

have been set free from sin by faith in Jesus, but yet are in much bondage, in much darkness, not enjoying the liberty of God's own children, harassed with doubts and uncertainties, without their calling and election being sure in their own eyes (2 Peter 1:10). Such souls have not obeyed the Angel's first two injunctions, so they have not followed him out into liberty, joy, and peace, but are yet remaining in the precincts of the prison darkness; and, though entirely free from the two soldiers, yet they are hindered by the Keepers before the door, and the two wards or watches of the night.

5th—The first Ward.—A ward means a watch, or night guard of soldiers, a further precaution for preventing the escape of the prisoners. The first ward may well be represented by our own evil hearts and inclinations, and every evil desire, or temper, or will, that proceeds from such a heart. That which is called works of the flesh in *Galatians* vi. 19-21. This one alone would be an overpowering hindrance without help from the Angel.

6th—The Second Ward.—This may well be represented by the evil influences of this world. The pleasures and pride of life, the follies, pomps, and vanities, amusements, gaieties, theatres, revellings, etc., etc., the praise of men rather than the praise of God, and every earthly idol of wealth, and riches, and luxury, and ease. A terrible ward or hindrance is this, even to some dear Christians.

There are thus mentioned in this narrative three active watches, or hindrances to the prisoner's escape from the prison. First, the keepers before the door, and these two last mentioned wards. And here are seen again those three great enemies of souls—THE DEVIL (the keepers), THE FLESH (first ward), THE WORLD (second ward). These were the three temptations offered to our Saviour when tempted in the wilderness: read *Luke* iv., where, in verse

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