

The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

REV. E. McLEOD,

"THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."

Peter.

[Editor and Proprietor.]

Vol. XII.—No. 35.

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1865.

Whole No. 607.

The Intelligencer.

GEHAZI: HIS SIN, DETECTION, AND PUNISHMENT.

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2 Kings v. 20-27.

Along the whole way of life over which the Christian is called to pass, the Scriptures have placed beacons as well as guiding lights, facts to alarm as well as examples to direct, on which the thoughtful mind may see inscribed, "Here such a soul suffered shipwreck." Beware of perishing through the same example of unbelief! Such a beacon is Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, whose whole biography is not indeed recorded in Scripture like that of his illustrious master, but from before whom a divinely directed hand lifts the veil on a particular day of his life, and seizing a moment of awful self-revelation, in a few bold strokes presents us with his whole moral portrait. Let us proceed to contemplate him in his religious privileges, in his sin, in his detection, and in his punishment.

Of Gehazi in his religious privileges. These appear to have been singularly great and eminent. It is supposed by many that he had been the servant of Elisha, and had witnessed from a distance the sublime miraculous ascent of that earlier prophet in his fire-chariot to heaven, and that after his ascension he had passed into the service of Elisha's successor. At all events, he had been the constant attendant of the latter prophet, following him in his journeys, beholding his miracles, enjoying his conversation and instructions, admitted in some degree to his confidence, and looking from day to day on his holy and spotless life. And was not this almost like living at heaven's own gate? The sacred narrative seems to call our special attention to the circumstance, for it speaks of him as "Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God." But it is a terrible thing when, to use old Fuller's striking words, "the clouds appear to rain not over Arabia the Happy, but over Arabia the Stony or Desert." For nothing is more certain than that where a man placed in the midst of great religious advantages continues insincere and acts a part, he will become morally very hardened, and will sink very far. The dog that sleeps beside the mill ceases to fear the sparks. And while Gehazi could not possess a large amount of barren religious knowledge, in all likelihood Naaman the Syrian who had so lately passed from his presence, had not in all his train a heathen servant with a conscience so hardened and a heart so petrified as his. If you wish to see the most wicked man in the world, look for him not in the dark places of the earth, and beside bloody heathen altars, but in Christian lands, where light has been resisted, all sacred influence despised, and the very grace of God turned into licentiousness.

It is every way probable, however, that up to this period the real character of Gehazi had remained concealed from Elisha, for men of pure minds are naturally confiding and unsuspecting. Little incidents may have occurred which now and then awakened in the prophet's mind a painful doubt regarding his servant; but the cloud was welcome and transient, and hitherto Gehazi had succeeded in maintaining, on the whole, a plausible outward demeanour. This is quite a possible thing even for the most thorough hypocrite. For it is events that try a man, and bring the moral sediment of his character to the surface. And he may sometimes wait even for many years before the particular temptation is brought near to him which suits his case, and, blowing aside the seemingly outward covering, reveals him to the startled world as a white serpent. So it was with this Gehazi now. Naaman the Syrian's bags of silver and gold and rich changes of raiment were the touchstone which disclosed the counterfeit, the Ishmael spear which unmasked the "whited devil" and showed the astonished prophet what a base person had been allowed by him for years to haunt his presence, to track his footsteps, and to share in his confidence.

The facts are these. Naaman the Syrian, after having been miraculously cured of his leprosy by washing seven times in Jordan according to the directions of Elisha, had immediately returned to the humble gate of the prophet, offering him a princely reward. But the man of God had persistently and solemnly refused to accept even the smallest fragment of what was offered him. He was anxiously desirous that the moral impression of the miracle should remain in full force upon the Syrian's mind: that nothing should be done to awaken even the least suspicion of selfishness as prompting its performance; and that the whole should be seen to have had its origin in pure compassion for Naaman, and zeal for the honour of the true God. But Gehazi, who had been present during the entire interview, had regarded his master's sublime self-denial with secret displeasure and strong disappointment. And when at length he saw Naaman turning his chariot in the direction of his native Syria, and bearing away with him the splendid offerings, untouched, he bitterly grudged the lost prize; and, reckless of all the consequences to Elisha and his religion, resolved that if his master would not accept of some portion of the rich Syrian's wealth in which he might afterwards share, it should then be his. Accordingly, Naaman and his retinue were not a mile distant from the prophet's door before Gehazi was hurrying after them with rapid pace. The moment the grateful Syrian became aware of this he commanded his chariot to halt and paying respect to the prophet in the person of his servant, alighted from the chariot and hastened back to meet him with the question, "Is all well?" The villain was ready with his well-timed lie. Two poor scholars of the prophets had that moment arrived from their college on mount Ephraim, craving assistance both for themselves and their brethren, which Elisha was not in circumstances to supply. And now he had sent him to say that he was willing to accept of a portion of the gifts which Naaman had so freely offered and so earnestly pressed upon him, to the extent of a talent of silver and two changes of garments. The request was a large one, exceeding in amount some hundred pounds of our money; but it was exceeded by Naaman's grateful generosity. For handing two talents of silver in two bags accompanied by two changes of garments, he laid them upon the shoulders of two of his own servants, who bare them before Gehazi to a secret place or storehouse in a hill near to the prophet's dwelling. There

the hypocrite safely deposited them until he should find an early opportunity of appropriating them to his own use, meanwhile concealing them from no eye so anxiously as Elisha's.

Let us now contemplate Gehazi in his sin. It is evident that covetousness lay at the foundation of it all; that lust of gain, which, in one aspect of it as indicating a sinful distrust of God, is spoken of in Scripture as infidelity, and in another aspect of it, as revealing an undue dependence on created things and an utter undervaluing of them, is characterized as idolatry, and on account of the many forms of iniquity and indirectly the prolific cause, is strongly represented by an apostle as "the root of all evil." And the example of this miserable man may suggest the remark that this unallowable passion is not confined to those who possess riches; it is equally common and equally mischievous in its operation in the case of those who, though still poor or in moderate worldly circumstances, are "hastening to be rich."

Now, it would seem that Gehazi had resolutely set himself to obtain a portion of Naaman's wealth, no matter what might be the measures of fraud or villainy necessary to accomplish his purpose. And so it was that this "lust, when it had conceived, brought forth sin;" the one unclean spirit went and took to itself seven other spirits worse than itself. It is seldom indeed that one sin can stand alone, or be restricted in the range of its transgression to one precept or prohibition of the moral law; there is ever a complete disobedience, and what appears at least to the perverted conscience a fatal necessity of sinning more and more. Behold the foul and varied progeny of this man's reigning avarice! There was the deliberate and plausibly constructed falsehood told to Naaman, speedily invented, and leading to the conclusion that he was no novice in deception, but that long practice had given him promptitude and skill in the black art of lying. Then there was the act of theft from which his hardened heart did not shrink, even when the magnanimous gratitude of Naaman gave him double what his rapacious heart had asked, and made his own servants the bearers of his guilty booty to the secret place. Next, there was the base unfaithfulness to his kind master Elisha, whose heart he was suspectingly confided in him for so many years. And, last of all, and in some respects also worst of all, there was the treachery to the cause of true religion which the act expressed,—the readiness, for the sake of securing his own selfish ends, to "lay his honour in the dust," by taking away from Naaman's miraculous cure its character of generosity, throwing an air of selfishness around the deed of mercy, and doing what he could to disturb, and even to obliterate, the favourable impressions which had been made upon the Syrian's mind. With what peculiar aggravations of sin does the man's conduct stand out before us when looked at in these sober lights!

It appears to me as if there were some hints in the brief narrative to show us that even his wicked heart had laboured to find excuses for the crime on which it had resolved, and to make it look very light and venial in the eye of his conscience. It is difficult indeed to say with certainty whether in those words of his soliloquy, when he plotted the mischief in his heart, "As the Lord liveth," he intended a kind of mocking travesty of his master's language when he had refused to accept of Naaman's gifts: "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none;" or whether he sought to cast an air of religion over his acts by the free use of sacred words,—according to Foster's severe saying regarding a certain Russian emperor, that "he had no doubt that he said grace before he swallowed his sin." But when he goes on to say to himself, "Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian," there is an evident wish to put a sop in the mouth of his conscience, and to speak it fair. For it is as if he had said, "This man is only a heathen, a Syrian, an idolater, and am I bound to keep such rigid terms with him?" But the moral law knows nothing of geography or distinctions of races; and there were even special reasons in the very circumstance that Naaman had been a heathen and an idolater, but had declared his solemn purpose to abandon his false faith, why he should be treated by one who professed to be a worshipper and servant of the only living and true God with all the more scrupulous morality and selflessness. Ah! how does the evil heart thus weave for itself ingenious apologies when it has formed its hidden purposes of iniquity, when all the while they are lighter than a gossamer web in the eyes of "Him with whom we have to do." Let us man, says the apostle, "go beyond or defend his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such." Men are ready, adds holy Leighton, "to find out poor shifts to deceive themselves when they have some way deceived their brother, and to stop the mouth of their own conscience with some quibble and some slight excuse, and force themselves at length to believe they have done no wrong. Therefore the apostle, to frighten them out of their shifts, sets before them an exacter Judge, that cannot be deceived nor mocked, that shall one day unveil the conscience and blow away these vain self-excuses as smoke. And that just God will punish all iniquity. He is the avenger of all such."—And now the talents of silver and the changes of rich and costly robes have been deposited and secured by Gehazi in the place of concealment, and he thinks with himself in guilty self-gratulation, "At last my fortune is made, and I shall no longer be the drudge of this prophet, but shall become myself a master! How soon was he to find that even gold may be purchased too dear, and that the lying tongue is but for a moment! Unabashed by the thought of what he has done, he enters into Elisha's presence with the same bearing of outward respect as he had been wont to manifest on former occasions, like the audacious woman described by Solomon, "who eateth and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness," and doubtless congratulating himself on the fact that he had managed his villainous work so adroitly—when lo! the reproof of his master and the judgment of Heaven alight upon him together!

We thus come to consider Gehazi in his detection. Now, we incline to the opinion that the question of Elisha—"Whence comest thou, Gehazi?" with which he proceeded to unmask the

daring culprit, was addressed to him in part with the kind intention of putting him once more to the proof, lest perchance, even at the eleventh hour, there should be the rising of repentance to suspend or avert the blow. But there is no giving way, no relenting, no quivering of the lip, no blush of shame which is the tribute which even a guilty heart, when it is not utterly hardened, pays to virtue. He is ready with the second lie to buttress or conceal the first: "Thy servant went no whither." What obdurate wickedness was there here! It must have needed a long course of deception to bear him so far away from that "fair and round dealing which is the honour of man's nature."

Nothing is more remarkable, as the prophet proceeds with his terrible work, forced onward by his servant's fatal obduracy, than his resolute calmness, his entire freedom from the influence of angry passion. There is profound seriousness, but no excitement. It is the prophet and not the man merely that speaks throughout. And yet, remembering quaint Fuller's words, that "it is best when the sentence of condemnation is steeped in the Judge's tears," we can well believe that, when he proceeded to address Gehazi in those words of stern reproof by which he showed him that he knew all, there was intense sorrow mingled with other feelings; especially when he thought that one who had many years and had so largely shared in his confidence, had thus been revealed as a withered branch, reprobate silver, in another moment to be blasted by the visibleness of Heaven and separated from him for both worlds. "Went not mine heart with thee," said the prophet in his stern sorrow to the astounded deceiver, "when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever."

It appears from these words that the conduct of Gehazi had been made known to Elisha by supernatural revelation, as distinctly as if the whole interview with Naaman had passed before his bodily senses. The prophet's soul had for the time been turned into a mirror, or camera obscura, in which even the minutest incident of the scene was accurately pictured. It would even seem that he was made aware of the workings of his servant's mind in reference to his ill-gotten gain, and had "sat as it were in his heart." And from the whole we conclude that both when Gehazi was returning from Naaman, and when he was now standing in his master's presence, he was secretly ruminating about what he should do with his suddenly acquired riches. "I will purchase oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and hire men-servants and maid-servants, and luxuriate in an abundance far different from the scanty fare of the prophet's board." And therefore, when Elisha put to him the solemn question, "Is it a time for thee to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards?" it was like the voice of Omnipotence itself addressing him, and turned in a moment all his guilty self-concealment into despair, by darting home upon his inmost heart the withering conviction that all was already known. But while in this instance the means of discovery were supernatural, there are many ways in which deeds of darkness may be known to our fellow-men, and "that which was done in secret be proclaimed upon the housetops." There is an infatuation connected with crime which generally makes it leave a clue for its own detection. It is sometimes as if the very birds of the air told the matter. It was the observation of this fact which long since occasioned the proverb, that "Satan always falls on one foot." Some expression dropped in a moment of thoughtlessness, some undestroyed writing, the ravings of delirium, and even in some instances overdone efforts at concealment have torn aside the veil from past deeds of violence or fraud, and brought the transgressor to an ignominious doom. But there are eyes that see even the most secret crimes when they succeed in eluding human detection, and there is a resistless hand that will one day bring every work into judgment. You cannot shake yourself free of your conscience; and even when it becomes feeble as a judge, it continues incorruptible and faithful as a witness, and writes its terrible records in indelible ink. And there is one sleepless eye that follows us everywhere and for ever. "The wicked saith in his heart, God hath forgotten. He hideth his face, he will never see it. Thon hast said it; for Thon beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with Thy hand." Be sure your sin will find you out.

We must not omit the remark that what still presented itself to the prophet's mind as the darkest feature of aggravation in Gehazi's sin, was the deep injury which his conduct was fitted to inflict on the interests of religion. He had tried to pull down what his master had built up, and, speaking in his master's name, had done what he could to represent him as pretending to an unselfishness and magnanimity which he did not in reality possess. And was this a time especially to put the interests of religion in jeopardy, when inquiry was abounding, and the love of many waxing cold? When there was but a little remnant in the land adhering to the old and uncorrupted faith? At such a time, for one who should have been a standard-bearer in the army of the Lord to swell the stream of apostasy and to throw a stumbling-block in the path of one who was favourably disposed towards the truth, was to win for himself double damnation. "Thou hast tried to make fraudulent gain by means of Naaman's cure; God will now punish thee for this by sending upon thee Naaman's disease." The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

And now let us look at Gehazi in his punishment. Its immediateness ought not to pass without observation. It most frequently happens in the divine government of the world, that retribution in its external forms is delayed—sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily! One of the Greek poets, whose writings often contained more truly religious sentiments than those of the philosophers, remarked this two thousand years since,—
"Vengeance divine to punish sin moves slow;
The slower is its pace, the surer is its blow!"
But there are occasions, like the present, when punishment moves swiftly in the footsteps of the crime, and the executioners of Heaven's justice

appear impatient to mark the sin with the deep brand of divine displeasure. The former of these classes of facts confirm us in the belief that there is a future judgment; the latter proclaim to us, as with a trumpet-tongue, that "verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth."

And the second of these truths becomes yet more impressively manifest when we consider the particular form of Gehazi's punishment. It was evidently intended to bear the image of his sin. He had sought to become possessed of Naaman's wealth by wickedly trading on his recovery from his leprosy, and he has obtained the wealth, but he shall receive the leprosy with it. And from that fatal hour to the end of his now embittered life, he shall never be able to look on his body, snow-white with this loathsome disease, without having his falsehood, hypocrisy, and fraud brought to his remembrance; his sin shall be ever before him; and more than this, his children shall reflect back upon his conscience the accusing memory of his wickedness—his own iniquities reproving him, and his own back-slidings correcting him.

Some may perhaps be surprised at the fact that this curse of leprosy should have been made to fall upon Gehazi's children in common with himself, while we have no reason to believe that they were partakers of his crime. But various considerations may be adduced to mitigate if not entirely to dispel the difficulty. Thus, it should be remembered that his children were deprived of their father's example of covetousness, and that they were not in themselves infected by their father's sin; that "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Then the moral effects of such an infliction might be salutary to the children. Their father's example of covetousness must have been morally contaminating. But such a visitation of the divine hand as this, so terribly and distinctly significant in what it said, might save them from partaking with their father also in the leprosy of his soul. It may be too, that one of the excuses by which Gehazi had tried to palliate his sin and apologize for it to his own conscience, had been the desire of providing abundantly for his family; just as men are every day making this apology for covetous acts of moral obliquity and others were made to see what sort of inheritance it is that sin bequeaths to children. And besides all this, it should never be forgotten that, in a not difficult way, properly speaking, lies at the door of revealed religion, or which the friend of the Bible is particularly called upon to remove. We find the same fact in many forms pervading the whole scheme of divine providence; it is conditions of men linked into each other and shedding mutual influence, children especially suffering in many ways from the misconduct of their parents; so that the difficulty rests more heavily with the Deist than with the Christian whose Bible supplies him with certain explanations which the Deist has cast away. Let us be thankful for the twilight, especially when we have the promise that it shall soon pass into unclouded day. The refuge of the unbeliever from such difficulties and shadows is into the midnight darkness.

We may surely gather from the bitter and baneful experience of Gehazi the peculiarly uncertain and unsatisfactory nature of sinfully acquired riches. Those who inherit them appear to inherit a curse with them, just as leprosy in this awful instance came with wealth. The prophet Jeremiah noticed the facts in his days in the case of those who got rich, but not by right. And those who lived in times of rapacity and spoliation in our own country, have remarked how goods obtained by such means have proved gangrenes to men's whole estates, and have compared them to the eagle that stole a piece of meat from the altar which carried a live coal attached to it that set her nest on fire. Their wealth has passed from man to man without rest, "like the ark among the Philistines, which was removed from Ashdod to Gath and from Gath to Ekron," vexing every one that kept it until it returned to its rightful owner.

But unquestionably the great lesson of the whole story of Gehazi is the evil and danger of a covetous spirit. Behold it eating into this man's soul like a canker or moral leprosy, rendering him unfaithful to his master, reckless of the honour and interests of religion, turning him into a base liar and hypocrite, tempting him to rob man and to rob God also. See the visible judgment of Heaven leaping forth against him and withering him in a moment, and with its dark wing sweeping his very children within the baneful circle of the curse. Nor does he stand alone in the sacred volume as an eternal monument of the peril of loving this present world. This hath slain many mighty. Behold a crowd of witnesses moving before us in ghastly procession—Balaam, Achan, Ananias and Sapphira, Demas, Judas, and many others, and turning towards us their miserable countenances as they pass, and saying, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness."

Let us learn that true riches consists not in possessing much, but in desiring little; let us drive out, or rather keep out, the demon of covetousness, by having our affections set on things above. Then with God as our portion, and heaven as our not far distant rest, we shall find the feelings of our peaceful and satisfied souls sweetly echoed in those words of our Christian poet—
"But Thon, O bounteous Giver of all good!
Non est aliquid tibi gravis: gibe tibi cuncta;
Give what Thou wilt, without Thy we are poor;
And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away."

From the Examiner and Chronicle.
HOURS ALONE.
BROTHER HARTMAN'S THIRD EVENING.

What a blessed meeting we had last night. It was just what I needed to strengthen and comfort me, for I found there others who had gone through an experience like mine, and one, brother Notfall, who is now here, untroubled with his life, having too much grace to give himself wholly to the world, and too little to keep his heart steadily in a consistent Christian life. How clearly I can see his duty; more clearly than my own, indeed, while for him I can be candid and unprejudiced. It is only, sometimes, by imagining myself some one else, that I can determine what is right for me to do in a particular case. How many helps we need, and this one—a truly enlightened judgment—is largely to be gained, I find, in the

society of Christians, by observing their different experiences.

Oh, I want to get away from this marsh of indecision on firm ground, away from the many quagmires and pitfalls about me here. Only let the tempter once understand that a man is in an uncertain position—neither saint nor willing sinner—that he has neither the helps of the one, nor the alarms of the other—and forthwith his Satanic battery of temptations will so assail the poor victim that he can barely stand, at the best, and must often fall where he is.

I remember when my darkness began; it was first with indecision, afterwards came a yielding to worldly self-seeking, then followed an indisposition to pray and examine myself, then a neglect of outward duties, while from the first I began to doubt whether I had ever been a true Christian. I'm thankful now that doubt of our state does follow disobedience, or we might think ourselves at the gate of heaven even while near that of perdition. But I hope there is a spark of grace in my heart, and that God, my God, will save me from being blinded to destruction. Why else should I be grieved at my failure as a disciple, and why, if I do not love the Master, do I love now the companionship of the prayer-meeting, and feel such longing to begin anew the upward life, yes, such a will to begin it? Is God working in me to will and to do of his good pleasure?

Blessed thought! and here's another gleam of hope: thy name, O my Saviour. But to hear it wakens a responsive thrill in my heart, even when it is farthest from thee, and I cannot hear or read thy words without a glow of heart, and an out-reaching hand which grasps thine own, saying, My Lord and my God. And oh, if I am thine, if indeed, though wandering and sinning, grieving and dishonouring thee, thou hast "set thy love upon me," if I have "been called by thy name," forsake me not though I have forsaken thee but "forgive" as "thou hast loved thy servant," and keep his heart henceforth.

It was because I would not use all the "helps" which he had already given me that I at first fell away from the "strait" path, and now, with his promise to lean upon, and his Spirit to guide, I will go forward, not mocking him by asking for grace, and at the same time neglecting to use that already lent. I can use more self-control than I have done—that I will do; and I can obey in many cases where I have disobeyed. These wrongs, so far as it is in my power to do so, I will right, knowing that so "he giveth more grace," the very word "more" proving that, some have already been given, and that therefore more will be added.

But that I may be properly prepared for temptation it will be better to adopt particular rules, as general ones are too often aimless and inefficient, and in finding these I shall answer rather Givall's third question, which was this: "What will make me a Bible Christian; that is, such a one as I am commanded to be?"

Mainly only the grace of God can make me such a one, but this grace comes through certain means or channels, and acts in a given way; that is, if I must find out, using the one and showing forth the other. First, then, how, that is through what channels—and here I shall search for philosophical terms; practical ones are all I want—under what circumstances does God give "grace" or Christian strength? His word clearly answers me that grace comes with obedience when it says "they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;" "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness;" "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly;" "walk in the spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh;" "resist the devil and he will flee from you;" "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations;" "he that feareth God shall come forth of them all." And here in another place is this last promise negatively expressed; "looking diligently lest any man fall of the grace of God;" that is, if I am watchful and diligent, grace won't fall me. I must then—and here is father G's answer—constantly and watchfully obey, consecrating myself while I pray for the spirit of perfect consecration. I must act from "ought to" rather than "want to," performing all my duties, whether I feel like it or not, knowing that the desires to do right will come in the action because that is God's appointed way to give it, so that it is his work wholly, though mine too; as He says: "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Now it is easy enough to find out my duties, for an attentive reading of the Gospels and Epistles alone will make me acquainted with the rules which should govern the disciple, and reveal the spirit which he should breathe; and it is pleasant to know that these are the same which the Master showed to the first servants who followed him, as well as to all the bright throng who have since honored him and are now in glory. It is the old law, and yet one ever new and unvarying to the selfishness of the natural heart, and may it be to me like John the Baptist's axe, striking deep and deadly blows among the roots of my sins. But it is easier to find out duties than to cultivate a tender conscience, easier to "know" than to "do;" for willing "to know," is nature, willing "to do," is grace.

May God help me, and make me "fear to sin;" and, as I can expect his help only while I try to help myself, I here resolve to do this by putting myself under the best influences; by taking myself jealously away from all evil or hindering influences; and by fleeing to his Word, the fountain of light and strength, at all times, and especially in times of unusual temptation or darkness.

And first, how can I put myself under good influences? Ah! the shame, the sorrow, to confess here to all the outward that though I once promised to keep close by the good Shepherd, I am not even known now among his sheep; that I have no place with those who dwell in his fold. Here then is my first duty, and thank God, it is a privilege now, to end my straying, to leave those with whom, in these new desires, I should find sympathy, and to come back to my Father's house. "Here my best friends, my kindred dwell, here God my Saviour reigns." How the old tones of Zion stir my soul!

"Heavenly dwelling: Zion's children
Take me to my home again."

"They are mine enemies." If even the best Christians too much love worldly things, so that I must copy not them, but the Master, surely I should find no help, and much harm, from intimate relations with those who love only the world. I know that this is an idea more exclaimed against than formerly. Only the other day, I heard a good man say, "Pooh! pooh! this idea that Christians must be peculiar—unlike other people—does a great deal of harm. They should be unlike them by being upright, and pure, and of good report." But this isn't enough, for there are now multitudes of "the world" who are morally upright, pure, and of good report, who yet show and have no love for him who is King in Zion. It isn't enough that they don't outwardly exhibit enmity to him, for if they do nothing and avoid nothing which shows forth loyalty and love to him, I ought, in that at least, to be as unlike them (as peculiar) as possible. It is not enough for me to show no opposition to the Master, but I must live so as to show that I love, that I adore him. The question is not "With how low a standard of duty can true religion exist?" but "How can I best serve and honor God?" The pattern disciple of the Bible loves with his whole heart; is not careful to prune his zeal of any healthy luxuriant offshoot; does not ask how worldly he can be, and yet not lose his soul.

But there!—I promised to meet brother N. at this hour; so I must wait till to-morrow evening, to consider some of the other means by which I may go on toward the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

PRAY, FATHER.—A little Indian girl, seven years old, was wasting away with consumption. She had heard the missionaries' preach, had been a constant attendant upon Sabbath school, and for some months had given good evidence that she was a lamb of the Saviour's flock. Her father, a proud, hard man, had once professed to be a Christian, but for some time had been a backslider, whose case was regarded as almost hopeless. The little girl had been falling rapidly for several days. One afternoon, when she seemed brighter, she begged that her father might be called. He came. Then looking up to him with her bright but sinking eyes, she said, "I want to go to the brook once more. May I go?"

He could not refuse; and, without saying a word, wrapped her up, folded her in his arms and carried her out through the yard, across the green meadow, down to the brook that wound its quiet way over sand and pebbles, among the alders that skirted the meadow. He sat down in the shade where the little girl could see the water and the bright play of light and shadow between the alders. She watched them a moment, and then turning away her wasted face, she said earnestly, "Pray, father!"

"O I can't, my darling," he said hastily. "But do pray, father, do pray," she pleaded. "No, no! How can I? No, no!" "Father," said she, laying her little thin hand upon his arm, "father, I'm going to heaven soon, and I want to tell Jesus Christ, when I see him, that my father prays."

The strong man's head was bowed, and there went up from that brook-side such a prayer of repentance, and confession, and supplication for forgiveness as must have thrilled with joy the courts of heaven.

He unclosed his eyes; the little one was dead! Her freed spirit had fled on the wings of joy and faith to tell the Saviour, "My father prays!"—Guide to Holmes.

THE MAN WHO THOUGHT HE NEVER PRAYED.—The Rev. Mr. Kilpin passed a very profane man, and having omitted to rebuke him, he awaited him in the morning at the same place. When he approached, Mr. Kilpin said,

"Good morning, my friend; you are the person I have been waiting for."

"O, sir," said the man, "you are mistaken, I think."

"I do not know you; but I saw you last night when you were going home from work, and I have been waiting some time to see you."

"Sir, you are mistaken; it could not have been me; I never saw you in my life before, that I know of."

"Well, my friend," said Mr. Kilpin, "I heard you pray last night."

"Now I assure you that you are mistaken; I never prayed in all my life."

"O! said Mr. Kilpin, "if God had answered your prayer last night, you had not been seen here this morning. I heard you pray that God would destroy your eyes, and ruin your soul."

The man turned pale, and trembling, said, "Do you call that prayer? I did, I did."

"Well, then, my errand this morning is to request you from this day to pray as fervently for your salvation as you have done for damnation; and may God in mercy hear your prayer."

The man from that time became an attendant on Mr. Kilpin's ministry, and it ended in his early conversion to God.

TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY.—One of the speakers in the N. S. General Assembly in arguing the importance of raising up men for the ministry, related the following:

The speaker thought our methods of ministerial training were defective. He had two boys when he was educating for the ministry, and he began with them when a year old. One of them when two years old, rose from his bed one morning and beheld for the first time, the ground covered with snow. In his night-clothes, and with bare feet, he went out and tramped around the house. Coming back and seeking admission at the door where his father (Mr. Patch) and a brother minister were sitting, the brother exclaimed in surprise,

"What do you mean by allowing the child thus to expose itself?"

"Don't you understand," says the father, "I am training him for the ministry! I am training him to go barefoot and in the snow, that he may be ready for the hardships of the calling."

Christian hearts are like iron; if made hot with the love of God, they will be the more readily be joined to each other in Christian love.