

IN THE TRENCHES

A NEWS LETTER OF THE
LT GENERAL JOHN C. PEMBERTON CAMP 1354
VICKSBURG MISSISSIPPI
SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS
May, 2014 Issue

Wayne McMaster
Eddy Cresap

Commander
Editor

Commanders Report

We had a good month this April. Good turn out for our memorial service this past Sunday. Weather was sunny and beautiful, windy but this kept the flags flying. Also kept the podium on the ground most of the time, we did not need it very much anyway.

I want to thank everyone that came out to be with us to honor our ancestors and those that could not make it, we missed seeing you. Joel Bailey and his brother Frank went down to Beauvoir Saturday and came back with a favorable report on the appearance of the grounds. Beauvoir's grounds were well maintained and the flower garden was very pretty. He did say he got very warm though.

We need to call as many members as we can to come to the next meeting, Cmdr Tim Cupit of the Rankin Rough and Readies will be our speaker. Everyone come and make him welcome, thank you Wayne McMaster

Tomb of Unknown Confederate Soldier

Go to the website below to see a video of the sentinel at the Tomb of the Unknown Confederate Soldier at Beauvoir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAJeqwYNnhU>

Directions to Meeting

From the red light on 61 south and Pemberton Blvd, go south about 0.4 miles and turn right onto Miller Street. Go about 0.1 miles and the DAV building is a metal building on the left. If you get to the campground you have gone too far. Go to our Web site for more directions. Thanks Bill.

Upcoming meetings

Our meetings are on the first Tuesday of each month. The meetings start at 7:00 pm. Our meeting location is 216 Miller Street in the Disabled American Veterans building. Visitors are always welcome. If you would like to present a program, please contact Commander Wayne McMaster at waynemcmasteris@gmail.com.

Below are the list of upcoming meetings and speakers.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Topic</i>
May 6, 2014	Tim Cupit	TBD
June 3, 2014	TBD	TBD
July 1, 2014	TBD	TBD

April Meeting

We had a very good presentation at our April meeting. Thanks to our speaker Glen Shows . The theme of his presentation was to learn, live and pass on your heritage. It only takes a lapse in one generation for a heritage to be lost to all time

Heritage Month Celebration in Soldiers Rest

Thanks to Josh Edwards for an article in the Vicksburg Post on Saturday preceding the service. Thanks to all who participated, helped set up and attended the service.

On Sunday April 27, The John C. Pemberton Camp 1354 and friends of the South met in Soldiers Rest, Cedar Hill Cemetery for a Memorial Service to honor the devotion to duty and sacrifice our ancestor showed in defending their country from a foreign invader. It was a beautiful day with about 30 people in attendance. Below is the poem written by Joel Bailey on the occasion of Confederate Memorial Day

Confederate Memorial Day by Joel Bailey

This Memorial day is set aside
To honor those who fought and died

Altho their goal was never achieved
They gave their lives for what they believed

We remember them as the South's best
On this memorial day at Soldiers Rest

New Meeting Location

We are now meeting in the Disabled American Veteran Building. A lot of hard work went into finding and setting up this room. Thanks for all who helped. We discussed and continue to look for comfortable chairs. Adjutant Larry Holman is looking into cabinets and book shelves for our books and "stuff". Thanks to Edward Campbell for arranging our state flags in the order they left the Union.

The building is owned by The local chapter of Disabled Americans Veterans. This organization does not use the building and meets at the VFW. We have agreed to pay the building's utilities in exchange for using the building. There will be a discussion at the May meeting about how we will fund the utility bill. It is heated and cooled, has bathroom facilities and has good parking available.

50th Crossroads Cemetery Memorial

The 150th Anniversary Crossroads Cemetery Memorial will be held May 18th, 2014 at 10 AM In Calhoun County, Mississippi This Memorial will honor five Confederate soldiers buried in Crossroads Cemetery.

Private Rueben Washington Hitt, Co. F, Ballentine's Cavalry Regiment died January 22, 1864 and was the first person and the first Confederate soldier to be buried in the Crossroads Cemetery. Crossroads Cemetery is located on County Road 361. From Calhoun City go 5 miles south to the Hwy. 8 & 9 intersection. Turn on to Hwy 9 South and go to the top of the hill. Turn east on to County Road 361, go approximately 2 miles and the cemetery will be on the right.

This Memorial is co-sponsored and hosted by Crossroads Cemetery Committee, The Calhoun Avengers Camp 1969, Sons of Confederate Veterans, the Margery B. Rogers Clark Chapter of the Order of the Confederate Rose.

All re-enactors are encouraged to attend and to be present by 10 AM. The Memorial will start at 11 AM sharp. Dinner will be served after the Memorial. For more information contact James Taylor, Camp Commander Calhoun Avengers 662-983-7246 or 662-983-8301 cell or faithbaptist1946@hotmail.com.

We would appreciate as many re-enactors, musicians, ladies dressed in period attire, and also any Black Rose Society members to help with this event.

Memorial Service

May 4, 2014 Confederate Soldiers' Memorial Service, at the Confederate Cemetery on the University of Mississippi campus in Oxford. *Oxford In The Civil War* author Stephen Enzweiler will be the featured speaker. Music, free catfish and barbecue, and more. Begins at 1 p.m. For more info call 662.832.4908

That Song

It is almost Memorial Day with the Fourth of July not far behind. I will not participate in the glorification of an army that invaded our sovereign nation. The intent of the invasion was to overthrow the duly elected government and force the citizens of that nation back into a compact which they had left legally to protect their self-interest. This invading army defiled our altars, burned our homes, raped our women, stole their food, and left the women, elderly and children to starve. All our Confederate ancestors wanted was to be left alone in peace.

No, I will not sing that song!!!

Speaker at National Convention

I am pleased to announce to you that we will be honored with a special guest to offer our keynote address at this year's event in Charleston. Our speaker will be Ben Jones, a former two-term Congressman from Georgia's 4th District. Mr. Jones might be even better known as "Cooter" from the *Dukes of Hazzard*. Perhaps of greatest interest to us is that Mr. Jones is a Compatriot and has been an asset to the SCV by using his high profile to speak up for the worth of our History and symbols

Upcoming Conventions

2014 Division Reunion will be held June 6-8, 2014 in Corinth

See below for details

2014 SCV annual convention July 16-19 in North Charleston S.C.

see <http://www.scv2014.org/> for details

Website

Go to <http://scv-camp-1354.com/> to view our website. Thanks to our Webmaster Bill Fryer. Bill is creating a "Wall of Honor" for our ancestors. Check it out on the web site and add your ancestor. Also find directions to our meeting location

Where is General Green

Thanks to Sam price for this info

General Martin Edwin Green was known to have fought all day and prayed all night. Martin Green was born in Virginia in 1815 and settled in Missouri in the 1830s. At the outbreak of the War, he was running a saw mill. He raised a Calvary regiment and was promoted to Brigadier General in the Missouri State Guard. After fighting at Pea Ridge, he was named to the same rank in the Confederate service. He fought at Iuka and Corinth. He then led a brigade opposing Grant in Central Mississippi. and the Vicksburg campaign including Port Gibson. He fell back into fortress Vicksburg.

During the siege, General Martin Edwin Green was in command of the second brigade, Forney-Bowen's Division. He was wounded on June 25, 1863 and was killed two days latter near Stockade Redan. When he was warned about keeping his head down, he responded "A bullet has not been molded that will kill me" . Shortly after being warned to keep his head down, General Green was killed by a sniper with a bullet to the head on 27 June 1863. The Sexton Log shows General Green was buried in George Marshal's lot in City Cemetery which overlooks Lover's Lane. There is no marker there today, but the NPS website reports a wooden headstone was in place on the grave in 1905. There was a resolution passed by the Missouri United Confederate Veterans to move three Missouri Confederate Generals to Confederate Cemetery in Springfield Mo in 1897. The three included General Green but all evidence shows he was never moved.

The lot where General Green was buried was owned by George Marshal. George Marshal was a local gentleman on General Green's staff.

There is a memorial stone for General Green in General's row of Soldiers Rest

Poets Corner

THE SOUTHERN CAUSE

Joel T. Bailey

*In 1861 the South rebelled against Northern laws
And the call went out for the Southern cause*

*From the small farms to the plantations grand
They came to defend their Southern homeland*

*They took an oath and proudly wore the gray
Some fought close to home and others far away*

*They charged ahead with no thought of defeat
Most would rather die before they'd retreat*

*Through the fields of dust and roads of mud
They fought the battles and shed their blood*

*Many of them would fall never to rise again
They would give their all in their effort to win*

*Even tho the goal they sought was never achieved
They had fought and died for what they believed*

*They may have lost but we hold their honor high
And the memory of the cause will never die*

Confederate Catechism

A new set of questions and answers will be posted each month. It is very important to arm ourselves with facts as the generation who lived it understood it.

The following was written by Lyon Gardiner Tyler who *was the son of President John Tyler and First Lady Julia Gardiner Tyler, born in Virginia. He graduated in 1875 at the University of Virginia. From 1888 to 1919, he served as the seventeenth president of the College of William and Mary (W&M), and is widely credited for restoring the college's financial condition following the deterioration which took place in the wake of the American Civil War.*

6. Did the South fight for slavery or the extension of slavery?

No. For had Lincoln not sent armies to the South, that country would have done no fighting at all.

7. Did the South fight for the overthrow of the United States Government?

No. The South fought to establish its own government. Secession did not destroy the Union, but merely reduced its territorial extent. The United States existed when there were only thirteen states, and it would have existed when there were twenty states left. The charge brought by Lincoln that the aim of the Southerners was to overthrow the government was no more true than if King George III had said that the secession of the American colonies from Great Britain had in view the destruction of the British Government. The government of Great Britain was not destroyed by the success of the American States in 1783. Nor would the government of the United States have been destroyed if the Southern states had succeeded in repelling the attacks of the North in 1861-1865.

8. What did the South fight for?

IT FOUGHT TO REPEL INVASION AND FOR SELF GOVERNMENT, JUST AS THE FATHERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION HAD DONE. Lincoln himself confessed at first that he had no constitutional right to make war against a state, so he resorted to the subterfuge of calling for troops to suppress “combi-nations” of persons in the Southern States “too

powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary” processes. It is impossible to understand how the Southern States could have proceeded in a more regular and formal manner than they did to show they acted as states and not as mere “combinations.” It shows the lack of principle that characterized Lincoln when later he referred to the Southern States as “insurrectionary States.”

9. Did the South in firing on Fort Sumter begin the war?

No. Lincoln began the war by secretly attempting to land troops at Fort Pickens in Florida in violation of a truce existing between the Federals and the Confederates at that place. This was long before Fort Sumter was fired on, and Fort Sumter was fired on only after Lincoln had sent an armed squadron to supply and strengthen that Fort. Even supposing that the action of the Confederates in firing on the Fort was unjustifiable, Lincoln was not bound to treat it as a gauge of battle. He knew that all the Confederates wanted was a fort that commanded the Metropolitan city of Charleston – a fort which had been erected for the defense of that city. He knew that they had no desire to engage in a war with the United States. Not every hostile act justifies war, and in the World War this country submitted to having its flag filled full of holes and scores of its citizens destroyed before it went to war. Lincoln, without any violation of its views of government, had an obvious alternative in putting the question of war up to Congress, where it belonged under the Constitution. But he did not do it and assumed the powers of Congress in making laws and enforcing them as an executive. By his mere authority, he enormously increased the Federal army, blockaded Southern ports, and declared Southern privateers men to be pirates.

Newsletter

If anyone has read a good book, visited an interesting place, would like to post a bio of their Confederate ancestor, or just has a thought they would like to share with the membership, forward the article to me (charlescresap33@att.net) and I will place it in the next newsletter. Thanks to Commander McMaster, Chaplin Bryan Dabney, our Camp Poet and 2d Lt Commander Joel Bailey, our artist in residence Jerry McWilliams and adjutant Larry Holman for their input to the newsletter.

Mississippi Division 119th Reunion Convention Memorials

If you wish to honor your Confederate Ancestor in the State Convention Program please email the following information to lmangus1941@gmail.com by **April 30 at the latest.**

Your ancestors name, rank and unit and your relationship to him.

Example:

The cost for a memorial is \$10 and that can be mailed with your convention registration.

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION FORM

119TH REUNION – MISSISSIPPI DIVISION, SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS
AND 20TH REUNION – MISSISSIPPI SOCIETY, ORDER OF CONFEDERATE ROSE

Corinth, Mississippi – June 6-8, 2014

Hosted by the Colonel William P. Rogers Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp #321

SCV MEMBER'S NAME: _____

TITLE: _____ SCV CAMP & NUMBER _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE #: (H) _____ (C) _____ EMAIL _____

SPOUSE'S NAME (for badge): _____

OCR MEMBER'S NAME: _____

OCR CHAPTER NAME AND NUMBER _____

GUEST NAME: _____

All registered SCV members will receive a name badge, a convention medal, a program, and a bag of goodies. Those registering at the door will receive the same as long as supplies last.

REGISTRATION AMOUNTS

SCV before May 23, 2014 \$30.00 AT THE REUNION \$35.00 QTY _____ \$ _____

OCR before May 23, 2014 \$10.00 AT THE REUNION \$15.00 QTY _____ \$ _____

Ancestor Memorial: EACH MEMORIAL IS \$10.00 _____ \$ _____

(Please print or type each memorial on a separate page and submit them with this form.)

Program Ads: \$100 for a full page; **\$50** for half a page; **\$25** for a quarter page; **\$15** for a business card size ad

(Please submit ad information on a separate page before May 2.)

Banquet—\$30.00 per adult plate QTY _____ \$ _____

\$15.00 per child plate (12 and under) QTY _____ \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT \$ _____

Make checks Payable to the Col. William P. Rogers SCV Camp #321

MAIL TO: Larry Mangus - 56 CR 615 - Corinth, MS 38834

HISTORICAL BUS TOURS – NO COST – RESERVATIONS APPRECIATED

Please sign up for those you wish to participate in:

_____ **Friday Early Bird Tour** – June 6th, 1:00 p.m. – Tour of Davis Bridge battlefield

_____ **Saturday Tour** – June 7th, 1:30 p.m. – Tour of Corinth battlefield sites

Sunday on Your Own Tours – June 8th – Shiloh National and/or Brice’s Crossroads National Battlefields

CONTACT INFORMATION

Larry Mangus - lmangus1941@gmail.com or (H) 662-287-0766 (C) 662-872-9180

Hotel Information: Holiday Inn Express is the **headquarters hotel.**

Holiday Inn Express 2106 Hwy. 72W (662-287-1407) – SCV Rate \$89 if booked before May 23

Hampton Inn: 2107 Hwy. 72W (662-286-5949) – SCV Rate \$89 if booked before May 23

2014 Mississippi Division of Sons of Confederate Veterans State Meeting Information

Compatriots!

The Colonel William P. Rogers Camp is honored to host the 2014 State Convention. The following is some additional information that may be helpful to you. The registration forms are available at this site - battleofcorinth.com.

Motels

Headquarters Motel – Holiday Inn Express is located at the junction of Routes 45 & 72, the Hampton Inn is across the street. The SCV rate of \$89 a night is good if rooms are booked before May 23, 2014. The price is the same at both motels.

Historical Tours:

1. We are offering an early bird tour of the Davis Bridge Battlefield on Friday June 6, at 1:00 pm. The tour will be led by NPS Ranger Tom Parson the leading expert on the battle. This is a pristine site that is seldom seen by visitors. A real treat!

2. On Saturday afternoon we will offer a bus tour of the many battlefield sites in Corinth- (Limited to 55 persons). A driving/walking tour will also be available for those who want to do it on their own.

We do need to know the number of persons wanting to go on these tours so we can provide guides and buses so please indicate your interest on the Registration Form.

3. On Sunday we recommend a tour of nearby Shiloh and the Brice's Crossroads Battlefields.

For the Ladies:

Corinth has a number of very interesting shops with many different choices. On Saturday morning from 8:00 am to approximately 3:00 pm there will be Corinth's monthly "Green Market" where local persons sell their Arts and Crafts and homemade items like jellies, pickles, baked goods, clothes, and jewelry. No trip to Corinth would be complete without a trip to Borroum's Drugstore (opened in 1865) for an old fashion ice cream treat and a "Slugburger." Directions will be provided.

Friday Evening Reception:

Our Friday night opening reception will be held at the Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center. It is a wonderful building on the Corinth Battlefield with great exhibits on the Battle of Shiloh and the Battle of Corinth.

We look forward to having you in Corinth where history comes alive!

Invitation

The Sons of Confederate Veterans Brandon Camp Rankin Rough and Ready Camp 265 invites everyone to their meeting on the first Saturday of each month at Penn's of Brandon. The meeting starts at 7:00 PM

Third Brigade Picnic

The Picnic will be held at the Grand Gulf State Park, Port Gibson, on May 17th from 10:00 to 2:00. Bring a covered dish and meet with other brigade members.

Friends of Beauvoir

Beauvoir the Home of Jefferson Davis is Owned and Operated by the Mississippi Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans

Here is an Invitation to give the Past a Future!

Condition of the property:

Beauvoir, A Mississippi Historic Landmark and a National Historic Landmark, was severely damaged by Hurricane Katrina on August 29, 2005. Five of seven buildings on the site were destroyed and the remaining two were damaged, including the house.

Mission:

Beauvoir, a Mississippi Historical Landmark and a National Historic Landmark, is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the legacy of American hero and Confederate President, Jefferson Davis and the Southern soldier. Thousands of visitors from throughout the nation and the world annually toured the buildings and landscaped grounds of the historic seaside estate.

Collections:

Besides its magnificent antebellum buildings, Beauvoir maintained a large collection of items belonging to the Davis family including furniture, art, textiles, and archival materials. The institution also housed a substantial collection of militaria, including several thousand pieces from the collection of Dr. Francis Lord. Most of those items were damaged.

Recovery:

Beauvoir's emphasis has been on restoring the damaged house. However, there are thousands of items need conservation and repair. The task is overwhelming.

Importance of Membership:

Annual membership in the Friends of Beauvoir is more important now than ever before. At this time, we can offer to your membership such benefits as free year-round admission, 10% discount for Gift Shop purchases, the occasional newsletter, and the tremendous pride of knowing that you helped Beauvoir to recover and continue its mission. Membership in Friends of Beauvoir provides the core support to help keep Beauvoir going. Therefore, won't you please help?

Membership:

Annual membership in the Friends of Beauvoir is available to any individual who has an interest in preserving history for future generations:

General Membership

- Individual.....\$25.00
- Family.....\$50.00
- Patron.....\$100.00-\$249.99
- Sustaining....\$250.00-\$499.00
- Benefactor....\$500.00-\$999.00
- Sponsor.....\$1000.00-\$4999.00
- President's Cabinet.....\$5000.00+
- Corporate Membership..\$500.00+

Friends of Vicksburg Battlefield

One of the questions I asked at our March meeting to Mike Maddell was "Why is the Gettysburg Park Museum so large? The answer was, it all came from money from the friends of Gettysburg battle field. The friends of Vicksburg National Park has been established and is seeking membership. Go to <http://www.friendsofvicksburg.org/> for information

Proposed By-Laws Amendments

These proposed bylaw changes will be voted on at the Mississippi Annual Convention

Proposal # 1: Amend Article 7 – Division Penalties; Section 3; Sub-section H as follows:

Insert the sentence “The decision to uphold or dismiss the censure, suspension, or expulsion shall be by three fifths (3/5) vote of the entire Executive Council.” with the new section reading as follows: “The censured, suspended, or expelled Member may, within 30 days, notify the Division Commander of his intent to appeal the decision of the Camp. The Division Commander will notify the Division Adjutant and the Camp Commander of the intent to appeal. The Division Commander will schedule a hearing, consisting of the Camp Commander and the censured, suspended, or expelled Member and witnesses to be held in Executive Session before the Division’s Executive Council. **The decision to uphold or dismiss the censure, suspension, or expulsion shall be by a three fifths (3/5) vote of the entire Executive Council.** The Executive Council will conclude the matter and notify the parties of its decision in writing within ten (10) days. The **Division** Adjutant shall notify the Chief Operating Officer at General Headquarters in writing if the Member is found to be guilty and if the penalty is suspension or expulsion.

Rationale: This is a serious matter and the vote should be more than a simple majority.

Proposal # 2: New Section 4 to Article 4 – Qualifications for Division Membership

Section 4 – Conduct. Members shall at all times, conduct themselves as gentlemen so as to bring credit and respect upon the Sons of Confederate Veterans and upon the memory of our Confederate forebears.

Rationale: Conduct other than the above could be grounds for discipline by a Camp or the Division.

Proposal # 3: New Section 5 to Article 4 – Qualifications for Division Membership

Section 5 – Termination. Membership shall cease by death, resignation, non-payment of dues, or expulsion. Members may also be temporarily suspended in accordance with these By-Laws and Standing Orders.

1. Resignation. A member in good standing may resign by sending a written resignation to his Camp Commander. The Camp Adjutant shall notify the Division Commander and Division Adjutant in writing of a member's resignation. A member in good standing in the Division Headquarters Camp shall send a written resignation to the Division Adjutant.

2. Death. Membership shall be terminated at the date of death of the member. A deceased member's membership is not transferrable.

3. Expulsion. Any individual expelled from membership under the provisions of these By-Laws shall be stricken from the roster, and the Division Adjutant shall take care to note his name so

that he may not be readmitted. The expelled member may be considered for reinstatement in the Mississippi Division only if the General Executive Council has voted in favor of reinstatement of the member to the Confederation and upon recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief.

4. **Non-payment.** A member shall be removed from the roster of members in good standing for non-payment of required dues, fees and/or special assessments by the payment deadline as set by these By-Laws. Furthermore provided, any member in good standing who becomes delinquent while serving in a combat zone with the military, as active service or civilian, shall be reinstated upon payment of outstanding dues without penalties or special assessments.

Rationale: There is nothing in the By-Laws dealing with the termination of a member's membership.

5. **Proposal # 4:** If proposed changes # 2 and # 3 are adopted, re-number existing Section 4 to Section 6.

6. **Proposal # 5:** {Revised} Article 18 section 5 #3(a) The Brigade Commander will appoint a Committee of 3 members other than the Brigade Councilman to handle any possible difficult situations that may arise. The Brigade Councilman shall be aware of the problem at the Brigade Commander's notification. If there is a complaint, within the Brigade, coming from a SCV Member of a Camp in that Brigade, the complaint will be forwarded to the Brigade Commander in writing. The committee will meet to determine if the complaint can be resolved at the Brigade level. If it cannot be handled at the Brigade level, the complaint will be forwarded to Division Commander in writing, with the endorsements of the Committee, to take further action. The Division Commander will have 15 days from when he receives it to address the complaint. The Division Commander will notify the Brigade Commander of action taken if any.

Rationale: To attempt to help the Division Commander where he does not have to deal with every little single issue that may come from each Brigade, which can allow him to focus on what could be considered more important issues. Also, to assure that if an issue is sent in writing to the Division Commander, that he will address the issue fully within an acceptable time frame.

7. Proposal #5 Article 10 Section 5

Change section 5 to section 6 to allow for a new section 5.

New Section 5: No camp or SCV member within 50 miles of the host camp holding the convention in a particular year shall organize or promote an event within 30 days prior to or after said convention unless said event is an already established annual event of two years or more duration and moving said event would be financially or historically impossible. Further no camp or SCV member shall start or promote any event within the boundaries of the state of Mississippi on the same weekend as the convention is being held unless the normal convention date of the first Friday following the 3rd of June as stated in Article 10 Section 1 is changed by the division membership for a particular year and the new date coincides with an already planned or established event.

Rationale To attempt to help the Division Commander where he does not have to deal with every little single issue that may come from each Brigade, which can allow him to focus on what could be considered more important issues. Also, to assure that if an issue is sent in writing to the Division Commander, that he will address the issue fully within an acceptable time frame

Chaplin's Corner

For the Brethren:

In St. Matthew 24:42, our Lord commanded us to *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.* This is in keeping with his parable of the wise and foolish virgins in St. Matthew

25:1-13. The particulars of this parable are these: we have ten virgins who are in anticipation of the coming of the bridegroom for his bride to which the Rev. Matthew Henry observed, "It was the custom among the Jews that the bridegroom came, attended with his friends, late in the night, to the house of the bride, where she expected him, attended with her bridesmaids, who upon notice given of the bridegroom's approach, were to go out with lamps in their hands to light the way for him into the house. The Bridegroom is our Lord Jesus Christ. They that follow the Lamb are said to be virgins [Revelation 14:4], this denotes purity." And *Halley's Bible Handbook* notes concerning this passage, "This parable means just one thing: that we should keep our minds on the Lord, and be ready when he comes." And Pastor David Guzik observed that, "there were three stages to a Jewish wedding in that day. The first was engagement - a formal agreement made by the fathers. The second was betrothal - the ceremony where mutual promises are made. The third was marriage - approximately one year later when the bridegroom came at an unexpected time for his bride... In this parable, the first two stages have already taken place. Now the wedding party (the ten virgins) await[s] the coming of the bridegroom for his bride. Why does Jesus describe ten virgins? Talmudic authorities affirm that there were usually ten lamps in a bridal procession... [our Lord went further with his description labeling] five of them [as] wise, and five [as] foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps [but] took no oil with them, [while] the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. And while the bridegroom [abided in his place], they all slumbered and slept. [Then] at midnight a cry was heard... [T]he five foolish virgins [only] appeared to be prepared for the bridegroom, because they had their lamps. But they really were not... because they took no oil... Without oil, the virgins were not ready for the bridegroom ..." To watch means being active and alert, as well as ready. When our Lord advised us in another parable (St. Luke 19:13) to *Occupy till I come*, he was calling on each of us to be proactive in his service

with the clear understanding that at any given moment, our Lord could call us away from them. We are thus to live like there is no tomorrow because one day such will happen. That is why have been implored to watch for his coming which then makes us watchmen as well as witnesses for Christ.

Now it would not be uncommon in today's world to envision a watchman as being a person who provides security for a business or plant facility after hours. But such would not accurately fit the biblical description of a watchman. Consider that throughout the Old Testament, we have the metaphor of a *watchman* being applied to the prophets. These chosen vessels stood before the people and gave them the revealed truth of God which they had received either in visions or by direct communication. But why, one might ask, did God call them watchmen? In ancient times, most people lived in walled towns or cities and these locales often had watchtowers placed every so many yards along their walls for two very good reasons. The first had to do with surveillance of the surrounding region. If an enemy appeared the watchman would then notify the commander. The second reason was that every watchtower doubled as a strong-point in the defense of the wall. From them, archers and spear men could direct their missiles on attacking troops which would have to subdue each watchtower in order to secure the perimeter. Because of their prophetic messages, men such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel were akin to the familiar watchmen on the walls who warned of coming troubles as well as the coming of the Lord himself. And just as the watchtowers on which the earthly watchmen served were spaced accordingly around a locale, so were the prophets positioned among the people in those times which God had called them. Likewise, you and I are to serve as witnesses for Christ to those around us all the while watching and praying for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has given to us the words of the prophets, the apostles, the patriarchs, the righteous kings of Israel, and the very words of our Lord and Master. We have also been given, through the workings of the

Holy Ghost, the capacity to understand the words which God had previously communicated to those biblical figures and writers. In sum, we have been given spiritual discernment which is a trait that no unregenerate person possesses. St. Paul noted in I Corinthians 2:14 that *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* The wise virgins possessed discerning hearts. The fact that they brought extra oil for their lamps revealed that they understood what was coming. The foolish virgins brought no extra oil. They thought they had enough to last until he arrived never considering that he might tarry longer than the limited capacity of their lamps. One may even hear the callous comment as recorded by St. Peter in his second epistle (3:4), *Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.* If we are doubtful about Christ's second advent, then we cannot be effective witnesses on his behalf. Again, we have been commanded to watch for we do not know the day nor the hour of our Lord's return. Two thousand years is a long time in anyone's book, nevertheless, if it is another two thousand years till he comes, it should not diminish our zeal nor dampen our spirits in the faith. He could come back today, this evening, or tomorrow ; but we will not know that day nor the hour until it happens. We have been given the times and the seasons, and frankly it seems to be close. Still, we must watch and work until he comes. And when we see him coming, let us all raise the shout of victory for our promised redemption has arrived and run to him who is our Saviour and Lord. Therefore, I urge each of you to watch, witness and pray for verily he will come again as he has promised us in his word written. Be then like those wise virgins who made provision for themselves and honored the Bridegroom at his coming by being lights along his path. The Bible says *let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your*

Father which is in heaven. May God encourage you and enliven you in his service as you stand your watch. Amen.

Let us pray,

Father, you have given us the gift of faith that we might be regenerated, born again in the name of thy dear Son; help us to watch for his coming again and to witness to others regarding the same, that through our witness more souls will be added to thy book of life; for this we ask in the name of Christ our Lord.

Amen