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THE BACKSLIDER AND HIS RECOVERY
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A Forecast of its Future From Bible Prophecy
Bible Doctrines
Lessons in Daniel
Various Other Writings

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PREFACE

Backsliders constitute a major problem in all divisions of the church. At camp meeting altars and in church revivals backsliders are generally in evidence. Some are acute cases and some are chronic.

In view of the fact that backsliders are such a common problem it is remarkable how little has been written about how to deal with them. Partly because of the scarcity of such instruction and partly because of confusion about the subject, the author is contributing the following pages in the hope that it may help both backsliders and those who undertake to help to restore them.

The author does not claim to have solved all the problems concerning backsliders, but feels it may be helpful to present some facts he has observed and some conclusions at which he has arrived in the course of over fifty years in revival meetings, camp meetings, and as a teacher of the Bible in various schools for the training of ministers and Christian workers.

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01 -- THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

In order to approach intelligently the subject of the backslider and his recovery, it is well to first consider what constitutes a normal Christian experience.

When we speak of anything as normal we mean that it resembles the norm from which it originated, a reproduction of what was potentially in the norm itself. For instance, if we plant a kernel of corn, we expect it will produce corn.

Now the norm of Christian experience is Christ Himself. He evidently spoke of Himself when He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Following out of the implications suggested by corn producing corn, might we not expect that the fruit of Christ's death will resemble the original norm?

In other words, might we not expect Christians to be reproductions of the Christ life if entirely normal? The following passages of Scripture appear to bear this out. "As He is so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17). "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:16). "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." (1 John 3:3).

Why then should we not expect, once a person has had the norm of the Christian life planted in him in regeneration, that he will progress in experience until all the graces implicit in

the norm will be manifest in him? Should not walking in the light lead him to such a consecration as will result in his experiencing sanctification, whether he ever hears the doctrine preached or not: and will not this result, as he grows in grace, in the ripe experience of a mature Christian? There have undoubtedly been such cases, and there might be many more were it not for interfering causes.

Viewed from the standpoint of the potentialities that are deposited in the norm of the Christian life, it might seem as though a person once saved should be always saved, and never backslide, and this is certainly possible. That God is able to keep that which is committed to Him is a precious doctrine. But when the doctrine called "eternal security" is viewed as insurance of eternal life, no matter what one does after regeneration or sanctification, then it becomes a pernicious doctrine, and may be construed as a license to sin.

Backsliding does not result from any weakness in the norm of Christian experience planted in the believer's heart, but is brought about by the interference of other causes that war against the new life received in regeneration. It is these that we shall now examine.

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02 -- CAUSES OF BACKSLIDING

There are at least two main causes of backsliding. One is neglecting to keep vows made when converted or sanctified. The other is failure to walk in increasing light that comes after these definite experiences.

The sinner when seeking salvation is generally more occupied with his past than his future. The sins he has committed concern him. These must be confessed and forsaken. This means that he does not intend to commit those sins any more. If he returns to his old sins he becomes a backslider.

The regenerated person seeking the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the sanctification that results, is generally more occupied with his future than his past. Instead of forsaking bad things as the sinner does, he is consecrating his good things to the Lord's service which virtually mean that he is making vows as to what he will do after the Lord sanctifies him.

Now, if the sinner returns to his former sins, or if the sanctified does not keep his vows, backsliding will result unless there is immediate confession and return to the path of duty. A sudden slip, without premeditation, need not result in backsliding, if confessed as soon as realized. Additional light, or a prompting to service should be immediately responded to, and if not, as soon as one sees his error, he should immediately correct his mistake, and if he does so he does not become a backslider. Neglect of these things, or repeating them, soon leads to a backslidden state that will require sincere repentance before he is restored to favor with God. Too often people wait for the next revival before seeking restoration, and in the meantime they become confirmed backsliders.

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03 -- UNSAVED PEOPLE NOT BACKSLIDERS

There is a class of people sometimes called backsliders who do not properly belong to that class. They are professors who have never been saved, though having claimed to be and possibly are counted as such by others. They have been at the altar in some revival meeting, made a few resolutions, felt better, and perhaps have been admitted to some church. But they soon find that they are unable to keep their resolutions, and soon lapse back into their former habits, and are counted as backsliders. But, since they never were born again, only merely decided to be Christians in their own strength, they cannot properly be called backsliders. Again and again people of this class are found at the altar. Nearly every revival meeting brings out seekers of this kind.

Each time they get to the same place, come to the same obstacle, but never fully confess and repent. They are not in the proper sense of the word backsliders; they are merely chronic seekers. These people need to be dealt with as unconverted sinners, and made to see their need of initial salvation. When they come to the hindering obstacle they need to confess and forsake it that they may be saved.

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04 -- DISTINCTION OF TERMS

In order to clearly understand the different stages of Christian experience one must distinguish clearly the meaning and difference of various terms used in speaking of spiritual things. The only terms we need to notice particularly in this discussion are innocency, regeneration, sanctification, and justification.

INNOCENCY is the state of an infant before coming to the age of accountability: before it knowingly and willfully commits sin. In this state the child is justified in the sight of God. It has never willfully resisted either law or grace. This may be termed passive justification for the reason the child in innocency is justified without any action of its own. To be sure the child has inbred sin and this at times will produce conduct that may be termed unlawful, but the child does not incur guilt until it knowingly and willfully does what it knows is wrong.

REGENERATION is the experience into which a sinner, whether child or adult, enters when he confesses and forsakes his sins, believes effectively in the atonement of Jesus Christ on Calvary, and is born again. This person is justified in the sight of God. This may be termed active justification for in this case the individual wills to do the will of God to the extent of his

knowledge. This experience is manifested by an amendment of the outward life consistent with the inward experience.

SANCTIFICATION is the experience of a person, who, having been made aware of the presence in his heart of inbred sin, seeks the baptism with the Holy Spirit for the destruction of the carnal nature. If he moves into the experience without backing up on the light received, he does not lose his justification, for he moves into the advanced experience without a break in his relation to God.

JUSTIFICATION is a term that has to do with a person's relation to God, whether in innocency, regeneration, or sanctification. It means to be right or just in the sight of God. This term is sometimes used inaccurately as meaning the same as regeneration. While it is true that a person enters into a justified relation with God when regenerated, yet that relation cannot be retained unless the individual goes on into the experience of sanctification as soon as he knows it is his duty to do so. Justification is a condition that runs through all the stages of experience from innocency to sanctification.

In order to make this plain let us consider innocency, regeneration, and sanctification as planes of experience, and let justification be considered as a cord let down from heaven indicating relation to God.

The innocent child, so to speak, can keep hold of this cord until it willfully sins. When it sins this cord is broken and the child falls in experience to a plane we may call condemnation. On confession of sin and faith in Christ the sinner is regenerated. However, he cannot reach the cord of justification from the former plane of innocency. But from the fact that he is now on the higher plane of regeneration he can again reach the cord and is again justified in the sight of God. Regeneration has restored him to right relation with God. From this it is evident that a person cannot be justified on a plane of experience that is below his sense of duty.

If a regenerated person walks in the light, sooner or later, often without hearing preaching on the subject, he will discover the need of another work of grace. If he then consecrates his all to the Lord he will receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit and thereby be sanctified, thus rising to the still higher plane of experience, and will retain his hold on the cord of justification.

One quite common cause of backsliding is when a person who has been regenerated comes to the light of sanctification and neglects to go on into the experience. Such a person loses his justification, for the added light rejected makes it impossible for him to retain his hold, so to speak, on his cord of justification. In order to retain his hold on the cord he must move up to the higher plane of experience.

Now, when a backslider of this type again gets under conviction and becomes a seeker, he must, of course, ask the Lord to forgive him for failing to go on into the experience of sanctification when he before had light on it. But if, after he had received forgiveness for that sin, he leaves the altar without going on to seek sanctification, he would repeat the same sin again. In fact he cannot lay hold of the cord of justification until he reaches the plane of sanctification.

In this connection let us consider the state of a person who has backslidden from the experience of sanctification. Unfortunately this is possible, as strange as it may seem. Let us start with this question: Can a person be justified below the plane of experience from which he has fallen? If our illustration of the cord let down from heaven is a true illustration, it should be plain to any one that no one falling from the plane of sanctification can be right with God until he is restored to the plane from whence he fell. He cannot lay hold of that cord from any lower plane of experience.

Again, if the person who has backslid because he would not go on to sanctification cannot be justified again until he obtains forgiveness for his previous neglect and then goes on to sanctification, how can the person who has once been sanctified and then backslid be justified until he is restored to his former position? There is this difference in the two cases: the one who did not go on when he should have done so had two things to do to get right -- seek forgiveness for not going on when the light came, and then seek the blessing he had not accepted, while the one who was once sanctified has only to seek forgiveness for the sin that made him backslide. Here is where many people get in confusion.

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05 -- A CASE TO ILLUSTRATE

Years ago the writer was connected with an association that held the view that a backslider from sanctification could get back into the experience only by first being justified, as it was called, in one trip to the altar, and then, some time later, seek to be again sanctified.

We had in those days an upper room where every Wednesday afternoon we resorted as a group to pray. One day one of our young men confessed he had backslidden. He had been a beautiful character in his sanctified experience, and it was very grievous to all of us that he had lost out. After a season of prayer with him he felt relieved and believed that he was justified again in the first work of grace.

But this was not the end of the matter. On a later Wednesday afternoon he said he desired to be sanctified again; that he was not satisfied with living in the first work of grace, that he believed he had received. He prayed and we all prayed for him that he might again be sanctified, but to no avail. He was unable to secure any sense of restoration such as he felt he should have. From that time on week after week this young man was a seeker for sanctification. He could not understand, neither could any of us, why it was so hard for him to get again the experience he had once enjoyed. He was looking for a manifestation similar to what he had received when originally sanctified, but it did not come.

I had with the others of that association held the theory that one backslidden from sanctification must come back by two distinct steps -- first be justified, as we called it, and then be sanctified -- and I had worked with the young man on that basis, but with no satisfactory results. His case was getting desperate, and we feared he would become mentally unbalanced in the struggle.

One day I remembered a statement I had heard a prominent Bible teacher make to the effect that a person once truly sanctified, if he slipped, the forgiveness of the thing over which he backslid restored him to the experience from whence he had fallen. I had not accepted the theory, though I had given it some consideration in view of the respect I had for the said teacher. But, since everything else we had tried failed, one day, when all but the young man and myself had left the upper room, I decided to approach the subject from that angle in an endeavor to help the unhappy young man.

Going over to the bench where he was kneeling, I secured his attention and in effect said, "Suppose we consider the end of the bench here to represent the time you were born into the world. As you moved along in your life you committed sins now and then, but one day you wearied of your sins and sought and found forgiveness. Every sin committed before that time was forgiven, never to be remembered against you again. Let us put a mark there." Moving my hand along the bench to represent the progress of time and experience, I said, "Here is the place where you were sanctified. So everything is clear before that, is it not?" The Lord had nothing against him previous to that event.

He appeared to be seeing things in a better light. "But, as you moved along, you came to a place where you sinned by commission or omission. Let us put a mark here representing the only thing the Lord had against you that day you sought forgiveness, some weeks ago. Did God forgive that sin when you asked Him to do so?" He assented that He believed He did. "Then," said I, "if the Lord forgave all He had against you, what more is there for you to do but to accept His forgiveness and believe you are restored to the place from whence you fell?"

The young man's face immediately lighted up, and he sprang to his feet with a sigh of relief, and ran downstairs shouting that he had the victory, and for days he lived under the manifest blessing of God. The last I knew he was still living in the grace of sanctification.

It is evident from the experience of this young man that when God forgave him the only sin of which he was guilty He justified him, and, since no one can be justified below His light, He must also have restored to him the grace of sanctification. While his heart was right, his mind was obsessed with a theory that kept him from realizing and enjoying what he had received. This works only in cases where the individual has had an unmistakable experience of sanctification. There are too many who have professed sanctification who, though they accepted the doctrine of sanctification, did not receive the heart experience. These, of course, can seek sanctification only after being forgiven of their false profession.

I had not known at that time, nor did I know for some time afterward, that John Wesley, who is considered as speaking the last word in matters of this kind, held this view of restoring backsliders from sanctification.

* * * * *

John Wesley in his sermon entitled "A Call to Backsliders," (Vol. II, pages 247-48), in the latter part of the sermon has this to say: "But have any that had fallen from sanctifying grace, been restored to the blessing they had lost? This also is a point of experience: and we have had the opportunity of repeating our observations during a considerable course of years, and from the one end of the kingdom to the other.

And, first, we have known a large number of persons, of every age and sex, from early childhood, to extreme old age, who have given all the proofs, which the nature of the thing admits, that they were sanctified throughout; 'cleansed from all pollution both of flesh and spirit;' that they 'loved the Lord their God with all their heart, and mind, and soul, and strength;' that they continually 'presented' their souls and bodies 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God;' in consequence of which they 'rejoiced evermore, prayed without ceasing, and in every thing gave thanks.' And this, and no other, is what we believe to be true, scriptural sanctification.

"Secondly, it is a common thing for those who are thus sanctified, to believe they cannot fall: to suppose themselves 'pillars in the temple of God, that shall go out no more.' Nevertheless we have seen some of the strongest of them, after a time, moved from their steadfastness. Sometimes suddenly, but oftener by slow degrees, they have yielded to temptation: pride, or anger, or foolish desires have again sprung up in their hearts. Nay, sometimes they have utterly lost the life of God, and sin hath regained dominion over them.

"Yet, thirdly, several of these, after being thoroughly sensible of their fall, and deeply ashamed before God, have again been filled with His love, and not only perfected therein, but established, strengthened and settled. They have received the blessing they had before, with abundant increase. Nay, it is remarkable, that many who had fallen either from justifying or from sanctifying grace, and so deeply fallen that they could hardly be ranked among the servants of God, have been restored, (but seldom till they had been shaken, as it were, over the mouth of hell,) and that, very frequently in an instant, to all that they had lost. They have at once, recovered both a consciousness of His favor and the experience of the pure love of God. In one moment they received anew, both the remission of sins, and a lot among them that are sanctified."

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07 -- MORE RECENT TESTIMONIES

John Wesley has been cited as an authority for what we have advocated in previous pages. But we have other Holiness preachers who have advocated the same more recently. We have in our possession a manuscript written by the late evangelist C. W. Ruth, which came into our possession before his death with privilege to use as desired. We are printing it here because we believe it has a message that will be profitable to all Holiness people.

* * *

Restoration To Sanctification -- By C. W. Ruth

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I John 1:9

To whom was the aforesaid promise given? Unmistakably to Christians, for the writer says it is "BECAUSE your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake," and "BECAUSE ye have known Him that is from the beginning," and "BECAUSE ye have overcome the wicked one," and "BECAUSE ye are strong," and "BECAUSE the word of God abideth in you," (See I John 2:12-14), that he is writing them. If this passage is applied to unregenerated sinners, there can be no reason for the Wesleyan teaching of a second crisis in order to obtain a clean heart; for if all sins have been forgiven and the heart is cleansed from "ALL unrighteousness," on the single requirement of confession, surely the heart would then be clean, and there would be no occasion for a second work of grace. A cleansing from "ALL unrighteousness," must necessarily include ALL that is "unrighteous," which would include the original, or in-born sin -- for it certainly is "unrighteous."

I am aware that there is the "washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5) in pardon, which doubtless removes acquired defilement resulting from our life in sin, -- and I have thus explained this "cleanseth" of this 9th verse, in connection with pardon: nevertheless, the little word "ALL" from ALL that is "unright" has left a question mark in my mind regarding this interpretation, -- knowing that the "original sin" is not cleansed away coetaneous with the forgiveness of sins. Hence, as it seems to me, this particular promise, with just the one requirement of, "If we confess," -- assuring both forgiveness and cleansing, -- seeing it was not spoken to sinners, in reality does not apply to sinners, -- as it is frequently quoted.

Now suppose we keep in mind the context and remember that he is writing to young converts, whose "sins are forgiven," and are "strong" and "abiding" in the Lord, and see if from his "message" (ch.1:5) we may not find his objective in writing, when he says in verse 7, "if we walk in the Light," (assuming they are in the light) "as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," and as history tells us there were Gnostics, who denied the fact of "original sin," he goes right on to say in the 8th verse, "if we say that we have no sin, (not sins) we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

It is noteworthy that in both the 7th and the 8th verses he speaks of sin as a unit, (in the singular number) -- thus indicating that although their sins have been forgiven, they still have need of walking in the light, in order that they may receive cleansing from this "sin" as a unit. And then, after their sins are forgiven, and they have walked in the light of the 7th verse and have been cleansed from the "sin" of the 8th verse, he proceeds to give them the 9th verse, and the first verse of the second chapter, (which invariably is termed an emergency promise) -- assuring them that "if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (Christ is never spoken of as an "Advocate" for the unregenerate sinner).

Since it was written to those whose sins are forgiven, as an emergency promise, why may not the 9th verse of the first chapter also have been given as an emergency promise, as there is only one verse intervening, and seeing it was written as a continuous letter, and follows the cleansing from the sin of the 7th and 8th verses? Does not this give continuity of thought on the part of the writer, and fully harmonize in consecutive thought all these verses, both of the first and second

chapter? And then it will be seen that there is no occasion nor necessity to read into that 9th verse what is not there, in order to sustain the Wesleyan teaching of a second work of grace. In fact this first chapter fully sustains the Wesleyan teaching, it insists on a cleansing from "sin" on the part of those whose sins "are forgiven."

I am aware that the method of recovery and restoration for those who have been wholly sanctified, and afterward have lapsed into sin, is a very controverted subject on the part of good men. However, we should like to ask what can such a person do, other than to "confess" (uncover) his sins? And what is between such a person and his God but his sins which have taken place since he was sanctified? Surely God does not bring up all the sins again of his previous life, so that the repentant man would need to go over all those sins again in restitution, etc., as he did when he was previously saved.

In seeking to be restored, what less could he do than he had previously done when he was both converted and sanctified? Could he withhold part of the consecration, and yet be justified? In other words, could a person be fully justified while living back of the light he had previously received, and the experience he had previously known? And as God undertook the work of restoration, would He simply restore him in part, and not restore to him all he had lost? We think not. And since there is nothing else such a person could do, but "confess" (uncover) (Prov. 28:13) his sins, we think he may claim the promise of the 9th verse, of both forgiveness and cleansing from all unrighteousness, on this single requirement that he "confess his sins." What more (or less) can he do?

I append here the teaching of Mr. Wesley on this subject confirming this teaching by an appeal to "experience."

(Since Wesley's teaching has been given on a previous page we do not repeat it here, as it is an excerpt from the same sermon.) C. W. Ruth further gives the opinion of another staunch Holiness evangelist who has passed on, like himself, to await the resurrection of the body as follows:

* * *

Teaching Of M. L. Haney

"Here is also the teaching of Bro. M. L. Haney, who was such a staunch Holiness evangelist for about 75 years. In his book "The Inheritance Restored," page 283, he says:

"May the grace of entire sanctification be lost? Undoubtedly it may. What are the most fruitful causes of losing the blessing? The taking back of something we have consecrated, failure to keep up with added light, and the refusal to testify as to what God has wrought in us. If we LOSE THE BLESSING, can we be restored by a single act of faith, or must we again be first justified and then sanctified? The backslider will be restored from that state, when the sins he has committed since he was sanctified are all washed away, and that may be done by a single act of faith, precisely the same as is true of justification.

"When the justified soul falls, his restoration does not depend on the removal of sins which were once forgiven but on the adjustment of what has transpired since his justification. If his fall has been occasioned by a single wrong act, his restoration depends solely on the removal of that single act of wrong. Restoration to the sanctified state is inevitable, the moment the guilt and pollution which have accrued since our sanctification are all washed away. If but one sin has been committed, when that one sin is forgiven, and our nature purified from its stain, we stand as before it was committed."

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08 -- SUPPLEMENTARY SUBJECTS

In view of the fact that very likely questions will rise in the minds of readers of the foregoing pages, I think it may be helpful to consider some questions likely to be asked. I am therefore appending some discussion that may be profitable.

* * *

Most Seekers Backsliders

Any one who has dealt with seekers at camp meeting altars or in church revivals during the past few decades must have been impressed with the percentage of the seekers who are backsliders. While we still find children experiencing initial salvation, the number of adult sinners being saved is discouragingly small. In a large camp meeting the writer attended some years ago, a person who had attended that camp several consecutive years, told me that among all the numerous seekers at the altar that year there were only two who were not "repeaters." That is to say, all but two persons seeking that year had been seekers there in previous years. This seems to be a common experience in other camps.

* * *

Classes Of Backsliders

There are different types of backsliders, or persons who are classed as such. Some, as before mentioned, are chronic seekers who never did get a clear witness of their salvation. Some have made vows at the altar at one revival that they have never kept and are again convicted at the next revival they attend. Some people are held up in this way for years, too cowardly or reluctant to make some confession or restitution they know must be made before they will have a clear experience. Each time they say they will attend to it this time, but, in many cases, the vow is not kept, and the next revival finds them in the same condition.

Some persons get confused in their experience at a revival or camp meeting and go to the altar and are counted as backsliders, perhaps count themselves as such. Such generally get cleared up, but some seem to get worse tangled up after going to the altar, depending, perhaps, on how they were dealt with by the workers at the altar.

It is a common experience for well-saved people to get new light at a revival, especially if an evangelist they have never heard before is preaching. Some such get so disturbed that they doubt their experience and go to the altar as though they were backsliders. This is not always necessary, though it may be helpful to some.

Misfortunes, losses, bereavements, disappointments, sometimes cause Christians to question the goodness of the Lord until they get in darkness spiritually, and some totally backslide by judging the Lord by feeble sense. To judge the Lord with unfairness will always bring darkness. It is virtually telling the Lord you know more than He does what is good for your soul.

Getting confused with unsound doctrine is another cause of backsliding. This is very serious, for such a person often thinks he has entered into an advanced spiritual state by taking up with some cult that emphasizes some point out of Scriptural balance. It is not uncommon for such persons to fall into strange temptations that lead them into sinful practices.

Over-confidence causes some people to backslide. All Christians need to heed the warning of the Apostle, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (I Corinthians 10:12).

The following are some types of backsliders, and the reasons for their backsliding. The list is probably not complete, but only representative.

* * *

False Condemnation

Some persons are counted, and perhaps count themselves, backsliders, who are not, but have fallen under a sense of false condemnation. Unfortunately some evangelists, consciously or unconsciously, make statements or give illustrations that are calculated to get people confused. It appears that some are too anxious to fill the altar with seekers, and thus make a reputation for themselves. I heard of one who is reported to have said, after one of his revivals, that he got all the church members at the altar as seekers. There are times, doubtless, when it is well for all the church members to gather at the altar, but to count them backsliders because they do so is a misrepresentation.

* * *

Stepping In The Light

We question the necessity of every person going to the altar because he has received additional light in a revival. It may be wise for some to do so, especially if it is light he has had for some time and neglected to walk in it.

But if a person has been walking in all the light he has had and he gets additional light under preaching, it is his privilege to walk right along with the preacher and step in the light as it comes to him, and amend his ways accordingly. It may help him to testify in the meeting that he has received light he expects to walk in.

Some people who have had the experience of sanctification without questioning, under radical preaching give up all they have had and take their places as unsanctified seekers. This is likely to become a habit to be repeated under some other evangelist. Keep all you have and step in the light of added truth.

* * *

Does One Slip Make A Backslider?

There is a difference between a premeditated act that is wrong and a sudden slip under aggravating circumstances. A person who plans to do something on purpose to injure another and deliberately carries out his intention is certainly in a backslidden condition. But there are sudden aggravating circumstances that come upon a person, and in a sudden moment of annoyance he may say words that are not kind. Under such circumstances the person who has spoken unadvisedly with his lips will, sooner or later, seek any one injured by what he has said, and seek pardon; he will also seek God's pardon.

In the interval between the time he said the unkind word and the time he seeks pardon, can he be declared a backslider? We think not. We believe there is provision made for such in the atonement.

We may illustrate it by what is known in civil law as "suspended sentence." For instance, a man is arrested for stealing a loaf of bread. The theft is confessed in court. Investigation brings out the fact that the man has no criminal record, that it is his first offence. Furthermore there were extenuating circumstances. His family had no bread, and he had no money. The loaf of bread had fallen off the bread truck as it passed his house. Instead of informing the driver, he appropriated the loaf. The judge, after taking all the conditions into consideration, sentences the man to thirty days in jail, but suspends the sentence, and the man does not go to jail. If he does not repeat his stealing after thirty days the sentence is canceled. But, if in the course of the thirty days he is again arrested and it appears that he is a confirmed thief, the sentence goes into effect. Under the suspended sentence he does not lose his liberty or any of the privileges of his citizenship.

May there not be in God's jurisprudence a similar provision whereby a man suddenly overtaken in a fault may be given time to prove whether or not he has set his course to continue in evil or to renounce the thing he has done and make proper restitution? Is not the emergency text cited by C. W. Ruth a provision of this kind? The text is I John 2:1, and reads as follows: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." It is plain that this text is addressed to persons who are children of God, and the term "any man" is intended to apply to any person who is a child of God. We say this is an emergency text, but it is well to realize that emergency provisions are not for every day use. Let us illustrate.

Some years ago the writer had occasion to ride on a river steamer on the Hudson river from Albany to New York City. In looking over the equipment of the steamer I observed in various places life preservers with instructions how to use them in case of an emergency. Not one of them

was used on the trip. The steamship company was not running steamers in order to drown people. In fact they did not expect to have any shipwrecks. But, in case the ship should strike a rock or snag and be in danger of sinking, they had made provision for such an emergency.

The life preservers were not for every day use. In like manner it is not God's purpose that His people should sin, as made plain in the first part of the verse quoted, but, in case a child of God is overtaken in a sudden temptation, provision is made for his safety until he can recover himself. The life preservers were not a substitute for the ship. One could not go from Albany to New York City in one of them. But they were intended to keep a person from drowning until he could get either to shore or to another ship. While they were a great comfort to the passenger thrown into the water, no one would want to be in one of them any longer than necessary.

If left too long in one with no other help the unfortunate passenger would eventually perish. So no one has any right to rest on an emergency text any longer than it takes to wake up to his predicament and seek complete restoration. A loyal citizen of the United States could not be in good standing on a suspended sentence all the time. There are limits to emergency provisions.

We read of a wicked railroad engineer who was saved. One day an aggravating thing occurred and under the sudden temptation he uttered an oath, just as he had been accustomed to do before he was saved. His fireman, who had been watching him, grinned at him, as much as to say "I thought your religion would not keep." The first time he had occasion to stop his engine he jumped out in the snow, got on his knees and asked the Lord to forgive him, and climbed back in his engine a restored Christian.

What was his condition in the interval between the time he inadvertently took God's name in vain and the time he prayed through? Is not this the interval the Advocate cares for? Every one does not as quickly see their error as this engineer did, but, if, when they see their condition they immediately seek forgiveness, has not the Advocate cared for their case awaiting their repentance? But, it is plain that any one cannot live long on an emergency text. It is only in the interval between the time the inadvertent sin is committed and the time when one awakens to what he has done and seeks forgiveness.

We are of the opinion that many people lose out in their experience who need not to have done so. In an unguarded moment they did what they afterward saw was wrong. They think all is over; that they have gone completely back to their old life, the devil condemns them, and, giving up, they go back into sin. At the next revival, when approached by some one desirous of seeing them reclaimed, they say they tried it once and could not hold out, so there is no use trying again. They may be persuaded finally to go to the altar and seek and find forgiveness, but, unless instructed to guard against the next inadvertent word or act, may repeat the same painful experience of losing out over one inadvertent act.

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Baptism And Re-Anointing

There is an initial baptism with the Holy Spirit, and there are later anointings of the Spirit. This is shown by the experience of the disciples. Jesus told the disciples as He was leaving them, "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." This was what they received on the day of Pentecost when it says, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Some time later, after they had experienced persecution from temple officials, they had a prayer meeting in which they asked the Lord, "that with all boldness they may speak Thy word." As a result of that prayer meeting it is stated, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

This was a re-anointing. They had not backslidden in the interval since Pentecost. These re-anointings evidently result in increased power. In the disciples' case boldness was added to them. The baptism with the Holy Spirit cleanses the heart from inbred sin. Subsequent fillings should not be called baptisms as the word baptism carries with it the idea of cleansing. Under normal conditions there will be increase of power with each re-anointing.

Let us illustrate. When we first put electricity in our dwelling we lighted only certain rooms. Later we extended the wiring to other rooms, to the porch, to the cellar, and in course of time we added a refrigerator, a sweeper, an orange juicer, a sub-pump, a grain grinder, a toaster. Now we did not need to install the meter every time we added a fixture. We did that once for all, but the power has been doing more things for us all the time. May it not be so with the coming of the Holy Ghost in sanctifying power? May not His power in and through us increase with re-anointings?

Of course if we violate the conditions on which the electric company put in the meter we will lose the power. In like manner, if we violate the conditions on which God granted us the Spirit we will lose the power. But when we make right the one thing that caused the electric company to disconnect our meter they reconnect the wire and we receive again all that we lost when it was disconnected. In like manner, if, after backsliding, we fulfill the conditions for restoring the power we get back all we had before.

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Dealing With Backsliders

When a person who believes he has backslidden from a sanctified experience goes to the altar with the idea that he must first seek forgiveness, and later seek sanctification, it is best to let him act on that conviction. There are so many people claiming sanctification who have never had the experience, that we would not want to make any of them think they could be restored by one step to something they never had.

But in cases such as that stated by John Wesley and C. W. Ruth, and the young man cited previously, there are cases that need help. If they have been truly sanctified, and the worker is convinced that they have been, then they can be helped by being shown that all between them and God are sins they have committed since they were sanctified, and that, when they have received assurance of forgiveness, they are restored to all they have lost.

There may be cases that seem to go through two works of grace in their restoration, but this is doubtless a case of re-anointing rather than an initial re-baptism. It may be proper for such a person, after being restored, to seek a re-anointing for service, but if they seek it only for the feeling they get from it they will be disappointed. Re-anointings are for service and not for the feeling one gets out of the experience. When one lingers at the altar after being forgiven to try and seek the feeling they had when first baptized with the Spirit they will get into confusion many times.

* * *

Creating A Body Of Sin

There is a theory that when a sanctified person sins the old man of Adam comes back or comes to life. If we believe in the crucifixion, destruction and eradication of the old man received by inheritance from Adam when we receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit, we deny our theory when we say he comes to life. Whether or not a new body of sin similar to that received from Adam is created by one who backslides from sanctification, the sinner is to blame for it. It is his own body of sin created by his own act, and he is responsible for it, and when the sin that caused this body of sin to be formed is forgiven the entire case is dealt with in one act.

But if the backslider from sanctification believes that he must be restored by two steps, those two steps must be taken before he leaves the altar, for, having been once sanctified, he cannot be justified before God until restored to the experience from whence he fell. If he leaves the altar still believing there is another step to take to be again sanctified, he is likely to take the attitude, that, being forgiven, he can take his time to seek sanctification at the next revival. Even though the forgiveness of the sin that caused the backsliding does restore him in God's sight, if he thinks there is another work to do, he will act as he believes and either get in confusion as the young man referred to on a previous page, or believe he can be right with God on the plane where he once lived before being sanctified.

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Who Will Go In The Rapture?

Sometimes evangelists are heard to say, when pressing the doctrine of sanctification, that persons who do not have this experience will not go in the rapture when the Lord descends from heaven to receive the church. In this connection they often use Hebrews 12:14 -- "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord," and then make it to mean that no one who has not had a definite second work of grace known as sanctification will go at the rapture to be with the Lord.

Now, if the congregation to whom they are speaking are indoctrinated so that they all know definitely that such a work of grace is needed, the message may be appropriate and timely, and every one in that congregation who has not been sanctified should seek that experience, if they have not already done so. Sometimes a person asks the question, "If one is regenerated and not yet sanctified will he go in the rapture?" Is it not plain, that, if a person knows enough to ask that question, he knows that he should have the experience of sanctification? Such, of course, cannot be

right in God's sight, otherwise justified, when neglecting to seek an experience he knows he can have, but refuses to seek.

However, such preaching, if universally applied, may be misleading, in implying that persons who have been truly regenerated and who never have heard the preaching of sanctification as a second work of grace, and have died in that state, will not be raptured. A person becomes a child of God when regenerated, and the new-birth is certainly an experience of wonderful grace, bringing a person into justified relation with God.

Then there are multitudes of regenerated persons in the world who are walking in all the light they have received, who know nothing of sanctification received as a second work of grace. Some of these do really have the experience but have not realized it was a definite second work. They have simply walked in the light. This is proven from the fact that some persons of this type, when they do hear preaching of sanctification as a second work of grace, recognize that it fits an experience they have received.

There is reason to believe that every person who is justified in the sight of God will go in the rapture. These will include infants who have never resisted grace, regenerated people who have never resisted the Holy Ghost, and, of course, those who are experientially sanctified. Whether all of these will have the same position in heaven is another question.

Paul speaks in Philippians 3:8 of striving to win Christ, which seems to be more than faith in Christ for salvation, as Paul was already both saved and sanctified. Then, further in the chapter (Phil. 3:12), he speaks of seeking for something beyond what he has yet received. He is pressing toward a mark he has not yet reached. Evidently he is seeking for something more than salvation, good as that is. He not only wants to get to heaven, but wants something after he gets there. Is it not possible that qualification for the Bridehood is more than Christian experience?

The Bible speaks plainly of treasure laid up in heaven, and rewards given, which can hardly be salvation, for we are saved by grace without works. Rewards are for service. It would seem, if a woman wins the affection of a man, she would eventually be his bride. Likewise, if Paul wins Christ, as he says he is trying to do, why may not it result with him, in his being in the bride of Christ? And if that is true of him, may it not be true of us if we likewise win Christ? But, are we endeavoring to win Christ, or just satisfied with His purchasing us?

It is interesting in this connection to observe that the original words for resurrection in verses 10 and 11 of the third chapter of Philippians are different.

In verse 10 the word is anastasis, which Young's Concordance says means "a standing or rising up." While in verse 11 the word is exanastasis, which Young says means "a standing up out of." Note the prefix ex which suggests exit. Now read the two verses this way: 3:10 -- "That I may know Him, and the power of His anastasis, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death: 3:11 -- If by any means I might attain unto the exanastasis of the dead. Paul speaks here of the resurrection he is seeking as an attainment rather than a gift of free grace. In verse 14 he further says, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

From this it is apparent that there are rewards awaiting those who faithfully serve the Lord in this life. The experiences of regeneration and sanctification are for the purpose of preparing the Christian for his life work. We need more pressing toward the mark, and we need to be careful we do not put the mark too low. It may be that while one may recover from backsliding and be restored experientially to all he has lost, possibly such backsliding may limit his rewards.

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09 -- TESTIMONIALS

I have read the manuscript of your book on The Backslider with a great deal of pleasure and profit, and think it is one of the finest things that I have read on the subject. I especially appreciate the fine distinction you make between a momentary lapse and real backsliding. This is a point that needs to be made clear to many Holiness people. I also appreciate the fine point you bring out about a person who has backslidden from the sanctified state, and how they are to get back. This is a point that has confused many people and it is something that needs to be cleared up. -- Dr. John R. Church.

It is a splendid treatment, well written, interesting, and, I believe, Scriptural. I will be glad to recommend the booklet. -- Dr. J. A. Huffman.

I have received your manuscript for a new booklet on backsliding with genuine interest and appreciation. I agree with you perfectly. The book is needed and will be very helpful. -- Dr. C. W. Butler.

I have read with interest the galley proofs of your booklet to be. It deals with a very important matter. I think I have not met a discussion in print before. So far as I can judge it is sound, and I believe it will stand the test in most cases. -- Dr. J. L. Brasher.

I have gone over it very carefully, and find it just the thing I have been wanting for some time. By this I mean you have put in booklet form a very splendid outline of and proof of the much misunderstood facts of the backsliding from and restoration to the lost experience. -- Rev. G. Arnold Hodgkin.

Your treatment of this subject is genuinely scriptural, sound and sensible in its logic, and is one of the finest presentations of the subject matter that I have ever read. It merits a wide circulation, and should be a valuable asset to church people everywhere. -- Dr. S. H. Turbeville.

You have produced a book which I am sure will be very valuable to many a backslider and helpful in dealing with them for those who encounter these cases in their work. For a long time this has been a very confusing matter in many minds, and I am sure your book will do much to help clear up the matter of restoration. -- Rev. Wm. S. Deal

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THE END