

# The King's Highway.

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness:

The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. Isaiah 35:8

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## BACKSLIDER IN HEART.

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The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways. Pro. 14:14.

In discussing this subject, I will state,

I. What backsliding in heart is not.

II. What backsliding in heart is.

III. What are the evidences of backsliding in heart.

IV. What are the consequences of backsliding in heart.

V. How to recover from this state.

1. What backsliding in heart is not.

It does not consist in the subsidence of highly excited religious emotions. The subsidence of religious feeling may be an evidence of a backslidden heart, but it does not consist in the cooling off of religious feeling.

II. What backsliding in heart is.

1. It consists in taking back that consecration to God, and His service, that constitutes true conversion.

2. It is the leaving, by a Christian the first love.

3. It consists in the Christian's withdrawing himself from that state of entire and universal devotion to God, which constitutes true religion, and coming again under the control of a self-pleasing spirit.

4. The text implies that there may be a backslidden heart, when the form of religion and obedience to God are maintained. As we know from consciousness that men perform the same, or similar acts from widely different, and often from opposite motives, we are certain that men may keep up all the outward forms and appearances of religion, when in fact they are backslidden in heart. There is no doubt that the most intense selfishness often takes on a religious type, and there are many considerations, that might lead a backslider in heart, to keep up the forms, while he had lost the power of godliness in his soul.

III. What are evidences of a backslidden heart.

1. Manifest formality in religious exercises. A stereotyped, formal way of saying and doing things, that is clearly the result of habit, rather than the outpourings of a religious life. This formality will be emotionless and cold as an iceberg, and will evince a total want of earnestness in the performance of Christian duty.

2. A want of religious enjoyment is evidence of a backslidden heart. We always enjoy the saying and doing of those things that please those whom we most love; furthermore, when the heart is not backslidden, communion with God is kept up, and therefore all religious duties are not only performed with pleasure, but the communion with God involved in them, is a source of rich and continual enjoyment. If we do not enjoy the service of God, it is because we do not truly serve Him. If we love Him supremely, it is impossible that we should not enjoy His service at every step. Always remember then, whenever you lose your religious enjoyment, or the enjoyment of serving God, you may know that you are not serving Him right.

3. Religious bondage is another evidence of a backslidden heart. God has no slaves. He does not accept the service of bondmen, who serve Him because they must. He accepts none but a love service. A backslider in heart, finds his religious duties a burden to him. He has promised to serve the Lord. He dare not wholly

break off from the form of service, and he tries to be dutiful, while he has no heart in prayer, in praise, in worship, in closet duties, or in any of those exercises which are so spontaneous and delightful, where there is true love to God. The backslider in heart, is often like a dutiful, but unloving wife. She tries to do her duty to her husband, but fails utterly because she does not love him. Her painstaking to please her husband is constrained, not the spontaneous outbursts of a loving heart. And her relation, and her duties, become the burden of her life. She goes about complaining of the weight of care that is upon her, and will not be likely to advise young ladies to marry. She is committed for life, but oh! it is such bondage! Just so with religious bondage. The professor must perform his duty. He drags painfully about it, and you will hear him naturally sing backslider's hymns,

"Reason I hear, her counsels weigh,  
And all her words approve;  
And yet I find it hard to obey,  
And harder still, to love."

4. While the heart is full of love, the temper will be naturally sweet. Wherever there is an irritable, uncontrolled temper allowed to manifest itself to those around you, you may know there is a backslidden heart.

5. A spirit of uncharitableness is evidence of a backslidden heart. By this I mean a want of that disposition that puts the best construction upon every one's conduct that can be reasonable.

6. A censorious spirit, and a want of interest in the Word of God, is conclusive evidences of a backslidden heart. While the heart is full of love, no book in the world is so precious as the Bible.

7. A lack of interest in secret prayer is also an evidence of a backslidden heart.

Young Christian! If you find yourself losing interest in the Bible and in secret prayer, stop short, return to God, and give yourself no rest, till you enjoy the light of His countenance. If you feel disinclined to pray, or read your Bible, if when you pray, and read your Bible, you have no heart in it, no enjoyment, if you are inclined to make your secret devotions short, or, are easily induced to neglect them, if your thoughts, affections and emotions wander, and your closet duties become a burden, you may know that you are a backslider in heart, and your first business is, to break down, and see that your love and zeal are renewed.

8. A want of interest in the conversion of souls, in benevolent enterprises, in truly spiritual conversation, especially the conversation and society of highly spiritual people. Also a loss of interest in the question of sanctification, and lack of interest in young converts. All these are sure proofs that the heart is backslidden.

9. When professors of religion commence pleading for worldly amusements, it is a plain indication they are backslidden. The most grateful amusements possible, to a truly spiritual mind, are those engagements that bring the soul into the most direct communion with God. While the heart is full of faith and love, an hour, or an evening spent alone, in communion with God, is more delightful than all the amusements the world can offer. A loving heart is jealous of everything that will break up or interfere with its communion with

God. Worldly amusements have no relish whatever.

IV. Consequences of backsliding in heart.

1. He shall be filled with his own works. But these are dead works, they are not works of faith and love, which are acceptable to God, but are the filthy rags of his own righteousness. If they are performed as religious services, they are but loathsome hypocrisy, and an abomination to God, there is no heart in them, and to such an one God says, "Who hath required this at your hand?" "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men, is an abomination in the sight of God. "I know that ye have not the love of God in you."

2. Another natural result of being backslidden, he shall be filled with his own ways as the text says, his own feelings, prejudices and enmities. He will be full of mistakes and of his own words. He will also have lots of trials to talk about. He will be full of anxieties, perplexities, disappointments, losses, and crosses, he will be full of delusions and bondage, he will be conscious of being full of self-condemnation.

v. How to recover from a state of backsliding.

1. Remember from whence thou art fallen. Take up the question at once, and deliberately contrast your state, your present state with that in which you once were, when you walked with God.

2. Take home the conviction of your true position. No longer delay to understand the exact situation between God and your soul.

3. Repent at once and do your first works over again. Do not attempt to get back, by reforming your mere outside conduct. Begin with your heart, and at once set yourself right with God. Do not attempt to imagine yourself in a justified state, for you know you are not. Your conscience condemns you, and you know God ought to condemn you, and if He justified you in your present state, your conscience could not justify Him. Come then to Jesus at once, own up, confess everything, take the blame and shame on yourself, you are the one to take it, and come notwithstanding all your wanderings from God. He loves you still—and has loved you with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving kindness is drawing you.—Sel.

## A SUGGESTION TO CHRISTMAS.

Out in Colorado they tell of a little town nestled down at the foot of the hills—a "Sleepy Hollow" village. But some enterprising citizens ran a pipe up the hills to a lake of clear, sweet water. As a result the town enjoyed a bountiful supply of water the year round without being dependent upon the rain-fall which you know is very slight out there. And the population increased and the place had a regular western boom.

One morning the housewives turned the water spigots, but no water came. There was some sputtering. There is apt to be noise when there is nothing else. The men climbed the hill. There was the lake as full as ever. They examined around the pipes as well as possible, but could find no break. Try as they might, they could find no cause for the stoppage. And as days grew into weeks, people commenced moving away again

the grass grew in the streets, and the prosperous town was going back to its old sleepy condition when one day one of the town officials received a note.

It was poorly written, with bad spelling and grammar, but he never cared less about writing or grammar than just then. It said in effect: "Ef you'll jes pull the plug out of the pipe about eight inches from the top you'll get all the water you want. Up the started for the top of the hill and dug into the pipe, and found the plug which some vicious tramp had inserted. Not a very big plug—just big enough to fill the pipe. It is surprising how large a reservoir of water can be held back by how small a plug. Out came the plug; down came the water freely; by and by back came prosperity again.

Why is there such a lack of power in our lives? The reservoir up yonder is full to overflowing, with clear, sweet, life-giving water. And here all around us the plain is so dry, so thirsty for those waters! And the connecting pipes between the reservoir above and the parched plain below are there. Why then do not the refreshing waters come rushing down?

The answer is plain. You know why. There is a plug in the pipe. Something in us clogging up the channel and nothing can get through. How shall we have power, abundant, life-giving, sweetening our own lives, and changing those we touch? The answer is easy for me to give—it will be much harder for us all to do, pull out the plug. Get out the thing you know is hindering.

I am going to ask every one who will, to offer up this simple prayer—and I am sure every thoughtful, earnest man and woman here will. Just bow your head and quietly under your breath say to him: "Lord Jesus show me what there is in my life that is displeasing to thee; what there is thou wouldst change." You may be sure he will. He is faithful. He will put his finger on that tender spot very surely. Then add a second clause to that prayer—"By thy grace helping me, I will put it out, whatever it may cost, or wherever it may cut." Shall we bow our heads and offer that prayer, and hew close to that line, steadily, faithfully? It will open up a life of marvelous blessing undreamed of for you and everyone you touch.—S. D. Gordon.—Wesleyan Methodist.

GOD NEVER MADE ANY MAN TO DAMN HIM.

Quite true. But then God never made any man an unbeliever; yet some men are unbelievers, and God has said concerning all such—"He that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). So you see the doom of the unbeliever is certain, for God has pronounced it Himself.

God never made any man a drunkard; yet some men are drunkards, and God has said concerning them—"No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 6:10)

The law never made any man a murderer, yet some men are murderers, and law condemns them to be hanged. But nobody blames the law for the crime, nor yet the judge who sentences the guilty man to death.

If the man had been found "not guilty," then the law would have set him free; but if the verdict returned by the jury is "guilty," then the judge has no alternative. He must

pronounce his doom. So you see the man makes himself amenable to justice, and the judge who pronounces his doom has no blame. And God has told us how it comes that some men will be damned through all eternity. Would you care to know the reason why? "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." (11 Thess. 2:10). They do not want to be saved. They reject that which God has sent to save them. Therefore God says they must be "damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (11 Thess. 2:12).

God declares that He has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Ezek. 33:11), but they themselves have "pleasure in unrighteousness," and for this they reject, or neglect the great salvation. For this they barter life and heaven, and choose damnation as thier lot. Reader, ask yourself honesty who is to blame? Who? Certainly it is not God, for—"God never made any man to damn him,"

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that Whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). And if the sinner chooses death God mourns his fate. "God never made any man to damn him," but the man himself by continued rejection of Christ, by continued resistance of the Spirit, and unbelief of the Gospel makes himself a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction. In other words he prepares himself for "eternal damnation."

"And when the rebel chooses wrath, God mourns his hapless lot, Deep breathing in His heart of love—I would, but ye would not."

## WHOLE-HEARTED.

Half-heart is not better than half-hot. A passenger asked the engineer when the train stopped, whether he was short of water, and was answered, "Oh, no! There's lots of water, but it ain't bilin." Many lives are held back for the same reason. John made his remarks about the lukewarm Christianity of the Laodiceans sufficiently pointed to be clearly understood. Many times all that a man needs in order to be a success in the work of God's kingdom is to go on doing exactly the things he is now doing, but to do them with all his might instead of only with his little finger. Plainest, simplest Christian lives can shine like the apostles' when they get their baptism of fire. In the records of Israel we are told that when Judah sought Jehovah "with their whole desire," he was found of them. In God's service the holy heart will be the whole heart.—Sel.

Your Lord is very jealous of your love, O believer. He loved you with such a love that He would not stop in heaven without you; He would sooner die than you should perish, and He cannot endure that anything should stand between your heart's love and Himself. He is very jealous of your trust. He cannot bear that you should hew out broken cisterns, when the overflowing fountain is always free to you. He is also very jealous of your company. There should be no one with whom we converse so much as with Jesus.—Spurgeon.

No passion for souls? What dreadful lack there must be in your spiritual life.—Sel.