

doomed amidst his dreams of wealth, by the servants waiting for their master from the wedding, by the good man's vigilance when the thief is stealthy and nigh. In their original utterance there seemed a doubt whether these were general warnings, addressed to the whole Church, or whether they were applied especially to the witnesses whom Christ had chosen ; and Peter—spokesman, perhaps, of the unuttered thought of others—asked the question, “ Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all ? ” Our Lord answers in the words of the text—words which, while they assume the Church's obligation to watchfulness to be not less binding, fasten upon the ministers of Christ a responsibility commended by loftier sanctions, and involving graver issues ; so that if it behoves a believer to be watchful, and faithful, and wise, upon the minister there is a double necessity ; and that he, if he overcome and be approved, is the heir of a sublimer recompense, and if he fail and be condemned, of a more appalling doom.

Amongst the many passages which bear upon ministerial character and service, I have selected this on which to ask your attention at this very