



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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WATCHING FOR CHRIST'S COMING

By C. H. Spurgeon

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Some time ago a brother sent me some information in which he felt there was an indication that C. H. Spurgeon became an A-millennialist in his later years. I had never answered his questions concerning that matter. I will let Spurgeon answer the brother's questions.

C. H. Spurgeon first preached in the New Park Street Chapel in December of 1853 when he was only 19 years of age. He preached again for three Sundays in January of 1854. He was asked to preach for six months on probation. The congregation, however, extended him a call to pastor the church in April, 1854, some time before the probationary period was ended.

On April 7, 1889, thirty six years later, Spurgeon preached the following message on the subject, “*Watching For Christ's Coming*” in the evening service at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, less than three years before his death on January 31, 1892. The message was read again in the Tabernacle on April 2, 1893. Spurgeon, “being dead, yet speaketh.”

The thing that is significant about this message is the pre-millennial view that Spurgeon still held not three years before his death. Some have advocated otherwise, but it would appear from this message that Spurgeon died a pre-millennialist.

One may find quotations in his sermons where it seems that he may have changed his view and espoused the a-millennial position. But, this sermon spells out clearly that he was obviously pre-millennial less than three years before his death and apparently remained so by this sermon being read after his death. I present it here for the reader's own study and edification.)

A Sermon Delivered by
C. H. Spurgeon

At The Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington
On Lord's Day Evening, April 7th, 1889

Luke 12:37-38 Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

I am about to speak of the Second Coming of Christ; and I felt thankful that my dear brother's prayer, although we had not been in consultation with one another upon the matter, was in every way so suitable to the subject upon which I am to speak. He led us in prayer to think of our coming Lord; so that I trust you are on the margin of the subject now, and that you will not have to make any great exertion of mind to plunge into mid-stream, and be carried away with the full current of thought concerning the Second Advent of the Saviour. It is a very appropriate topic when we come to the Lord's table; for, as that prayer reminded us, the Lord's supper looks backward, and is a memorial of his agony; but it looks forward, and is an anticipation of his glory. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, “*For as often as ye eat of this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*” By looking forward, in a right state of heart, to that Second Coming of Christ which is the joy of his Church, you will be also in a right state of heart for (SEE WATCHING, Cont. Page 6, Right Col.)

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EDITORIAL

LORD, LET ME BE A BARNABAS

Acts 9:26-27 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of

Jesus.

Acts 15:36-39 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. 37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. 38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. 39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus.

If most preachers were given a choice of emulating Paul or Barnabas, they would choose Paul. After all, did he not write more books of the New Testament than any other writer? Did he not organize more churches and stabilize more works than any other preacher? Don't more people name their boys Paul than name their boys Barnabas? Why then would any one pray, "Lord, let me be a Barnabas"?

As I drove to Kentucky Saturday, May 6, 1995, I was listening to tapes of the New Testament. I had listened to about 20 chapters of Matthew when I caught my mind wandering and could not concentrate. I put in some tapes of hymns and played three of them. Just north of Nashville, TN, I decided I would see if I could find any preaching on the radio. I caught the last ten minutes or so of a sermon preached by Adrian Rodgers in which he was dealing with Barnabas.

Now, I can be as critical of Adrian Rodgers as anyone. But, I must say that the message he was preaching on this day was used of the Lord to stir my heart and I found myself praying, "Lord, let me be a Barnabas."

Strange, huh? Why would I want to be a Barnabas?

Barnabas was a man of compassion and consolation. His name means "son of consolation." Barnabas was the kind of fellow who would stand by someone when others would cast them aside, write them off, and deny them the right to be of service in the Lord's vineyard.

Saul of Tarsus had a terrible reputation. He had made havoc of the Lord's churches. He let the men who violently destroyed Stephen lay their coats at his

feet while they stoned a godly man. He had obtained letters of authority to go as far as Damascus and take captive any who claimed to be Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem for trial and probable death. Yet, on the road to Damascus he was wonderfully saved. He went on to Damascus where he was baptized and where he worked for some time. He eventually went up to Jerusalem and sought to unite with the church there but they wanted nothing to do with this man. It was Barnabas who stepped forward and joined Paul's effort and commended him to the church at Jerusalem and secured his acceptance there. (See Acts 9:23-28).

Barnabas lived up to his name, "Son of Consolation." His charitable attitude toward Paul was the means used by God to get the fearful congregation at Jerusalem to receive this former persecutor. I suggest that Paul could and should have learned a few lessons in charity from Barnabas. Yet, many will applaud Paul for his staunch, unbending mindset while criticizing Barnabas for his compassion. I think *we* could all learn a few lessons from Barnabas, as well as Paul.

After their first missionary journey the two missionaries, Paul and Barnabas, returned to Antioch and reported on what they had done on that journey. After a period of time, Paul suggested that it was time that they visit the churches organized on the first journey to see how they were doing. Barnabas agreed and indicated they should take John Mark. But, Paul disagreed. John Mark had started with them on their first journey and had quit and gone back home. Paul was very much opposed to bringing John Mark along. He would have nothing to do with a quitter. Quitters must be written off as unworthy of the Lord's service.

In the case of Saul of Tarsus, Barnabas was defending and encouraging a man who had recently been saved. His crimes had been committed before he was saved. In the case of John Mark, however, he was encouraging and defending someone who was saved, but had deserted the battle in a time of hardship. He had gone back home before the journey was over. Paul would have none of this and flatly refused to be a party to restoring a quitter. The compassionate, charitable, consoling, encouraging Barnabas, however, was insistent that John Mark be restored to the work and taken on the second journey. As is seen in the second passage above, the contention became so great between them that Paul

and Barnabas parted company. Paul took Silas and left on the second missionary journey while Barnabas took John Mark and went to Cyprus.

Now, who was at fault, in this matter, Paul or Barnabas? I like what John Gill says on the matter. "It is not easy to say which was to blame most in this contention; perhaps there were faults on both sides, for the best men are not without their failings; yet this affair was overruled by the providence of God, for the spread of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his interest; for when these two great and good men parted from one another, they went to different places, preaching the word of God."

It is interesting to note that Paul apparently realized his mistake in this matter at a latter date. At least, John Mark, through the efforts of Barnabas, had been restored to the service of the Lord. Paul would write to Timothy and say, "***Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.***" (2 Timothy 4:11). Humanly speaking, one wonders what would have happened to John Mark if Barnabas had not extended a hand of encouragement to him when he was down. One wonders! On another occasion Paul admonishes the church at Colosse to receive John Mark if he came their way. ***Colossians 4:10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;).*** And again in his epistle to Philemon, Paul classifies John Mark as a fellow worker in the service of God. ***Philemon 24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.***

Barnabas was a spiritual man, and God says, "***If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.***" (Gal. 6:1). Barnabas saw a brother overtaken in a fault. Paul would have nothing to do with him. He could not join them in the second missionary journey. But, Barnabas, the son of consolation, saw real potential in John Mark. If someone would just extend a hand of encouragement he could yet be profitable in the Lord's vineyard. In keeping with his nature and past practice, Barnabas would be Mark's encourager, his restorer. Consequently, John Mark was restored and Paul, apparently seeing his error wrote, "Bring Mark for he is profitable to me in this ministry."

Before moving on, let me note the spirit in which

we are to seek the restoration of an erring brother. It is to be done in a spirit of meekness, not madness.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves who stripped him naked, wounded him and left him half dead. This man was apparently a Jew. A Jewish priest came by and walked by on the other side and would have nothing to do with him. He left him to die. A Levite came by and stopped and looked at his Jewish brother but he too passed by on the other side. I am reminded of God's words to some Israelites like these two. These said, "***Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.***" God said of these with a "holier than thou" spirit, "***These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.***" (Isa. 65:5). How God does despise the sin of self-righteousness! How God does despise those who stand aloof from others because they feel they are more righteous than they.

But, it was not so, when a certain Samaritan came by. He did not draw his robes around himself and say, "I am holier than thou and I can have nothing to do with you." He was a good neighbor. He was a man of compassion. He would be a Barnabas to this man who was down and out.

I might point out in passing that it is important that we notice the context of this passage if we are to interpret it correctly. Jesus is teaching a lesson on being a good neighbor. Note how he closed out this discussion. ***Luke 10:36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?*** The good Samaritan in this passage is often set forth as a type of Jesus Christ. Jesus is not teaching a lesson about what he would do for his people in his sufferings. He is teaching a lesson about being a good neighbor in response to the question, "***And who is my neighbour?***" Like Barnabas, this man was a man of compassion and he was the paragon of a good neighbor.

The priest was so interested in making certain he did not get contaminated, he could not show any compassion. His own supposed purity was more important than having compassion on a man who was lying beaten, stripped, and near dead. The Levite was very little different. At least he did take a look at the man before passing on and preserving his self-assumed cleanness. Both would rather see a Jewish brother die than get contaminated.

The Samaritan had compassion on the man. The next thing the Samaritan did was go to the man who was half dead, robbed, and naked. He cleaned and bound the man's wounds and set him on his own beast and took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day when he left the inn he paid the inn keeper to care for him and assured him if the amount of money which he gave him was not sufficient, he would pay the balance when he came by again.

When you see someone who is down and discouraged, do you extend a hand of fellowship and encouragement? When a member of your church falls out of service, perhaps even becoming a disgrace to the church, do you seek his restoration or do you take a "holier than thou" attitude and stand aloof from him?

I would remind us all that the first, and preeminent purpose of church discipline is ***the restoration*** of the fallen. I remember a brother in one church I pastored who had a weakness for drink. He would go for months without touching anything that would satisfy his "need" for alcohol. But, something would happen in his family or in his work that would send him "sneaking" (his words) back to a liquor store and he would end up drunk. Before long, he would come to me weeping and repenting and would ask to speak to church and ask their forgiveness. That being done he would be fine for at least a few months.

One night, just before business meeting, some men were discussing the matter. One brother said, "We ought to kick him out of the church and never let him back into the fellowship. He could quit and stay quit if he would just do it. I did."

I said, "Brother, don't you make a motion to do this for you are not qualified. Your spirit and attitude in this matter is entirely wrong. Second, you have admitted several times in my presence that you have tried to quit smoking and say you just can't do it. If this brother can quit drinking 'if he would just do it,' you could quit smoking if you would just do it." I was not saying that smoking and drunkenness were of the same import. My point was that he was under the control of his cigarettes as surely as the other brother was sometimes under the control of his bottle of whiskey. But, worse was his total lack of compassion and charity toward the brother overtaken in a fault, as well as his self-righteous attitude.

In spite of the racial strife between Jews and Samaritans, this Samaritan would not leave a Jew

dying beside the road. Though he apparently did not know the man, he was willing to spend and give of himself to restore the man to his physical well-being. He went beyond what we might expect him to do. He not only furnished his own bandages, his own oil and wine for treating the wound, his own donkey to bear the man to the inn; he paid for the man's lodging; he paid for the man's food; and when he left, he paid for the man's continued care. He even promised to pay any other that was due on his next journey that way. He was a man of compassion. He was a man of consolation. He was a man of charity.

Which of the three do you consider to be a neighbor to this wounded, dying man? The priest? The Levite? Or the Samaritan?

Whose actions in this matter best typifies yours when a brother falls into sin or among thieves?

JESUS ACCUSED OF EATING WITH SINNERS

Matthew 9:10-11 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

"Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" What a question! These Pharisees would never be seen eating with Publicans and sinners. The very idea that this man who claimed to be the Son of God would sit and eat with Publicans and sinners. He should be vomiting in their presence rather than eating and conversing with them. ***Matthew 9:12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.***

Men who are sick, sin sick, whether they be unsaved or saved, need our help. Should we have more compassion on the unsaved than the saved? A brother who is over taken in a fault needs a Barnabas as much as does a lost man.

FAILURE IS NOT FINAL!

We should remember that ***failure is not final.*** Apparently Paul thought it was when he refused to take John Mark on the second missionary journey. Barnabas knew better. He took John Mark with him and later Paul would say of this same man, "He is

profitable to me." If I would be a Barnabas I must learn that failure is not final.

We see this in the case of David. How terribly he had fallen. He took another man's wife in an adulterous relationship. He conspired and had the man killed and married Bathsheba even though he was already married. He went for some time without confessing that sin. He did not deal with it except inwardly until confronted by Nathan. When Nathan came to him he did not storm into his presence screaming out denunciations against David. Instead, he used a parable to lead David to pronounce judgment on himself. The harshest words he said to David were, "Thou art the man." These words were enough for the Lord to use them to strike David with conviction. These words were used to bring about his restoration. This guilty man was used greatly of God after his restoration. Some of the most stirring and heart touching Psalms written by David were written after his fall and restoration. I am thinking of Psalm 51, 32, 38, and others. Psalms we would not have if God had simply cast David off for his sin. David's repentance was a long time coming and he went through much grief before and after his repentance. But God did not abandon David. There was no place for David to go that God was not with him. What a solemn sound those words, "If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there," if you consider them in the light of David's sin and conviction. And, speaking of the terrible state into which he had fallen, David praises God because ***"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."*** (Psalm 40:2)

God did not bar David from being used again. No! David anticipated being used of the Lord to bring the lost to Christ. ***Psalm 51:12-13 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*** Many of David's friends and loved ones stood aloof from him and would have nothing to do with him. ***Psalm 38:11 My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.*** When his foot slipped others magnified themselves against him (Psa. 38:16). This brought David to the very depths of despair and he was ***"ready to halt."***

Did God use David again? He certainly did. He

certainly does! How many times have you preached from Psalm 51 if you are a preacher? Did you know that it was written by a man who had committed adultery, still had the wife he had stolen from another man, committed murder, and was, at the very time he wrote it, practicing polygamy? That was written after David's terrible fall and eventual recovery. God still uses it. I remember preaching from that Psalm a number of years ago. I was preaching a revival meeting in Ohio and after preaching on that passage and Psalm 32 and 38, a teenage girl came to me at the back door and was sobbing greatly. When I asked her what her problem was, all she could say at the moment was, "I feel so dirty." God had used David's writings on which I had preached to convict her of sin and bring her to face that sinfulness and that night she was gloriously "cleansed from all iniquity" and made white as snow. David, through his writing had taught a "transgressor her ways, and a sinner was converted unto" God that night.

Failure was not final for David!

CONCLUSION

I believe it easier to emulate Paul in his staunchness, sharpness, and unbending attitude than to imitate Barnabas in his compassion, consolation, and charity. It would be easier to side with the congregation at Jerusalem and write off Paul as untrustworthy and dangerous than to side with Barnabas and defend and encourage that "havoc maker" and persecutor of Christians. It would be easier, the way I am turned, to side with Paul against John Mark and sever ties with Barnabas because of his defense of John Mark than to side with Barnabas and defend that young preacher who had deserted on the first journey.

That Barnabas was at least partially right in that argument seems evident from the way Paul later wrote of John Mark and Barnabas. That Paul was at least partially wrong seems evident from his apparent change of heart and need of having John Mark with him.

I want to do something I rarely do in this paper. I want to commend a man by name whom I look upon as being of the same spirit as Barnabas, the son of consolation. A number of years ago a brother in the ministry sunk to the very bottom. His life was a veritable shambles and for several years he was out of

church and out of the ministry. I don't know if everyone else gave upon this brother, but Bro. Earl Smith never did. Bro. Earl Smith became his Barnabas and extended to that brother the hand of encouragement time and time again. Now that brother has been restored and is being again used by the Lord. When he reads these lines he will "Amen" what I am saying about Bro. Earl Smith.

I have seen this man over the years help young preachers. I preached my second sermon at his church and over the years he has been an encouragement to me also. I pray that God may help me be a little more like Barnabas. I pray that he may help all of us be a little more like Barnabas that we may console, love, and encourage others in times of despair and discouragement, yea, even when they are overtaken in some serious fault.

I guess God needs his Pauls to keep his people from mellowing too much. But, I suggest he needs his Barnabases to keep us from becoming too unbending and obstinate, adamant and inflexible in our dealings with brethren and sisters who may fall into sin, into what we deem error, and who may be overtaken in a fault, whatever we perceive that fault

(WATCHING, Continued From Page 1)

coming to the communion-table. May the Holy Ghost make it to be so!

The posture at the communion-table, as you know, according to our Lord's example, was not that of kneeling, but that of reclining. The easiest position which you can assume is the most fitting for the Lord's supper; and yet remember that the supper was no sooner finished, than "they sang a hymn" and when the hymn was concluded, they went out to the Mount of Olives to the agonies of Gethsemane. It often seems to me as if now, after finding rest at the table by feeding upon Christ, whose real presence we have, not after a carnal sort, but after a spiritual sort, after that, we sing a hymn, as if we would go out to meet our Lord in his Second Coming, not going to the Mount of Olives to see him in a bloody sweat, but to hear that word of the angel, "*This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" I do not think we ought to feel at all surprised if we were to go out from the table of fellowship to-night, and meet our Lord at once; nay, we should be always waiting for his appearing, ever

expecting him, not knowing at what hour the Master of the house shall come. The world does not expect him; it goes on with its eating and drinking, its marrying and giving in marriage; but his family should expect him. When he will return from the wedding, I trust that he will not find the door shut against him, but that we shall be ready to open to our Lord immediately he knocketh. This is the object of the few words that I shall have to say to-night, to stir you up, and my own heart also, to be ever watching for Christ's Second Coming.

I. FIRST, THE LORD WILL COME. He that has come once is to come again; he will come a second time. The Lord will come.

He will come again, for *he has promised to return*. We have his own word for it. That is our first reason for expecting him. Among the last of the words which he spoke to his servant John are these, "Surely I come quickly." You may read it, "I am coming quickly. I am even now upon the road. I am traveling as fast as wisdom allows. I am always coming, and coming quickly." Our Lord has promised to come, and to come in person. Some try to explain the Second Coming of Christ as though it meant the believer dying. You may, if you like, consider that Christ comes to his saints in death. In a certain sense, he does; but that sense will never bear out the full meaning of the teaching of the Second Advent with which the Scripture is full. No, "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." He who went up to heaven will come down from heaven, and stand in the latter day upon the earth. Every redeemed soul can say with Job, "Though after my skin worms shall destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." Christ will as certainly be here again in glory as he once was here in shame, for he has promised to return.

Moreover, *the great scheme of redemption requires Christ's return*. It is a part of that scheme that, as he came once with a sin-offering, that, as he came once to redeem, he should come a second time to claim the inheritance which he has so dearly bought. He came once, that his heel might be bruised; he comes again, to break the serpent's head, and, with a rod of iron, to dash his enemies in pieces, as

potter's vessels. He came once to wear a crown of thorns; he must come again, to wear the diadem of universal dominion. He comes to the marriage supper; he comes to gather his saints together; he comes to glorify them with himself on this same earth where once he and they were despised and rejected of men. Make you sure of this, that the whole drama of redemption cannot be perfected without this last act of the coming of the King. The complete history of Paradise Regained requires that the New Jerusalem should come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and it also requires that the heavenly Bridegroom should come riding forth on his white horse, conquering and to conquer, King of kings and Lord of lords, amidst the everlasting hallelujahs of saints and angels. It must be so. The man of Nazareth will come again. None shall spit in his face then; but every knee shall bow before him. The crucified shall come again; and though the nail prints will be visible, no nails shall then fasten his dear hands to the tree; but instead thereof, he shall grasp the scepter of universal sovereignty; and he shall reign for ever and ever. Hallelujah!

When will he come? Ah, that is the question, the question of questions! *He will come in his own time*. He will come in due time. A brother minister, calling upon me, said as we sat together, "I should like to ask you a lot of questions about the future." "Oh, well!" I replied, "I cannot answer you, for I dare say I know no more about it than you do." "But," said he, "what about the Lord's Second Advent? Will there not be the millennium first?" I said, "I cannot tell whether there will be the millennium first; but this I know, the Scripture has left the whole matter, as far as I can see, with an intentional indistinctness, that we may be always expecting Christ to come, and that we may be watching for his coming at any hour and every hour. I think that the **millennium will commence after his coming, and not before it**. (Emp. Mine. RWC). I cannot imagine the kingdom with the King absent. It seems to me to be an essential part of the millennial glory that the King shall be revealed; at the same time, I am not going to lay down anything definite upon that point. He may not come for a thousand years; he may come to-night. The teaching of Scripture is, first of all, 'In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.' It is clear that, if it were revealed that a thousand years might elapse before he

would come, we might very well go to sleep for that time, for we should have no reason to expect that he would come when Scripture told us he would not.”

“Well,” answered my friend, ‘but when Christ comes, that will be the general judgment, will it not?’ Then I quoted these texts, “The dead in Christ shall rise first.” “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.” I said, “There is a resurrection from among the dead to which the Apostle Paul labored to attain. We shall all rise; but the righteous shall rise a thousand years before the ungodly. There is to be that interval of time between the one and the other; whether that is the millennial glory, or not, this deponent sayeth not, though he thinks it is. But this is the main point, the Lord shall come. We know not when we are to expect his coming; we are not to lay down, as absolutely fixed, any definite prediction or circumstance that would allow us to go to sleep until that prediction was fulfilled, or that circumstance was apparent.”

“Will not the Jews be converted to Christ, and restored to their land?” enquired my friend. I replied, “Yes, I think so. Surely they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and God shall give them the kingdom and the glory, for they are his people, whom he has not for ever cast away. The Jews, who are the natural olive branches, shall yet be grafted into their own olive tree again, and then shall be the fulness of the Gentiles.” “Will that be before Christ comes, or after?” asked my friend. I answered, “I think it will be after he comes; but whether or no, I am not going to commit myself to any definite opinion on the subject.”

To you, my dear friends, I say,—Read for yourselves, and search for yourselves; for still this stands first, and is the only thing that I will insist upon to-night, the Lord will come. He may come now; he may come tomorrow; he may come in the first watch of the night, or the second watch, or he may wait until the morning watch; but the one word that he gives to you all is, “Watch! Watch! Watch!” that whenever he shall come you may be ready to open to him, and to say, in the language of the hymn we sang just now—

“Hallelujah!

Welcome, welcome, Judge divine!”

So far I know that we are Scriptural, and therefore

perfectly safe in our statements about the Lord’s Second Advent.

Brethren, I would be earnest on this point, for *the notion of the delay of Christ’s Coming is always harmful*, however you arrive at it, whether it be by studying prophecy, or in any other way. If you come to be of the opinion of the servant mentioned in the forty-fifth verse, you are wrong: “If that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.” Do not, therefore, get the idea that the Lord delayeth his Coming, and that he will not or cannot come as yet. Far better would it be for you to stand on the tiptoe of expectation, and to be rather disappointed to think that he does not come. I do not wish you to be shaken in mind so as to act fanatically or foolishly, as certain people did in America, when they went out into the wood with ascension dresses on, so as to go straight up all of a sudden. Fall into none of those absurd ideas that have led people to leave a chair vacant at the table and to put an empty plate, because the Lord might come and want; and try to avoid all other superstitious nonsense. To stand star-gazing at the prophecies with your mouth wide open, is just the wrong thing; far better will it be to go on working for your Lord, getting yourself and your service ready for his appearing, and cheering yourself all the while with this thought, “While I am at work, my Master may come. Before I get weary, my Master may return. While others are mocking at me, my Master may appear; and whether they mock or applaud, is nothing to me. I live before the great Task-master’s eye, and do my service knowing that he sees me, and expecting that, by-and-by, he will reveal himself to me, and then he will reveal me and my right intention to misrepresenting men.” That is the first point, brethren, the Lord will come. Settle that in your minds. He will come in his own time, and we are always to be looking for his appearing.

II. Now, secondly, THE LORD BIDS US WATCH FOR HIM. That is the marrow of the text: “Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching.”

Now what is watching? Not wishing to use my own words, I thought that I would call your attention to the context. The first essential part of this watching is that we are ***not to be taken up with present things***. You remember that the twenty-second verse is about not taking thought what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; you are not to be absorbed with that. You who are Christians are not to live the fleshly, selfish life that asks, "What shall I eat and drink? How can I store up my goods? How can I get food and raiment here?" You are something more than dumb, driven cattle, that must think of hay and water. You have immortal spirits. Rise to the dignity of you immortality. Begin to think of the kingdom, the kingdom so soon to come, the kingdom which your Father has given you, and which, therefore, you must certainly inherit, the kingdom which Christ has prepared for you, and for which he is making you kings and priests unto God, that you may reign with him for ever and ever. Oh, be not earth-bound! Do not cast your anchor here in these troubled waters. Build not your nest on any of these trees; they are all marked for the axe, and are coming down; and your nest will come down, too, if you build it here. Set your affection on things above, up yonder,—

"Up where eternal ages roll,

Where solid pleasures never die,

And fruits eternal feast the soul;"

there project your thoughts and your anxieties, and have a care about the world to come. Be not anxious about the things that pertain to this life. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Reading further down, in the thirty-fifth verse, you will notice that watching implies ***keeping ourselves in a serviceable condition***: "Let you loins be girded about." You know how the Orientals wear flowing robes, which are always getting in their way. They cannot walk without being tripped up; so that, if a man has a piece of work on hand, he just tucks in his robe under his girdle, ties his girdle up tightly, and gets ready for his task, as we should say in English, turning the Oriental into the Western figure, rolling up your shirt-sleeves, and preparing for work.. That is the way to wait for the Lord, ready for service, that, when he comes, he may never find you idle. I called to see a sister one morning; and when I called, she was cleaning the front steps with some whitening, and she said, "Oh, my dear pastor, I am sorry that you

should call upon me just now! I would not have had you see me like this on any account." I answered, "That is how I like to see you, busy at your work. I should not have liked to have come in, and caught you talking to your neighbour over the back palings. That would not have pleased me at all. May your Lord, when he comes, find you just so, doing your duty!" You see exactly what is meant; you are to be doing your duty; you are to be engaged about those vocations to which God has called you. You are to be doing it all out of love to Christ, and as service for him. Oh, that we might watch in that style, with our loins girded about! Work, and wait, and watch! This is what your Master asks of you.

And next, he would have us ***wait with our lights burning***. If the Master comes home late, let us sit up late for him. It is not for us to go to bed til he comes home. Have the lights all trimmed; have his chamber well lit up; have the entrance-hall ready for his approach. When the King comes, have your torches flaming, that you may go out to meet the royal Bridegroom, and escort him to his home. If we are to watch for the Lord, as we ought, it must be with lamps burning. Are you making your light to shine among men? Do you think that your conduct and character are an example that will do your neighbours good, and are you trying to teach others the way of salvation? Some professors are like dark lanterns, or candles under a bushel. May we never be such! May we stand with our lamps trimmed, and our lights burning, and we ourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord; not walking in darkness, nor concealing our light, but letting it shine brightly! That is the way to watch for Christ, with your girdle tight about you because you are ready for work, and your lamp flaming out with brightness because you are anxious to illuminate the dark world in which you live.

To put it very plainly, I think that watching for the Coming of the Lord means ***acting just as you would wish to be acting if he were to come***. I saw, in the Orphanage school-room, that little motto, "What would Jesus do?" That is a very splendid motto for our whole life, "What would Jesus do in such a case and in such a case?" Do just that. Another good motto is, "What would Jesus think of me if he were to come?" There are some places into which a Christian could not go, for he would not like his Master to come and find him there. There are some kinds of amusements into which a believer would

never enter, for he would be ashamed for his Master to come and find him there. There are some conditions of angry temper, of pride, petulance, or spiritual sloth, in which you would not like to be if you felt that the Master was coming. Suppose an angel's wing should brush your cheek just as you have spoken some unkind word, and a voice should say, "You Master is coming," you would tremble, I am sure, to meet him in such a condition. Oh, beloved, let us try every morning to get up as if that were the morning in which Christ would come; and when we go up to bed at night, may we lie down with this thought, "Perhaps I shall be awakened by the ringing out of the silver trumpets heralding his Coming. Before the sun arises, I may be startled from my dreams by the greatest of all cries, 'The Lord is come! The Lord is come!'" What a check, what an incentive, what a bridle, what a spur, such thoughts as these would be to us! Take this for the guide of your whole life. Act as if Jesus would come during the act in which you are engaged; and if you would not wish to be caught in that act by the coming of the Lord, let it not be your act.

The second verse of our text speaks about the Master coming in the second watch, or in the third watch. *We are to act as those who keep the watches of the age for Christ.* Among the Romans, it was as it is on board ship, there were certain watches. A Roman soldier, perhaps, stood on guard for three hours, and when he had been on the watch for three hours, there came another sentry who took his place, and the fresh sentinel stood in his place during his allotted time. Brethren, we have succeeded a long line of watchmen. Since the days of our Lord, when he sent out the chosen twelve to stand upon the citadel, and tell how the night waxed or waned, how have the watchers come and gone! Our God has changed the watchers, but he has kept the watch. He still sets watchmen on the walls of Zion, who cannot hold their peace day or night, but must watch for the Coming of their Master, watch against evil times, watch against error, and watch for the souls of men. At this time, some of us are called to be specially on the watch, and dare we sleep? After such a line of lynx-eyed watchmen, who counted not their lives dear unto them that they might hold their post, and watch against the foe, shall we be cravens, and be afraid; or shall we be sluggards, and go to our beds? By him that liveth, and was dead, and is alive for

evermore, we pray that we may never be guilty of treason to his sacred name and truth; but may we watch on to the last moment when there shall ring out the clarion cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." People of the Tabernacle, you are set to watch to-night just as they did in the brave days of old! Whitefield and Wesley's men were watchers; and those before them, in the days of Luther and Calvin, and backward even to the days of our Lord. They kept the watches of the night, and you must do the same, until—

"Upstarting at the midnight cry,
'Behold your heavenly Bridegroom nigh,'"
you go forth to welcome your returning Lord.

We are to wait with one object in view, viz., *to open the door to him, and to welcome him:* "that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." Perhaps you know what it is to go home to a loving, tender wife and children who are watching for you. You have been on a journey; you have been absent for some little time; you have written them letters which they have greatly valued; you have heard from them; but all that is nothing like your personal presence. They are looking out for you; and if, perchance, the boat should fail you, or the train be late, if you arrived at eleven or twelve o'clock at night, you would not expect to find the house all shut up, and nobody watching for you. No, you had told them that you would come, and your were quite sure that they would watch for you. I feel rebuked myself, sometimes, for not watching for my Master, when I know that, at this very time, my dogs are sitting against the door, waiting for me; and long before I reach home, there they will be, and at the first sound of the carriage-wheels, they will lift up their voices with delight because their master is coming home. Oh, if we loved our Lord as dogs love their masters, how we should catch the first sound of his Coming, and be waiting, always waiting, and never happy until at last we should see him! Pardon me for using a dog as a picture of what you ought to be; but when you have attained to a state above that, I will find another illustration to explain my meaning.

III. Now, lastly, THERE IS A REWARD FOR WATCHERS. Their reward is this, "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching."

They have a present blessedness. It is a very

blessed thing to be on the watch for Christ, it is a blessing to us now. How it detaches you from the world! You can be poor without murmuring; you can be rich without worldliness; you can be sick without sorrowing; you can be healthy without presumption. If you are always waiting for Christ's Coming, untold blessings are wrapped up in that glorious hope. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." Blessednesses are heaped up one upon another in that state of heart in which a man is always looking for his Lord.

But what will be the blessedness when Jesus does come? Well, a part of that blessedness will be *in future service*. You must not think that, when you have done working here, you Sunday-school teachers, and those of us who preach and teach, that the Master will say, "I have discharged you from my service. Go and sit on a heavenly mount, and sing yourselves away for ever and ever." Not a bit of it. I am but learning how to preach now; I shall be able to preach by-and-by. You are only learning how to teach now; you will be able to teach by-and-by. Yes, to angels, and principalities, and powers, you shall make known the manifold wisdom of God. I sometimes aspire to the thought of a congregation of angels and archangels, who shall sit and wonder, as I tell what God has done for me; and I shall be to them and everlasting monument of the grace of God to an unworthy wretch, upon whom he looked with infinite compassion, and saved with a wonderful salvation. All those stars, those worlds of light, who knows how many of them are inhabited? I believe there are regions beyond our imagination to which every child of God shall be an everlasting illumination, a living example of the love of God in Christ Jesus. The people in those far-distant lands could not see Calvary as this world has seen it; but they shall hear of it from the redeemed. Remember how the Lord will say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." He is to keep on doing something, you see. Instead of having some little bit of a village to govern, he is to be made ruler over some great province. So it is in this passage. Read the forty-fourth verse: "Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." That is, the man who has been a faithful and wise steward of God here, will be called of God to more eminent service hereafter. If he serve his Master well, when his

Master comes, he will promote him to still higher service. Do you not know how it used to be in the Spartan army? Here is a man who has fought well, and been a splendid soldier. He is covered with wounds on his breast. The next time that there is a war, they say, "Poor fellow, we will reward him! He shall lead the way in the first battle. He fought so well before, when he met one hundred with a little troop behind him; now he shall meet ten thousand with a larger troop." "Oh!" say you, "that is giving him more work." That is God's way of rewarding his people and a blessed thing it is for the industrious servant. His rest is in serving God with all his might. This shall be our heaven, not to go there to roost, but to be always on the wing; for ever flying, and for ever resting at the same time. "They do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word." "His servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face." These two things blended together make a noble ambition for every Christian.

May the Lord keep you waiting, working, and watching, that when he comes, you may have the blessedness of entering upon some larger, higher, nobler service than you could accomplish now, for which you are preparing by the lowlier and more arduous service of this world! God bless you, beloved, and if any of you do not know my Lord, and therefore do not look for his appearing, remember that he will come whether you look for him or not; and when he comes, you will have to stand at his bar. One of the events that will follow his Coming will be your being summoned before his judgment-seat, and how will you answer him then? How will you answer him if you have refused his love, and turned a deaf ear to the invitations of his mercy? If you have delayed, and delayed, and delayed, and delayed, how will you answer him? How will you answer him in that day? If you stand speechless, your silence will condemn you, and the King will say, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away." God grant that we may believe in the Lord Jesus unto life eternal, and then wait for his appearing from heaven, for his love's sake! Amen.

(This message was taken from the METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE PULPIT, Vol. 39, A. D. 1893, Pp. 157-165.)

MISSOURI: I would like to receive you paper, "*The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator*."

ARKANSAS: I am writing to you about your paper and the great articles you print in *The Proclamator and Promulgator*. I

really love and agree with them. The article on the Inspired Word of God in the last issue is really good also. I enjoy the paper very much and may the Lord bless you and your writings. **NEW MEXICO:** Greetings in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thanks again for your paper, which I find very interesting. I find your comments on the KJV to be intriguing. I'm sure the Tyndale Bible, the Geneva Bible, and such like are all reliable. But, as you know, many historical Baptists only trust the Textus-Receptus Greek Text, and reject the Westcott and Hort Greek Text. Brother, I am a little disappointed in your ambiguity in saying some other Bible versions are OK., but not specifying which ones. Which versions do you endorse and which ones do you reject? As far as I'm concerned all the New versions (NIV, TLB, RSV, NASV, etc.) based on the corrupt Westcott & Hort Greek Text, are perversions from **HELL!** I'm amazed at how many Sovereign Grace Baptists take a weak stand on the Bible; but praise God there are many Sovereign Grace brethren who do stand on God's preserved word . . . I've heard them preach it and I know it is true! Praise God.

Ed. Note: We have more Bouquets and Brickbats but there was not enough room. NEXT TIME!

**POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to:
The Grace Proclamator & Promulgator
3084 Woodrow
Memphis, TN 38127
(USPS #000476)**

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH

9601 Blue Ridge Ext. Kansas City, Missouri 64134

August 1-3, 1995

**THEME: THE SUFFICIENCY OF GOD'S WORD
MESSAGES AND SPEAKERS IN ORDER**

Tuesday Evening

**The Inspiration, Inerrancy, and Authority
of God's Word: Eld. Jack Duplechain
The Sufficiency of God's Word and
Further Revelation: Eld. Wayne Camp**

Wednesday Morning

Exposition of Psalm 19

Eld Jarrel Huffman

**The Sufficiency of God's Word For
Salvation: Eld. Paul Brown
The Sufficiency of God's Word for
Evangelism: Eld. Forrest Keener**

Wednesday Evening

**The Sufficiency of God's Word for
Explaining the Origin of Life**

Eld Jack Duplechain

**The Sufficiency of God's Word for
Governing Man's Moral Behaviour
Eld Orval Heath**

Thursday Morning

Exposition of Psalm 119

Eld Royce Smith

**The Sufficiency of God's Word for Facing
the Cults and Isms of Our Day
Eld. Jarrel Huffman**

**The Sufficiency of God's Word and
Counseling: Eld. Wayne Camp**

Thursday Evening

**The Sufficiency of God's Word And the
Functioning of a Church
Eld. Forrest Keener**

**The Sufficiency of God's Word for the
Work of the Ministry: Eld. Orval Heath**

Eld. Laurence A Justice, Pastor

Phones: (816) 761-7184 or 761-5697