

WHEN SAUL LOST GOD!

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"God is departed from me, and answereth me no more." 1 Sam. 28:15.

When King Saul lost out with God, he became the piteous example of a miserable backslider. His career is a solemn warning to ministers and laymen, to stand true and be obedient.

When Saul lost God he was no longer "little in his own eyes." He was perhaps more in his own thoughts than formerly. He not only thought Himself a greater man, but probably thought of himself a greater portion of his time. When a soul begins to think of himself too much, his humility is only an imagination. Humility is not a disposition to "run yourself down," and certainly not to "brag yourself up;" but is best expressed by the term "self-forgetfulness." When Saul was thinking of how he could best serve God and the nation, he was then little in his own eyes, and little time was he in his own thoughts. When you see yourself too long, the vision of Christ will shrink. But when you see yourself small, but see a great Christ, you can say, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me."

When Saul lost God, he sought to usurp more authority, not only to be king but to take the place of Samuel the priest. He thought Samuel too slow, so he took the prophet's place of leadership. When the church "pillars" lose God, they will begin to dictate to the pastor or prophet in the Church.

When Saul lost God, he would not resign his position. When the prophet said, "God has taken the kingdom from you and given it to one more worthy than thou," true repentance would have said, "I resign my place and will become only a soldier in the ranks or a worker in the camp. I acquiesce in God's estimation of me, that I am not worthy to be king." When a minister of God falls into immorality, he seldom if ever repents. His great concern seems to be to retain his credentials, and his standing in the conference or assembly. The best sign of true repentance is a feeling of utter unworthiness to be a preacher, to repent and save his own soul, and to have a fear lest he be overcome if he should be thrust into the temptations of a public minister of the gospel. That backslider preacher who is worrying and crying over the loss of credentials is not truly penitent. For true credentials are from God, the church giving paper ones to recognize what God has already given. The first and best sign that Saul meant what he said when he uttered the words, "I have sinned and done wickedly," would have been for him to call the prophet, resign his commission and declare allegiance to David. He might then have been forgiven, and have become a real example of grace. David took the right way after his fall into immorality, when he truly "bawled out the fifty-first Psalm," humbled himself in sackcloth and ashes and confessed his sin to God.

When Saul lost God, he tried to purge out the prophets that did not speak to his command and notion. When a church member loses God he will seek to vote out the pastor that reproves him. A high officer will seek to weed out and skid away the other members of the conference or assembly that do not subscribe to all his program. "Slay the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with David." 1 Sam. 22:17. Whenever that spirit of purging out the political opponents

begins to work in the church official it is a sign that he has lost God, and his holiness needs to be fumigated.

When Saul lost God, he went to a spiritualist medium to find out about his future. The miracle of God frightened both the witch and the King. What a sad picture when one goes off after seances, weird religious rites and cults, to find again the blessed Lord.

When Saul lost God, God was faithful to warn him and he could have repented and have been restored to favor. Had he handed in his commission, presented himself as a sinner at the throne of God, felt his unworthiness and his weakness, he might have been forgiven and restored, if not to the office, which might have again been a snare to him, at least to divine favor and blessing.

When any soul loses out with God, there is a way back. A broken and a contrite heart will touch the mercy of God. A deep sense of distrust in his own moral strength, will not only lead to confession of acts of sin, but a trembling with fear lest we again fail through self-dependence. He will be glad to renounce office and take a higher place in God's sight, that of a worshipper of the true God—the highest position in the church. He may tremble in his own weakness, but he will find a place on the eternal Rock of Ages, which cannot move.

Soul, that has lost God, take the humble way of true repentance, seek no position only to be right with God, resign even a position that might throw you into temptation, and remember even God forgives, and speaks peace to your soul. You may, and it is a good thing, to tremble with self-distrust, and work out your final salvation with fear and trembling; though you may tremble on the Rock; the Rock will not shake.—Selected.

HOW TO USE YOUR BIBLE

1. Own a good print, well-bound Bible, a concordance.
2. Set a portion of each day sacredly for Bible study. Let your body go unfed rather than your immortal soul.
3. Choose an hour for study when your mind is clearest.
4. Study with a humble, teachable mind—not to see what you can make it teach, but what God meant for it to teach (Matthew 11:25).
5. Pray for the guidance of the Author of the Book (Psa. 119:18; John 14:26; 1 John 2:27).
6. Read the whole Bible through consecutively, again and again (Luke 24:27).
7. Study, not skim; weigh each word; look up all references and read them carefully; search the Scriptures with the text-book and concordance to see how God handles such words and subjects as "Sin," "Salvation," "The Cross," "The Blood," "Repentance," "Faith," etc. Analyze books of the Bible verse by verse, writing down all the teachings of each verse (Josh. 1:8).
8. Read it as the Word of God (1 Thess. 2:13). Submit your judgment unhesitatingly to its teachings; believe all its promises; heed all its warnings; obey all its commands always and at once. Remember, it is God's message to you.
9. Study and accept, not only what you like, but all God has to say (John 7:17).
10. Commit to memory at least one verse each day (Psa. 119:11).
11. Carry a Bible or Testament with you for the improvement of spare minutes (Eph. 5:16; Acts 8:28).—Sel.

Temperance Column

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging. Whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.—Prov. 1:20.

SURELY AN ENEMY HAS DONE THIS!

He was an Australian boy of about 22 years of age. He wore the uniform of a soldier in the ranks. Something terrible happened to him. There he lay, slumped in the railway carriage seat, breathing heavily, unconscious. His face almost blood-red, his tongue protruding between hot, parched lips.

It was very evident that he was poisoned. Not long ago he had pledged his life, if need be, in defense of his country. But there a tragic figure on the carriage seat, infinitely pathetic, he would have been absolutely helpless to raise a finger on behalf of his country if at that hour an enemy had struck at his home-land.

On the floor by him was a bottle, half empty. It was evident that from this bottle he had drunk the poison that rendered him helpless.

His own government, in face of spending large amounts of money to make him fit as a soldier, had sold some one the right to sell the poison to the lad in uniform.

Had a German, an Italian or a Japanese administered to the lad some drug that put him in that condition it would probably have started a riot and the "enemy alien" would have been fortunate to escape with his life.

If a fifth columnist had been responsible for his condition, the police force and all the mighty power of Government would have sought out the offender and have dealt drastically with him.

The probability is that some "patriotic" publican, with a flag flying over his premises had sold the boy the stuff and with the permission of the citizens of Australia.

We know a church member who would not even sign a petition to protect this lad, and many others, against this home foe by restricting the hours of sale of this beverage.

We know a patriotic lady who served the same poison slightly deluted, on her table to young people and so cultivated an appetite for it.

We know a minister who, fully aware of the terrible devastation wrought by this stuff amongst the youths of his community never so much as raised his voice against the traffic.

We know good citizens who were never satisfied till this very poison was put on sale in the military camp amongst these lads.

A whole nation has sinned against that soldier lad administering a poison and leaving him helpless and debauched in that railway carriage.

"Surely an enemy has done this."—Forward.

IF THE LIQUOR SELLER TOLD THE TRUTH

I sell false joy, meaningless laughter,
I sell incompetence the morning after;
I sell headache, muzzy brain,
I sell little children's pain.
I sell uncertainty of weaving feet,
I sell illusions of the fine and sweet.
I sell slavery, I let down bars,
I make dirtiness look like bright stars
I sell you nothing, an awful lot,
And make you pay for it with all you've got.
—American Issue