

creed; a seat in the scorner's chair; open apostacy, confirmed infidelity, or atheism. How awful is such abandonment of the good confession, once witnessed and often declared, as he who is now without, was wont to join in holy ordinances, and sit at the Lord's table with those who thus declare that they are on the Lord's side.

One may seriously swerve from the right in feeling and action, and yet be in deplorable ignorance of his own state. Oft has the backslider been thus: "Gray hairs here and there upon him, yet *he knoweth* not." He has been led aside by a deceived and deceiving heart. His first error lay in failing to keep it with all diligence. O how many evils flow from men failing to prove, to examine their own selves; from want of this a man "falleth while he thinketh he standeth," and imagines himself to be rich and increased with goods, and having need of nothing, while he is poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. Thinks himself in the vigour of youth, while grey hairs are here and there upon him. The first step from the right way may have been taken with some measure of reluctance—been only partial—allowed for once. A second time error has met with less resistance—the road has become more and more easy; the heart has become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. "The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;" under its fatal direction many a soul has been led far from the ways of righteousness that once ran well. And he knoweth not, for he has not considered the woful distance to which he has receded from God. This ignorance can form no excuse, nay, is itself the very guilt of the backslider, who refuses the counsel of God, and will not consider his ways.

Let us solemnly consider this subject as it bears on our individual responsibility, duty, and privilege.

Let each one examine and prove his own self, take not a hasty glance at his position,

but make deep and searching inquiry as to how matters stand with us in the sight of God. Religion is a personal concern, and "every tree that beareth not good fruit shall be cut down." The account may soon be called for. Do you stand in readiness to give account of yourself to God? The midnight cry may soon be heard—are your lamps trimmed and ready? O let this form matter of deep heart-searching. Am I progressing or receding? growing in grace or drawing back? keeping the end in view or following a present evil world?

BE WATCHFUL OVER YOUR OWN HEARTS.
You may be tempted—many have been—to let the Master's will stand, that you may follow the will of another. The tempter may whisper, "It is a little matter." But beware, apostacy in thousands has begun just where you stand; they listened and were undone. One grey hair appeared, and then another, until the process of decay seemed complete. Trifle not with the convictions of conscience. Grieve not the Spirit lest he depart, and your sin separate between God and your soul, and darkness and despair—the very gloom of perdition—gather around you.

It is said that in the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the priests "built every man over against his own house." Every man's first care ought to be his own state, yet *not his only care*. The Christian is to watch over his brethren, "looking diligently that no man fail of the grace of God." Is there not among modern Christians a woful defect? They can and do talk to each other about prosperity and health, and yet but little about spiritual prosperity, and the health which springs from God's presence. How often is *religious conversation* an idle thing, left to the last, or left altogether. When brethren seem remiss in the performance of spiritual duty, or present in any form the "grey hairs" of declining piety, it is surely our duty then to speak with and counsel them. We may have some reasons