

must tell you, no! Sickness and suffering, and all the ills which flesh is heir to, must tell you, no! A death-bed will tell it—the grave in which you will soon be laid tells it: O! how emphatically it tells it! Believe it, then, while yet you may escape these fatal consequences, and obtain eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE MINISTER A WATCHMAN.

The minister of the word is styled a *Watchman*. On what ground is he so styled? and for what object is his watchfulness needed? In answering these questions it may be useful to advert a little to the condition of those in whose behalf he is appointed. They may be described generally as persons in imminent danger—and that with respect to their everlasting interests—and from hostile influences operating both within and without. Our congregations are composed of beings who shall exist for ever. They are composed of persons, every one of whom is in his original condition, as guilty, exposed to the divine wrath; and every one of whom is in his original condition, as being morally depraved, unfit for the service or the enjoyment of a holy God. That gracious Being, however, against whom they have sinned, and from whom they have revolted, has mercifully interposed, and has sent the Son of his love to suffer in the room of the guilty, “that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Without overlooking, therefore, or despising instrumentality of a different kind, we have to remind our readers that the ministry is especially God’s ordinance for making known to perishing sinners the way of salvation, for winning souls unto Christ, and for building up believers in their most holy faith. With respect to each individual in the enjoyment of this ordinance, it may be said, “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” The light of the gospel shines to guide their feet in the way of peace; and it is as they now act with regard to that light, that their condition shall be fixed in futurity, and that for ever. Of what incalculable magnitude, then, are the interests involved in the way in which they act during the brief span of their present existence!

But important as this view is, it is not in the contemplation of it that we see the proper ground on which the minister is appointed as a Watchman. A herald may be commissioned to make a

proclamation, and as preaching Christ the minister may be styled a Herald.—An ambassador, too, may be sent to propose reconciliation; and, although of course not exactly in the same sense in which the inspired Apostles could use the language, yet as preaching the same gospel, ministers may say, “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” There is something beyond all this in the idea of a Watchman. It contemplates those to whom the proclamation has been made, as having been impressed with its authority—it contemplates those to whom the terms have been proposed as having, in profession at least, submitted to them, it views them as soldiers, lately in rebellion, returned to their allegiance but still in an enemy’s country, and needing, therefore, not the mere repetition of announcements of mercy to which they profess that they have already submitted, but the exercise of unremitting vigilance that they may not be surprised by the enemy, the warnings—the counsels that may guard them against snares, that may rouse them to activity, that may stimulate their efforts to “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Every soldier knows that it would be the height of infatuation in any army so situated to neglect the appointment of sentinels; but that, and in the most important of all emergencies, is the infatuation of those who, professing to be the soldiers of the cross, neglect their duty with respect to the appointment and maintenance of spiritual Watchmen.

The congregations of the visible church are so many bands who profess to have enlisted under the banners of Jesus Christ, as the captain of their salvation. They are in a state of militancy, and are exposed to the assaults of enemies—He whose camp they have left is unwilling that they should escape; and he goes about seeking whom he may devour.—The world has its attractions; and those who profess to be the followers of Christ seem slow to understand, that “if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Even where a work of grace may have been begun in the heart, there are still corruptions there, and lusts which war against the soul.—How delusive, accordingly, is the security in which multitudes seem inclined to spend their days. They have heard the gospel preached, they speak of Christ