

CHAPTER XI  
THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE  
BELIEVER

*The Doctrine of the Scriptures*  
*Part II*

THE eternal security of the believer is revealed in a well-defined body of Scripture the interpretation of which is not subject to question as to its exact meaning, or as to the fact that it refers only to salvation, if the plain teaching of the Word of God is taken to be the final statement of truth. Those passages which have been thought by some to teach that a Christian might be lost again, together with certain questions of doubt, have been considered in the preceding chapter, and the way is clear, so far as this discussion is concerned, to give undivided attention to the positive words of certainty regarding the divine keeping guaranteed in the Word to every child of God. Complete exposition of this extensive body of Scripture would be impossible within the limits of this chapter. As in the preceding chapter, the passages may best be grouped under certain general heads, and representative passages of the Scriptures in this body of truth considered in each of these divisions. According to His Word, the true child of God is secure in the divine keeping for at least seven reasons:

*I. The Purpose, Power and Present Attitude of God the Father.*

1. The Purpose of God.

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The divine revelation unfolds the eternal past, the present order in time, and the eternal future. To all these the saved one is closely related. From the beginning he was in the thought and purpose of God; he is now in the day of decision and grace; and the eternity to come is made glorious by the sure realization of the design of God for him. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren, moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. 8: 29, 30). "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him" (Eph. 1: 4).

These passages sweep the whole eternity. They reveal a divine purpose in the dateless past and reach on to its realization in the eternity to come, and all without reference to human conditions. Still another passage, related only to the ages to come, reveals that this will all be accomplished as a sufficient display, to all created beings, of the grace of God: "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2: 6, 7).

The solemn question confronts every thoughtful person, therefore, whether the infinite God can realize His eternal purpose, or is He baffled and uncertain in the presence of the object of

His own creative power? To this question the Scriptures give no uncertain answer.

## 2. The Power of God.

God has not only revealed Himself as Creator and Lord of all, but it has pleased Him to give the most minute and exact assurance of His ability to do for His child that which He purposed in the ages past. Speaking of what He would have us know, it is said: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly (Eph. 1:19, 20). "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any (created thing) pluck them out of my hand" (Jno. 10:27, 28). This is true of "my sheep." No power created is sufficient to pluck them out of His hand. Even the "free will" of the sheep cannot, and will not, bring him to the point of perishing. "Who are thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Rom. 14:4). "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him (guard my deposit) against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling (stumbling) and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). Such is the testimony

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of the Holy Spirit concerning the sufficient power of God for the believer's eternal keeping.

### 3. The Attitude of God.

Could it be possible that God would so love an individual as to give His only Son to die for him and still love him to the extent of following him with the pleadings and drawings of His grace until He has won that soul into His own family and household and created him anew by the impartation of His own divine nature, and then be careless as to what becomes of the one He has thus given His all to procure? Here, again, the Scriptures make positive reply. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5: 8-10). "Much more" is a term of comparison. He gave His Son to die for us while we were yet sinners and most abhorrent, as such, to His absolute purity and holiness. Such is the boundless love which He has commended to us through the cross. But much more than His attitude of love toward sinners will be His attitude of love toward those whom He has cleansed, transformed, redeemed and created anew as His own beloved children in grace. If He will save sinners at the price of the blood of His only begotten Son, much more, when they are justified, will He save them from wrath through Him. This great compari-

son is repeated in the text apparently for emphasis. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be (kept) saved through His life (or the fact that He is now alive and appearing for us at the right hand of God. See Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). The testimony of the Bible, then, is that the attitude of love and care of God for those whom He has saved will be much more than the attitude of love, surpassing knowledge, for enemies and sinners as it has been manifested in the cross.

Not only is it revealed that God is disposed to keep the one whom He has saved, but the true child of God is also a gift of the Father to the Son (Jno. 10:29; 17:6, 9, 11) and has been committed to the keeping power of the Father by the prayer of the Son. "Holy Father keep." That prayer will be answered.

Thus it may be concluded that should the saved one be lost, the eternal purpose of God will have been thwarted. Admitting this, it must be concluded that He Who can design a universe whose remotest star shall not deviate by a second from its appointments throughout the ages; Who can plan the universe from the highest arch-angel to the marvelous organism of the smallest insect; Whose purpose has never yet been known to fail—that such a God may be defeated by the mere creature His hands have made. If the saved one is finally lost, it must also be concluded that God is, to that degree, lacking in power. He Who has testified that not one of His sheep will ever per-

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ish, must yet retract His bold assertions and humbly submit to a power that is greater than His own. He Who created and holds the universe in His hands; Who calls things that are not as though they were; Who could speak the word and dismiss every atom of matter and life from existence forever must retire before the overlordship of some creature of His hand.

And, lastly, admitting the revelation concerning God's eternal purpose and His infinite power to accomplish that purpose, if it could still be proven that the saved one might be lost we would be shut up to the one and final conclusion that it could be so only because the All-powerful God did not sufficiently care to keep those whom His power had created as new-born children. But what do we find? The revelation is full of testimony concerning that very care. Who can measure the revealed devotion of His boundless love toward the objects of His saving grace? Who will dare claim that He will not answer the prayer of His Son?

### *II. The Substitutionary, Sacrificial Death of God the Son.*

There is no spiritual progress to be made until one is convinced that something final was accomplished at the cross in regard to sin. Nor will it do to believe that the thing accomplished applies only to such sins as have already been committed, or for which forgiveness has already been granted. Something has been done concerning every sin that ever has been committed, or that will yet be committed by man, and conse-

quently every person has been vitally affected by the cross. It does not baffle our God to deal with sins before they are committed. Had He not done this there could now be no grounds of salvation for any sinner in this age. So complete has been the sacrificial work of the Son of God that the Spirit has testified: "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world"; "He tasted death for every man"; "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"; "He died for all." Because of the thing which He has accomplished by His death, the present condemnation of sinners is said to be no longer due primarily to the fact of their sins, but to the fact that they will not receive the remedy God has in infinite love provided: "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (Jno. 3: 18, 19). "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16: 16). "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5: 19). "Of sin, because they believe not on me" (Jno. 16: 9). To this sin of rejecting the lavishing of God's mercy and grace must be added the fact that those who thus reject have chosen, in practical effect, to stand under the burden of their own sins, as though Christ had not died.

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It is a matter of revelation that even the un-saved are not now condemned because of the sins which Christ has borne. How much less could a true child of God be condemned because of his sins! "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The saved one will be brought into judgment concerning his life and service (2 Cor. 5:10), and be chastened of the Father (Heb. 12:6); but never will he "be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:31, 32). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that hath sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life" (Jno. 5:24). "He that believeth on him is not condemned" (Jno. 3:18).

Although the child of God will not be condemned, God is not indifferent concerning the manner of his daily life. He has other and more effective ways of prompting His children to normal living under grace than to hold over them the terrors of instantly perishing as the result of sin. A wise mother, even, has other resources in correcting and developing her child than instant murder for the slightest deviation from her will. Sin is never mitigated, because it is committed by a Christian; it is terrible in God's holy eyes: but it is still His child that sins and He has Himself provided that even sin shall never hinder the exercise of His eternal love. He has forever swept sin's judgments out of His own way.

The child in the Father's house may lose his fellowship, joy, peace and power and even come



under the Father's chastening hand, because he is a son, but he is not to be condemned. When he is chastened it is not a question of making, or breaking, his sonship: it is all because he is a son. Even of the world it is said that God is "not imputing their trespasses unto them."

The child of God is said to "stand in grace." This is far removed from standing in works or any personal merit. Because of the cross, our God is able to save us in spite of the fact that we have sinned and are without merit before Him. Because of that same cross and on the same grounds of justice, He is able also to keep us saved who may be sinning and who can claim no worthiness in His sight. The very same provisions of grace which made it possible to save us at all, make it equally possible for us to be kept saved for all eternity.

To claim that the child of God is not safe because of the supposed unsaving power of sin, is to put sin above the blood and to set at naught the eternal redemption that is in Christ Jesus. If there is real solicitude as to the moral effect of this revelation, let it be remembered that, according to the Bible, this truth, so far from being considered a license to sin, is the greatest divine incentive to true holiness, and as important as the believer's life and conduct is, it is under other and more effective divine care.

### *III. The Sealing by God the Spirit.*

The believer has been sealed by the Spirit of God unto the day of redemption. "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed

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unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30, see also Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:22). Nothing could be more final than this. The Spirit Himself is the seal. His blessed presence in every true child of God is the divine mark of ownership, purpose and destiny. The Spirit Who was sent to abide in us will not withdraw. He may be grieved, or quenched (resisted), but He abides. This He does as the divine guaranty that there shall be no failure in any purpose of God and the sealed one will reach his eternal glory and the eternal blessedness of "the day of redemption."

It is easily concluded by some, and because to them it seems reasonable, that the divine Person cannot remain in a heart where there is sin. Such are soon driven either to judge themselves to be absolutely without sin, or else to be lost. They evidently do not realize the value of the cross as the divinely provided answer to every challenge of righteousness that may arise because of sin, nor do they seem to have considered deeply that body of Scripture which reveals the fact that God can and does get on with imperfect Christians. Out of such imperfect material He must people heaven, so far as humanity is concerned, else that blessed place will stand empty throughout eternity. The Spirit can righteously abide in every Christian. He does thus abide, for God has said it. His sealing will endure unto the "day of redemption." To claim that the child of God may yet be lost is to ignore the power and sufficiency of the infinite Spirit Who has sealed every saved

one unto the day of redemption by His unchanging abiding Presence.

*IV. The Unconditional New Covenant Made in His Blood.*

Of all the covenants God has made with man some are conditional and some are unconditional. The conditional covenant is made to depend upon the faithfulness of man: "if ye will do good I will bless you." The unconditional covenant is a direct declaration of the purpose of God, and depends on Him alone. "I will make of thee a great nation, and in thee all the families of the earth shall be blessed." This was God's unconditional covenant with Abraham. It was unconditional in that God in no way related its accomplishment to Abraham's conduct or faithfulness. Jehovah was certainly interested in Abraham's conduct; but He in no degree made conduct a part of the basis of the great undertaking stated in the covenant. In ratifying a portion of the covenant made to Abraham, God alone passed between the pieces of the carcasses while Abraham lay motionless in a very deep sleep (Gen. 15:4-17). Abraham had nothing to do with it. He was committed to nothing whatsoever, and was wholly set aside. Such is the fact and force of an unconditional covenant.

"The new covenant made in his blood" is in like manner unconditional. It is especially mentioned in Heb. 8:7-10:25 and includes every promise of God for salvation and keeping for believers in this age of grace. This "new covenant made in his blood" is unconditional, since

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it wholly passes over every question of human merit, or conduct, and consists in the mighty declarations of what God is free to do and will do in sovereign grace for the one who believes on His Son. We *enter* this covenant by believing. This should not be confused with the conditions *within* the covenant. The new covenant is not conditioned by our believing, but is unconditionally declared to those who do believe.

No human conditions are found in the following passages: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (Jno. 5:24); "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (Jno. 6:37); "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man (creation) is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (Jno. 10:28, 29); "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. 8:28-30); "Being confident of this very thing,

that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6); "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2 Tim. 4:18).

These declarations do not once descend to the level of human life and conduct: they define the divine intent and purpose. Were they to be conditioned in the slightest degree upon human merit, the ultimate goal of Christlikeness could never be realized for any fallen being. It is sometimes asserted that a condition of good conduct is implied in these passages which together form the new covenant. Nothing is implied whatsoever. If God shall choose to make an unconditional covenant how could He more clearly state it? Or how could His exact truth be preserved if men are free to qualify His Word?

To claim that a Christian may be lost through the issues of his daily life is to make an eternal, unconditional covenant, made by God in sovereign grace, seem to be a mere legal demand with which no human being could ever hope to comply. It would be tampering with the word of His grace.

#### V. *The Intercession and Advocacy of Christ.*

Many have placed an emphasis out of all due proportion upon the three years' ministry of Christ on the earth as compared with His present ministry at the right hand of God. So little is this latter ministry considered that it is almost unknown to many Christians; but no one can enter intelligently into the revelation concerning

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the fact, purpose and value of the present ministry of Christ and not be assured of the eternal security of all who have put their trust in Him. Whatever else lies within the purpose of the Eternal Son at the right hand of God, the Scriptures reveal only that He is there for the keeping of His own who are in the world.

The present heavenly ministry of Christ is both intercessory and advocacy. As Intercessor He prays for all that the Father hath given Him, or every member of His blessed body. This prayer is concerning their weakness and helplessness. His intercessory ministry began with His High Priestly prayer which He prayed before His death, as recorded in Jno. 17. This petition, it should be noted, is not only limited to His own in the world, but altogether for their keeping and fitting for their heavenly destiny. He also continues to pray *only* for His own, and concerning their keeping and destiny (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). No child of God will ever know before reaching heaven from what dangers and testings he has been saved by the faithful and unfailing intercession of his Lord. He is the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, brought again from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant Who is guarding His own, and of them He will say: "And I have lost none of them, save the son of perdition that the Scriptures might be fulfilled"; while they can say of Him, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

It is inconceivable that the prayer of the Son of God should not be answered. It was answered

in the case of Peter. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." He did not pray that Peter should be kept out of Satan's sieve. He did pray that Peter's faith might not fail, and it did not fail. What consolation it yields to contemplate the fact that He, with all His understanding of every weakness and danger before us, is praying this moment, and every moment, for us! His is not a prayer that will not avail. His praying is perfect and the result is absolute. Moreover, His intercession is without end.

The Aaronic priesthood was most limited in its continuance because of the death of the priest. "But this man (Christ), because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7: 24, 25).

He is able to save to the uttermost (Greek, *panteles*, meaning forever, or perfectly in point of time). Such security is vouchsafed only to those "who come unto God by Him," and such security is assured to these on no other grounds, in this passage, than that "He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

As Advocate He now "appears in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9: 24). This ministry has to do only with the believer's sin. "If any (Christian) man sin, we have an advocate with the Father (not an advocate with God), Jesus

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Christ the righteous" (1 Jno. 2:1). In exercising this ministry He does not continue to atone for sins as they are committed: sin has been atoned for "once for all," and what He does is in the value of that finished work of the cross. He does not seek to excuse the sinning Christian before the Father's presence. Sin is ever that soul-destroying stain that can be cleansed only by His precious blood; but the blood has been shed. Nor is He appealing for the pity and leniency of God the Father toward the Christian's sin. God cannot be lenient toward sin; but having perfectly satisfied every demand of His own righteousness against sin by the cross; He can be eternally gracious toward the sinner who has come unto Him by Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ is now appearing before the face of God for us and He appears there with His glorified human body in which are the scars of His crucifixion (Zech. 13:6). It is the presence of that very death-scarred body which answers the condemning power of every sin of the child of God. It is also a sufficient answer to every accusation of Satan who accuses the brethren before God day and night. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God." It is Christ, superior to all finite beings, Who died. The death of such as He is the undisputable answer to the condemning power of every sin; and He is risen. Oh blessed Presence! Oh eternal safety! No condemnation can ever pass His nail-scarred body. What priceless con-



solution to the imperfect and sin-conscious saint!

We have been kept to the present hour by the living Intercessor Who ceases not to shepherd our wandering feet, and by the living Advocate Who ceases not to appear for us before the right hand of the Father. The same Intercessor and Advocate will yet prevail until that blessed day when we shall see Him as He is and be like Him.

To challenge the eternal security of the believer is to deny that the prayer of the Son of God will be answered and to deny the eternal efficacy of His atoning blood. In ignorance, perhaps, such insult has been heaped upon the blessed Saviour; yet still He is faithful. He prays and appears before the Father in behalf of just such ignorant or sinning believers.

#### *VI. The Eternal Character of Salvation.*

Thirty-three divine transformations, which together constitute the present fact of the Christian's existence as in distinction to the unsaved, have been named already in a preceding chapter. These, it has been seen, are all eternal by their very nature. They are wholly disassociated from every human element that might endanger them, and they are made to rest alone on the merit of the eternal Son of God. We are said to be reconciled, redeemed, dead to the law and to sin, acceptable to God, and made nigh, all by virtue of His blood and not by any merit within ourselves.

Sonship is eternal. It is the result of a birth which secures the impartation of a new divine nature. It is impossible to remove from a child the nature of his human father. It is a deeper

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and more abiding reality to have partaken of the divine nature. The born-again one thus possesses "eternal life" by a legitimate birth, and can "never perish." Such terms are themselves final. It could not be eternal life that is imparted with no possibility of perishing and then be lost by no greater force than the feeble act of man, that act moreover already having been covered with atoning blood.

Salvation is also a new standing, or headship in the "last Adam." Removed from headship of the "first Adam" and the doom of his fall, the saved one is now "in Christ" and a partaker of the character and standing of his new Head, the Son of God. There can be no fall in the "last Adam."

To deny the eternal security of the believer is to challenge the eternal character of the riches of divine grace, and to assume that the very Son of God may fall in Whom we stand.

### *VII. The Believer's Heavenly Perfection.*

Having removed by the cross every moral question that could ever arise in connection with the salvation and keeping of the believer, the God of all grace has been pleased to reveal the final estate to which He will bring us in satisfying His own infinite love. There is nothing greater in the power of God for us than that we should be "conformed to the image of his Son." Such a blessedness could be assured only on the very conditions which would at the same time guarantee the eternal security of the believer. That final perfection, "like him," is possible only as every human element is set aside. Were we able to effect our

salvation by the slightest degree it would, in so much, fail of the divine purpose. He, of necessity, has kept it all in His own power, and nothing can now hinder Him in the fullest satisfaction of His knowledge-surpassing love.

That final perfection, "like him," is also to be a manifestation, to all created beings, of the grace of God. It is to be manifested by means of "His kindness toward us through Jesus Christ." By His redeemed ones He proposes to show His grace and to show it on a scale that will be wholly satisfying to Himself. Grace is unmerited, unrecompensed favor, and if He is to show His grace finally and perfectly by the salvation and keeping of His own redeemed children, it can be such a display of His grace only as it is wholly removed from human works and merit. Being completely removed from the failing grounds of human merit, there is nothing that can happen in the believer's life, under the gracious care of God, that can remove him from His eternal purpose.

The first eight chapters of the letter to the Romans present the exhaustive divine statement concerning salvation, and this great portion of Scripture closes with an absolute declaration of security for the one who believes. It is like the closing chords of a great symphony. The Spirit of God, through the Apostle, approaches this final declaration through seven questions, the answers of which will be found to be a condensed statement of the divine revelation concerning the keeping power of God. This statement will be found in Rom. 8:29-39, and the questions are:

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First, "What shall we say to these things?"

The things referred to are the successive steps of sovereign grace and power which are taken in bringing the believer to his final glory. In this passage time is lost sight of and human worthiness is passed over in the resistless onward movement of the eternal purpose of God. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." What can we say to these things? What wisdom have we to speak? We can only yield our hearts and believe what He has spoken.

Second, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

God is certainly for us. He spared not His own Son in our behalf. Is there any power in the universe which can thwart its Creator? The very thought is almost blasphemy.

Third, "How shall he not with him freely give us all things?"

Not only has He proven Himself inclined to give, by the superlative gift of the Son of His Love, but having gained us at such a price, He will not spare any pains to keep the treasure thus purchased; nor will He withhold a lesser gift.

Fourth, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

Such a charge must be preferred before God and He does nothing but justify. He may chasten, as

a Father in His own household; but nothing can be laid to the charge of His elect before Him Who is now free to justify.

Fifth, "Who is he that condemneth?"

It is Christ that died. This means much more than the death of any other could mean. He is the Son of God, and His sinlessness and infinite being made Him a perfect sin-bearer. It is not the death of a man or an angel. It is the atoning death of the Christ of God. He has not only died, but is alive for evermore; yea, is even at the right hand of God. Because of His presence there, every demand of an offended law is satisfied in Him. Who can condemn with Christ at the right hand of God?

Sixth, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

Not now the love of the Father, or our poor love for Him; but who can make us unlovely in His eyes? He loved us while we were yet sinners. He loves us still, with an everlasting love.

Seventh, "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

These are the outward experiences in life, and the trusting heart can say, "I will not fear what man can do unto me"; yea, "all things work together for good to them that love God." Such suffering is the portion of the child of God in this world. "As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

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But there are the greater issues of death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present and things to come, height, depth and every unknown creation. Can we boldly speak of security in the face of such unknown and unknowable forces? To this the Apostle's clear testimony is added. "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature (creation) shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus." Twice the Apostle employs the phrase, "I am persuaded." In the other instance, as here, it expresses his confidence in his eternal security and keeping in the power and grace of God. "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12; cf. Rom. 4:21).

Such is the faith of the Apostle Paul. He was persuaded that he was saved for time and eternity. Those who are not so persuaded can hardly claim to hold the faith of the Apostle, or to honor the clear testimony of God.

CHAPTER XII  
AN APPEAL

SHOULD you, reader of this book, be uncertain of your salvation, or know that you are not saved, will you not respond to the loving invitation of your God and come to Him by the way He has provided in the Person and cross of His Son? Think not that He expects anything from you but your whole trust in Him until He has first saved you by His grace. He will faithfully do according to His Word the moment you have chosen positively to rest your salvation in His saving power and grace alone. After you have thus believed, He purposes to supply all the enabling power to meet all the problems and the needs of your daily life. You need not fear, only believe His Word. His wisdom, strength and bounty are sufficient for you.

Having cast yourself upon His saving grace as it is in Christ Jesus, you have the right to believe that He has saved you, and you should, in honoring His faithfulness, immediately take the place of a son before Him and draw moment by moment on His exhaustless bounty and love.

Should you, on the other hand, be confident that you have believed and are assured that you are a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ, will you not praise Him anew for "so great salvation" and so yield yourself to Him that He may more perfectly use you as His ambassador to tell His

truth to others? Will you not, in these dark days of confusion as to the truth of God, take great care to be accurate in the presentation of this priceless Gospel message to others? It is quite possible to mislead souls unintentionally by misstating the divine conditions that lead to life eternal. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

The privilege of preaching the Gospel to one soul is priceless. So, in like manner, any blunder in its presentation may contribute to an eternal disaster and woe. Carelessness in preaching is criminal and ignorance is inexcusable. The Gospel is plain. Earnestness is important, but no amount of earnestness can be substituted for the exact statement of God's message to lost men.

It is too often supposed that preaching about sin is preaching the Gospel. Sometimes the purpose of such preaching is to deepen conviction concerning sins of the past. Such a message could be of value only as it prepares the way for the Gospel. By itself, this message is in no way the good news of saving grace. Men do not have to arrive at some prescribed degree of consciousness of sin in order to be saved. They need only to know that whatever sin God may have seen in their lives has been already laid on His atoning Lamb. They are now asked to *believe* that glorious message.

Sometimes preaching against sin is with a view to encouraging men to cease sinning. This is superficial indeed and unbiblical. The unsaved are "dead in trespasses and sins," and are "in the



power of darkness." Sin is a nature as well as a practice. Fallen man would be lost had he not sinned. He must be born again; not as a means of correcting the effects of his past practices, but because of his fallen Adamic nature. Being spiritually dead, he must be given spiritual life. No reformation can change the fallen state. When preaching against sin, it is well to remember that the unsaved cannot cease sinning. When they receive the Saviour, they will receive both the power to discontinue and the disposition to turn from sinning.

It is sometimes supposed that to preach Christian-living is preaching the Gospel. Sinners are thus told to "walk in the light," to pray, to study the Bible, to make confession of sin, or to repent. On the contrary, they have no light in which to walk, no access to God in prayer, no understanding of the Scriptures apart from the message of saving grace which the Spirit will use to their salvation. They are on no grounds of relationship before God where confession could be of any avail. They are already condemned. They cannot change their own mind, or repent. They can *believe* on Christ by the Spirit and such believing includes that change of mind, or repentance, which is possible to the unsaved. They stand confronted with the revelation concerning a Saviour Who waits to save. He is to be believed upon. Other issues can serve only to postpone the day of salvation.

Encouraging men to believe that God will be merciful is not preaching the Gospel. All such

preaching really ignores the cross. Salvation is not a present act of generosity and leniency on the part of God. Salvation is possible because the love of God has already provided *all* that a sinner can ever need. The sinner is not saved by pleading with God for His kindness: he is saved by *believing* that God has been kind. Such is the exact place of the cross in the message of the Gospel.

Preaching the Gospel is telling men something about Christ and His finished work for them which they are to *believe*. This is the simplest test to be applied to all soul-saving appeals. The Gospel has not been preached until a personal message concerning a crucified and living Saviour has been presented, and in a form which calls for the response of a personal faith.

The Saviour said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

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