

of the sanctuary but still feeling a deep interest in the welfare of her church, and grieved over the sad reports that so often came to her ears. One day she was honored with a call from Mrs. Gaddess. This lady had been one of the warmest advocates of Mr. Crosson before he came, but it was not long before, in some way, he offended her and she was equally warm against him. She, however, attended upon the church services very regularly, not so much from any sense of duty or benefit derived from them as for the sake of finding something new to talk about. This day her theme was the prayer-meeting of the night before. "Yes, I was there, but I might as well have stayed at home, for all the good it did me. There was about ten others, beside myself, present, including Mr. Crosson and the sexton. There was no one to lead the services, and the lights were so dim no one could see the words if they'd wanted to sing. Mr. Crosson's subject was the same old thing: scolding the absent ones because they didn't come, and hitting at those who were there because they weren't consistent with their profession. I think we might as well not have any prayer-meetings, for all the good they do."

"Well, it strikes me there couldn't be a church that needs them more," spoke up bright Nellie Goodwyn, who was paying her old Auntie a visit, and had been an interested listener to the conversation. "I think it would be a good idea to hold a prayer-meeting over your pastor, as he seems to be so wicked, and see if you couldn't convert him," and laughing merrily, she left the room. Mrs. Gaddess soon left, and after her departure Nellie's words kept returning to her Auntie's mind.

"The child's fun has truth in it," she said to herself. "Surely, if any one ever needed prayers, our minister does; and here we have been wasting all this time finding fault with him, and grieving because we couldn't make him what we wanted, when the Lord could have changed him in a minute if we had only asked him. I don't believe one of us has prayed a good earnest prayer for him since he came. But I will not waste any more time in neglect. Why can I not have a little prayer-meeting in this very room, where no one need know of it but ourselves and God? I will invite the five elders, who, I know, will be in sympathy with me, and together

we will plead for a blessing upon our church and pastor."

And just here let me say a word about these five elders. You might wonder how a church with five earnest, Christian men—as all elders are supposed to be—should have been allowed to sink to such a low level. They were indeed godly, Christian men, who, while realizing that Mr. Crosson was not just the man for the place, nevertheless practised the virtue of silence and did not encourage by any word of theirs the critical fault-finding spirit of the majority of the people. In so far were they wise and their conduct commendable, but their influence was mainly of this negative character; they did nothing wrong, neither did they any thing decidedly good. Elder A., the eldest of the five, was a good old man of seventy, who had been an active member in his younger days, but was now too feeble to attend church regularly. Elder B. was a little lame, and, living quite a distance from the church, had gradually convinced himself that he was excused from attending upon all the service as he had once done. Elders C., D. and E. were all good men too, and anxious—in a mild way—that their church should prosper, but so absorbed just then in their farming, merchandise and politics that they hadn't much time left for hunting up lost souls and bringing them into the kingdom. So that, instead of by their own prudence and activity rectifying the mistakes of their pastor they had forgotten their own responsibility and had come to the conclusion that nothing could be done so long as Mr. Crosson remained with them.

The next morning after Mrs. Gaddess' visit, Auntie Goodwyn called in Elder A., for whom she was on the lookout, and confided to him her plan. She found in him a sympathetic listener and ready helper, at once they agreed to inform the remaining elders and meet in her parlor that very night.

At the appointed hour they came, even Elder B. having forgotten his lameness in his surprise and curiosity over the unusual invitation. Auntie Goodwyn soon explained the object of the meeting; how, through the thoughtless words of her niece, her eyes had been opened to see their neglect of duty, and how firmly convinced she was that if they unitedly prayed for a blessing on their pastor, that this answer would come and the desired change