

## THE EVIL OF APOSTASY:

*Apostasy is a terrible path.*

Is it so that many of Christ's pretended disciples do, some time or other, fall totally and finally away from Him?

Then let me exhort and persuade all hearing me, but especially you who have been lifting up your hands to Him at a communion table and professing to be His disciples by laying your hands on a slain Redeemer, to endeavor firmness and stability in cleaving to Christ and His way...To enforce this exhortation, consider first the evil of apostasy either in part or in whole.

It is a provocation of the highest nature. And there are especially two evils in it, which cannot but awaken divine resentment, viz., treachery and ingratitude. 1st, There is treachery in it. What husband would take it well, if his wife should abandon him and follow after other lovers? My friends, you have been taking God for your husband in a solemn manner before angels and men. Will it not be treachery in the highest degree to go and prostitute your souls unto sin, His greatest enemy? Will not this cast a calumny and reproach upon God, as if others were better than He? This will make Him say, "What iniquity have your fathers found in me?" ([Jer. 2:5](#)). "O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee?" ([Mic. 6:3](#)). 2dly, There is ingratitude in it also. It was a very cutting word that Christ had to His disciples... "Will ye also leave me?" The same is He saying to every one of you: "Will ye also go away, after such proofs of My kindness, after such repeated vows and obligations?" From all [this], it is evident that apostasy is a provocation of the highest nature.

2. Your backsliding will give a deep wound to religion and bring up a reproach upon the good ways of God. You have been owning Him as your Lord and Master and declaring before the world that you think His service the best service, His wages the best wages; that one day in His courts is better than a thousand ([Psa. 84:10](#)). Now, if after all you backslide, will not the world conclude that you have not found that in His service that you expected? Thus, others will be scared from the good ways of the Lord.

1. You will grieve the hearts of the godly, whose hearts God would not grieve. And it is a dangerous thing to offend one of His little ones. It were better for you that “a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones” ([Luke 17:2](#)).

If ye shall apostatize in whole and slide back with a perpetual backsliding, it will be a prelude of your eternal banishment and separation from the presence of God. God’s soul takes no pleasure in [such] backsliders, and therefore they can never have access into His gracious presence. Consequently, [they] shall be punished with everlasting destruction.

If ye be believers and apostatize in part, ye shall put a whip in God’s hand to chastise you. If ye shall after this turn careless in your walk, more remiss in duty, less frequent, less fervent, less lively than before, ye may assure yourselves that ye shall not go unpunished. “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” ([Amos 3:2](#)). “If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments...then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes” ([Psa. 89:30-31](#)).

Secondly, consider some great advantages of stability in cleaving to Christ and standing firm to His cause and interest.

It will furnish you much inward peace and tranquility of mind. “Great peace have they which love thy law” ([Psa. 119:165](#)). God tells Israel that, if they had cleaved unto Him and His way, their peace should have been as a river and their righteousness as the waves of the sea ([Isa. 66:12](#)).

It will glorify God and reflect a luster upon religion. Make the world conclude ye serve a good Master. Hence is that of Christ, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” ([Matt. 5:16](#)).

As backsliding strikes a damp upon the spirit at the approaches of death, so stability of heart in the Lord’s way affords courage and confidence through Christ upon the approach of that grim messenger

of the Lord of hosts. Hence is that of Paul, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness...” ([2 Tim 4:7-8](#)).

The reward of grace is insured in Christ to the steadfast soul. “Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” ([1 Cor. 15:58](#)). Remember that your title to the reward comes in by virtue of your union with Christ; and, O, how glorious is that reward the steadfast soul is entitled to through Him! It has a kingdom secured to it: “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; And I appoint unto you a kingdom” ([Luke 22:29](#)). A throne: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne” ([Rev. 3:21](#)). A crown is secured, a crown of life: “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” ([Rev 2:10](#)). A crown of glory: “When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” ([1 Pet. 5:4](#)). A crown of righteousness, which is laid up for all that keep the faith and “that love his appearing” ([2 Tim. 4:8](#)). A crown of joy, yea, a crown of everlasting joy shall be “upon their heads...and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” ([Isa. 35:10](#)).

I conclude with two or three advices.

Take care that the foundation be well laid upon the everlasting Rock Jesus Christ. For this is the foundation that God hath laid in Zion, and another foundation can no man lay. Ye must be cemented to this foundation by the Spirit and faith, otherwise ye can never stand in a day of trial; for your root being rottenness, your “blossom shall go up as the dust” ([Isa. 5:24](#)). The house built upon the sand fell when the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon it; but the house founded upon this Rock shall stand out against the utmost efforts of the gates of hell ([Matt. 7:24-27](#)).

Maintain an everlasting jealousy over your own hearts. For “he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool” ([Pro. 28:26](#)), considering that it is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” ([Jer. 17:9](#)). Particularly take heed of the workings and sproutings of the bitter root of unbelief, which causes to depart from the living God ([Heb. 3:12](#)).

Keep your eyes upon the promises of persevering grace, particularly that [of] [Jeremiah 32:40](#): “And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.” If you plead and improve this promise by faith, it is impossible ye can draw back. For it is “impossible for God to lie” ([Heb. 6:18](#)). God stands on both sides of the covenant to fulfill both His and our part of the same. Therefore, plead that ye may fulfill His in you, that He would keep you by His power through faith unto salvation ([1 Pet. 1:5](#)).

4. Keep a steady eye on Christ, the blessed Mediator of the covenant. Eye Him as the storehouse and fountain of all your supplies of grace and strength. For it is out “of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace” ([John 1:16](#)). Eye Him as your Captain to fight all your battles against sin and Satan; for He has “spoiled principalities and powers” ([Col. 2:15](#)); and if ever we overcome, it must be in the blood and strength of the Lamb. Eye Him as your guide to lead you through all the dark and difficult steps of your pilgrimage. For He leads the blind “in paths that they have not known” ([Isa. 42:16](#)). Eye Him as your pattern. Endeavor to imitate Him in all His imitable perfections. Run your Christian race, “looking unto Jesus” ([Heb. 12:2](#)). Remember how steady and firm He was in carrying on the great work of redemption. He set His face like a flint against all the storms and obstacles that lay in His way. He did not faint, nor was He discouraged, but travelled on in the greatness of His strength, enduring the cross, and despising the shame. For He said on the cross, “It is finished” ([John 19:30](#)). So study ye after His example to run your Christian race, your course of obedience, and press on against all temptations and difficulties, until ye have finished your course with joy and arrive at the mark and prize of the high calling of God in Christ.

Be aware of the first beginnings of defection and backsliding. For one trip makes way for another. Defections are like the rolling of a stone upon the brow of an high mountain; if once it begins to roll, it is fair never to rest until it be at the bottom. Ye have been upon the mount of God, Sirs! If ye begin once to roll down the hill of your high professions and resolutions, it is an hundred to one if ye do not land in the depths of apostasy and at last in the depths of hell.

Lastly, study to be well skilled in the unmasking the mystery of

iniquity, in detecting the wiles and stratagems of the tempter, and to provide yourselves with suitable antidotes against every attack of the enemy. For instance, if he tell you sin is pleasant, ask him if the griping of the worm of conscience is pleasant too, and if one day in God's house be not better than a thousand in the tents of sin. If he tells you that nobody sees, ask him if he can shut the eye of an omniscient God, Whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and Who setteth our most secret sins in the light of His countenance ([Psa. 90:8](#)). If he tells you that it is but a little one, ask him if there be a little God or if His displeasure be a little thing. If he tells you that sin is profitable, ask him, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" ([Matt. 16:26](#)). By considerations of this nature, the mind comes to be fortified against the attacks and onsets of that grand enemy of salvation, [which proves to be] a notable ballast to keep the soul firm and steady against the most violent storms and tempests that may blow either from earth or hell.