

A TRUE WATCHMAN

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It is indeed an honor to be invited to give the message at the *Beacon* banquet. I well remember the night when I first heard Dr. McIntire make the announcement that a Christian newspaper was to be started. It is hard to realize that nearly 25 years have passed since that time. During that period the *Beacon* has expanded and extended its influence until now it has readers on every continent and in many sections of the United States. As I think of the service that it renders, I feel that it is one of the watchmen of whom the Lord speaks in Isaiah 62:6, where He says: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence."

Today our nation is surrounded by a vast network of radar screens, early warning systems, etc., designed to detect the coming of any enemy that might seek to destroy us. In ancient times every city had watchmen on its walls throughout the night, peering into the blackness around, seeking to detect any sign of a stealthily approaching foe.

History records a tragic instance where the efforts of the watchmen accomplish nothing. For ten years the ancient city of Troy had resisted a devastating frontal attack. At last the invaders had given up the effort and had sailed beyond the horizon, leaving only a large wooden representation of a horse. Gleefully the relieved defenders dragged the horse into the city, a trophy of their joy that peace had come. As they celebrated into the night, the watchmen on the walls glanced into the distance, thankful that the enemy was gone.

All the world knows what followed. The city that thought itself safe from attack from without was suddenly overwhelmed by the warriors who crawled out of the wooden horse, overwhelmed the guards at the gates, opened them to new swarms of invaders, and soon left the city a blackened ruin.

Could such a catastrophe hit the Christian church? Would God permit it? It does not take much knowledge of history to demonstrate that God has many times allowed a substantial portion of His church to disappear, when it has allowed itself to be overwhelmed by outer or inner forces of infidelity and unbelief.

At one time Syria and Egypt were great centers of Christianity, with thousands of churches. Then Mohammedanism conquered these regions so completely that only a handful of Christians remained. In the latter part of the sixteenth century one-third of Poland was Protestant,

and to present the message of the Scripture with great force and conviction. I was tremendously impressed by what he said, but rather puzzled by the fact that during the previous months I had never heard him give a message that was at all similar. Just as he finished I happened to run my eyes over the faculty who were seated on the platform and there among them I noticed an old gentleman of great wealth, who was devoted to the Word of God. Three months later this man died and left \$25,000 to the college.

THE SIEGE OF DAMASCUS

By the time that I graduated I was quite aware of the infiltrating tactics of Modernism in the college. Its Christian testimony had already greatly diminished, although this fact was not yet known to the world at large. At Commencement, in my address as valedictorian, I took the siege of Damascus as a figure, pointing to that city, once a great Christian center, besieged by the forces of infidelity and eventually becoming a center of anti-Christian movements where the Gospel was scarcely heard. The president, who was sitting behind me, clapped his hands vigorously. As he handed me my diploma he said, "That was a great speech." But I was later informed that during the following year he frequently declared in faculty meeting, "There will never be another Allan MacRae on the platform of this college."

Thus I early learned that one cannot always take people's words at face value, but that it is our duty to look behind them and to seek for their real purpose and intent. God has set watchmen upon the walls of Zion. He wants them to look beneath the surface and to see what really is happening. He wants them to expose the forces that would infiltrate and destroy all that is true to Christ.

After I graduated from college I spent a year at the Los Angeles Bible Institute. It was the last year that Dr. R. A. Torrey was there. I shall never forget my debt to that great man of God. I was much impressed by his emphasis on putting Jesus Christ and Him crucified first in everything that one would do. He constantly stressed the importance of complete loyalty to the infallible Word of God. Dr. Torrey emphasized the need of careful, scholarly study to know exactly what the facts are, not to take superficial conclusions, but to examine the truth in full detail, and then to stand uncompromisingly upon it, no matter what might result. These ideals have stayed with me through the years, and I am constantly striving to pass them on to my students at Faith Seminary.

but if he is honest he may go on to explain that actually he thinks that no one knows what became of the physical elements that composed the body of Christ, after they were laid in the tomb.

Only this week, since my return from California, I heard of an instructor in a school with an excellent reputation as a fine Christian college. This instructor is reported to have told students that the Bible is full of errors, that we need an entirely new approach to its understanding, and that it would make no difference to his faith whether a man called Jesus ever lived on this earth or not. Yet when he stood before the Board of Trustees of the college he declared that he believes in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures!

Nowadays it seems that people can interpret words in any sense that they desire. Occasionally true believers thoughtlessly repeat the lingo of the Modernist, expressing true belief in words that are normally used to mean the opposite. Far more commonly, we find people who really deny the Word of God, speaking in language that seems to affirm it. Double-talk is at a high point in our day. We need watchmen. We need men who are qualified to determine exactly what people really mean, to point out the conflicting forces of our day, to show the currents that seek to engulf Christianity and Americanism, and to present the situation clearly and plainly. We need clear documentation and definite evidence. In this field the *Christian Beacon* has always maintained a high level. It is a true watchman upon the walls of Zion.

WATCHING NOT AN END IN ITSELF

I am sure that no one will so misunderstand me as to think that I am stating that the supreme task of the Christian is to be a watchman and that no other task is comparable to this. The watchman performs a very necessary service in the Christian world. It is the duty of every one of us to assist and support this work, but it is of course not of such supreme importance as completely to overshadow other tasks. The purpose of the watchman is not watching, as an end in itself; the real purpose is the protection of the city. Were there no city of active, vital life, the activity of the watchman would be meaningless.

In the case of which we are speaking, the city stands for the work of the Gospel. This involves spreading the good news of salvation through Christ. It involves showing young Christians how they can grow in the knowledge of the Lord. It involves helping all Christians learn to make their lives count for Christ. Dr. Carl McIntire, editor of the *Christian Beacon* and director of the 20th Century Reformation Hour broadcast, who is one of the finest and most effective watchmen in our Christian world today, would be the last to have a misunderstanding on this point. I think of the fine pastoral work that he does in his large church. I think of the effective presentations of the Gospel that he so steadily gives. I think of his great interest in the work of foreign missions.