

The King's Highway.

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness.

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness—Isa. 35-8.

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GOD'S WATCHMAN

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"I have set thee a watchman. . . . If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hands."—Ezek. 33:7, 8.

The prophet Ezekiel was contemporary with Jeremiah and Habakkuk. He came from a priestly family, and was set apart for the ministry. He was a married man, living in his own house; and he had the honor of being called by the same name as the Lord Jesus Christ, son of man.

Ezekiel's ministry was unique; he was a man of visions, and was specially called to be a "watchman" to the house of Israel.

A watchman is a man in charge of a city. He stands on the lookout, entrusted with the solemn duty of keeping the people informed of impending danger. He must sound the alarm at the approach of an enemy; and, unfaithfulness in the performance of his duty may bring disaster upon the city—the people may perish and the guilt laid upon the watchman.

God has His watchmen today, who stand on the walls of Zion. They are chosen from among the people, and their duty it is to give warning of the impending judgments. "No man taketh his honor upon himself" (though there are, undoubtedly, some self-appointed preachers who have entered the ministry as a profession). God's watchman is Divinely called and set apart, like Moses at the burning bush; Elisha while plowing in the field; and Amos while following the flock.

There are some important lessons to be learned from this Scripture:

First, *the Watchman's Responsibility*. "I have set thee a watchman." This is no ordinary occupation. The watchman is responsible to God for the immortal souls under his care. He must arouse the indifferent, awaken the sleepers, plead with the ignorant, warn the careless, the unruly, and the foolish. He must warn sinners of their doom if they do not repent. From the walls of Zion he must sound out, in unmistakable language, "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." He must warn the people against the destructive criticism of these days of the insidious approach of the enemy through many false doctrines. God's watchman must sound an alarm against the most subtle enemy of all, "the sin secreted in the citadel of man's soul," which is allied with Diabolus and his army outside the wall. No quarter must be given; it is an inviolable enemy of the Prince Immanuel, and must be hewed in pieces, lie Agag of old utterly destroyed. The faithful watchman will find it necessary to spend much time in intercessory prayer on behalf of the souls committed to his care, like Paul who for three years at Ephesus, ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears.

The Watchman's Culpability. "If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity." How may the watchman become guilty of the death of the wicked? *He may fall asleep*. It is a criminal offense for a watchman to go to sleep on duty; and yet it does appear as if many preachers were asleep as to their responsibility, and to the spiritual condition of the people under their charge. They do not believe in revivals of religion, and object to having the people awakened to their need. Some time since, I was preaching in a Baptist Church, on the subject of the New Birth; and one of the members remarked, "We never heard anything about that subject before, and I have been attending this church for years." If the preacher is asleep, is it any wonder that the people are settled down in their fancied security. "Like priest, like people!"

Diversion. It is one of the enemy's tactics to divert the watchman from his post; to get him preoccupied with minor matters—the cares of this world, party politics, the making of money, or anything else which will rob him of prayer and Bible study—then very soon his fervor and zeal for souls will wane, the old-time fire will no longer burn in his heart, and the devil will gloat over the fact that he has succeeded in getting another watchman to forget his duty. There may be much religious activity, but it will be only "organized weakness." No alarm will be sounded against sin, and no sinners will be converted.

Compromise. It is a common trick of the enemy to invite the preacher to compromise. At first it looks a mere trifle; but after a while it may lead to an affiliation with the Lodge, the Club, or the Grange, and so the preacher's mouth is closed against the dance and the card party. He now discusses sensational topics in the pulpit, and cries, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." He sees no need for alarm; sin is, after all, not an offense against God. His slogan now is, "Save the World;" and the way to do it is by advocating the Universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man! The preacher fails to warn the impenitent of hell and the certain judgments of God.

The Watchman's Accountability. "His blood will I require at the watchman's hand." Daniel Webster said, "Man's accountability to God is one of the greatest thoughts in the universe." Since ALL must give an account of our stewardship to God, "If thou warn wicked . . . if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Some will perish under the ministry of God's faithful and devoted servants; some will die in their iniquity, in spite of tears and warnings, but the watchman will be clear of their blood.

The Judgment Day will be an awful time for the unfaithful, compromising preacher, under

whose negligence the souls of men have perished. Their blood is to be required at his hand. Woe to the watchman who has failed to sound the alarm! It is impossible to conceive the anguish of the man who will meet his deluded and deceived congregation at the Bar of God. If the men of Nineveh will rise in the Judgment and condemn the generation who repented not at the preaching of Jesus, surely these deceived and lost souls will arise and condemn the man who failed to blow the trumpet and warn them of their peril.

God grant that we may be faithful, and diligently watch every soul committed to our care, "as they that must give an account, that we may do it with joy, and not with groaning."—Heb. 13: 17, R. V.

Mrs. Geo. T. Edlitz Dec 24