

## The Backslider

**I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, *and* nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, *and* considered *it* well: I looked upon *it*, *and* received instruction. (Proverbs 24:30-32)**

The backsliding of some is total.—After having made a profession of the true religion, they apostatize from it. I am aware it is common to consider a backslider as being a good man, though in a bad state of mind: but the scriptures do not confine the term to this application.

Those who are addressed in the passage just quoted, had not the fear of God in them, which can never be said of a good man. Backsliding, it is true, always supposes a profession of the true religion; but it does not necessarily suppose the existence of the thing professed. There is a PERPETUAL backsliding, and a drawing back UNTO PERDITION [Jer. 8:5; Heb. 10:39].

Such characters were Saul, and Ahitophel, and Judas. Many persons who have in a great degree declined the practice of religion, yet comfort themselves with an idea that they shall be brought to repentance before they die: but this is presumptuously tempting God. Whosoever plunges into this gulph, or continues easy in it, under an idea of being recovered by repentance, may find himself mistaken. Both Peter and Judas went in; but only one of them came out!

There is reason to fear that thousands of professors are now lifting up their eyes in torment, who in this world reckoned themselves good men; who considered their sins as pardonable errors, and laid their accounts with being brought to repentance: but, ere they were aware, the bridegroom. came, and they were not ready to met him!

(The Backslider: Or, An Enquiry into the Nature, Symptoms, and Effects of Religious Declension with the Means of Recovery by A. Fuller, London: Printed by J. W. Morris, 1801, 8-9, e-book; Text and paragraph structure modified)