

251. The Chief Cause of Backsliding.

Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor. 10, 12.

Many who were confirmed at the Lord's altar have forsaken it and now worship the idols of this present world. The chief cause of this backsliding on the part of those who thus broke their confirmation vow is this: They are not much concerned about their immortal souls. They look upon confirmation as some kind of festivity, the only thing about it worrying them being the examination. That over, they have no further cares. Others regard the day of confirmation with greater seriousness. Their hearts burn with love for Christ Crucified. They hate sin and worldliness. They deprecate the thought that they should ever turn recreants. They think themselves equal to any temptation; and why? They rely upon their own strength and reason. They trust in themselves.

Beware of relying upon your own prudence and power in a spirit of conceited self-confidence! Whoever trusts in himself is half lost already. Powerful and treacherous temptations are round about you, and your sinful flesh is a tempter within you. The Spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak. You are now believers; but be not deceived. Where grace has become powerful, the wickedness of the heart is sure to assert itself more powerfully than ever. Where one devil is driven out, seven will try to reenter. You will not walk a step without danger of falling. You will not live a minute in which Satan is not lying in wait for you. He will spy out your weakness and cater to your sinful taste. What is evil he will know how to render pleasant; what is good, unpleasant. Forbidden things he will make easy; your duty, hard. The broad way he will make smooth for you; the narrow way, thorny. He was able to persuade our parents when they were still in the state of innocence to disobey God, to turn David into an adulterer and murderer, a disciple of Christ into a traitor. Left to your own strength, you are not only half lost, but wholly. Do not, therefore, trust in yourselves. *Self-confidence is the chief cause of backsliding.* "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." The spiritual sleeper is in great danger. Keep the Sword of the Spirit shiny, ready for instant use.

Prayer.

Almighty God, merciful Father, Thou dost call me and all sinners to repentance in the words: "Return, thou backsliding Israel, and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord, thy God." This voice of repentance and grace daily reaches my ear and my heart. Grant, O Lord, that I may not rest secure. Let me not be like a man sleeping at the edge of a precipice, not knowing that his next move will shatter him; nor like a sentinel, who lays down his arms and sits down to rest and sleep, while the enemies are approaching. Let my heart watch and pray without ceasing. Amen.

I lift my heart to Thee, Savior divine,
For Thou art all to me, and I am Thine.
By Thine own cords of love, so sweetly wound
Around me, I to Thee am closely bound.

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries. You may contact Rev. Ley at: pastorley@leychalet.com.

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