

"A FALLING AWAY."

By J. B. Easton

The prediction of the Apostle Paul concerning "a falling away" of believers from the faith preceding the coming of Christ, as recorded in 2 Thess. 2:1-3, accords with the statement of Christ in Matthew 24:12, 13: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." That there are many evidences of a falling away from the faith in the present time, as well as a lamentable coldness on the part of believers is proved by the following:

1. The condition of the heathen world. Statisticians tell us although the gospel is now being preached in every tongue, the number saved in the heathen world is far below, in ratio, the increase in population among the heathen. This shows that nominal Christianity among the heathen is not keeping pace with increase in paganism and therefore must be falling away.
2. The increase in vice, lawlessness, and crime in civilized lands. Statistics are not needed to show that which can be seen by the naked eye, and is generally acknowledged by intelligent persons who have not faith. The unregenerate world recognizes that vileness and iniquity are on the increase. If the increase of wickedness does not prove a falling away in godliness among any people, then a wet season in any country is no security against a dry season; that is, both may prevail in the same territory at the same time.
3. The abominable doctrines and teachings promoted by those who call themselves children of God, and emanating from the church, is further proof of this decline. We are not here discussing the cause of this condition, although it is evident that it is the natural result of the people's turning away their ears from the truth. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Thess. 5:3, 4). Because of this God will send strong delusions upon them that the people so disposed might believe a lie and be damned. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:11, 12). Hence we have doctrines of devils taught in the church; such as doing penance for sin, and self-made atonement; works of supererogation, etc., Spiritualism, Christian Science, "falsely so-called," "second chance" theory, modernism with its denial of the divinity of Christ, the miracles of Scripture, the atonement, and many other false theories too numerous to mention. The program of modernism is to save the world without a Redeemer. Nothing but a Christless church could produce such a theory.
4. Commercialized religion pervading the church. What can be expected when the prominent men in both the laity and ministry of the church among the various denominations go into large speculations,

profiteering, seeking gilt edge premiums in making investments, etc. Is that not nibbling at the forbidden fruit and passing it around? How like laying up treasure in heaven it sounds to hear them talking on the per cent. they are getting on their money invested! Setting the heart upon material possessions blinds the eyes to spiritual values and stops the ears from hearing the voice of God; yet how quickly it is done before the individual is aware if it. How easy is it to become an extortioner in seeking gain from the world while we try to make ourselves believe we are only getting what is due us. The deceitfulness of riches is damning to the soul. When more consideration is given to finance and management than is given to souls and spirituality we may be sure the church is on the decline. Commercialized religion like veneered furniture deceives the investor and brings discredit upon those who deal in the stock. A holy church and ministry will avoid any known business transactions that would cast a reflection upon the cause they represent.

V. The substitution of social religion for the Holy Spirit, His office and work. That there is a social element in man that is to be developed and given place to in the life is not denied, but to institute mere social organizations in the church to provide a good time, for either young or old people, is a sin against God and a reflection upon Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit that will bring a withering blast upon the spirituality of any people. The many social functions of the modern church have eaten up her spirituality and caused a decadence that has corrupted her vitals. Where social life is given preeminence in the church it never fails to work spiritual death. The decline of piety among some classes may be traced directly to this evil. It has been carried so far in many instances that it has resulted in the social dance and immoral practises of young people of opposite sex, resulting in disgrace upon the church. All having its incipency in the little, so considerate, harmless church social. The writer has known such results from personal observation. The sociability resulting from the Spirit of God in His indwelling in the heart is of a holy atmosphere which tends to establishment in Christian character, rather than light, frivolous and gay behaviour.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

While a Christian man in Connecticut was dying, he groaned out, "Lost, lost!" The pastor who was at his bedside said in surprise, "I thought you were saved." "Yes," he replied, "My soul is saved, but fifty years of my life are lost." He might have been useful during that time, but now the opportunity is lost forever.—A. C. Dickson.

"Sin is the only cloud without a silver lining."

Holiness is the keeping grace, and, therefore, holiness must be the dominant note in the revival which is now so much needed. Only foolish vanity can make one think that he is safe with less than the best that the grace of God can do for him.—Sel.

SALT.

By A. J. McKinney

Much is said about the calamities which befell Jonah and those with him on the fateful journey of rebellion. It is well that heed be given that piece of history, by those who contemplate partnership of any kind with the descendants of that minor prophet. Such unequal yoking has been the ruin of many.

The antitheses, with corresponding occurrences of like results, have been found in association with the godly and the pure. We read that the house of Obededom was blessed by the presence of the ark of God. "I will not destroy it (the city) for ten's sake," saith the Judge. It is said that the day righteous Lot went out of Sodom the city was destroyed.

No doubt the ship on which Paul sailed towards Rome was saved as to the cargo of living freight because of the "salt of the earth" which composed part of the lading. Favored thus with the presence of the godly the whole company were saved. This was not the first or last time disaster on sea was averted because of praying, believing people among the passengers. "There is a Providence which shapes our ends." "Say ye to the righteous it shall be well with him." "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about . . . to deliver them." Paul "obtained promises," and one was: "Lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." Fortunate for those who sailed with such a character, rather than with one profane. As "no ship e'er sank with Christ on board," so security comes of having some of His people as passengers in our enterprises and on our journeys.

McPherson, Kansas.

A UNIQUE BEATITUDE.

The Bible pronounces blessing on the most singular conditions of heart and life. It blesses the poor in spirit; those that mourn. These are the very last conditions that carnal human nature consider blessed or happy. James makes the astonishing statement, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation. Temptation becomes then a channel of blessing. He says they are the road to "the crown of life."

Temptations are compliments from Satan. He knows the tempted man has the pearl of great price, and he seeks to steal it from him.

Temptations, therefore are not sins, as some suppose. Nor are they proofs that we are not in Divine order, or else we should have to condemn Jesus, "The Captain of our salvation," who Himself was tempted. We may overcome every temptation. No man was ever compelled to yield to temptation, for the Apostle says, "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man, but God is faithful who will with the temptation make a way to escape."

We believe when we get to glory and look back over the race we have run, we shall see how temptations have been the means of great spiritual enrichment, and we shall feel like saying, "Blessed temptations."—Way of Holiness.