

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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THREE STEPS IN BACKSLIDING

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There were three steps in the declension in Peter's life which resulted in a break with Christ. First, he followed Christ at a dangerous distance—"afar off." Second, he associated with the wrong crowd. Third, he warmed by the devil's fire.

Sudden backsliding is the exception to the rule. Almost all backsliding is gradual; first, the temptation; second, the yielding; third, sinning. The serpent tempted Eve, and she listened to his voice. She thought upon the proposition, she willingly yielded, believed his reasoning, and sinned; hence the sad fall of the human race.

Temptation enters the mind, and, if harbored, and reasoned upon, will result in yielding to sin in most cases. If one would be safe, temptation is to be resisted immediately upon its presentation. "But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and, sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14, 15). It is a dangerous thing to even consider a suggestion from the devil for one moment. Eve reasoned upon the temptation presented by the serpent, then she yielded. The act was voluntary, and the whole unborn posterity of the race was ruined in the sin of Adam which began in Eve, and the present condition of the world is a logical consequence of a voluntary act.

Peter followed afar off, or at a dangerous distance from the Lord. He was tempted to change his association, and fell in with the wrong crowd, and soon sat with them around the devil's fire. Then came a crash that resulted in tears of bitterness and awful anguish of soul and deep penitence of spirit. Notice the steps: He followed afar off; he sat with them; he denied—"I know him not." The great danger today is following Christ at a dangerous distance, instead of following close up to His great warm heart, and keeping our hand in His hand. Indifference, negligence, carelessness, and a

prayerless, devotionless life, will prepare us for a change in our association. We will seek a crowd that is congenial to our heart condition. The world's crowd, then, will appeal to us. It is remarkably strange how hard it is to get one to stop in his drift toward the danger line, when once declension has begun. The world's crowd becomes fascinating to a Christian who is in a lukewarm state, and following afar off.

Being in the wrong crowd and listening to their arguments of unbelief, and imbibing their doubts, soon prepares one for the last step, which results in a crash. Warming by the devil's fire is logical, after one has taken the first two steps in backsliding. They cannot see any danger in shows of entertaining or educational features, and then comes the argument of harmless indulgence in worldly things. And, finally, it is all right to take a popular view and assume a popular attitude toward those things which once they could not even endorse, much less participate in. When the test comes, they cannot stand up for Christ, have no testimony, and, like Peter, they say, "I know him not." Immortal soul, you who have been an ardent, close follower of Christ in other days, search yourself and determine whether or not you are following the Lord at a dangerous distance, and if you are, hurriedly retrace your footsteps to safer ground.

There is a chilling wave sweeping over the church world that is cooling the ardor of many Christians, which, if we are not rescued from, will result in death. Many good Christians have taken the three steps which Peter took, and they have denied their Lord, and the land is filled with backsliders today. It is appalling! It is enough to drive the true followers of Christ to their knees for an old-fashioned revival.

The altars are barren, schools are full of destructive criticism, society is reeking with uncleanness, and we have practically a low standard of morals, and unless we have a Bible revival of Regeneration and Full Salvation, like the Wesley revivals, the days when iniquity will

be full to the brim are out yonder in the soon-coming tomorrows of our life. Oh, if the wayward, backsliding, Christ-denying followers could only get a look of Christ such as Peter got that sad night after the cock crew, which reminded him of his Lords' saying! One look from that innocent face broke his heart, and he went out and wept bitterly. In penitence he sought the reconciling face of his Lord, was pardoned and restored, and afterward comforted his brethren. Could hearts be broken and fountains of tears opened to flow, there would be a return of the backslidden to the fold, and there would be rejoicing in the house of God where silence has reigned so long. When you find a lack in interest of the Bible, in secret prayer and holy devotion, beware! It is only the beginning of a dangerous distance from Christ. Flee to Jesus! Be sure and follow up close to the heart of Jesus. Keep your experience at white heat; look well to your footsteps; and keep your eyes closed to the things impure and your ears stopped to the clamoring of earthly voices. Be sure that you know your Guide, and you will make rapid strides toward the Celestial City, and you will keep on safe grounds and always have a testimony for Christ. You will never have to say, "I know him not."

Backslider, do not take a second step if you have taken the first; if you have taken the second, do not take the third. But, if you have taken the first, second or third, return, make no delay in getting back to God. Peter returned, confessed, sought pardon and found his loving, forgiving Lord. He proved faithful unto death, and obtained a martyr's crown. Peter's Lord is your Lord and Saviour. He will pardon and restore.

Don't criticise or compromise,
Nor sit on the neutral fence,
But harmonize where it is wise,
Filled with God's love intense.

Let your supreme object be,
In thought and actions true,
Souls to win from the life of sin,
And God will take care of you.

—E. A. Farron.