

I read this brief article today that pretty much sums up what this blog is about, so I thought I would share it. This American author lived from 1845-1923. Having seen some disturbing things written on the internet where "watchfulness" has been described as seeking out dates to set for the rapture, and sometimes through the seeking of spiritual experiences that are not even biblical, the article below is a breath of fresh air.

Watchfulness!

by George D. Watson

“Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him!” (Matt. 25:6).

It is watchfulness of spirit that fills its vessel with oil, and trims its lamp, and keeps ready for that long-expected but swiftly-hastening hour when this is the cry that shall ring through the earth!

Watch! Look with Attention!

Watchfulness embraces all the concentrated powers of attention. It is not only the look of the eye, even in physical watching, but of the mind and the affections. To watch is to look thoughtfully either at or for something. Hence religious watchfulness is holy thoughtfulness – a calm, wide-awake attentiveness to things spiritual and divine.

The word “circumspect” means to look all around – to inspect the entire circumference. The living creatures described by Ezekiel were full of eyes, so they could see in every direction. A soul filled with the Holy Ghost is to spread out its thoughtfulness in every direction.

Watchfulness – Love on Picket Guard

To “watch” the way Jesus commanded us, we must have the eye of the mind in the socket of the heart. Unless we love to think on God and the coming of Jesus and on constant spiritual progress we will never make true Scriptural watchers.

A watchful Christian is one whose faculties are flooded with holy love. He loves to remember the things of God; he loves to be incessantly choosing the will of God in things great and small. He loves to find God everywhere and in everything. If the love of God is not poured sufficiently abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost to arouse and inspire the faculties, the soul will never be a true watcher, but will be drowsy and sleep at its post at the very time the bright procession of God’s mercies are going by.

To hunt for faults is not watchfulness, because it is not the act of love. To be meddlesome, to pry into things that do not contribute to our well-being, to scan people with a cold, critical eye, to be alert for unfair comparisons is not the calm, thoughtful gaze of a heavenly sentinel. Watchfulness, then, is pure love on picket guard.

Upward, Inward, Outward

Scriptural watchfulness has three directions to it: upward to God, inward to our spiritual condition, and outward to our environment. It is to watch for God as David did when he said he watched for God in prayer more than they that watch for the morning (Psa. 130:6). It is to look with patient, loving attention for fresh revelations of the character of God, of new openings of His Word, of clear intimations of His will.

It is also a devout and intelligent outlook for the fulfillment of prophecy, for occasions of divine intelligence in the affairs of men. It is to keep the telescope of holy vigilance sweeping the heavens of God's grace and providence like the wise men who were on the lookout for the star of Bethlehem. It has been said, "He that notes a special providence will never lack a special providence to note." It is wonderful how people find what they look for, and holy watchfulness toward God will find Him where foolish indifference sees only blank space.

A watchful Christian will keep guard over his own inner spirit. He will notice the uprisings of every disposition, of the trend of his thoughts, and of the choice of his will, and of his words, and the tones of his voice and of his manners. He will not only watch his actions, but under the swift and beautiful guidance of the Holy Spirit he will perceive the very essence and spirit that flows out in the actions and words. This is what the Lord means when Scripture says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

Holy vigilance must also guard our environment and be on the lookout for the approaches of Satan in multiplied forms, and keep on the alert for escaping all evil, and doing all the good we can. Watchfulness is to see and seize the golden opportunities that an infinite providence brings to us. This is the range of the Bible sentinel. It may seem like a tiresome task, but if the soul is flooded with divine love it will not only be easy but be a chosen occupation of the chastened and sanctified intellect.

Quietness of Spirit

True watchfulness implies the concentration of all the faculties, and a sentinel must watch with his ears and the sense of smell as well as his eyes. To watch well we need light to see and stillness to hear. God's watchers in the darkness of this present age need great stillness of spirit, or they will fail to see the things they are appointed to observe. Many Christians are so filled with bustle, and noise, and hurry, and excitement, and fret, and -criticism, and scheming, and talkativeness, they cannot detect God's messages, nor the footsteps of the coming King. Neither can they know what is going on in their own hearts.

Watchfulness is to become a heavenly habit of the mind. It is not an instantaneous blessing, but an habitual attitude of the mind which we must choose and cultivate. This habit of heavenly watchfulness is the attitude of the soul for meeting Jesus when He comes!