5:6) Oh, that Christian people everywhere might be awakened out

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“This do in remembrance of Me”

Colin Anderson

Loyal subjects will not argue over this. To them, what their Lord requested is as compelling as a command, for they are constrained by love. Yet some may ask, How can we remember Him since we were not present “in the days of His flesh?” Our answer is, We are not like people coming together to pay respect to an unknown soldier; having nothing but a stone memorial to help us. The Holy Spirit has provided us with information we may find in the books of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. He has preserved four accounts of the Savior’s life, death and resurrection and also given us rich teaching in the Epistles. Christ is preeminent throughout. The Author of it all indwells us and is most willing to bring these things to mind (Jn. 14:17,26). We are both privileged and equipped to remember Him. Yet any attempt to give expression to this when we gather with others will be dull and lifeless if we do characteristically spend time thinking on what is written concerning Him.

How often should we do it? If we put that question to a member of one of the first churches, he would think it strange. Some were slaves and at the close of the Sabbath, in the evening, and therefore the first day of the week, was the time they could all do what their Lord desired. So we read “on the first day of the week when you come together to break bread.” That was how often they did it and that was the reason for their gathering; It was their priority. The question with many today is, How often must we do it? I think the question asked by those earlier believers would rather have been, How often may we do it?

From the start however, the dominant role the breaking of bread played in the early gatherings of believers was endangered. The enemy saw to that and the flesh in its greed cooperated.

Unworthy Conduct

For example at Corinth it appears to have been associated with a “love feast.” This became an opportunity for the flesh to display itself in overindulgence on the part of some relatively wealthy members present. They were not prepared to share their abundant supply of food and drink with those who had not enough. In contrast the Lord’s Supper which followed called for a genuine display of love and unity for which this previous indifference shown towards the needs of fellow believers was hardly good preparation. Weakness, sickness and even death among them revealed the Lord’s displeasure. To prevent any recurrence of this shameful behavior the members were told to confine this

pre-remembrance feasting to their own homes. See I Cor. 11:23-34.* (See note after article)

Unworthy Thoughts

Church history from the close of the New Testament until today uncovers other reasons why the once simple yet spiritually influential Breaking of Bread fell out of favor. It was displaced by something that only vaguely resembled it. It became something other than calling the Lord Himself to mind. This breakdown was brought about by the “Church” with its caste of priests. The simple feast was replaced by a rite requiring the ‘layman’ to focus on his guilt instead of on His Savior’s virtues. An elaborate ceremony replaced the simple act of remembrance. It became a ritual, the fulfillment of a legal obligation, a method to obtain forgiveness and to gain merit. Morbid introspection (a looking within oneself) was encouraged. It became a duty instead of a delight and the forgiveness it offered only lasted till the next sin was committed. Hence the need for a final confession before you die! Even among those who have shaken themselves free of this gross bondage there are those who still bring thoughts of their own unworthiness to the Breaking of Bread instead of focusing on the worthiness of Christ.

They are hampered by their distress over the incorrigible “flesh” within them. Worship leaders and Pastors may even encourage this when calling upon everyone to “examine themselves” before they partake of the Supper. Do we really believe bemoaning the weakness of our flesh is a sign of genuine piety and will help us worship? J. G. M’Vicker was not ignoring the need for confession if a believer is convicted of a specific sin when he nevertheless wrote:

“The longer I live the more I see the vast importance of a believer clearly distinguishing between self and Christ and remembering that by the cross he has got rid of, renounced self, and that now Christ, and He only, is his righteousness and life. What are those bad states of soul that we are often tempted to grieve over but bad states of our flesh. Would we have the flesh good? He that has fled to the lifeboat need not tremble or mourn over the leaks and rottenness of the condemned old hulk he has abandoned. Much of our sorrow is from pride. We are vexed that our flesh is not better, and is not growing better. We forget that the old garment is not mended but thrown away, and a new one given instead. Has it any faults? Point to them if you can, then I shall indeed tremble and mourn. But if you cannot, you are welcome to point out as many evils in the old dead and buried self as you please. They humble me, make me thankful for my deliverance, make me cling faster to Christ; but I have got rid of the whole thing, blessed be God.”

We have all week to focus on ourselves, experience our successes, sorrow over our failures, confessing along the way any sins of which we become aware. The Breaking of

is all about our Savior's experience. It is a remembrance of Him. Those who speak at that time should remind us of His pre-incarnate and eternal co-existence with the Father, His lowly birth, His spotless life, His sacrificial death, triumphant resurrection and promised return. In short, "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." That will stimulate true worship and is one reason why the enemy does all he can to keep Christians from acting as He requested; "Do this in remembrance of Me."

* Some who have traveled have been present in a gathering when a lack of love and consideration for others has been evident. Naturally the question arises, why doesn't the Lord act in swift rebuke of improper and irreverent conduct today? I think the answer is, we now have the completed Scriptures "profitable (among other things) for reproof and correction..." In them He has given us an example of His reaction to coldness, lovelessness and inconsiderate behavior among His people. He remains the same today but withholds His swift judgment, perhaps graciously waiting for faith to realize the truth from the Word and a wholesome fear of the Lord to develop before He closes the door on such travesties of "fellowship." The warnings given in the letters to the churches in the second and third chapters of Revelation confirm this. *

Continued from page 1 — *Watchman...*

their lethargy and out of their carelessness and frivolity, and brought to realize the seriousness of the times in which we live! What a solemn thing it is to be a Christian in a world like this, in view of the fact that we will soon give an account of our works to the Great Judge. (H. A. Ironside)

6. "Be sober, be vigilant (be **watchful** and cautious at all times); because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Pet. 5:8) There is terror in his (the devil's) threatenings, which may well strike panic into timid hearts. But we must remember that it is the expending of ineffectual rage. He makes up in noise what he has lost in power. There is no church-fold which he does not eagerly visit; bent on injuring its usefulness, or snatching away its careless professors. We are engaged in conflict with an accomplished and merciless opponent, who is quick to plunge in his sword wherever the joints of the armor open, and whenever we give him the chance. What need, then, for constant vigilance on our part to meet and parry his attacks! And before we can hope to vanquish assaults from without, we must be careful to have taken up that attitude with respect to the inner realm which is ours in the holy arrangements of God. We cannot successfully vanquish assaults from without, while there is revolt or anarchy within. (F. B. Meyer) *

Continued from page 4 — *Word of God...*

receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Their gross ignorance of the subject with which they undertake to deal is only equaled by their self-confidence. Of their irreverence we say nothing; for who would think of looking for reverence in the writings of infidels? We might perhaps look for a little modesty, were it not that we are fully aware of the bitter hostility which lies at the root of all such writings, and renders them utterly unworthy of a moment's consideration. Other books may have a dispassionate examination; but the precious Book of God is approached with the foregone conclusion that it is not a divine Revelation because, indeed, infidels tell us that God could not give us a written revelation of His mind.

How strange! Men can give us a revelation of their thoughts; and infidels have done so pretty plainly; but God cannot. What folly! What presumption! Why, we may lawfully inquire, could not God reveal His mind to His creatures? Why should it be thought a thing incredible? For no reason whatever, but because infidels would have it so. The wish is, in this case assuredly, father to the thought. The question raised by the old serpent, in the garden of Eden, nearly six thousand years ago, has been passed on, from age to age, by all sorts of skeptics, rationalists and infidels, namely, "Hath God said?" We reply, with intense delight, Yes; blessed be His Holy name, He has spoken — spoken to us. He has revealed His mind; He has given us the holy scriptures. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect [artios], thoroughly furnished unto all good works." And again, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17; Rom. 15: 4.)

The Lord be praised for such words! They assure us that all scripture is given of God; and that all scripture is given to us. Precious link between the soul and God! *

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For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Rom. 15:4

August, 2013

The Word of God graciously kept

C. H. Mackintosh
Excerpt

Who would think of listening to a blind man on the subject of light and shades. And yet such a man has much more claim to be heard than an unconverted man on the subject of inspiration. Human learning, however extensive and varied; human wisdom, however profound, cannot qualify a man to form a judgment upon the word of God. No doubt, a scholar may examine and collate MSS. simply as a matter of criticism; he may be able to form a judgment as to the question of authority for any particular reading of a passage; but this is a different matter altogether from an infidel writer undertaking to pronounce judgment upon the Revelation which God has, in His infinite goodness, given to us. We maintain that no man can do this. It is only by the Spirit who Himself inspired the holy scriptures that those scriptures can be understood and appreciated. The word of God must be received upon its own authority. If man can judge it or reason upon it, it is not the word of God at all. Has God given us a Revelation or has He not? If He has, it must be absolutely perfect, in every respect; and being such, it must be entirely beyond the range of human judgment. Man is no more competent to judge scripture than he is to judge God. The scriptures judge man, not man the Scriptures. This makes all the difference. Nothing can be more miserably contemptible than the books which infidels write against the Bible. Every page, every paragraph, every sentence only goes to illustrate the truth of the apostle's statement that, "The natural man

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