



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### The Scriptures' warnings against backsliding



The Saviour specifically said that backsliding would be a particular problem for His people at the end of the age. "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 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," Matthew 24:11-13. The following extract is from an exposition of Psalm 51 by Dr. James Morgan of Fisherwick Place Presbyterian Church, Belfast, published in 1854. His words, from over 150

years ago, still ring ever so true today. —*The Editor.*

The servant of the Lord may fall into sin. Alas! it is unnecessary to furnish any proof of this statement. The Scriptures everywhere assume it to be true. They are filled with warnings, and counsels, and directions, all proceeding upon it. Behold the parent taking leave of his beloved son, as he goes forth into the world to act the part assigned him there. He pours forth his anxiety on his account in accents of tenderness, and entreaty, and instruction. All these are delivered under the apprehension of the danger to which he knows his beloved one is exposed. And thus it is in the Word of God. As a Father He speaks in it to His children. He warns them of the dangers that beset them on every hand. Look especially at the Epistles of the New Testament, which are written expressly to the members of the churches. They are a continual warning against sin, and a constant exhortation to the faithful performance of every duty. They betray a deep sense of the liability of all to fall into the one, and their indisposedness to do the other.

All this is readily admitted; yet it is important to notice a few features which the Scriptures mark especially, in this liability of all believers to fall into sin.

**They set forth its cause.** It is the remaining corruption of the old man. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit." The divine life is a contest between opposing principles in the mind. Light and darkness, good and evil, holiness and sin, the Spirit of God and the agents of Satan, are there. There is no respite to the controversy. While life lasts it must be maintained. The Christian must never forget he carries his greatest enemy in his own bosom, and that he is encompassed by foes ready to enter as soon as the traitor within will open to them.

**They teach us that no man is exempt from temptation, and that all or any may fall before it.** No station, whether of the prince or peasant; no occupation, whether of the minister or member of the Church; no condition, whether of riches or poverty, of rest or toil, is free. Each has its own peculiar temptations, and these are so strong that it is probable every one supposes his own situation to be the most beset by danger.

**They reveal that there is no sin into which any man may not fall.** In the record of the sins of the godly, contained in the Scriptures, it is very noticeable that many have fallen into those very sins to which they seemed least liable. Moses, the "meekest man,"



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sinned by violence of temper; Abraham, the father of the faithful, sinned by unbelief; Peter, the courageous, sinned by cowardice; and David, the devout, sinned by impurity. This is designed to show that as no man is safe, so neither is there any sin into which the most advanced Christian may not fall. Of none can it be said this is impossible. The best man may commit the most aggravated sin.

**They show us by their records that whosoever sinneth shall not escape detection.**

It is most honourable to the Scriptures that they conceal no man's sin. Their own favourites and heroes are, if possible, more exposed than others. This is an indication of their origin -a proof that they come from God and, instead of reducing their claims upon us, should be held greatly to strengthen them.

**They remind us that just as any man supposes himself to be safe so is he exposed to danger.**

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." He that knew human nature well exhorted His disciples, saying, "Watch ye," — "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." These are the principles of the Divine Word on the liability of all men to sin. They are accordant with truth, and are confirmed by the facts which daily present themselves. They teach us how clearly Jesus saw the hearts and understood the lives of His people, when He made one petition of their daily prayer to be, "Lead us not into temptation," and another, "Forgive us our sins." We must acquiesce in their propriety.