

be roof Christians, and from the highest point within our reach obey the Lord's command—"Lift up your eyes and look on the fields."

This was the next thing the watchman did, after going up to the roof. "He lifted up his eyes and looked." It is not enough to pray with our eyes closed, for "all the kingdoms of the world," or for "all the heathen" in a general way, with no definite knowledge of definite need. We must look out over the expanse of country seen from our roof, watching to see what is happening, and so learning what to say to the King. For in every instance the watchman told the king what he saw. "Thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman; let him declare what he seeth" (Isaiah xxi. 6.) The faithful discharge of a watchman's duty involves faithful seeing as much as faithful declaring; and only as we are faithful in the looking out can we be faithful in the mediation.

The first thing that attracted the attention of David's watchman was "a man running alone" (2 Samuel xviii. 24); and it will not be long, if we take up our station on the roof, before we have to give the same report to the King, "I see a man running alone." How many of these lonely runners there are scattered over the world, some far away from home and friends, running alone because one and another who were once working alongside of them have been called by the King to higher service, or have been removed from their post by sickness or other circumstances, leaving one man or one woman to run alone; some quite close to us, with many fellow-laborers near at hand, and yet to all intents and purposes "running alone," perhaps by their own fault, perhaps from the force of circumstances or temperament.

Might we not take it as one special part of our work as watchmen to look out for the lonely ones and tell the King of them? Might not one result be that He would let us cheer the loneliness of which we had told Him? For it is not only the far-off ones for whom we must watch and be mediators with the King. There is a danger sometimes, just because we are on the roof, of our being so intent upon what is happening in the distance, that we do not notice what is passing close to the tower. It was not long before the watchman saw two men, of whom one "came apace and drew near," while the other was only just in sight (vv 25, 26), and the watchman gave equal attention to both, and told the king what he saw of each. Do not let us ever get so absorbed in one "runner," however lonely, whether at home or abroad, that we fail to see "another," who may have equal demands upon us, and equal need of our mediation with the King.

As the messenger drew near, the observant watchman detected peculiarity in his manner of running (v. 27), and it will be impossible for us to watch attentively on the Lord's behalf, without

observing many a peculiarity in many a worker for Him as we come into close contact with them, but let us be careful that, as we see them, we speak of them first to the King, not to our fellow workers; unless it is done "on behalf of the Crown," and then only after we have told the King, never on our way to tell Him. For it may often happen that when we go to tell Him of what we consider a defect in a worker, He will reply as David did—"He is a good man," and even when the adverse opinions that we have formed are altogether true, how different will be the spirit of a judgment, expressed after fellowship with the King, from that which we should utter if we talked things over first with others.

Sometimes, like Joram's watchman, we shall see "furious driving" (2 Kings ix. 20); at other times it will seem to us that people are holding back and hindering the Lord's work from over caution and fear of going too fast. Sometimes we shall see "one running alone"; at other times our cry will be "I see a company" (2 Kings ix. 17). Sometimes we shall see messengers coming towards us bringing tidings of the battle which they have seen, and of the defeat of the King's enemies (2 Samuel xviii. 28); while again and again we shall have to say of messengers whom we saw start out bearing the offer of reconciliation to opposing forces:—"The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again" (2 Kings ix. 18); occasionally because he has deserted to the enemy's ranks, more often, thank God, because he has laid down his life on the King's behalf. But whatever we see, let us tell the King. Who can say what new grace and power might be given to individual servants of the Crown in answer to our believing, watching, and prayer, or how often as we told the King of the sent ones who had not returned, He might, in response, send others to fill the vacant posts (see 2 Kings, ix 19).

The watchman was not only the mediator between the people and the King; he was also the mediator for the King with the people. "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me" (Eze. iii. 17). If we act faithfully towards God as watchman, we shall be sure to get messages from Him to men. Our business as watching ones will not only be to tell the King what we hear and see of men, but also to tell to men what we see and hear of the King. For we shall see Him and we shall hear Him. So surely as we "stand continually upon the watch-tower" and "hearken diligently, with much heed," we shall be able to say sooner or later—"That which I have heard of the Lord of Hosts . . . have I made known unto you" (Isaiah xxi. 8-10). "I will stand upon my watch, and get me upon the tower, and will look forth to see what He will speak with me (or by me).