

Shall Never Perish

J. F. Strombeck



***Shall Never Perish: Eternal Security Examined.* By J. F. Strombeck. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications (Reprint), 1991. 207 pp. Paper, \$9.99.**

You don't have to be a Bible College or seminary type to enjoy this book, and it will be a help to all your friends who need to know about eternal security. Warren Wiersbe writes in his foreword that he was blessed by reading this and other books by Strombeck as a young believer. This reviewer had the same experience. Born of pioneer Swedish stock in 1881, John Frederick Strombeck went on to be a successful businessman who gave generously to Christian causes and spent his time writing and speaking to everyday Christians on controversial subjects in a sound and scriptural way (*Grace and Truth, So Great Salvation, Disciplined by Grace, and First the Rapture*).

Dedicated to Lewis Sperry Chafer, another well-known "grace" leader, this book starts with our Lord's words in John 10:27–29 and then develops four parts on related topics: "Eternal Security and Some Doctrines of the Grace of God," "Eternal Security and Godly Living," "Arguments Against Eternal Security Answered," "Evils of Arminianism," and a conclusion.

This is not a tightly spun theological work quoting manmade creeds as authoritative (whether Roman, Reformed, Lutheran, or Anglican). Essentially Strombeck writes *biblical* theology for the masses, and how they (and we all) need it! Denominationally, he belonged to the Scandinavian-rooted Evangelical Free Church.

Since *Shall Never Perish* is so very full of Scripture quotations, perhaps an updating of the KJV and RV to a more modern text would have helped. In reviewing this book, *The Witness* wrote: "We doubt very much if a finer treatise on the assurance of salvation and the eternal security of the believer in Christ has ever been published, or can be written If anyone can remain a 'doubting Thomas' after perusal of this classic work on eternal security, he must be past conviction on the subject."

Strong praise for a strong (but not angry or unkind) book.

Kregel deserves our thanks for reprinting this and other Strombeck classics. "Gracers" especially, if one dares to use that slang term, should get them all.

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Part One
Introduction

CHAPTER ONE

MY SHEEP listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John 10:27-29).

For the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, no passage in the Bible has more assurance in it than this one. In it is found an unconditional statement by our Lord that those who are his are his for all eternity, because they are in his hand, under his care, and are in the Father's hand, under his care. The strength of the Father is that which guarantees this condition of safety.

There are those who are not willing to accept this simple and clear statement without modifying it. Thereby they not only lose the assurance that might come to themselves; but they rob others of that assurance which is so greatly needed by every one of God's children.

God makes two kinds of promises to his children: conditional and unconditional. He always makes it clear whether or not they are conditional or unconditional. When conditional, he uses the word "if" or its equivalent; but when his statement is unconditional, he leaves out the "if". This is therefore an unconditional statement.

Yet there are many who, claiming to accept the Bible as being God inspired, nevertheless insist that this is a conditional statement, and that "if" the sheep follow they shall never perish. By what right do they add the word "if"? As it is neither stated nor implied by the context, it is clearly a case of tampering with God's word, and changing its meaning.

Five separate statements are made concerning "My sheep": (1) Listen to My voice, (2) I know them, (3) they follow Me, (4) I give them eternal life and (5) they shall never perish. These are five distinct things said about those who are his sheep. Not one is conditional upon any other.

By adding the word "if" to the third statement, the fourth as well as the fifth must become conditional upon it. Thus not only the question of perishing, but also that of receiving eternal life would be conditional upon following the Lord. Then, to make the words "follow Me" mean the living of a life as the Lord Jesus lived his (as some assert), makes this mean that the one who lives as he lived will thereby receive eternal life and shall never perish. This is nothing less than modernism grown to full fruitage. It is salvation by works. Thus this addition of the word "if" denies salvation by grace through faith; it is a denial of the grace of God. It is dangerous to tamper with God's word!

As though this light handling of God's eternal truths were not enough, it is further being preached and taught that while no one can snatch one of Christ's own out of his hand and out of the Father's hand, it is possible for one to jump out by his own willed action. By what scriptural authority is that statement made? Does the wording of the passage permit such a statement? Only two conditions could make it possible for a sheep to jump out of his own accord: (1) that he be given the freedom to do so, or (2) that he have the power to do so against the purpose of God. Are either of these possible?

The sheep belong to Christ; they are "My sheep." They are his because he, the Good Shepherd, gave his life for them. He purchased them with his own blood and they have been given to him by the Father. Ownership means lordship. That which is owned has no right of will contrary to the will of the owner. It has liberty to go, only within the limits granted by the owner. It is perfectly clear then, that the Good Shepherd does not grant to any sheep that has cost him so much to place in his own hand for safety, the privilege of jumping out of it.

God's hand is not an open hand. It is a hand that holds. When a father or a mother holds the hand of a small child to lead him safely through some place of real danger, that father or mother will not let that little hand go, even though the child might try to pull away.

No, God does not grant the sheep the liberty to jump out of his hand. It would disgrace a human shepherd of sheep to say that he allowed his sheep to stray away from him. How much more does it disgrace the Good Shepherd to say that he allows his sheep to go away from him?

The only question left then is, has the sheep the power to leap out of God's hand contrary to his will and purpose? To admit this, would be to contradict Jesus' words: "My Father . . . is greater than all." The "all" necessarily includes the sheep. It would also contradict his words, "they shall never perish," for if they did jump out they must perish.

What a perversion of God's word it is to add the little word "if" and to limit God by saying that a sheep can jump out of God's hand!

It denies salvation by grace through faith; it denies the fact of a believer's eternal life; it makes the will of man stronger than the will of God; it discounts the keeping power of God, and it robs the believer of his assurance. Yet men, who are called to be ambassadors of God, to be stewards of the many and diverse grace of God, often very earnestly and zealously, but mistakenly, do that very thing.

Jesus made another statement concerning himself and his sheep. He said, "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep"(John 10:11). This statement and the one, "My sheep shall never perish," are inter-dependent upon each other. They are to each other as cause and effect. The one cannot be touched without touching the other. To deny the effect - the absolute safety of the sheep - is to question the effective power of the cause - the death of the Good Shepherd. When Jesus says, "My sheep shall never perish," it is unconditional and final. It is to be accepted in simple faith and made the subject of rejoicing and thanksgiving.

CHAPTER TWO

Why This Discussion?

THE TRUTH that "My sheep . . . shall never perish," and that "no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand," is the substance of the doctrine of eternal security of the believer. Some object to a discussion of this doctrine on the ground that it engenders controversy and is not essential to salvation. It is true that as far as those who have been saved are concerned, they are still saved whether they understand this doctrine or not; but it has been the experience of multitudes that they have not known whether or not they are saved until they have come to understand this precious truth. In fact, without spiritual understanding of this doctrine it is impossible for anyone to be assured of eternal glory with God.

There are some who claim to be certain that they themselves shall be in heaven, but refuse to accept the doctrine of eternal security. By what special dispensation of grace shall they be saved? Are they not resting upon their own stability? Do such people have stronger characters than some weaker brothers who are

frequently stumbling? Does salvation make this distinction? It is to be feared that these people do not clearly see that salvation is by grace and grace alone, for the one of strong as well as the one of weak character, and that none are kept because of the slightest human merit.

The principal reason, however, for this volume is that unless one understands and accepts the doctrine of eternal security, one can not accept without a great deal of reservation the doctrines of the grace of God. The whole body of grace truth loses very much of its meaning to those who reject the doctrine of eternal security.

Some year ago, a minister of national reputation in this country was asked the question: "It makes considerable difference, does it not, how a minister preaches, whether or not he accepts the doctrine of eternal security?" The immediate answer was: "A vast difference."

If there is a vast difference in preaching due to acceptance or rejection of this doctrine, then it surely is important to discuss it. Speaking generally, those who reject this doctrine will in their sermons emphasize works. It becomes: "You must do this and you must not do that." The emphasis is on self and their preaching often causes hearers to question their own salvation. Fear is used as a motive for godly living. Those who accept the doctrine of assurance, tell of what God has done and offer their hearers a finished work of salvation by Jesus Christ. Their appeal to holiness is based on what God has done for the saved one. they magnify the grace of God. Truly there is a vast difference.

WHY USE THE TERM "ETERNAL SECURITY"?

There are those who accept the truth of the eternal security of the believer; but feel that this truth should be taught without reference to that expression, and that the name of the doctrine, because of the resentment against it, should never be used. It is true, because of misrepresentations of the doctrine, that it is wise to follow this course under certain circumstances, especially when it is impossible to deal extensively with the subject. But that does not do away with the need for a frank discussion of the whole subject. There is a great deal of anti-eternal security agitation. Much is preached and written against it. Gross misrepresentations of the doctrine are made. Some of the best Bible teachers and most spiritual Christians in the land are being labeled in certain quarters as "eternal security men" and doors, which otherwise would be open, are closed to them. Thereby congregations, sadly in need of being taught grace truth, are not having the opportunity to hear it. Some of the best Bible teachers are being kept out of summer Bible conferences because of their belief in eternal security, and the

young people who so greatly need to know the doctrines of the grace of God are not being taught.

This seems enough to demonstrate the real need of squarely facing this anti-eternal security agitation. That can only be done by using the term eternal security. It is impossible to expose the error of this teaching without using the words that are used so freely.

Some say that the expression eternal security is unbiblical and should not be used. If that is true, so also are the expressions, The Trinity or the Triune God, the Vicarious (or Substitutionary) Death, Omniscience, Omnipresence, and others that are freely used. These identical words are not in the Bible, but the meaning is there. The Bible teaches that the believer is included in the "eternal purpose" of God (Ephesians 3:10, 11); he has "eternal life" (First John 5:13); his salvation is called "eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:9); he has been redeemed by an "eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12); and he is assured an "eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15); and he is called "to eternal glory" (First Peter 5:10). In view of these expressions, it is surely correct to speak of the "eternal security" of the believer for each and every one of these conditions does make him eternally secure.

CHAPTER THREE

The Issued Clarified

The strong antagonism against the doctrine of eternal security found in some groups is largely due to a misunderstanding of it. There has been much misrepresentation of this doctrine coming from what might be classified as three different sources.

There seems to be a small number of persons who make use of the doctrine as a license to sin. There are not many of these; but those that there are, are being held up as proof that eternal security is something to be shunned. Whether or not such persons have ever been saved is a question that God alone can answer. It is certain, however, that it is not fair to judge a Bible doctrine by the misrepresentations of men who try to use it as a cloak for their wickedness. To point to such men and argue that eternal security is an evil teaching to be shunned is just as reasonable as it would be to hold up a counterfeit United States twenty-dollar bill and insist that because of it, all good twenty-dollar bills should be rejected. When counterfeit bills are found, they are taken out of circulation so as to protect the sound money. Likewise when someone uses the precious

doctrine of eternal security as a license, the error should be exposed that the truth might be retained.

There is a second source of information about eternal security that results in misunderstandings. This is presentation of the doctrine that is not erroneous, but unfortunately is only partial. The whole truth is not explained and some of those who hear draw wrong conclusions. This presentation comes from persons, often young people attending either a Bible school or summer Bible conference, who have received the truth of their security in Christ as a new revelation previously unknown to them. Being overjoyed in the assurance that has come to them, after years of uncertainty as to their salvation, they are eager that others should share the same joy and peace into which they have entered. It is regrettable that there should be this incomplete presentation of this comforting doctrine, but who is to blame for that? While it may be a severe charge, it is none the less true that had there been proper teaching of Bible doctrines in the home churches attended by these persons, such faulty presentations could never have been made. Who is to blame?

The third reason, and probably the greatest, for the antagonism to eternal security is because of the misrepresentation of the doctrine by some who are opposed to it.. This may not always be intentional, but it is none the less harmful.

Those who oppose the doctrine of eternal security say that this doctrine teaches that one who has been saved can not be lost; it makes no difference how he lives. The emphasis is usually placed on the last clause. This is what most uninformed Christians in many churches think is being taught as a doctrine, and they naturally resent such teaching. So do also those who accept and cherish this doctrine. This is a very unfair and misleading statement. In fact, the last half is a pure falsehood.

Those who hold and understand the doctrine teach that through the infinite sacrifice of his Own Son, God through the riches of his grace, saves the one who comes to him in simple faith; and that every one that has been redeemed by the blood of Christ, God through his own power, shall bring to glory.

There is a vast difference between these two statements. The one is on a human plane, the other is on a divine. The former centers attention on the believer's life and implies that salvation is dependent thereon. The second centers attention on God's love and sacrifice and makes salvation dependent thereon. The first calls attention to the failures of oneself; the second to God and his infinite power. The first suggests a license to sin; the second an appeal to holiness. The first

temporizes with sin; the second glorifies God. The first is an appeal to human reason; the second an acceptance of divine revelation.

It is a dangerous thing to so misrepresent God's revelation.

LOST OR SAVED

In all disputes, much misunderstanding is cleared away by a proper understanding of the terms used. To be lost is a condition before God of every individual member of the human race before he is saved. This condition is described as "dead in trespasses and sins" and "by nature the children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:1, 3). Such are under the condemnation of God's holy law. To be saved is to have passed from this state of condemnation and death into a state of eternal life (John 5:24). The lost are under the reign, or power, of sin to death; the saved are under the reign, or power, of grace to eternal life. The transfer from the one position to the other is by an act of God and not of man. A more detailed explanation of what it means to be saved is found in Chapter six. It is in this sense that the words lost and saved are used when it is said that one who has been saved shall not be lost.

Salvation itself is not an outward condition but a heart relationship with God. As a result of it come outward expressions. In the lives of some, these are more manifest than in others. Abraham and Lot are both spoken of in the Bible as justified (saved) men, but there was much more outward evidence of a heart relationship with God in the life of Abraham.

On the other hand, there may be much of what to man appears as evidence of a new life within, which is not that at all. There are many who profess to be Christians, who take part in religious work, or have joined some church, who have never been saved. Going forward in a revival meeting, weeping or passing through emotional periods, does not constitute being saved. These may and sometimes do accompany salvation, but they are not salvation. It is even possible for men to preach in the Name of Christ without having been saved (Matthew 7:22, 23). A moral reformation is not salvation. In fact, it may be quite the opposite because it may be the result of human will power and action and not of God.

Because man judges the outward being and not the heart, there are many mistakes made in judging persons as saved or unsaved. The doctrine of eternal security has nothing to say about this vast number of people who only give outward show, but who lack the heart relationship with God.

As the salvation of an individual is a matter entirely of God's doing, so also is the security of every one that has been saved. It follows then that man's knowledge of both the fact of salvation and security must primarily come as a revelation from God.

To many, it seems most unreasonable that one who has been saved is not lost because of his sins and failures. It truly is unreasonable, but it is equally unreasonable that God should save one who has sunk to the lowest depths of sin; yes, even a very intellectual and moral person but still a sinner, and raise him to the highest position in glory far above all other creatures of God. Yet it has pleased God to reveal that fact to man. He has also revealed the fact that he has made provision to keep every one that has thus been saved. There is but one thing to do: accept that which God has revealed through his word, however much that may differ from what one has been taught in the past. In the discussion of this question, then, no such statements as, "We know from our experience" have any weight. It is only a question: "What does God say?"

CHAPTER FOUR

God Says So

The simplest evidence in support of the doctrine of eternal security is a large number of scripture passages which state in plain, unconditional language the facts that can mean nothing else than that all who have been saved are saved for all eternity.

Some of these, in addition to John 10:27-29 already used, are quoted below:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My Word and believes in him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24, NKJV).

"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away" (John 6:37).

"And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:39, 40).

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" (Romans 5:8, 9)

"Therefore, there is now no more condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). The last ten words printed in the King James Version have been added. They are not in the Revised Version, (or the NIV or the NASB). Those who use the Swedish Bible will find that they are not in it.

"And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you [and he does live in every saved person], he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you" (Romans 8:29, 30).

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. . . . And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified." (Romans 8:29, 30).

"Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us" (Romans 8:33, 34). All saved are included in "God's elect." To be lost is to have a charge laid against oneself and to be condemned. God has made provision against both.

"He [God] will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful" (First Corinthians 1:8, 9).

"And just as we [all who are saved] have borne the likeness of the earthly man [Adam], so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven [Jesus Christ]. (First Corinthians 15:49).

"Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you [all who have been saved] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

"For you [who are saved] died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:3, 4).

"The Lord will deliver me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever" (Second Timothy 4:18).

"Who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time" (First Peter 1:5).

"Dear friends, now we are children [born ones] of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (First John 3:2). Anyone who can at this moment, or at any moment say: I am a child of God, I am saved, can also say, I know that I shall be like him. There is not the slightest trace of anything conditional in this verse.

These passages are unquestionably written to, or about, the saved of this age. There is nothing in the context of any of them to qualify their meaning. They are in non-figurative language which does not call for explanation.

If these passages do not declare that the one who is saved shall remain saved to the end and share the glory of Christ in his heavenly Kingdom, then words are without any certain meaning.

Surely God says that the saved one is eternally secure.

Part Two

CHAPTER FIVE

Eternal Security and the Doctrines of the Grace The Grace of God

In the preceding chapter, a sufficiently large number of scripture passages were quoted to support the truth of eternal security, leaving no room for any reasonable doubt. There is yet, even more certain evidence to support this truth, if any one part of God's word can be said to be more sure than any other.

It must be admitted by all that the doctrines of the grace of God are a related body of truth, each part of which harmonizes perfectly with each and every other part. There must be no contradictions between the various doctrines and no confusion as to their meanings, for God is the God of order and not of confusion.

The fundamental question then is: Does the truth of eternal security harmonies and fit in with all the doctrines of the grace of God, or does the declaration that one who has been saved can be lost do so? As these two positions are

contradictory to each other, only one of them can be so harmonized. That position which can be harmonized must then be accepted as fundamentally correct and the other discarded. This is of far greater weight than the quotation of separate scripture passages to support the one side or the other. In fact, it must be conceded that, if it can be established that the one position is in harmony with all the doctrines of grace and the other is in discord with them, it becomes imperative to interpret individual verses in harmony with the conclusions from a study of the doctrines. Certainly no passage can be interpreted so as to build a doctrine that is out of harmony with the great body of grace truth.

It is the purpose of this section to show that the truth of eternal security and all the others either stand or fall together. Each and every one of these doctrines requires the acceptance of the truth of eternal security for a full and clear acceptance thereof. Thus the doctrine of eternal security might be said to be the keystone of the arch of the doctrines of grace, or it might be likened to the warp of a fabric of which the other doctrines of grace are the woof. Take out the doctrine of eternal security and the arch falls, or the fabric falls apart.

Those who support the position that one who has been saved can be lost never put their position to this test. In fact they are not known to quote any doctrine of grace to support their position. They rest their case on individual scripture passages, the interpretations of which are questionable or have actually been read into these passages by themselves and often entirely contrary to the context in which they are found. This however, will be discussed in a later section.

It will not only be shown that the doctrine of eternal security is in harmony with the doctrines of grace, but it will be shown that the opposing view makes these doctrines void and meaningless.

It will be seen from the discussion of the different doctrines that eternal security is not a separate doctrine, but is actually an inseparable part of each of the doctrines of the grace of God and therefore it seems more exact to speak of the "truth" or "fact" of eternal security than the doctrine of eternal security.

What follows is not offered as an exhaustive study of all of the doctrines, nor is it all of any one doctrine. What is claimed for it is, that it calls attention to those parts of a large number of doctrines which have a bearing on the doctrine of eternal security. It makes no claim to be a scholarly theological discussion of these doctrines.

CHAPTER SIX

Saved by Grace Through Faith

FOR IT is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no-one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). This passage deals with the past tense of salvation. It is salvation from the guilt, penalty and condemnation of sin. It has already been fully accomplished. It is not a process that is being carried on to be perfected at a later time. In its present tense, salvation is from the power of sin and is a process. In its future tense, salvation will be from the presence of sin and will be accomplished "in a moment in the twinkling of an eye."

Salvation, to use the words of another, is in no sense a probation. To be saved by grace, to some, seems to mean to be placed in such a relation to God that at the end of the earthly life, one enters glory, provided, however, that one has been faithful to God and has lived according to certain moral standards. It is not stated as definitely as this, but that is a very fair statement of the meaning of salvation to be gleaned from a great deal of present day preaching.

The doctrinal epistles tell of a great many things that are true of the one who has been saved. These are all spoken of as being fully accomplished. There is no mention of growth or development of any one of them. They are always considered as being final. The following is only an incomplete list of these things. It is not necessary to enumerate all in order to prove that the one who has been "saved" is in an unalterable condition. Some of these are more fully discussed in later chapters.

The saved person has been redeemed from under the law (Galatians 4:5), and the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13), by an eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12). He is dead to the law (Romans 7:4), and shall not come into condemnation (John 5:24, Romans 8:1). He is reconciled to God (Second Corinthians 5:18), and is at peace with him (Colossians 1:20). He is justified (Romans 5:1), and all sins have been forgiven (Colossians 2:13). He has been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the kingdom of the Son of God (Colossians 1:13). He has been born again of imperishable seed (First Peter 1:23); is a son of God (John 1:12); and has eternal life (John 5:24). He is a new creature (Second Corinthians 5:17). He is perfected forever (Hebrews 10:14); is complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10); and has been accepted by God (Ephesians 1:6). He has been born of the Spirit (John 3:6); baptized by the Spirit (First Corinthians 12:13); is lived in by the Spirit forever (John 14:16, 17); and has been sealed (or security marked) with the Spirit for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30). He has become the object of God's

love (Ephesians 2:4), of his grace (Romans 6:14), of his power (Ephesians 1:19), and of his faithfulness (First Corinthians 1:9). He is a citizen of heaven (Ephesians 2:19 and Philippians 3:20); is seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6); and is already glorified (Romans 8:30).

All of the above, and more too, God says of the one who has been saved. Before the one who has been saved can be lost, everyone of these things must be made null and void. Is that possible? God's word is absolutely silent as to any such possibility. This should be final, for it is only through his revelation that these facts are known to man. It could only, by a similar revelation, be known that they are subject to change if that were possible.

Can one who has been redeemed by an eternal redemption be brought back into bondage? Can one who is dead to the law be made alive to it? Can one within the Kingdom of God be taken out of it? Can one born again of imperishable seed and having eternal life die? Can one that has been perfected forever be found imperfect? Can one that is complete in Christ become incomplete? These are eternal in their very nature, and therefore are unalterable.

Only when all of these questions can be answered in the affirmative, can one who has been saved be said to be lost. The burden of proof rests squarely on those who say that one who has been saved can be lost to show that these things can be made void. To many, it is a light matter to say that one who has been saved can be lost, but how many understand the full implications of that statement?

IT IS BY GRACE

Grace excludes all merit on the part of the one who is the object thereof. Therefore to be saved by grace cannot take into account any merit in the saved one, either before, at the time of, or after the time he is saved. Furthermore, grace is shown toward the one who is actually guilty. "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Therefore demerit does not hinder the operation of grace, nor can it set aside that which grace has accomplished. In fact, demerit is the occasion for grace to accomplish its work.

The conclusion drawn from this is that that which God has done by the operation of his grace is unalterable, and this is exactly what God says about grace. ". . . it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed" (Romans 4:16).

Thus to be saved by grace is to be unalterably saved and that for all eternity. The saved one cannot be anything but eternally secure.

THROUGH FAITH

There is no merit in faith. "It is of faith that it might be by grace." If there were the slightest merit in faith, it could not be a channel through which grace could work. It would be a counter agent to grace which, as has been seen, by its very nature excludes merit on the part of the one saved. Faith not only excludes the thought of merit, it actually includes the idea of helplessness and hopelessness. In faith one calls on another to do that which one is unable to do for oneself. A child in the family is sick and near death. the family physician is called. In doing this the parents confess their own inability to deal with the illness and express their confidence in the doctor. There is no merit in calling the doctor. their faith in the doctor merely gives him the opportunity to work.

The object of the sinner's faith is Christ. He did not come into this world to help men to be saved. He came to save that which was lost - that which was beyond all human help As Saviour, he came to give his life as a ransom - to die, and thereby take on himself the judgment for sin.

Jesus gave a clear illustration of what faith in him means. He said to Nicodemus: "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life" (John 3:14, 15). The Israelite in the desert showed his faith by looking on the snake of brass that hung on the pole (see Numbers 21:5-9). This one act of faith expressed a confession of sin and utter helplessness and was an acknowledgment that God's provision was his only hope. He neither understood the significance of the snake, nor why it was made of brass. He didn't analyze his faith to see if it was sufficient. He didn't question the intensity of his look. He surely claimed no merit for looking. There were just two things on his mind: his own absolute hopelessness and the sufficiency of God's provision. This is all there is to the faith through which the lost are saved. There is no power in faith that contributes to salvation.

Yet there are men who discuss faith as something which is meritorious on the part of the believer. Some even say that faith is a work. This is impossible, for salvation is through faith and "not by works." Sometimes one hears sinners invited to come to the cross and lay their sin burden there. If this were possible, it might be contended that faith is a work, but even this is impossible. No person can take the sin burden off himself. The sin burden must always rest on a person and it stays on the sinner until it is taken and placed on Christ and that can only be done by God. "The LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). If man is totally incapable of doing anything to remove the sin burden from

himself, he is much more incapable of contributing anything to doing all the things already mentioned as being true of the one who is saved.

Through faith (that is the acknowledgment of one's own utter helplessness and hopelessness and the casting of one's self upon God's provision) God is able to act in grace. That is the meaning of: "It is of faith that it might be by grace." That is also the meaning of: "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12).

The meaning of faith then, as well as the meaning of grace, excludes every possible vestige of human merit. If every possible vestige of human merit is excluded, then man's acts, apart from accepting the Saviour, are not related to salvation and thus no act of man or demerit of man can cause him to be taken out of the condition of being saved. Yet this is exactly what is argued by those who contend against the doctrine of eternal security.

The fact that saving faith is an act and not a process must not be construed to mean that there is no further need for faith. "The righteous will live by faith" (Romans 1:17 [Quoting Habakkuk 2:4]). God has much more in view for the saved person than being saved from the guilt, penalty and condemnation of sin and into the Kingdom of his dear Son, even as much as that means. He desires that those who have themselves been saved shall bear "more fruit and "much fruit." This is to live a Spirit-directed life that shows others the way of salvation. That is the life that the righteous (one who has been justified, making them righteous before God through one act of faith) shall live by the faith principle of confessing one's own inability and full dependence on God.

AND THIS NOT FROM YOURSELVES

God does not trust man to see his own absolute lack of merit merely through the meaning of the word grace and faith, for to know his own lack of merit and absolute worthlessness in relation to God is man's hardest lesson to learn. So God adds the definite statement "not from yourselves." Again, no human merit can contribute to salvation. God is very zealous to have it known that he and he only is responsible for man's salvation. Yet well meaning, sincere Christians will insist on some "must" or "musts" on the part of man in order for him to remain saved.

There is a further meaning to the words "not from yourselves." The word "yourselves" is addressed to men who in themselves are fallible, who are finite and who are incapable of good as God judges goodness. If salvation were by such, it would be faulty, it would be limited in extent and duration, it would not be good and acceptable to God.

If it were part of God and part of self, as it must be if the slightest degree of merit or demerit of man were taken into account, it would still be faulty, limited and unacceptable to God, to whatever extent man's merit or demerit be taken into account. There would somewhere be one weak link in the chain. As the strength of the chain is the strength of its weakest link, there cannot be the slightest link of human merit in the salvation chain that binds the believer to God, but there is no weak link in that chain, because it is "not from yourselves" and therefore the believer is eternally secure.

Every argument against the eternal security of the believer is based on the human element. As God definitely and clearly excludes all human element in salvation, every one of these arguments is thereby ruled out.

IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD

Salvation is a gift from God. Again, and for the fourth time, all thought of merit is excluded, for a gift is not a gift in the full sense of the word if it is in exchange for even the slightest thing. The fact that salvation is said to be a gift from God, makes it unchangeable, for the "gifts . . . of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29).

This gift is "of God." It is not only given by God, it is also prepared by him. All of aforementioned things that are true of every believer are provided by God and are thereby perfect and acceptable to him. "They are made to stand on the unchanging person and merit of the eternal Son of God" (Lewis Sperry Chafer in his book, Salvation), for they are all "through Christ" and because of his merit. They are therefore of infinite and eternal value in the sight of God. the one who has received the gift of salvation must then be eternally secure. To say that one who has been saved can be lost is to say that there can be a failure in these things which are of God. That implies deficiency in the merit of Christ and in the power of God working through him. Dare anyone say that that is possible?

NOT BY WORKS, SO THAT NO-ONE CAN BOAST

Works and grace are said to be mutually exclusive of each other. "And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. But if by works, then it is no longer grace; if it were, work would no longer be work" (Romans 11:6). Therefore, as salvation is by grace, all that in any way might be works, whether it be to will or to do, is excluded.

Works are the opposite of faith. That which is of works is of man's effort and is meritorious to him. By works man confesses his own ability and displays

confidence in self. Israel did this at Sinai when they answered Moses: "We will do everything the LORD has said" (Exodus 19:8). On the contrary, as has been seen, faith admits one's own disability and dependence upon another for that which is to be done.

Thus where there are works there is boasting of man, but where it is through faith, there is no boasting of man. Therefore salvation is "not by works, so that no-one can boast." "Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith" (Romans 3:27). This is "so that no-one may boast before him" (First Corinthians 1:29).

Thus there can be nothing - absolutely nothing - bearing on the salvation of man from the guilt, penalty and condemnation of sin and into the glorious Kingdom of the Son of God that can in the slightest degree be of works by the saved one himself. This is all excluded for the very purpose of excluding boasting by man.

TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORIOUS GRACE

God does not save man because of any value in man or because man is too good to be lost; for there is no goodness in man, "they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one" (Romans 3:12 [See also Ecclesiastes 7:20; Psalms 53:1-3]). God saves men so "that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7).

The supreme purpose of God in salvation is: "To the praise of his glorious grace" (Ephesians 1:6 and 2:7). In eternity those who are saved shall sing a new song saying: "You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood" (Revelation 5:9 NKJV). There shall be no discord in that song. Here on earth there is a definitely discordant note every time someone says that the saved one must not sin, must continue in faith, must hold out, must do this and must not do that in order to remain saved. The praise is not all given to the blood, but these notes shall not be heard there, for they are of the flesh, and no flesh shall glory in his presence. To him only and to the glory of his grace shall be all the praise.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Gift of the Son of God

THE ONLY basis on which God does anything for man is the gift of his own Son. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (John 3:16). It was "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). This offer is to

all, but only to "as many as received him . . . he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12 NKJV).

To those who accept the Son as a gift, God gives everything else that is needed by a child of his. "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). The fact that the Son was given up thus becomes of infinite value to every one that receives him, for all things are given and received with him. The "all things" include every possible thing that the believer's spiritual welfare might require under every conceivable condition. It is nothing less than a divinely perfect provision for the one who has the Son. This must include a provision against being lost.

There are some things that are specifically mentioned in the Bible as being gifts from God. They are: eternal life (Romans 6:23), The Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17) and Righteousness (Romans 5:16, 17).

As long as a person has the Son and with him these other gifts, he is saved.

Those who teach that a saved person can be lost necessarily teach that these gifts can be lost. They say God takes the eternal life back to himself or that the Holy Spirit will depart from one who has received him. These are man's words, not God's.

What does God say? He says "the gifts . . . of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29). If God says that he will not revoke a gift, it is contradicting him and calling him a liar to say that he takes his gifts back. No. One who has received, as a free gift from God, first his Son and with him righteousness, eternal life, and the Holy Spirit and all other things, will always have these throughout all eternity and is eternally secure.

Still there are some who prefer to reason rather than accept the finality of God's word. They say: "Oh, yes, God does not take back his gifts, but a man can throw them away.: Where is the scripture proof for this? The Bible says that the Holy Spirit abides forever (John 14:16). Can he be thrown away? The gift of Righteousness is a matter of God's own accounting (Romans 4:24). Has man access to God's books so he can change them? Can eternal life be thrown away? Man can throw away his physical life by committing suicide, but that life is a mortal one. Can suicide be committed when the life is eternal?

God has given these infinite gifts to men that he should be praised for them. Paul says "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" (Second Corinthians 9:15

NKJV). There is no thanks given to God by teaching that God takes his gifts back or that they can be thrown away.

Thus the doctrine of eternal security is inseparably related to the teachings concerning the gift of the Son.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Substitutionary Death of Christ

"THE WAGES of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4 NKJV). This is God's law. It is far more unalterable than the laws of the Medes and the Persians. God's own righteousness demands that his law be held inviolate; the penalty of the law must be enforced. There can be no exception made. Not one sin can he overlook, even the smallest. God, sitting as Judge, would be unjust if he did not impose the death penalty of his law upon all.

The voice of his law has stopped every mouth and declared everyone guilty before him (Romans 3:19). There is no human means of escape, but God has provided a means whereby he might remain just and yet deliver the sinner from the death penalty of his sins.

The sentence has been imposed. Sinning humanity stood guilty before the Judge, awaiting the execution of the sentence, but before the execution took place the gates of heaven were opened. the Son of God was sent forth. He was given a body which was in the form of sinful flesh, but he was not sinful. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth" (First Peter 2:22 [See also Isaiah 53:9]). He was as "a lamb without blemish or defect" (First Peter 1:19). the centurion was right when he said: "Surely this was a righteous man" (Luke 23:47).

Because he was sinless, he was not under the condemnation of the law, but he presented himself to God the Judge to ransom those who were under that condemnation, and paid the death penalty on their behalf. Thereby those who accept him as the one who paid the penalty of the law in their stead shall not die, but live.

He, himself, said that this was the very reason he came into the world. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). "The Son of Man" came "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). "I have come that they (the sheep) may have life" (John 10:10).

This giving of his life was a voluntary act on his part. He said, "No-one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (John 10:18).

God the Judge accepted his offering and "laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (Second Corinthians 5:21).

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (First Peter 2:24). "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (First Peter 3:18).

In that great event that took place on Calvary's hill, God, the righteous Judge, sitting in judgment, took the sins of sinning mankind and laid them on his own Son. Then he carried out the execution of the judgment upon him. Everyone standing before God as a guilty sinner who will acknowledge this death of the Son of God as paying the penalty for his sins is immediately declared by God as having fully satisfied the demands of the law and is free from its penalty. Because Christ died on his behalf, he is then in the sight of the law as one dead. He is dead to the law and from that time on the law, as the only giver of death, has nothing to do with him. Paul states this fact clearly and repeatedly: "So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ" (Romans 7:4), and again: "But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law" (Romans 7:6), and still again: "For through the law I died to the law" (Galatians 2:19).

The substitutionary death of Christ then means that he was put to death in the place of the sinner to satisfy God's law that demands that "The soul who sins shall die." Thus the death sentence has not only been imposed; the sinner who believes in Christ, has in the Person of Christ been executed and from then on he cannot be condemned by the law for he is dead in its sight. Thus one who has been saved by being ransomed by the death of Christ cannot be lost.

"Payment God will not twice demand,

Once from my bleeding Surety's hand

And then again from me."

Some are able to accept this truth insofar as it affects sins committed prior to the time they were saved, but believe that sins committed afterward may cause one to be lost. To such there are several answers.

In the first place, did Christ die for their sins at the moment they accepted him? No. it was almost nineteen hundred years before a single sin has been committed by them., When he died he did so for the sins of the whole human race which have been committed over a period of six thousand years. Therefore it cannot be a question of the time sin was committed.

Again, it must be remembered that God doesn't work according to the calendar. When he looks at the life of any particular individual it isn't as a biography of successive events, but as a composite portrait of sinful and righteous acts. This must be so, for he saw everyone before the foundation of the world, before time was. In taking an individual's sins then, and placing them on Christ, whether it was those of a saint of the Old Testament or of one living today, he considered the entire sin element of that life and passed judgment on it. As far as the penalty of God's holy law and the demands of his righteousness are concerned, the sin question is settled once and for all the very moment an individual believes that Christ paid the penalty in his place.

If one who has been saved and is dead to the law by the body of Christ could be lost, then it would be possible to put the same person to death, twice. This is impossible. Therefore, to say that it is possible for one who has been saved to be lost, is to deny the value of the substitutionary death of Christ.

But God does not leave this question open. He has given the most definite assurance that those who have been saved by the death of Christ shall be eternally saved. He says: "But God demonstrates his own loves for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" (Romans 5:8, 9).

CHAPTER NINE

Redemption

BECAUSE "THE law brings wrath" (Romans 4:15), one who is under the law is subject to the wrath of God.

"Whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God" (Romans 3:19). The law is the service of death and of condemnation (Second Corinthians 3:7, 9). Therefore, one who is under the law is guilty before God and condemned to death.

Therefore, the one who is under the law is lost.

A saved person has been redeemed from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13) and from under the law (Galatians 4:5). He is no longer under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:14).

Redemption was accomplished by the death penalty being borne by Jesus Christ instead of by the sinner. Thus execution by substitute, as explained in the preceding chapter, has been actually carried out. In the sight of the law, the guilty sinner is dead - dead to the law (Romans 7:4) and therefore free from it.

If one who is saved is to be lost, it is necessary to return him into the state of being under the law. As he was freed from the law by payment of the death penalty, he can be brought back under it only by the execution of his substitute. Until that is done, the law can have nothing to say to him. Therefore the payment by Christ of the death penalty of the law on behalf of every sinner that comes to him demands the acceptance of the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer.

Redemption is said to be: "not with perishable things - but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." This redemption price can never lose its value, for it is imperishable. It is infinite in its value, for it is the blood of the infinite Christ. It is perfect for He was without blemish or defect, and it is precious. An imperishable, infinite, perfect and precious redemption price insures an unchangeable, infinite, complete redemption. And such is the redemption of the believer. "He (Christ) entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12). Inasmuch as the redemption of the one who has been saved from under the law is eternal, he cannot again come under the law and be condemned to death by it. He can, therefore, not be lost. Eternal redemption and eternal security are one and the same thing. There can be no doctrine of eternal redemption without the fact of eternal security.

As conclusive as all of this is, it is not all that God has done to make the redemption of the saved one absolutely certain. Redemption is not only from something, it is also to God (Revelation 5:9). Everyone who is saved had been "bought" (First Corinthians 7:23) by Christ, and the transaction has been sealed and witnessed.

After an individual has, through faith, accepted Christ as his redeemer, he is sealed with the Holy Spirit and is also given him as a witness to what has been done. This sealing is "until the redemption of the purchased possession"

(Ephesians 1:14). The seal is legal evidence of a consummated purchase, and is proof of owner.

A beautiful illustration of the use of the seal is found in the story of the purchase by Jeremiah of a field from Hanameel, his uncle's son. The transaction was sealed according to law; and witnesses and the purchase price, seventeen shekels of silver, was weighed in the balances. Then Jeremiah gave the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to law, and that which was open (ie. witnessed) and gave them to Baruch to be put in an earthen vessel. The field was then Jeremiah's by purchase. (See Jeremiah 32:8-14.)

That incident in the life of Jeremiah is a beautiful picture of the sealing by the Holy Spirit. The transfer of the field to Jeremiah was a legal transaction. So also Christ becomes owner of every believer through a legal transaction. Natural man is under the law and condemned to death. In Christ is vested the right of redemption. He paid the redemption price, not shekels of silver, the redemption money of the temple, but his own precious blood to satisfy the requirements of the law. On behalf of everyone who believes, evidence is subscribed and sealed. The seal is the Holy Spirit. In addition thereto, a witness is taken. This also is the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:15, 16). These evidences are then place in an earthen vessel - the believer's body, where they continue until the redemption of the purchased possession is consummated.

A sealed and witnesses transaction is unalterable. It is final. It is irrevocable. The one who has been bought from under the bondage of sin and the condemnation of the law cannot be returned to that state. The seal is effective throughout the entire earthly life of the believer. To deny the eternal security of the believer is to reject the value of the seal and witness of the Holy Spirit.

Thus the fact of eternal security is as vital to the doctrine of redemption as life is to the body. Take life away from the body and it is useless, it returns to the dust. take security out of the doctrine of redemption and its life-giving power is gone. The doctrine of Redemption demands the doctrine of eternal security.

CHAPTER TEN

The New Birth

UNFORTUNATELY, COMPARITIVELY few Christians really understand what it means to be "born again." "You must be born again" is a favorite sermon topic, but why is it such a rare thing to hear a simple explanation of what the new birth

means and what takes place when one is born again? Those that deny the eternal security of the believer do not explain it.

The new birth is as real as the first birth. The Lord Jesus Christ said to Nicodemus: "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" (John 3:6).

The word birth, when used literally, always means the coming into existence of a new life which has the same nature as the parents. When a wolf, or a sheep, is born, there is a new life which has the wolf nature or the sheep nature, as the case may be. When a child is born into the world, new life comes into existence. This life has a human nature which is sinful. It is therefore subject to death. This is the birth that Jesus called "of the flesh" and the result of that birth is flesh. This life cannot change its nature. It is as grass that withers, and as a flower that falls away (First Peter 1:24). To be saved does not mean that this life which is born of the flesh is changed or made over. This cannot happen, for its nature cannot be changed. That is the condition that makes the new birth imperative. The only thing God could do with the flesh was to judge it, and the judgment resulted in condemnation and execution (Romans 8:3; Galatians 2:19; Romans 6:6).

The new birth is a birth of the Spirit. It is to be "born, not of natural descent, nor of human decision, or a husband's will, but born of God" (John 1:13). It is the coming into being of a new, divine life which has the imperishable and immortal nature of God. Of the new birth Peter writes: "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God" (First Peter 1:23). This seed not only lives forever, but it has also been revealed that it remains (First John 3:9) in the one who is born of God. Such a life must be eternal and that which is eternal cannot die. All who are born of imperishable seed have an imperishable nature and have eternal life. It is impossible for such to be lost for that would mean the perishing of the divine nature and that which cannot die.

By the new birth, one who has already been born into the human race is born into the spiritual realm, that is, the Kingdom of God. This is the only way to see or enter into that realm (John 3:3, 5).

Not a single individual who has been born into the human race has been able to remove himself from it. Many have committed suicide, but all that achieves is to shorten the days of their earthly existence. Their existence still continues, on and on and on into the eternity of the future. How some people would like to obliterate themselves entirely from the human race! Yet they cannot because of the relentless law: once born a human, always a human.

Despite all this, some teach that one who has been saved can be lost by willfully going away from God. This is the same as saying that one who has been born into the Kingdom of God can, by his own will, separate himself from the spiritual realm. By analogy with the human race, this is impossible. The burden of proof rests heavily upon those who so teach to produce scripture passages which show that this is possible. None has as yet produced such proof. In fact, these teachers do not attempt to prove this and similar statements by quoting scripture. They simply make the statements and their hearers or readers who are untutored in Bible doctrine accept them at face value.

Those who reject the eternal security of the believer, pervert the doctrine of the new birth (either consciously or unconsciously) by believing that eternal life is received first at the end of the present earthly life. In the meantime the "saved person" might lose his chance of receiving it. This is a widely accepted error. Eternal life, however, is an ever present possession of all who are born again, from the very moment they were so born.

Jesus said: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My Word and believes in him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24 NKJV).

All of this is accomplished in a moment when the sinner, by believing, accepts Christ and is born again. The word "has" does not mean "is receiving" nor "will receive." It means already possessed. Three times in this verse, the unending nature of the believer's life is stated: (1) has everlasting (eternal) life, (2) shall not come into judgment and (3) has passed from death into life. Notice also that Jesus calls special attention to the fact that he is authority for the statement. He says "I say to you," and that is not all, he emphasizes it with the strongest expression he ever used: "Most assuredly" (NKJV); "Verily, verily" (KJV); "Truly, truly" (NASB); "I tell you the truth" (NIV). What finality of expression is used here by the Lord Jesus Christ!

Even still, it is possible to be so blinded by the teaching that one who has been saved can be lost, that this cannot be understood. At the close of a session of a Bible class in which the truth of the believer's present possession of eternal life had been pointed out, one of the members said: "I can't believe that we now have eternal life, for that would be eternal security and I won't believe that." Not all are as honest in expressing their position as was this person, but their minds are just as closed to the truth. They cannot see the truth, because of adherence to a false teaching that absolutely contradicts it.

Those who teach that one who has been saved can be lost, also teach that one such a person can be saved again. To be saved means to be born again. If it were possible to be lost, that would mean the death of the life resulting from the new birth. Then to be saved a second time it becomes necessary to be born again a second time. With some, it would be a third, fourth, fifth time and so on indefinitely. Is there any scripture to support such juggling of the simple meaning of the word birth?

Just how far astray the rejection of the doctrine of eternal security will bring people is seen in connection with the doctrine of the new birth. To accept "new birth" as meaning a new eternal life as real as the physical life received by the first birth makes their position indefensible. So the new birth is called a "symbol of salvation." This precious, basic, vital doctrine is made figurative language. Its force is lost. Its clear meaning is lost. The word of God has been made meaningless.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The New Creation in Christ Jesus

THERE IS a doctrine that is very little known and still less taught that is very closely related to the doctrine of the New Birth. It is the "new creation in Christ Jesus."

He who is saved is "created in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:10). "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation" (Galatians 6:15). This creation takes the place of the old creation in the first Adam. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (Second Corinthians 5:17). This new creation is "the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:24).

The new self is the born-again self, the one born of the spirit, as distinguished from the old self, or carnal self, the one born of the flesh. The old self has a corrupt human nature, with inborn tendency to evil. The new self is partaker of a divine nature and life and is in no sense the old self made over, or improved. (See Dr. Schofield's Reference notes to Ephesians 4:24 and Romans 6:6)

God created Adam in his own likeness (Genesis 5:1, 2). Afterward, "Adam . . . had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth" (Genesis 5:3). Thus is stated the beginning of the generations of the human race, but something had happened in the interval between the second and third verses. Adam through sin had lost the likeness of God. When Seth was begotten in

Adam's "own likeness, in his own image," it was not in the original likeness to God but it was in the likeness of the sinful Adam. Also, as it was said of Adam "and then he died," so it was also said of Seth - "and then he died." The observant reader will find the following formula throughout the chapter: "Altogether . . . lived . . . years . . . and then he died." There is one exception, Enoch who was "taken from this life, so that he did not experience death" (Hebrews 11:5), is a prototype of those saints who are to be caught up when Christ comes for his Church.

Ever since that same formula has applied to man, every descendant of Adam from Cain and Seth down to the present day, has been born in the likeness and image of Adam, with a sinful nature and subject to death. There is absolutely no escape from this condition. "Therefore, just as sin entered the world [humanity] through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned. Consequently, ... the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men" (Romans 5:12, 18).

The words that are written large over the first creation, that of which Adam is the federal head, are - "SIN HAS REIGNED, TO DEATH." That condition is unalterable, for God had commanded Adam not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and has made death the penalty for disobedience. This means death in its fullest significance, physical death, spiritual death and the second death which is the final everlasting separation of the body, soul and spirit from God. God's commandment has been broken and the penalty cannot be avoided.

To be lost in this first creation is to be dead in trespasses and sins.

When the Son of God became flesh and came into the world, he lived among men of the old creation, but he was not of it. He was not of the seed of Adam, but of the seed of the woman. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, he did not possess Adam's sinful nature. He was full of truth (John 1:14). He was in the likeness of sinful flesh (Romans 8:3), but no sin was in him.

Then through infinite love, he identified himself with the first creation and took upon himself the guilt of it. He was the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. As a result, he tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9).

But God raised him up, "freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him" (Acts 2:24). He arose victorious over death. The Son of God? Yes, but also the Son of man. With his resurrection there was a new creation raised by God out of the death of the old. All who are

saved are enlivened together with Christ in this resurrection. "But God ... made us alive with Christ ... even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:4-6).

As the first creation has one man as its federal head, so also has the new, the man Jesus Christ (Romans 5:15). The first creation received its sinful nature from its federal head, Adam. The new creation receives its righteous nature from its federal head, the man Jesus Christ, for "through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19). In each case, the nature of the creation depends on the act of the head. It doesn't depend on the acts of those people that derive from those heads.

As the unalterable law of the first creation is Sin, to death, so the law of the new is GRACE REIGNS THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS, TO ETERNAL LIFE. This law of the new creation is even more unalterable than that of the first creation. "For if, by the trespass of one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17). Since the head cannot be condemned (Romans 6:9, 10), the members of the new creation cannot be condemned.

To be saved is to be in the new creation under the law of righteousness, to eternal life. To be lost is to be in the first creation under the law of sin, to death. If one who has been saved can be lost, it must be possible to bring him back into his original position in the old creation. That is impossible. To say that this could happen would be to contradict Jesus' own words: "Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me ... will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24). Furthermore, for everyone that is in the new creation, the old has passed away (Second Corinthians 5:17). There can be no return to it.

To say that a saved person, one who has been enlivened together with Christ, can be lost is to reject completely God's teachings concerning his new creation.

CHAPTER TWELVE

An Unbroken Chain

FOR THOSE God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, ... And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified" (Romans 8:29, 30).

This is an unbroken chain of things that God has done for the saved one. All is based on his foreknowledge and culminates in glorification. All is in the past tense, therefore already accomplished.

There is no stage at which there is the slightest possibility that the number of individuals is reduced. Just as many are glorified as are predestined. Not a single one less! As all who are called are glorified, not one can be lost.

There are five doctrines of the Grace of God in this passage. Not a single one of them can be fully accepted without accepting the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer.

1. GOD FOREKNOWS

The foreknowledge of God is a part of his omniscience. To say that God is omniscient is to say that he knows everything - past, present and future. This he declares of himself: "I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come" (Isaiah 46:9, 10).

In the following passages the foreknowledge of God is made the very basis for salvation. "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son" (Romans 8:29).

"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Ephesians 1:4).

"Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (First Peter 1:2).

These passages state clearly that what God has done in salvation was based on his foreknowledge. He knew before Adam was created, or before a single saved person was saved, every detail of each life from the cradle to the grave. In view of this foreknowledge, he "predestined" and he "chose." If it is possible by sin in the life, or by loss of faith, or by "willing to go away from God" to be lost, what can be said about the foreknowledge of God? If God did not see these things he is not omniscient. If he saw them and in spite of them undertook to predestine, to call, to justify and glorify, he started something which he cannot finish.

Only by accepting the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer can one accept without reservation the doctrine of the omniscience of God.

3. HE ALSO PREDESTINED

Predestination, as defined by Dr. Schofield, is "that effective exercise of the will of God by which things before determined by him are brought to pass."

In this discussion, predestination is considered only with reference to the saved. These are said to be predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son. (See also Ephesians 1:5, First Corinthians 15:49, First John 3:2)

God, therefore, by the effective exercise of his will has determined that all who are saved shall be conformed to the image of Christ.

If a single saved person is lost, God has failed as far as that person is concerned to exercise his will effectively, and has not accomplished that which he determined to do. To say that one who has been saved can be lost is to deny that God has power to do what he has determined to do. One must either accept at full face value God's own statement, or else reject it. There is no middle ground. One cannot even admit the "possibility" of a saved person being lost.

To emphasize the certainty of predestination, it is said to be "in accordance with his pleasure and will" (Eph 1:5). How then dare anyone say that a man can will to go away from God and be lost? That would clearly be interference with the pleasure of God's will and is a direct denial of God's own word.

When God clearly says that he shall conform those who are saved into the image of his own Son, there is only one thing to do. That is to believe it. Any other attitude rejects this great doctrine.

4. HE ALSO CALLED

The calling of God is to "share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Second Thessalonians 2:14). It is according to his own purpose and does not depend, at any time, upon the saved one's own works. For it is written: "Who has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time" (Second Timothy 1:9).

This purpose of God in calling is to make known the riches of his glory, through those called, who are "objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory" (Romans 9:23, 24). "To those whom God has called ... Christ the power of God" (First Corinthians 1:24). The faithfulness of God is involved in the calling (First Corinthians 1:9). Again, the calling shall not be altered. Israel was

nationally broken off as the branches of the olive tree, but shall be grafted in again, (Romans 11:24) "for all Israel shall be saved." (Romans 11:26) This is because "God's gifts and his calling are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29).

The calling of God then is the carrying out of his own purpose, independent of the saved one's works. It is to make known the riches of his glory through the objects of mercy. Christ (not they themselves) is the power of all that are called. The calling is based upon God's faithfulness and is irrevocable.

All who are saved are called (Second Timothy 1:9)

Therefore, in order that one who has been saved, be lost, God must, by something in the life of such a person, be thwarted in his purpose. He will fail to make known the riches of his glory through that object of mercy. Christ is an insufficient power in that individual; God is not faithful, and he does revoke his call. To say that one who has been saved is not eternally secure is to bring these charges against God.

5. HE ALSO JUSTIFIED

Justification is that act of God by which he imputes (or counts) righteousness to one who believes in Jesus Christ as the one who was made "to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (Second Corinthians 5:21). It is entirely apart from any merit on the part of man, so that boasting might be excluded (Romans 3:27).

Justification is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24). Because Christ was presented as a sacrifice of atonement for sin, God is able to justify the one that believes in Jesus and still remain just (Romans 3:25, 26).

It is not a process that is being perfected as long as the believer continues to believe, but is a single act of God performed the instant an individual exercises faith in Jesus Christ. It is repeatedly spoken of as finished. (Romans 5:21, 8:30, 1Cor. 6:11, Titus 3:7).

It is also an unalterable condition of every saved person. The righteousness that is imputed in justification is a free gift (Romans 3:24; 5:17). As God never revokes his gifts (Romans 11:29), he will never count one who has been justified as anything else than righteous.

Justification is by grace (Romans 3:24). Therefore, it is certain. That which is by grace is unfailing. "The promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all ... who are of the faith of Abraham" (Romans 4:16).

All who are saved are justified. In order for one who has been saved to be lost, he must lose his standing before God as justified. To do so, some deficiency in the redemption of Christ and his death as a sacrifice of atonement must be found, for justification is based entirely on that, apart from any merit or demerit of man. If a person can throw away his salvation as some say, it would be necessary for such a person to have access to God's accounting records and change them, for imputation of righteousness is a matter of God's reckoning. It would be necessary for God to take back a gift, which he never does. The promise according to Grace which God says is sure would have to fail.

6. ALREADY GLORIFIED

Those who hold that one who has been saved can be lost will unhesitatingly agree that when saints reach glory there is no more danger of being lost. These friends overlook the fact that believers are already glorified and that it is but the revealing of the reality that is still in the future. There are things which God has already accomplished, but the revealing has been delayed until later. Thus, Christ is said to be the Lamb "chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times" (First Peter 1:20).

Similarly, the believer is already glorified; "those he justified, he also glorified," but the revealing of it is in the future. "Your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:3, 4). The glorification has taken place, although appearance in glory is in the future and in the meantime the believer's life is "hidden with Christ in God." Can anyone be more secure?

If one who is saved can be lost, it must have to be by taking such a person from his place in glory where he is hidden in God. Surely no one dares to say that this is possible. There are those who enthusiastically preach that the believer's inheritance is secure, because it is reserved in heaven. Yet they strongly deny the security of the believer. Have they overlooked the fact that the believer is already glorified, and that his life is not only in heaven but in God? It is impossible to accept the truth that the believer is already glorified and deny his eternal security.

"What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:31, 32).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

God's Judgments of the Sins of the Saved

GOD CANNOT ignore the sins of the unsaved. They must be judged. Neither can he ignore even the so-called smallest sin of one who is saved. Many who oppose the doctrine of the security of the believer freely consent to and teach, that God is merciful and will overlook the faults of those who are saved. This is error of the grossest kind. It means nothing less than that God compromises his own righteousness. Then he would not be God.

God always judges sin in the life of a believer. In fact he has made a double provision for judging such sin!

This judgment is double in that it is penal and corrective. The purpose of the penal judgment is to satisfy fully the demands of his righteousness. The corrective judgment is to satisfy his everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3). Thus neither his righteousness nor his love is compromised.

This dual judgment of the sins of the saved is seen in the advocacy of Christ and in the chastening by the Father. If it can be shown that God has made provision to keep the saved one from being lost, when he may commit sin after he has been saved, then the case is settled; for every cause that has ever been offered as a condition by which one may be lost, is in fact sin. It is sometimes admitted that one who has been saved might sin, and still not be lost; but it is said that if he stops believing, he is lost. That is just one form of sin, for "everything that does not come from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Again it is said that one can, of his own will, go away from God and be lost. Again, this is sin, for the setting up of one's will against the will of God is sin in its very essence. There is but one problem and that is SIN.

THE ADVOCACY OF CHRIST

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: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (First John 2:1, 2). The scene here is on legal ground. Sin, the violation of God's holy law is being judged. The sinner has an Advocate who is righteous in the sight of the law. The Advocate is pleading the case on the basis of atonement, that the penalty has been paid. An advocate always pleads before a judge. The Judge is he who is the Judge of the whole world, but he is also called

"the Father." Therefore it is a son that is being judged. There must also be an accuser to bring the charge. Elsewhere (Revelation 2:10) it is revealed that he is Satan.

Satan is before God day and night accusing the brethren. When a saved person sins, Satan files a prompt charge and demands condemnation, ie., the full penalty of the law. He himself is under that same penalty because iniquity was found in his heart (Ezekiel 28:15, 16). In the face of this accusation what is the hope of the sinning "saved one"? God cannot overlook that sin. He would compromise his own righteousness by ignoring the sin of the sinning "brother" and holding Satan responsible for his sin.

There is indeed need of an advocate! What plea has the sinning saint to offer? Do not forget that all who have been saved are in this position at some time or other - some more often than others. "If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives" (First John 1:10).

Thank God! There is an Advocate. He is the only hope of a believer. It all depends on him. He is Jesus Christ the Righteous. Being righteous, he has never broken God's holy law. He is perfect in its sight. Furthermore, he cannot do anything that will compromise that law. Therefore, his advocacy is a righteous one, and is in harmony with the law.

What then does he plead on behalf of the sinning saint? It is the fact that he is the atonement for sins. He points to that hill outside of Jerusalem where there were three crosses. On two, hung men who were paying the penalty for their sins against human laws. On the center one, was hanging one, who was the Son of man, yes also the Son of God. He was there paying the penalty for sins of others. He was there as the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). It is he himself that he points to and, as the Advocate of the sinning saint, he pleads: "I am that Lamb without blemish or defect (First Peter 1:19). I am that righteous one dying for the unrighteous (First Peter 3:18). I was crushed for his iniquities (Isaiah 53:5). I bore his sins in My body upon that tree (First Peter 2:24). I have redeemed him from the curse of this law under which he is now being accused, because I was made a curse for him (Galatians 3:13). I, the Righteous, was there made sin for him, that he might be made righteous in the sight of this holy law (Second Corinthians 5:21)."

That is a picture of the Advocate, and that is, in God's own words, the ground for his pleading. On the basis of that plea both the holy law and the righteousness of the Judge are held unbroken.

Paul has grasped the full glory and significance of this when he, through inspiration exclaimed: "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us" (Romans 8:33, 34).

And then in the light of full satisfaction, both past and present, of God's righteousness, he further exclaims: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" And his answer, so full of assurance (verses 35-39) can be summed up in the one word - **NOTHING**.

The tremendous significance of this present work of Christ can be somewhat understood from the comparison that is made of it with his own redemptive work.

"Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!" (Romans 5:9, 10).

Is the saved one now justified? Unquestionably. "Much more" then ... he shall be saved from wrath; ie., from the penalty of God's holy law. God's "shall" is certainty, but this is a "much more" shall. The saved person can be much more certain of salvation from wrath than he can be of the already certain fact of justification! This is to the extent that life is much more than death. Reconciliation, - salvation of the past - is by his death. Salvation of the present and the future is by his resurrection life. How dare finite mind question such a declaration by God? Can the finite understand the infinite? No. But with simple God-given faith man can say, "I believe."

And still God's revelation of this unreachable theme is not exhausted. It has pleased him to reveal clearly that there is to be no interruption to this advocacy. "But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:24, 25).

The altogether too common interpretation of the words, "save completely" ("save to the uttermost" KJV), is that God can take a sinner, even when sunk to the lowest depths of sin, and raise him to glory. Undoubtedly this has helped many who have seen themselves so low in sin that they have considered themselves as hopeless. Yet this is not what God intends. Such an interpretation permits degrees of sin more or less difficult for God to deal with. Scripture does not

support this idea. Twice in the two verses, the ever existent nature of the Intercessor is made the condition for his ability to save to the uttermost. Furthermore, the words of the original here translated "to the uttermost" (KJV) ("completely" NIV) are in the John 13:1, translated "to the end." Therefore the essential revelation in this passage is that the salvation, which is accomplished by the resurrection life of Christ, is without interruption. It is an eternal salvation (Hebrews 5:9).

The advocacy of Christ is therefore a provision to guarantee the eternal security of every believer.

GOD'S CHASTENING

God's provision in Christ's advocacy on behalf of the saved one is not all that he does for the specific purpose of keeping him from condemnation. there is a corrective judgment provided for sin which is not self-judged. This judgment of sin is chastening.

"To chasten is to purify morally and spiritually by the providential visitation of distress and affliction; to purify from errors or faults as the effect of discipline. It implies imperfection, but not guilt."

This is exactly what God does with the Christian who fails to judge himself. One purpose of God's chastening is that the one chastened shall not be "condemned with the world." In other words, this chastening is for the purpose of keeping the saved ones from becoming lost. "But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world" (First Corinthians 11:31, 32).

Chastening is a provision of God exclusively for those who are heirs; that is, saved. It is for no others and no son (heir) is excluded (Hebrews 12:6-8).

If God has made a special provision for the saved person who persists in sinning, to keep him from being lost, how can he be lost? It is a case of denying the sufficiency of God's provision in chastening to say that one who has been saved is not eternally secure.

The same provision is found in the Old Testament and is stated in unmistakable words. It is a part of God's unconditional covenant (contract agreement) with David.

"I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, ... and I will establish his kingdom... and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. ... I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love (or mercy) will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you" (Second Samuel 7:12-15).

Notice that God says very definitely that even though wrong (which is sin) is committed, his "mercy will never be taken away." As long as God deals in loving mercy it is impossible to be lost.

Someone may argue that as God took his mercy from Saul so will he take it from the saved one who sins. In the first place, this would deny God's statement that he chastens the saved one in order that he not be condemned with the world. In the second place, the case of Saul and the saved person is not the same. Corrective chastening was not a part of the mercy that God showed to Saul and that he took away from him. It is very definitely a part of God's mercy toward the saved one as it was to David's son. The unsaved are objects of God's mercy, but there is no corrective chastening in that mercy and it shall be taken away from them if they do not become saved.

But how did God dare to say that sin on the part of David's offspring would not result in his rejection? There are present-day preachers who criticize similar statements to God's children of this age. If God himself exalts his grace as being greater than the sins of one of his children, how dare anyone condemn the one who similarly glorifies God's grace in this age? It is a serious matter to criticize the exaltation of the grace of God. This is the very purpose of salvation. It is "to the praise of his glorious grace" (Ephesians 1:6).

The one who fights the doctrine of security of the believer, as some are now doing, says that God will take his grace away from the sinning saint. Are they not then doing the very opposite to praising God's glorious grace? Is this not sin? If it is possible to become lost, what is their position? Are they not advocating their own condemnation?

Surely God has made ample provision by the advocacy of Christ to meet Satan's accusations and by chastening to correct the life of the saved one to keep him saved. Is it possible to accept at full value God's revelation of these provisions and still say that the believer is not eternally security?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Office of the Holy Spirit

THERE CAN be no adequate understanding of the purpose of the Holy Spirit's presence in the world as long as one rejects the doctrine of eternal security.

TO BE WITH YOU FOREVER

Just before Jesus left this earth, he promised those that were his: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you for ever ... he lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:16, 17).

Therefore, in this age the Holy Spirit dwells in the individual believer and is there to abide forever.

It is true that David prayed, "Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalms 51:11), but that was before Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit would abide forever. That makes a vast difference. That Holy Spirit can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30) and may be quenched (First Thessalonian 5:19) so that his voice is not heard; but this doesn't imply that he's taken away.

The Holy Spirit never dwells in a lost person. Such a person is spiritually dead, which means that he is separated from the Spirit. It is a contradiction, then of the promise which Jesus gave to his disciples, to say that one in whom the Holy Spirit has come to abide forever, can be lost.

SEALED, AS TO POSITION

Believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit to the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30). What is the purpose of that sealing?

In Revelation (Chapter 7:2-8) is a company of servants of God who are sealed in their foreheads. The purpose of this seal was to keep them secure (Revelation 9:4).

After Daniel had been cast into the lion's den, "A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed" (Daniel 6:17).

In his vision, John (the writer of Revelation) saw Satan bound for a thousand years, cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up; and a seal was set upon him so that he could no longer deceive the nations, until the thousand years were ended (Revelation 20:2, 3).

In the first case, the servants were sealed so as to be secure against the torments of the locusts. In the second case, the seal was applied so that there could be no change in the king's command. In the third instance, the seal assures that Satan will be in a place of safe keeping from which he cannot escape.

In all three instances, the seal denotes an unalterable position of those who are sealed. That is exactly what the Holy Spirit as a seal means to the saved person. God has sealed him by his own Spirit so that he, as a believer, cannot be changed until the day of redemption.

SEALED AS TO OWNERSHIP

The seal also signifies ownership. Everyone who believes is sealed with the Holy Spirit "until the redemption of those who are God's possession" (Ephesians 1:14). This sealing then is effective and cannot be broken as long as a believer is in this mortal body. It is not needed after that. Those whom Christ has purchased with his own blood shall always be his very own. As the seal cannot be broken, they are secure.

DEPOSIT ON OUR INHERITANCE

In addition to all of the above, the Holy Spirit is given as a deposit guaranteeing the believer's inheritance (Ephesians 1:14). A deposit is a payment made by a purchaser to guarantee the completion of the transaction by him. In Christ, the believer has obtained an inheritance which was "predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will" (Ephesians 1:11).

The believer has not as yet entered into possession of this inheritance, but the Holy Spirit has been given as a deposit that it shall be given when the transaction has been fully completed. To say that one who has been saved can be lost is to say that possession of the inheritance shall not be given to one to whom God has already paid a deposit. "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind, Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" (Numbers 23:19).

Thus the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer is required by the fact that the Holy Spirit has come into the saved one to stay forever; he is sealed by the Holy Spirit, both for the purpose of security and as a sign of ownership due to purchase; and God has given him as a pledge to the believer that he shall receive an inheritance in heaven.

If the believer is not eternally secure, what does all of this teaching concerning the Holy Spirit mean?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Objects of the Love of God

MAN MAY be either the object of the love of God or the wrath of God. There is no middle ground. Those who are lost are called objects of wrath (Ephesians 2:3). In fact, being the object of wrath constitutes being lost (John 3:36). On the other hand to be saved is to be an object of his love. "Having loved his own who were in this world, he now showed them the full extent of his love" (John 13:1).

If it be possible for one who has been saved to be lost, it must of necessity be possible for one who has been the object of the love of God to be taken out of that position and be made the object of the wrath of God. Does any scripture passage teach that? Definitely not! On the contrary, it is taught that God loves his own with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3). All saints of this era were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that they should be with him as loved sons (Ephesians 1:4-5).

This is a part of the purpose of God in order to bring praise to the glory of his grace (Ephesians 1:5, 6). If it were possible to revert into the condition of being a child of wrath, then God can be thwarted in his purpose. It has been pointed out elsewhere that that is not possible.

Furthermore God says, in the most definite and understandable language, that nothing, or no-one, can separate the believer from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39).

Even so, there are those who make all this void by saying, "While it is true that nothing can separate a believer from the love of God, he can of his own free will, go away from God's love." This statement is due to a false understanding of the

free agency of man. The passage itself here in Romans eight also clearly excludes any such possibility.

Several "creatures" are mentioned as being unable to "separate us from the love of God." Then in order to leave no possible chance for doubt, these words are added, "nor anything else in all creation." As every believer is a creature of God, he is also included in the words "anything else in all creation." It is, therefore, a flat denial of God's word to say that a man can separate himself from God's love. If anything is emphatically taught in the Bible, it is that when man has become the object of the everlasting love of God, there is no change in that condition.

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son to satisfy the demands of his own righteousness. Those who reject that Son are under the wrath of God, but whoever accepts that Son as the one on whom the wrath of God was poured because of his sin, he is then and thereby unalterably made the object of the everlasting love of God. It is every believer's privilege to rejoice in this glorious revelation of God's love. To deny the eternal security of the believer is to rob many of this rejoicing.

THE SOVEREIGN GRACE OF GOD

One who is the object of the love of God is under the sovereign grace of God. The unsaved man is under the condemnation of the law. Sin reigns in his life accompanied by death (Romans 5:21).

That which is sovereign is independent of, and unlimited by any other. It is supreme or highest power. Therefore where sin reigns, grace can't be sovereign and where grace is sovereign, sin has no dominion.

when grace has become sovereign, sin can never again reign, for it is said: "Sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). Notice that it is shall not (not does not) which indicates that the reign of sin in death has been definitely brought to an end. Thus the grace of God is the supreme power and reigns with eternal life in the case of everyone that comes under its sovereignty.

That the grace of God is sovereign can mean nothing less than that the believer is eternally secure. If one who has been saved could be lost because of sin (and remember that is the only thing that can cause anyone to be lost) then sin would have to become a greater power than grace which is impossible.

In the covenant made with David (previously referred to), God specifically said that even if David's son would commit iniquity, his mercy would not leave him (Second Samuel 7:14, 15). This shows that sin in the life of one in a covenant relationship to God, does not limit the sovereignty of his grace.

To deny the eternal security of the believer is to deny the sovereignty of the grace of God. One who does not see himself as eternally secure under the sovereign grace of God can never sing with the psalmist: "O give thanks to the LORD for he is good, and his mercy endureth forever" and under all circumstances of life, repeat that refrain twenty-five times (Psalms 136).

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Kept by God's Power

JESUS PRAYED: "Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name ... so that they may be one as we are one" (John 17:11). Peter who heard that prayer wrote some years later: "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (First Peter 1:5).

A. IS GOD OMNIPOTENT?

Thus those who are saved have been committed by Jesus, who for them gave His Own life, to God for safe keeping. If God fails to keep a single one of those whom Christ bought with His own blood, He fails to conserve that which was accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ. God forbid the thought.

There is a need today for believers to know that they are being kept by the power of God. Paul realized this in his day, and wrote to the Ephesian saints, to "the faithful in Christ Jesus," that he prayed that they might know "his incomparably great power for us who believe." Then he described that power as: "the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God has placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body..." (Ephesians 1:19-23).

No finite mind can fathom the "incomparable greatness" of this power, but everyone who believes may know in simple faith that this power is exercised in his behalf.

The power of God, in raising Christ from the dead, surpasses every other power, for it raised Christ from a death which was caused by the sum total of human sin and placed him far above every other power, present and future. It is nothing less than omnipotence.

As this power is greater than all human sin, it is surely greater than the sins of any single saved person. As it is clearly stated that this power is exercised on behalf of everyone that believes, it is nothing less than a denial of the omnipotence of God to say that by sinning, or by ceasing to believe, or by willing to go away from God, a saved person can be lost.

As this power is the greatest expression concerning God's power, it can be said, to use the words of another, "the universe will crumble before a single saved one can be lost."

To deny the eternal security of the believer is to deny the omnipotence of God.

B. WAS CHRIST RAISED FROM THE DEAD?

The resurrection of Christ is considered in God's word as guaranteeing the resurrection of believers. Both are by the same power. "By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also" (First Corinthians 6:14).

Jesus himself gave the fact of his resurrection as a guarantee of the resurrection of believers. He said, "Because I live, you also shall live" (John 14:19). The same truth is also found in Romans 8:11. "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you."

One who is lost has no part in the resurrection of the saints, but God's word to those who are saved is, that they shall participate in that resurrection and points to the resurrection of Christ as evidence of that fact. Thus the denial of the security of the believer questions the power of God to resurrect those who are saved. It implies that something might happen in the life of a saved person to interfere with the operation of God's power. If that's possible, then isn't there also room even to question the resurrection of Christ as having taken place?

Thus it is seen that the denial of the security of the believer raises questions as to the power of God and as to the resurrection of Christ, the very ground for the hope of eternal life.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Gift of the Son of God

MUCH MORE could have been written than space here permits; but from the foregoing, it is clear that the doctrines of the grace of God demand the doctrine of eternal security, and that the doctrines of grace are made void by the contention that one who has been saved can be lost.

Those who deny the eternal security of the believer and teach that someone who has been saved can be lost, must show how that can happen in view of all that has been said. They must answer the following questions:

How can someone, who has received Christ and all things with him as a gift which God says he does not revoke, be lost when the possession of this gift means eternal life?

How can someone whose salvation does not depend in the slightest upon human effort or merit, but entirely on the power of God and the merits of Christ, be lost by some human act, either by the mind or by the body?

How can someone for whom Christ by his death paid the full penalty of the law, and satisfied all the demands of God's justice, be made to pay that penalty again?

How can someone who has been redeemed by an eternal redemption and by the precious blood of Christ, which has infinite value, be returned to a state of condemnation?

How can someone who has been born of imperishable seed and thus given eternal life as a gift which God does not revoke, die?

How can someone whom God says shall not be condemned, be condemned?

How can someone who is a new creature and in a new creation in which sin, condemnation and death are not known and in which the unalterable law is life, ever be condemned and die?

If every believer was foreknown by God, and all who were foreknown were predestined to become conformed to the image of the Son of God, and all who were predestined have been called, and all who were called have been justified, and all who were justified have already been glorified in the sight of God, at what point is it possible for a single one to be lost?

If God has made provision for every saved person through the advocacy of Christ, which is based solely on his righteousness and the fact that his death was a sacrifice of atonement for all sin, to answer all charges made by the accuser against him, how can such a person be condemned (lost)?

If in every saved person the Holy Spirit lives forever; if he is sealed with the Holy Spirit for security and sealed and witnessed as to Christ's ownership; and if he has been given the Spirit as a guarantee of something which he can only receive when he reaches glory, how can he not reach glory?

If being an object of God's wrath is to be lost and being an object of his love is to be saved, and if God says that someone who has become an object of his love shall always be so; in fact that is the very purpose of salvation: how can one be lost?

If God declares that he is exercising the very same power on behalf of the saved one as he did when he raised Christ from the dead and set him at the greatest height of power and glory, how can it be said that it is possible for one who has been saved to be cast by God into the lake of fire which means to be lost?

It seems then, that those who deny the eternal security of the believer must honestly face every one of these questions and prove by scripture passages that their position does not contradict, but harmonizes with all of the doctrines of the grace of God. Until they do this, they are unquestionably subject to the charge that they are teaching against the grace of God.

Until that has been done, the eternal security of every believer will stand as the most strongly attested revelation in God's word.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Eternal Security and Godly Living

Part Three

Grace Teaches - Love Compels

IN PART two, it was shown that the doctrines of the grace of God cannot be understood and fully accepted without the acceptance of the truth of eternal security. This section deals similarly with eternal security in its relation to godly living, or practical Christianity.

The great and widely accepted charge against the teaching of eternal security is that it leads to carelessness in the lives of Christians and robs the Church of its spiritual power. It is said that to teach that one who has been saved cannot be lost is to offer a license to sin. Incidents from the lives of individuals are cited as proof of this contention. The argument is always founded upon human observations and judgments.

In reply, much evidence might be offered both from the lives of living Christians and from history to refute this charge. The lives of the Puritans, who held this truth, are outstanding illustrations which might be used with considerable effect. But in a discussion of an issue as infinite as this, finite observations and often fallible conclusions based upon them, cannot be considered as conclusive evidence. The only evidence that can be admitted as final is that which is taken from God's own revelation, the Bible. That is absolute and infallible. Those who make the charge that teaching eternal security is to offer a license to sin never support their charge with any scripture passage.

The fact is, the charge that teaching eternal security leads to carelessness in Christian living is a direct contradiction of God's word. Many of the strongest appeals in the Bible for a pure, holy, righteous and godly life are based on statements which definitely teach the eternal security of the believer. This being true, as will be shown extensively in the following chapters, it is those who deny the eternal security of the believer and thereby rob these passages of their true and full meaning who are contributing to the low state of standards of Christian living. This can hardly be overstated.

God does not, as is the popular conception, make righteous living the condition for eternal life and glory with him. That, as has already been shown, is a matter of pure grace. It is the fact of eternal life and assurance of glory and all that these include that is the incentive to holy living. It is what God has already done through the operation of his sovereign grace. It is the doctrines of the grace of God which have been shown to demand the doctrine of eternal security upon which God rests his appeal for practical righteousness. Men who teach against eternal security do not fully understand these doctrines and therefore cannot appeal to holiness on God's own basis.

It is not God's holiness nor his righteousness; it is not the law, nor is it the threat of condemnation (being lost) that teaches Christians to live soberly, righteously and godly. It is his grace that does so. Paul wrote to Titus giving instructions as to what he should teach as rules of conduct. Then he gave the reason in these words: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us

to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age" (Titus 2:11, 12).

Thus those who limit the grace of God by denying the eternal security of the believer, limit that which God says teaches godly living; while those who magnify his grace are teaching that which God says teaches believers how to live lives that please him.

It is important to be guided, not by what man's judgment or conclusions teach, but by that which God's word reveals.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST COMPELS US

As the grace of God teaches how to live as children of God ought to live, so it is the love of Christ that compels the saved one so to live. Paul says "For Christ's love compels us" (Second Corinthians 5:14). Therefore, fear of the wrath of God (being lost) cannot be the dynamic of holy and righteous living. Neither can it be said that it is the righteousness or holiness of God that is the compelling influence.

It is that love that was expressed when Christ died and rose again. It was through that death and resurrection that all old things passed away, yes even the curse and the condemnation of the law, and the believer became a new creature in Christ that cannot die (Chapter 9). It is that love of God which he manifested when he was in Christ on the cross, reconciling the world to himself (Second Corinthians 5:15-19). It is that love of God from which the believer cannot be separated (see Chapter 15), and which guarantees the eternal security of everyone that has become the object of it.

If Paul's statement is true, then to proclaim that love, to magnify it, to call attention to its eternal and unchanging nature is to open the hearts and lives of Christians for that which compels them to be what God would have them be. On the other hand, to deny the unbroken flow of this love, by saying that one who has been the object of it can be lost, is to hinder God's own dynamic from operating in the life of the saved one.

This is undoubtedly the greatest charge that can be brought against the teaching that those whom God through infinite love, expressed in the death of his Son, has saved, can be lost.

It is grace that teaches and the love of Christ that compels believers to live as God would have them live. The need of the Church today is a clear teaching of this.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Incentives to a Surrendered Life

POSSIBLY THE strongest appeal to a life entirely surrendered to God is in the following words: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual (real or logically expected) act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what is God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1, 2).

Here is a plea to the believer that his body be made a living sacrifice. The word sacrifice signifies change of ownership for the purpose of being consumed for the benefit of the new owner. It includes a complete surrender of self-will. This sacrifice is to be living, that is, continuous and productive of results. It is to be holy. It is to be acceptable to God. Furthermore, all conformity to this world is to end and the life shall be transformed through the mind's seeking the good, pleasing and perfect will of God. In this there is nothing left of self.

Paul does not make this strong appeal for a surrendered life without first stating very clearly and definitely the motive or incentive that prompts that kind of life. He does so in these words, "Therefore, I urge you, ... in view of God's mercy." The word "therefore" shows that he rests the whole argument on what he has in the preceding part of his letter taught about the mercy of God. These are the doctrines of the grace of God. This is always God's method. How different this is from the purely human and altogether unscriptural method of scolding and threatening Christians and using the element of fear that they may be lost, to arouse from worldly interests and to awaken interest in spiritual things!

As Paul pleads on the basis of the "God's mercy," it is perfectly clear that his appeal is without force until this mercy is known, understood and accepted. The better known and the more clearly understood these are, the greater is the force of the argument. On the other hand if the mercy of God is denied, then the force of the appeal is lost and there is no reason for heeding it.

Any appeal that is based on certain facts or conditions has force only in the same measure as is the certainty of those facts or conditions on which it is made. For years banks appealed to the public to make deposits because of the securities guaranteeing the repayment of the money. This appeal had force, and men, women and children, rich and poor, brought their savings. Why? Because the

security of their funds was not questioned. But times changed, the banks' investments dropped in value, people began to question the security of their funds, deposits dropped off and withdrawals became greater and greater. The banks' appeals for deposits were without force because their argument based on safety was not accepted.

This is how it is in the Christian life. God makes his appeals to the saved to invest their lives, their all with him and offers his mercy as security. This mercy of God which he offers as security is guaranteed by the precious blood of Christ. Is it certain? As long as his blood is effective, this security is good. Thus it is highly important both to know what the doctrines of the grace of God are and to understand them. They are seldom taught and, as much of the meaning of these doctrines is lost by the denial of the eternal security of the believer, it is not strange that Christians these days do not sacrifice their bodies to God as they ought to do.

The all important thing then is to consider the "mercy of God" or the grace of God as explained in the part of the letter to the Romans preceding the appeal.

The first part of Romans (Romans 1:18 - 3:20) deals with the sinfulness of man and concludes that there is no righteous human and that the whole world is guilty in God's sight. Man or woman is shown to be incapable of doing anything towards his own justification. This is a prerequisite for the functioning of the grace of God.

Against this background of utter helplessness and absolute hopelessness on man's part, the mercy of God is revealed.

But there is a righteousness for man. It is not by doing what the law commands. It is of God and is revealed in the gospel (Romans 1:17). It is manifested in the life of faith that Jesus Christ lived, and is given to all that believe (Romans 3:22). It is a gift from God (Romans 5:17). Being a gift from God, this righteousness shall always be the possession of him who has received it through faith.

The one to whom this righteousness has been imputed is said to be justified by grace (Romans 4:24, 25). Inasmuch as justification is by grace, it is unalterable. Justification is made possible by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24). This again proves that it is unalterable, for redemption is eternal.

Those who have been justified henceforth stand in grace (Romans 5:2). They are no longer under the law but are under grace (Romans 6:14). One who is not under the law, which is the ministry of (and the only ministry) of condemnation,

cannot be lost. There is no condemnation for them because they are in Christ Jesus. "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). If you are in Christ Jesus at this moment, you cannot be condemned and lost.

Another aspect of God's mercy or grace is the provision that those who have been justified shall be saved from wrath. This is "much more" sure than the fact that Christ died for them while they were still sinners (Romans 5:8, 9). This is achieved by the present life of Christ (verse 10).

"As sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign ... to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:21). Therefore the one that is under grace is assured of eternal life. This eternal life is also said to be a "gift of God" (Romans 6:23), and therefore always remains in the possession of the one who has received it.

The bodies of all in whom the Spirit lives (and that includes all who have been saved) shall be given life, by the Spirit of God who lives in them (Romans 8:11).

Believers have been predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. They are already glorified (verse 29, 30). No-one can condemn them, because Christ has died for them, and even intercedes for them (verse 34). Finally in the strongest language possible it is said to be impossible to become separated from the love of God (verse 35-39).

These are the aspects of God's mercy on which Paul rests his argument for a completely surrendered life in God's service. Every one of these mercies is absolutely unalterable. The security that God offers his children when he pleads with them to invest their lives with him cannot lose its value. That is why the full surrender of self is a "reasonable" (KJV) or "logical" (Concordant Version) service.

Those who deny eternal security discount the value of God's mercy and grace and deny the effectiveness of the shed blood of Christ. To them these have value only as long as the Christian does this or that which they themselves specify. Thus the whole appeal is lost, for the things added cause an appalling amount of uncertainty and confusion. In view of this, who is it that is responsible for the lack of sacrificial lives in the churches?

CHAPTER TWENTY

Walk Worthy of Calling

AS A prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Ephesians 4:1). In the remaining part of this letter, Paul discusses Christian conduct, all of which is part of living worthily of the calling, and therefore a part of the appeal. This appeal to those who have been saved by grace through faith to live a life worthy of their calling, is introduced by the word "then." thus it becomes necessary to turn back and consider the reasons for the appeal. No appeal to live worthily of a person's status means anything without a knowledge of the importance of that position.

In the first three chapters, the apostle has presented the believer's standing before God. It is these truths that are the basis for the appeal to walk worthily.

Believers have been chosen in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and without blame in God's sight. They have been predestined to be adopted as his loved sons. All of this has been done in accordance with his pleasure and will, and so that his glorious grace will be praised (Ephesians 1:4-6). The choice was according to his foreknowledge, so he made no mistake as to whom he chose. As predestination is "the effective exercise of the will of God by which things before determined are brought to pass", it is certain that nothing can interfere with the accomplishment of adopting every believer as a loved son, blameless in God's sight. This is the same position that Christ had with the Father before the creation of the world (John 17:24). It is the most exalted position into which any of God's creatures can ever be placed. It is above all of the angels of heaven. As it is all of grace, and that which is of grace is certain, there can be no question as to its accomplishment.

God has sealed with the Holy Spirit everyone that he has chosen. Repeated emphasis is placed on the fact that all that is done by God is "according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will" (see verse 5, 9, 11). All of this is to "the praise of his glorious grace" (verse 6) and "to the praise of his glory" (verse 12, 14). There is no possibility of making any part of this conditional in the slightest on human works or merit.

It is further revealed that God is exercising on behalf of the believer the same power that he exercised in that greatest manifestation of his power, when he raised Christ from the dead and set him above all rule, authority, power and dominion. If anything is certain, it must be that which is being accomplished by that power.

Salvation by grace through faith as a gift of God apart from any work or merit of man, has already been discussed (chapter 6), and was shown to be unalterable. This is a part of the high calling of God.

It is all of this and more too to which the word "then" in Paul's appeal refers, and which is made the basis for the appeal to live worthily of God's calling.

Another appeal to walk worthy of God is found in First Thessalonians 2:11, 12. This is based on God's calling the believer into his Kingdom and glory. As the calling of God is irrevocable (Romans 11:29) and is therefore unalterable, here again that which assures the eternal security of the believer is made the basis for the appeal.

This emphasis upon the certainty of the grounds for these appeals must impress the careful Bible student. To say that one who has been saved can be lost is to inject an element of uncertainty into that which God makes certain. It confuses that which must be understood clearly to give force to the appeal, and thereby weakens the appeal. On the other hand, the teaching of eternal security honors and illuminates every statement God makes concerning those who are saved, so that the basis for the appeal can be accepted, and the appeal understood.

BE NOT CONFORMED TO THE WORLD

In order to walk worthy of God, it is necessary that one be not conformed to the world, but separated from it. The apostle Paul also makes this appeal and, as in the case of the appeal for full surrender of body and will and also the appeal to walk worthy of God, this appeal is also based on conditions which guarantee the eternal security of the believer.

In Romans 12:1, 2, previously considered, there is an appeal to those who have received the mercies of God that they "no longer conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed" (mentally). Differentiation from the world is thus made directly dependent on the doctrines of the grace of God, which, as was shown in the last preceding chapter, demand the eternal security of the believer.

There are other passages in the doctrinal (teaching) letters that are equally clear in dealing with this question of distinction from the world. Paul pleaded with the Corinthian Christians to flee from sexual immorality and his appeal was based on the fact that their bodies were members of Christ. This appeal was followed by an appeal to glorify God in the body and in the spirit because the body was the

temple of the Holy Spirit that was in them, and because they were bought with a price (First Corinthians 6:15, 20).

Here, then, two unalterable conditions are made the basis for the appeal. The Holy Spirit who was in them was there to stay forever (John 14:16) and the purchase by the blood of Christ had been both sealed and witnessed by the Holy Spirit until the redemption of the body. Thus again it is the certainty and unchangeable work that God has done for the believer that is the basis for the appeal.

In Second Corinthians 6:14-16 is an appeal to believers not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, because believers are the temple of the living God.

An appeal to set your mind on things above and not on things on the earth is based on one of the strongest statements in the Bible concerning the eternal security of the believer in these words: "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:2, 3). Can anyone be more secure than the one who has been hidden in God so that nothing can touch him?

This same appeal to nonconformity with the world because of what the believer is and because of God's purpose, is found in First Thessalonians 5:5, 6, 9, 10. "You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled." "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him."

Every one of the conditions upon which these various appeals are based on are materially weakened, if not entirely destroyed, by the teaching that one who has been saved can be lost, for that denies that unalterable nature of these conditions.

It would seem, then, that worldliness in the church of today is chargeable to failure to teach the doctrines of the grace of God, which are inseparable from the truth of eternal security. As denial of the truth of eternal security makes it impossible to teach these doctrines in their fullness, it follows that those who teach against that truth are contributing to the present state of worldliness in the churches.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

An Appeal to Purity

EVERYONE WHO has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure" (First John 3:3). This is an appeal to purity of life. The standard is the purity of Christ - nothing less than that. It is addressed to those who have a certain hope - to no others. What is this hope? It is stated in the preceding verse. "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (verse 2). This is an unqualified statement that those who are now children of God shall be like Christ. It is not, "those who remain children," or "remain faithful," or "hold out," it is all who are now children, and this "now" has been there during the entire Christian era. This hope is "an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf" (Hebrews 6:19, 20).

It is because of this sure hope that those who have been saved are urged to purify themselves. A constant realization of the fact that one shall be like Jesus Christ, the Son of God, makes all impurity of life seem strangely out of place.

But if a person has no definite assurance that he shall be like Jesus, then the appeal loses its force. How many Christians are there who do not K-N-O-W that they shall be like Christ! How can anyone know, if it is possible to be lost? If it is possible for any one saved person to be lost, that same possibility exists for all. Thus no-one can know that they shall be like Christ if the teaching against eternal security is right. If no-one can know for sure, that he or she shall be like Christ, then this appeal is just so many words wasted.

How different God's appeal is from that which is so often made from pulpits: "If you do not do this," or "if you do that," you will not be taken when Christ comes!

Thus the teaching of the eternal security of the believer supports God's appeal for purity of life while the denial of it undermines it. Another appeal to pure living is found in Colossians 3:5, 6. "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry." Again the appeal is based on an unconditional statement to which the word "therefore" points back. It is this: "When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." Again it is a definite, unconditional statement that connects the believer with Christ in glory that is the reason given as the incentive to purity. To teach that one who is saved might not appear with Christ in glory (that is, be lost), possibly because of one of the sins mentioned in

the verse quoted, is to take away from such a person this written incentive to purity that God has given for his or her special help when tempted.

DESIRE THE WORD OF GOD

God's appeal for purity of life is not merely negative; it is for the purpose of making the saved person yearn for the word of God, as in the following appeal:

"Therefore rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" (First Peter 2:1, 2). This is an appeal which may well be heeded in many churches today. The things mentioned here are of a class that are usually not mentioned by those that oppose eternal security as causing someone who has been saved to be lost. Such things as envy and slander are so subtle and common that few Christians would escape being lost, if sin could cause a saved person to become lost. Yet Peter says get rid of all of these and crave the word of God. What a great need there is now to be occupied with the word of God! Yes, and there is a crying need for the simple explanatory preaching of it.

This appeal is to persons who have been addressed as "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (First Peter 1:2). It has already been shown that election (God's choosing) based on God's foreknowledge means eternal security or else God is not omniscient. Therefore in the very greeting these persons (and it is all who are saved) are reminded of their eternal security in Christ.

But the appeal is based on a particular argument as is shown by the introductory word "therefore." This argument is found in the last three verses of the previous chapter. "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever""(First Peter 1:23-25. Quoting Isaiah 40:6-8). The unending nature of the life that results from the new birth, and which is offered as the sole argument for laying aside malice, envy and so on, and desiring the word of God is the very heart of this passage. That life is not of perishable, but of imperishable seed.

This statement is both a negative and a positive statement. By the unchangeable law of birth, the one born has the same nature as the one who gave birth. The unending nature is asserted for the third time in the words "living and enduring." Then the perishable nature of flesh which is like grass, is contrasted with the new life which comes from the word of God; and finally it is stated that the word of

God (which is the life of the saved person, because Christ is the Word, and our life) stands (or endures) forever. This passage forcefully declares the eternal nature of the new life of the saved person. It is just this fact that is the reason given for those who are born again (saved) to get rid of malice and deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander and instead of these, desire the word of God.

If the fact of the unending characteristic of the new life of the saved person (which means that he or she is eternally secure) is denied, then there is very little left, if anything, on which to appeal to saved people to get rid of all these things and to cultivate an appetite for God's word. Nothing can stimulate a desire for knowledge of God's word more than a clear understanding of the fact that one is born again of imperishable seed and is certain of being in glory with Christ.

Thus again the appeal to a godly life is based on the security of the saved and denying it robs the appeal of its force.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Stand Firm

IN First Corinthians 15:58, Paul makes this most earnest plea: "My dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain. "Something has been said which gives assurance that their work shall not be in vain. What is this something? It is found in the preceding verses, going back as far as the fifty-first. "Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed - in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet ... For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory ..." ... But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Those are the certain facts on which the appeal to standing firm and a life given fully to the work of the Lord is made. Such work cannot be in vain because of the certainty of the facts on which the appeal is based. What is it that is certain? All shall be changed. All who were members of "the church of God in Corinth," all who are "sanctified in Christ Jesus," all who are "called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (First Corinthians 1:2). These saints in Corinth did not have the best record, yet Paul made no exception. He stipulated no conditions nor is there any that can be implied. It is "we will all be changed." This is so because the victory over death is

by God through Jesus Christ, and "God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful" (First Corinthians 1:9).

If it is possible for anyone who is now saved to be excluded from that "all" and not be given the victory over death by Jesus Christ, the appeal loses its force. If there is any possibility that one now saved might not be "changed" at the last trumpet, then there is a chance that such a person has worked for the Lord in vain. If anyone who is saved is later lost, then whatever labour such a person has done for the Lord has been in vain, for God can't reward that work and cast the person into the lake of fire. If this possibility exists for any saved person, it surely exists for all and then no-one can know that his labour is not in vain. But this contradicts Paul's statement that we know that our labour is not in vain. Thus to deny the eternal security of the believer makes void God's word on which God bases his appeal to stand firm.

A middle-aged man once admonished a younger man that he should not waste all his money but save some for the future. The young man replied: "But I might die before I get ready to use it; then it would do me no good." The uncertainty of the future kept that young man from living a steady or disciplined life and saving for the future. To the believer, as an incentive to steadfastness and a life given fully to the work of the Lord, God pledges himself that the believer's work will not be in vain. The believer's assurance of a life with God throughout all eternity is then the incentive for a steadfast, immovable Christian life on earth which is fully dedicated to the work of the Lord. Those who teach Christians that they might be lost are thereby encouraging them to do as the young man did, enjoy the present world for there is no definite assurance that they shall, in the world to come, enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Paul said in this same fifteenth chapter: "If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."" (verse 32. Quoting Isaiah 22:13) And so in measure as Christians, through the denial of eternal security, are being told that they might not be raised to a life of glory with God; are "eating and drinking" in many churches instead of standing firm and being given fully to the work of the Lord.

Similar appeals to standing firm are found elsewhere and are based on equally unalterable conditions.

"Therefore, my brothers ... stand firm in the Lord" (Philippians 4:1). The "therefore" looks back to: "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him

to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body" (Philippians 3:20, 21).

"So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter." In this case the "so then" refers back to "From the beginning God chose you to be saved ... He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Second Thessalonians 2:15, 13, 14).

The appeal here is based entirely on God's choosing and calling. There can be no failure in these.

Thus very clearly and definitely God first gives full assurance to the believer that he or she shall be raised from the dead or be changed at the last trumpet; that his vile body shall be made like the glorified body of the Lord Jesus Christ by the working of the infinite power of God. This is so because God has chosen and he has called by the gospel (good news). It is only after God has made these facts clear that he appeals because of this assurance for firm immovable lives, given fully to the work of God.

To deny the eternal security of the believer denies the certainty of that which God makes definite, robs the believer of his assurance and undermines God's appeal.

CONCLUSION

Thus in Chapters 18 to 22 inclusive, it has been shown that it is the grace of God that brings salvation, which also teaches how to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world; and it is his eternal love with which he loves, both before the sinner is saved and afterward, that is the dynamic of that life. It is his mercy, as seen in the unalterable standing of the believer in grace, that is the incentive to a full surrender of body and mind to God. It is the believer's high calling in Christ, planned and determined by God before the foundation of the world, and being carried out according to the pleasure of his own will, that is the incentive to an earthly life that honors Christ, and is distinct from the world. It is the certain knowledge of being transformed into the image of Christ and appearing with him in glory that is the basis for an appeal to a pure life away from earthly lusts. The imperishable, undying nature of the new life of the one who has been born again is given as a reason for desiring to feed on the word of God; and finally the assurance of the resurrection of the body, the transformation of the present depraved, imperishable body into one made like Christ's glorious body is the appeal to stand firm and always dedicated to God's work.

Every one of these conditions on which these various appeals are made demand the eternal security of the believer. Therefore to teach that it is possible for anyone who has been saved to be lost is to undermine the very structure of God's argument for a life that is pleasing to him. Thus the charge that the teaching of eternal security leads to carelessness and a state of low spirituality is not only false; but the teachings against security by those who make this charge are responsible for these same conditions for which they blame those who are faithful stewards of the teachings of God's grace.

To merely neglect the teaching of these truths is a serious matter.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Part Four

Arguments Against Eternal Security Answered

Can We Know from Experience?

THE ARGUMENTS against eternal security and for the contention that one who has been saved can be lost fall into two broad groups: (1) those based on human observations and reason and (2) those based on scripture passages interpreted in order to make them so teach. In some arguments both of these errors are intermingled.

Those based on human observations and reasoning shall be considered first. In fact, inasmuch as the subject being considered is one that can be known only through what God has revealed to us, all arguments or parts of arguments that are purely on a human level must be ruled out. No evidence can be recognized as such that is not based on God's own revelation. It is good, however, because of the wide acceptance of some of the arguments that are purely human, to show how these arguments deny and contradict God's own word.

No attempt is made here to deal with all arguments that have been offered against eternal security. Space will not permit nor is it necessary; as the case rests not on refutation of human arguments, but on the positive revelation of God as it is found in the doctrines of grace. What follows is offered to show that the arguments against eternal security are untenable, and to help some who are bothered by these arguments.

A very familiar argument of this type is: "We know from our own experience of people who have been saved, but later have been lost." Instances are also cited of men who have at one time preached the gospel, but have later denied God. The

human observation and conclusion drawn from it, supporting this argument, may both be incorrect, for man is far from infallible, but that isn't the most serious objection to the argument. Anyone who definitely makes the statement about someone, that he has been saved and is now lost, is making a double judgment where he puts himself in the position of God. This is a serious charge, but it can be sustained by scripture. Anyone who is saved, is saved through faith, that is, believing. "Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life" (John 5:24). Believing is a heart attitude toward God. "It is with your heart that you believe and are justified" (Romans 10:10).

What does God say about the judgment of a heart attitude toward himself? "The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). Thus God specifically says that man cannot judge as to whether or not a man is in his heart, right with God. Christians ought to recognize others as Christians, or refuse to recognize them as such in fellowshiping with them (First Corinthians 5:11 and Second Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15); but this is quite different from making a positive statement that men are saved or not. Thus no man can definitely declare of another that he is either saved or lost.

God has caused to be written down in his word, the lives of two men, and has also given his own judgment as to whether these men were saved or lost. In both cases God's judgment is opposite to man's, based upon experience.

A favorite sermon subject of a few years ago was, "Lot Pitched His Tent Toward Sodom." Invariably it was said that, as a result of this first move toward Sodom, Lot became a lost man. This surely is the only conclusion that can be drawn from judging the experience or the "outward being" of Lot, but those who preached this entirely overlooked God's testimony concerning Lot, recorded some two thousand years after Lot died. It is found in Second Peter 2:7, 8. "He rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)." Man, judging the outward being of Lot, says he was lost. God, judging his soul, which in scripture is nearly synonymous with heart, calls him righteous.

Who is right, God or man? No modern case quoted as proof against eternal security has looked more hopeless than Lot. Yet men who are teachers of God's word say, "We know from our own experience that persons who have been saved can be lost."

Let no-one condemn this reference to the life of Lot nor say that it should not be mentioned, as it encourages sinful living. The fact that God has had it recorded in his word is authority for its use. When properly understood, the life of Lot becomes a tremendous warning, in the most concrete terms possible, of what it means to be "saved, but only as one escaping through the flames" (First Corinthians 3:15). This warning is entirely lost when it is used to warn saved people of the supposed possibility of their being lost. Lot's life is placed in contrast to that of Abraham. To both, righteousness was imputed, unrelated to works. Surely no Christian would choose the life of Lot with its barrenness and ultimate loss of everything except life itself, when it is possible to have a life like that of Abraham to whom God revealed his purposes and who was called the friend of God.

The other person in God's record is one whom man's judgment calls saved, but God said that he was lost. It is Judas Iscariot. Judas is the ever present proof to many for the possibility of being saved and later lost. Read his life. He was counted as one of the twelve earthly disciples of Jesus. He was so trusted by the others that he was made their treasurer. He was with the twelve when they were sent out to preach the gospel of the Kingdom. There is not the slightest record of any of the other eleven mistrusting him. He was included in the "we" when Peter said, "We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:69). Surely from experience, Peter and the other disciples thought they knew that Judas was saved.

But when Peter made that great confession of faith in Christ, which is in itself the very basis for being saved (John 3:36), and included in it Judas, Jesus immediately challenged it by saying, "One of you is a devil." What made this difference in judgment? Peter knew only the outward being of Judas - Jesus Christ knew his heart.

Again, after Jesus had washed the disciples' feet, he was very careful when he said, "you are clean" to add, "'though not every one of you.' For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean" (John 13:10, 11). Jesus had washed the feet of Judas as well as the others. Therefore, the difference between Judas and the others was that he had not 'had a bath' (verse 10); hence he was not clean. This is the washing (the same root word as is used for bathed in John 13:10) of regeneration (Titus 3:5) by which Judas had not been cleansed. As this bath is a "once for all" cleansing (Hebrews 10:1-12), Judas had never been saved, according to the record of the scripture.

In the days of the early Church, there were those among the true believers who went out from among them. Of them it is written: "They went out from us, but

they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us" (First John 2:19). As the very purpose of their going out was to show that they were not of the saved, it is clear that they had been fully recognized as saved.

Finally then, the one who says, "We know from our own experience that there are those who have been saved but are lost," places his own observations and judgment above God's statements to the contrary. But that is not all, he allows his own limited human observations and judgments to deny what God teaches in all the doctrines of the grace of God, which, it has been shown, demand the eternal security of the believer for their full understanding and acceptance. It is placing fallible and finite judgments and reasoning of man above God's infinite and infallible word.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Is Man a Free Moral Agent?

THOSE WHO reject the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer rely heavily on the argument that man is a free moral agent, and, as such can, after he has been saved, will to go away from God and become lost just as he had previously willed to come to God and be saved. This is one of their strongest arguments.

Space doesn't permit an exhaustive discussion of the free moral agency of man, nor is it necessary. All that is needed is to show the error of the argument as presented.

There are at least four separate and distinct fallacies in this one argument: (1) Man can reverse his freedom of action and its effects at pleasure; (2) Being a free moral agent, man is a free agent in other matters; (3) that man is a free moral agent in respect to salvation; (4) That the sovereign grace of God is limited by the free moral agency of man.

1. IS MAN FREE TO REVERSE HIS ACTIONS AND THEIR EFFECTS AT PLEASURE?

It is argued that because man can come to God and be saved, he can therefore will to go away from God and be lost. In other words, he can reverse his action and thereby the effects of his action. If it can be shown that there are conditions under which the effects of voluntary acts of man cannot be reversed by the free will of man, then the argument falls for no other proof is ever offered to support the

statement that man can go away from God and be lost. There surely is no revelation from God in this matter and nothing less than that has any weight.

To Adam was given freedom to eat or not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He was therefore in the true sense, a free moral agent. He ate of the fruit in disobedience to God's command and as a result, became a sinner and his nature became sinful. Because of this sinful nature, he, as well as the whole human race, lost that state of being a free moral agent with ability either to obey or disobey God's commandment. No one of Adam's seed has ever been able to fully obey God's law. Not one has by a voluntary deed been able to reverse the effects of Adam's act committed by him as a free moral agent.

Again, a woman may be a free agent in the matter of entering into marriage relations with a man, but thereafter, the Bible clearly states, she is bound by the law of the husband as long as he lives (Romans 7:2).

These two citations prove conclusively that freedom to act along a given line does not imply freedom to reverse that action and its effects. It surely does not then follow, that because someone has willed to come to God and be saved, he can will to go away and be lost.

2. A FREE MORAL AGENT IS NOT A FREE AGENT.

A free moral agent is a "being capable of those actions ... which can properly be denominated good or evil in a moral sense." There are matters outside of the moral realm in which a free moral agent is not a free agent. The contention that someone who has been saved can go away from God and be lost because such a person is a free moral agent, ascribes a power to will and act far greater than can possibly be included under the free moral agency of man. In fact, it really makes man, who is only a creature, an entirely free agent independent of his Creator and Saviour.

No man or woman ever willed to be born into the human race, and equally powerless is he to will to separate himself from the human race and become something else or even nothing at all. He may, by suicide, shorten his earthly existence, but he is still in the human race and shall be called as a man out of his grave. In this, he is clearly not a free agent. Yet it is argued that a saved man can will to separate himself from God. His entry into the kingdom of God was by birth. He was "born of God" into that state. It was not of his own will, for someone who is "born of God" is born "not of natural descent, nor of human decision" (John 1:13). It is true that the unsaved man wills to come to God, but it is not the willing to come to God that places him in the kingdom of God. That is

by an act of God. Man has as little to do with that, as he had to do with his physical birth. As it is impossible for man, by free action to separate himself from the human race, so it is equally impossible for him, by a free act, to separate himself from God's kingdom. To whatever degree man may be a free moral agent, that freedom is exercised entirely within the limits of his humanity. There is no such thing as free moral agency of man within the kingdom of God, for those who are born of God cannot sin (First John 3:9). They have a divine nature that is in harmony with God.

Clearly, then, the contention that man is a free moral agent does not include the freedom to will to go away from Christ and God. Truly, once a son of mankind, always a son of mankind, and equally true, once a child of God, always a child of God. There is no possibility for a man, by his own will or action, to change either of these two conditions. As man cannot change this condition and God will not, for Jesus said: "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away" (John 6:37); all who are saved are secure for all eternity.

3. IS MAN A FREE MORAL AGENT WITH REFERENCE TO SALVATION?

To say that man is a free moral agent and, as such, can come to God and be saved; and can, therefore, go away and thereby be lost, implies that man is saved or lost, due to his own actions as a free moral agent. The argument, as it is stated, does not leave room for any other cause of salvation than the free agency of man. No other power greater than that of man as a free moral agent could possibly contribute to salvation, if the power of man as a free moral agent can set it aside.

As a free moral agent is a being capable of good and evil actions, necessarily to be saved, such a being must always do that which is good.

Adam was created "good" and was made a free moral agent. He and Eve before the fall, were the only members of the human race that could truly be called free moral agents. But Adam (and this includes Eve) exercised his free moral agency by disobeying God's commandment, and thereby was placed under the condemnation of that commandment. This condemnation is death and everyone descended from Adam is in the same position, for "death came to all men" (Romans 5:12). The unsaved are described as dead in transgressions and sins; and are energized by Satan as children of disobedience (Ephesians 2: 1, 2). They are blinded by the god of this world (Second Corinthians 3:14). Not until God has shone in their hearts by the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-11) can they intelligently exercise saving faith. No-one can come to Jesus Christ unless the Father draws him (John 6:44). This is God's picture of man. Is that the picture of a free moral agent who can will to come to God and be saved? Scarcely!

Notice that the free moral agency of Adam was in the matter of obeying or disobeying God's law. Through Adam's disobedience, his nature became sinful and that sinful nature, by the law of birth, was passed on to all men. This sinful nature makes man incapable of those actions that are good in a degree demanded by God's law, and therefore he is not a free moral agent. Paul, speaking of his old nature which came from Adam, said: "I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin." He also said: "What I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do." He saw himself brought into captivity to a law of sin which was in his members (Romans 7:14, 19, 20, 23). This is the true picture of the Adamic nature of every man - every so-called free moral agent. Because of this, it could be said: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Only one has been able to "reject the wrong and choose the right" (Isaiah 7:15). He was the Seed of the woman and not of the sinful Adam. (see Genesis 3:15)

Thus it is impossible for man by any free action on his part to live so that he is good in the sight of God's holy law. In other words, man cannot be justified by the works of the law. He is not saved by any good action that he may take as a free moral agent.

If a man is not saved through his acts as a free moral agent, then the conclusion that he can go away from God and be lost, certainly does not follow. Thus for the third time the argument has been shown to be fallacious.

4. IS THE SOVEREIGN GRACE OF GOD LIMITED BY MAN'S WILL?

To say that man can will to go away from God and be lost is to make the sovereign grace of God subject to the will of man. This must be so because it is clearly revealed that grace reigns to eternal life (Romans 5:21). If man can will to go away from God and be lost, then grace does not reign to life - grace is not sovereign. To many there seems to be a clash between the so-called free moral agency of man and the sovereign grace of God. This is not true.

As has been shown, after Adam had sinned, man was no longer a free moral agent in the sense that he was able to do good and thereby fulfill the demands of God's holy law. Therefore, because of the demands of God's righteousness, man is lost. But God made a special provision whereby man can satisfy the demands of God's righteousness as expressed in his holy law.

This provision is in the person of his own Son who paid the death penalty of the broken law. This being done, God again gave man freedom to will. This second freedom to will is with respect to his Son. Man can either reject or accept him.

Those who reject him remain in the position of being guilty and under the condemnation of the law. The one who accepts him as the one who paid the penalty of the law for him, through faith, establishes God's law. The law is thus held inviolate and God's righteousness is vindicated. Each and everyone who in this way accepts Christ acts as a free agent under God's commandment.

It has already been pointed out that when Adam exercised his freedom and broke God's commandment, he thereby became possessor of a sinful nature which made it impossible for him to act freely and be restored to his former status and condition. So also by contrast, when someone has of his own free will accepted Christ as the propitiation which satisfies the demands of God's holy law, he is given a new divine nature which makes it impossible for him to will to return to his former state.

It is at this point that man's free agency in the matter of fulfilling God's law comes to an end. In fact, by so acting as a free agent, man confesses that he is not a free moral agent. By accepting Christ as the sacrifice of atonement for his sins, a person admits that he is not free to do good himself and thus satisfy God's law.

It is also at this very point, when man exercises saving faith, that the sovereignty of grace begins to operate. Until a man has accepted Christ and thereby established God's law, he is under the demands of God's righteousness. When these demands are satisfied, the floodgates of grace are opened and grace becomes sovereign and reigns to bring eternal life (Romans 5:21). It is, therefore, the righteousness of God that limits the sovereignty of his grace. Man, by accepting God's provision for satisfaction of his own righteousness, places himself at the mercy seat where nothing but the grace of God can touch him. Thus man's freedom of will is related to God's holy law and ceases to exist in the matter of life or death (saved or lost) when the sovereignty of grace begins.

Surely nothing can be ascribed to the free moral agency of man that can in the slightest interfere with the operation of the sovereign grace of God that guarantees the eternal life of everyone who has been saved.

Is any further proof needed to show the unbiblical position of the argument based on the free moral agency of man?

Thus the case of the backslider, when considered in the bright light of God's own revelation instead of in the dim light of human reason, becomes a strong and intensely specific argument for eternal security. Nor is that all, it contradicts the charges that those who accept eternal security teach that it makes no difference how a saved one lives.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Some Arguments Answered

ANSWERS TO many of the arguments against eternal security have been given throughout the preceding chapters. These answers need not be repeated here, but it might be helpful to some to have the arguments mentioned and references made to the chapters where answers to them can be found.

One of the most familiar arguments against eternal security and one that meets with much sympathetic reception is the statement: "To teach that a saved person is eternally secure and cannot be lost causes worldliness in the church and loss of spiritual power." This argument is not only answered in chapters 18-22; but it has been shown that denial of the security of the saved one robs God's appeal for a holy and godly life of their force, and thus it is in fact those who oppose the doctrine of eternal security who are responsible for that condition.

Another criticism is that young people, who go away from home and are taught eternal security at a Bible institute or conference, come back and enthusiastically, but unwisely, spread the doctrine in their home church. In the first two pages of chapter 3, it is pointed out that the responsibility for this condition rests upon those who have been responsible for the Bible training in that church, because they have failed to teach properly the doctrines of the grace of God.

The statement that, while Christ will not cast out one that comes to him, it is possible for a saved person voluntarily to go away from God, has no basis whatever in scripture. It is purely human imagination and cannot be accepted as an argument to decide a question, the only known facts of which are to be found in God's own revelation. That it is impossible for a saved person to go away from God.

The argument that a sheep can jump out of God's hand and be lost is also of this same class. No direct statement from the Bible has ever been offered to sustain it. The only authority backing it is the reasoning of the fallible human being that makes it. The impossibility of such an action is shown in the third and fourth pages of chapter 1. As the freedom of man's will is here involved, the answer to the last preceding argument applies here also.

It is argued that while eternal life is eternal, it is possible for a saved person to lose that eternal life, and that under certain conditions (which are never clearly defined), God will take back the eternal life to himself. This argument entirely

ignores God's revelation concerning the new birth. (See chapter 29.) It would be just as reasonable to say that a mother can take back to herself the life that she has given to her child. Furthermore, it has been shown (Chapter 6) that eternal life is a gift from God and that he never revokes his gifts.

It is often said that a saved person can lose the Holy Spirit. This is a direct denial of John 14:16, which clearly states that he stays forever.

It has been argued that as the physical life can be starved until it dies so also the spiritual, if it is not fed, will starve to death. This is offered as proof that a saved person can be lost. The fallacy in this argument is that comparison is made between two absolutely dissimilar things: physical life and the life that comes through the new birth. That physical life is universally mortal (subject to death) is clearly taught in the Bible. Death has come to all men (Romans 5:12). But that spiritual life, which is given to someone who is born again, is by God said to be eternal. This it must be, for it is of imperishable seed (First Peter 1:23). Comparing these two kinds of life and saying they are similar in this essential respect is to contradict God's declaration that they are diametrically different.

It is contended that of the two views, it is more reasonable to hold that someone who has been saved can be lost. That statement can be freely granted, but it must be remembered that that which springs from a loving heart is not the result of reason, even when on a human plane. Salvation is completely unreasonable. Why should God give his only begotten Son, and why should that Son voluntarily give his life so that mankind, who had rebelled against him and was worthy of nothing but everlasting separation from him might throughout all eternity live - not as restored to the originally perfect state that he was created in - but as a being like the Son himself, higher than all others of God's created beings? Salvation is made all of love and mercy. Where then is there any room to argue the reasonableness of any part of God's plan of salvation? In the light of God's own revelation of his infinite love, the argument from human reason instantly fades into nothingness. It is, however, most unreasonable to accept God's revelation concerning his love and sacrifice in saving a person, and then deny that he "who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will" (Ephesians 1:11), has not provided for the keeping of that for which he has sacrificed so much.

But why weary the reader (further) by multiplying refutations of these purely human arguments? Enough has been given to demonstrate that these arguments are without support in God's word. In fact, are contrary to it. Nor, as has already been said, does the proof of the controversy lie in answering all such arguments that the human mind might conceive. The real proof is in God's own revelation

which has been presented at considerable length. It is, as someone has said: "We are not governed by reason but by revelation."

As a help to those who have been confused by what has been offered as biblical proof against eternal security, a few more arguments will be answered. Certain "musts" are imposed upon those who are saved in order to remain saved. Two will be mentioned. It is said that a believer is secure as long as he remains in Christ, but he must remain in Christ or he shall be lost. For a consideration of this "must," the reader is referred to (Chapter 28 paragraph 21).

Another is, "the saved person must continue to believe." If he ceases to believe he is lost. Few who make this statement realize that if this is true, then a saved person is lost the instant he harbors a doubt. One argument which is hardly worthy of recognition, except for that fact that it has been quite freely used in certain quarters, is that the ending -eth of believeth (KJV) makes the word mean continuous believing. If this is true, then all verbs ending in -eth (in the KJV) also signify continuous and incomplete action. It is suggested that the reader try this out by reading John 4:5, 7 and 13 and 11:28, 38. But there are some who are truly concerned about this point. For those, assurance will be found in John 5:24, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." This verse makes it clear that saving faith is not a process, but an act. Anything that is brought to pass by a process cannot be spoken of as accomplished as long as the need for the process continues. When a thing has been accomplished, then that through which it was brought to pass is no further needed. In this verse eternal life (which cannot end) is said to have been given. It is not being given. It is also stated that whoever believes "has (already) crossed over (past tense) from death to life." Salvation from the penalty of sin, that is from the condemnation of the law, is by no means a process; it is an instantaneous act of God in response to a single act of faith on the part of the sinner.

It is taught in Ephesians 1:13, 14, that after a person has believed (a finished act) he is sealed with the Holy Spirit until the redemption of the purchased possession. This passage once and for all rules out the argument that one must continue to believe.

There is a need for continuous faith on the part of the saved person; but that is not in relation to the question of eternal life (being saved) or everlasting condemnation (being lost), and therefore is not a part of this discussion.

It is said that sin in the life of a saved person will result in that one's being lost. There are not many who are willing to go so far as to say that any sin whatsoever

will cause a saved person to be lost, especially if they are reminded that, "everything that does not come from faith is sin," and "anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins" (James 4:17). In fact anything that falls short of the glory of God is sin (Romans 3:23). Yet it is maintained that there are certain kinds of sins: unconfessed sins, willful sins, or continued sinning that will result in the one who commits them being lost. To accept this condition is to acknowledge that there are degrees of sin. It is to say that there are sins which a saved person can commit and still remain saved, but there are others which must be avoided or you will be lost. To make this concrete, the following list of sins is given: an unkind thought, a slight snub of a fellow Christian, a bit of envy because someone else has been more highly honored, a hasty unkind word, a misrepresentation of someone else, a white lie, pride, envy, jealousy, resentment to another, a root of bitterness, greed, hatred, wrath, strife, theft, falsification, idolatry, drunkenness, revellings, fornication, adultery, murder. From the above list, which sins can be safely committed and which not? Where is the line to be drawn and by whom? And where is the Bible authority for the classification when it is finished? Those who contend against eternal security are unwilling to state clearly their position in this matter. They are not as frank as is the Roman Church which classifies sins as venial and mortal.

But one need not be bewildered by this indefinite presentation of the sin question. God in the death of Christ made an absolute and full provision for sin and satisfied all demands of his law. This has already been explained in chapters 8 and 9, and need not be repeated here.

And this leads on to the next argument: "If a saved person cannot be lost, what of backsliders?" This word is greatly misunderstood. In the first place, the word never occurs in relation to the saved of the Church era. It is exclusively an Old Testament word and, with one exception (Proverbs 14:14 which is a different word in the original), is applied nationally to Israel and Judah. As the things that are recorded concerning God's chosen people Israel, are examples to believers of this era (First Corinthians 10:6), it seems entirely proper to speak of a saved person who has departed from a life of obedience to God as a backslider. But when this is done, to be consistent, such person must necessarily be considered in the same light as God considered his Old Testament backsliding people.

In connection with the first mention of backsliding, it is written: "Your wickedness will punish; your backsliding will rebuke you" (Jeremiah 2:19). Rebuke then is connected with backslidings. this at once suggests chastening through which God corrects those saved persons who do not judge themselves.

In the next chapter are found these words, "'Return, faithless people,' declares the LORD, 'for I am your husband'" (Jeremiah 3:14). Here the Lord speaks of that which he regards as an unbreakable tie. Then follows a prophecy of that restoration of Judah and Israel to their own land which has not yet been fulfilled. Then in verse 22 is a loving entreaty: "Return, faithless people; I will cure you of backsliding," and they answer: "Yes, we will come to you, for you are the LORD [YHWH or Jehovah, the redemptive name for God] our God."

In this passage surely there can be found nothing on which to base the statement that a backslider is lost. On the contrary, it teaches that a backslider is in an inseparable relation to God and will be restored.

In a second message God says (Jeremiah 5:6) of Judah, "Their rebellion is great and their backslidings many"; and then tells of what another writer calls punishment, "with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men" (Second Samuel 7:14) that are to happen to them; but also adds: "Yet ... I will not destroy you completely" (verse 18). Yet again God pleads: "Why does Jerusalem always turn away?" (Jeremiah 8:5) and again more corrective punishments are predicted. They shall be melted like in gold refining, and tested (Jeremiah 9:7); they will be made to "eat bitter food and drink poisoned water" (verse 15). The student of history well knows how hard the rod has been and how severe the floggings; how they have been melted and refined by the fires of persecution and how bitter the food and drink. It has all been chastening, but not everlasting separation.

More than six hundred years later, it was written: "Did God reject his people? By no means! ... God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew" (Romans 11: 1, 2). "And so all Israel will be saved" (verse 26) because "as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs" (verse 28).

And so also the backslider, while chastened by the Lord, is never driven away (John 6:37), because he also is "chosen (elect) according to the foreknowledge of God" (First Peter 1:2). "For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29).

While here is comfort, there is also a warning of the most solemn kind. God's mercies can not be trifled with. One who trifles with the grace of God, though not lost, because salvation is of grace, will suffer the just consequences of his sins.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Why the Warnings?

IT IS argued: if a saved person cannot be lost, why then all the warnings in the Bible? To ask this question is to imply that all warnings are addressed to saved persons and the only thing that God needs to warn those about, who are saved is that they do not do something to cause him to condemn them to everlasting death. Is there then nothing else for an individual that God is concerned about than the matter of eternal life or everlasting condemnation?

There are many warnings addressed to believer but, before considering some of them, it might be well to discuss briefly some warnings which are often taken to apply to Christians but really do not directly apply to them.

Some of the passages in which certain individuals are warned are addressed to other than the saved of this era. In Matthew 24:42 and Mark 13:14 are warnings to servants to watch. In both, it is clearly said that this watchfulness is in the expectation of the coming of the "Son of Man" (Matthew 24:37 and Mark 13:34). Speaking of this coming, Matthew 24:30 says: "All the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory," and according to verse 29, this will take place immediately after the great tribulation. As the Church is taken up before the tribulation, these passages cannot, in their primary sense, be applied to present-day believers.

It is to be noted also that these warnings are to "servants." Jesus in speaking to his disciples said, "I no longer call you servants ... Instead, I have called you friends" (John 15:15). Under the law, God's people in their activity for him are servants, but under grace they are "friends." Thus it is doing violence to the new relationship to say that these passages apply to Christians.

Another passage in which there is a warning that is made to apply to saved persons is Hebrews 6:1-9. This is discussed elsewhere at considerable length. This warning is directed against the possibility of Jews in the early groups of Jewish Christians trusting in the sufficiency of ceremonial worship and the kingdom teachings, but without a personal faith in the Saviour indispensable to salvation. There are large numbers in the churches today who have the form of godliness, but do not know the power of it. These, who merely profess to be Christians but are not true believers, are warned by passages such as this one. There is a special need today to warn the unsaved within the churches. By applying to Christians warnings as this one, is to rob that class of people who need so sadly the warnings of God's word to them.

Throughout the pages of the Bible are found records of the mixture of the weeds with the wheat. From the days of the mixed multitude that went with Israel out of Egypt to the false teachers of the Christian era who transform themselves into apostles of Christ (Second Corinthians 11:13; Second Peter 2:1 and First John 4:1), there has been a need for warnings to God's people to distinguish between those who are truly God's own and those who aren't. Here then is one great reason for the warnings in the Bible.

As great as the subject of eternal life is, God most certainly has much more than this for each person he has saved from the penalty of sin and, through the new birth, placed in his own kingdom. If that was all, why doesn't he take all those who are saved to himself immediately after they are saved? Certainly someone who has been purchased at so great a price as the blood of his own Son wouldn't be left on earth at the risk of being lost if he could be lost, and also without any purpose for that earthly life!

But God has a purpose for the earthly life of those who are blood bought, and it is in relation to this purpose that the warnings are addresses to believers.

THE FRUITS OF THE EARTHLY LIFE MIGHT BE LOST

It is very possible for someone who has received eternal life, whose spirit has been saved, to suffer loss of all that might have been accomplished by his earthly life. Every man's work (the sum total of his earthly life) shall be tested by fire. "If it (any man's work) is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames" (First Corinthians 3:12-15).

In line with this, the writer of the Hebrews says: Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our 'God is a consuming fire.'"(Hebrews 12:28, 29 [Quoting Deuteronomy 4:24]). A similar warning is found in Second Corinthians 5:10-11. Lot is the outstanding example of such a person. All the works of his life were lost in Sodom. Even upon those of the city who were nearest to him, his influence was lost. Certainly no Christian wants to be saved the way Lot was when he could be like Abraham. A first need for the warnings to saved people then is the possibility of the loss of the fruits of the earthly life.

WARNINGS AGAINST LOSS OF INFLUENCE

A second need for warnings to saved people, which is really a part of the one just mentioned, but important enough to justify special mention, is the ever present possibility of a Christian losing his influence in the world for God.

The possibility of salt losing its savour and being cast out and trodden under foot of man (Matthew 5:13) is used as a warning of this type. So also is the possibility of a man withering as a branch and being cast by men into the fire (John 15:6).

One of the most searching warnings of this kind is found in Revelation 2:5. "Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place." This warning is addressed to the angel of the church at Ephesus. This church had stood as a great light bearer surrounded by dark heathenism and even at the time the warning was spoken, much good was said about this church; but it had left its "first love" and therefore the warning. How sensitive God is in the matter of letting his light shine out through those who are his own! All through the centuries of the Christian era, the pages of history are filled with records of churches and individual men that have been discarded by God as light bearers in this world of darkness. To interpret this warning as a possibility of being lost is to rob that church (or individual) which is very actively engaged in God's work and zealous for the faith delivered once to the saints, of the much needed warning that being a light bearer essentially requires a personal love for the Lord.

REWARDS MIGHT BE LOST

God will reward in eternity those who serve him faithfully during their earthly life. "If what he (any man) has built survives, he will receive his reward" (First Corinthians 3:14). But it is also possible for a man to lose that reward which God had made possible for a man to lose the reward that God had made possible for him to gain and he solemnly warns of this: "Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown" (Revelation 3:11). Crowns are rewards for faithfulness to God. They do not represent eternal life. This is perfectly clear from Revelation 4:4 to 11, which depicts the scene wherein the twenty-four elders cast their crowns before the throne saying, "Thou are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power." There is a glory and honour for eternity that can be lost and God warns his children of the possibility of losing it.

WARNINGS TO AVOID CHASTENING

So far only warnings as to loss or gain for eternity have been considered. There are also warnings that consider the present life of the believer. While it is true that every child of God is subject to chastening, it is also true that the amount of chastening may be more or less, depending on the believer's judgment of himself for allowing sin in his life. Those who do not judge themselves are warned that God will judge and chasten them. (First Corinthians 11:27-32).

IT IS POSSIBLE NOT TO ENTER INTO REST

The Lord Jesus Christ said: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). What can be meant by this rest? It is the rest that he gives to all who have labored with the heavy burden of sin, which he through his death takes away from all who have come to him, confessing themselves as sinners. It is a rest in the finished work of salvation.

That this is a rest to be enjoyed during this earthly life is clear from the words that follow: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me."

There are many Christians who do not have this rest because they do not understand that when Jesus Christ died on the cross, God performed through him a finished work of salvation which is theirs through simply coming to him in faith. Instead of resting in the finished work of Christ, they are constantly laboring in order to be accepted by God. They are trying to be justified by their own efforts. They are always struggling to "hold out" but have no rest - no assurance - that they will see Christ in glory.

God has given a solemn warning against just this condition, but the warning has to a large extent been lost because the passage has been made to mean the possible loss of eternal life.

This warning is found in Hebrews 4:1-3. "Therefore, since the promise of entering his (God's) rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest." The interpretation that makes this passage teach that a saved person can be lost and thus fail to enter into rest in heaven overlooks the present tense of the words: "Now we who have believed enter (not 'will enter') that rest." The tenth verse makes this even more definite for there the entering into rest is already an accomplished fact. "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from

his own works, as God did from his" (KJV). And here it is clearly said that the rest is from one's own works.

Those who deny the eternal security of the believer and add works as a condition for salvation are responsible for the failure of many Christians to cease from their own works and to enter into that rest which comes from faith in the finished work of Christ.

While there are many other warnings in the Bible, enough has been considered to show the emptiness of the argument, "Why then the warnings, if a saved person cannot be lost?", and also the shallowness of the interpretation of the Bible which denies eternal security.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Misinterpreted Bible Passages

A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER of scripture passages selected from various parts of the Bible are offered as arguments against eternal security.

The basic principle of Bible study and interpretation is that the Bible is one great, harmonious presentation of truth and that each part must harmonize with every other part and with the whole. The great truths concerning sin and condemnation, and grace and eternal life, are outlines which everything else must conform to. Therefore the doctrines of sin and of the grace of God are the background that individual verses must be examined against. If there is an apparent meaning that contradicts these established teachings, then it is necessary to seek some other meaning. Even if no other meaning seems possible, such a verse cannot be made to annul all that is taught by the whole body of harmonious truth vastly outweighing such verse.

The only God-honoring practice is to accept the divine revelation of the large body of truth and humbly seek a harmonious meaning for the few individual, difficult verses. To do differently is to rob God's Word of its power to give comfort, joy and assurance.

Interpretations given to passages to make them contradict the eternal security of the believer are subject to various errors that might well be considered under four different groups:

1. Applying to the saved, passages addressed to others.
2. Interpreting passages outside of their context.

3. Difficult, or obscure passages wrongly interpreted.
5. Using passages in figurative language to formulate a doctrine.

Only a part of the passages that are offered to prove that a saved person can be lost can be considered here. Those considered will, however, be sufficient in number to give you a clear picture of the various interpretational errors. Nor is it necessary in all cases to give a full and correct interpretation of each passage quoted. For the purpose of this discussion, all that is needed is to show a good reason why any given passage cannot mean that someone who has been saved can be lost.

1. APPLYING TO THE SAVED, PASSAGES ADDRESSED TO OTHERS

"When a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die" (Ezekiel 3:20). This was true under the law, but the saved person is "not under law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14), and therefore it cannot apply to him. Every saved person has been justified (counted as righteous) through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24) and does not stand before God in his own righteousness.

"The soul who sins is the one who will die" (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). This also is under the law. Under grace, the saved person is already dead in the person of his substitute, Jesus Christ (Second Corinthians 5:14), and is free from the condemnation (death penalty) of the law.

Matthew 18:23-35. This passage is under law. The principle for forgiveness which applies to the Christian is found in Ephesians 4:32, "... forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13). This is said of Israel passing through the great tribulation and cannot be applied to Christians. The same is true of Mark 13:13. The context in each case shows this clearly.

The person referred to in Luke 11:24-26, into whom the evil spirit reenters, cannot be someone who has been born again, for every such person is inhabited by the Holy Spirit, who stays forever (John 14:16, 17). That individual was merely reformed - not regenerated.

"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons" (First Timothy 4:1). This passage doesn't speak of the individual's faith in the Saviour for salvation. Those spoken

of here teach lies told them by demons instead of truths of faith which the Church has taught. In First John 2:18, 19, these same people are mentioned, and there it is clearly stated that "they went out from us ... but their going showed that none of them belonged to us." Hence, they have never been saved, even though they have passed as believers and represented themselves as such. There are several passages that speak of false teachers who are a part of the apostasy of these last days. They have departed from the faith held by their fathers in the Church. Thus to depart from the faith does not require a previous, personal faith in Christ as is necessary to be saved.

2. PASSAGES INTERPRETED OUTSIDE OF THEIR CONTEXT

Some very serious errors are made by using certain passages entirely out of context to show that someone who has been saved can be lost. "You have fallen away from grace" (Galatians 5:4) is quoted as a sure proof that a saved person can be lost. This statement is made to describe a Christian who has fallen into sin. If those who use this statement like this will take time to read the entire verse, they will see how far they miss the true meaning. It is not those who fall into sin, but those who are particularly concerned with doing everything that the law requires in order to be righteous in God's sight, so as to remain saved, that have fallen from grace. Thus it is they themselves who insist on works to remain saved who have fallen from grace. To apply the by-works principle to the unsaved is to be guilty of preaching another gospel (Galatians 1-8:9). Applying it to believers is to encourage them to fall from grace.

The theme of Galatians is "After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" It is not a treatise on the new birth as John 3:1-21, nor on salvation from the penalty of sin as Ephesians 2:1-10. It is an appeal to a life in the liberty of grace instead of in bondage to the law.

Another favorite statement used entirely out of context to prove that a saved person can be lost is found in Hebrews 6:6. It consists of these five words: "If they fall away." It is said that this shows clearly the possibility of a Christian being lost. What is the context? Verses 4-6 are all one sentence that speaks of people who have had certain experiences which are mentioned. It is true that in the words, "if they fall away," it is implied that it is possible to fall away from that which had been experienced, but the essential statement concerning these persons, whoever they may be, is: "It is impossible ... if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance." If the words, "if they fall away," refer to persons that have been saved, so also must the words, "It is impossible ... to be brought back to repentance." Do those who make the implied meaning prove that a saved person can be lost also accept and teach that someone who has been lost again,

cannot be brought back to repentance? They do not. They are always urging backsliders to come and be saved again. This illustrates the shallowness of much of the teaching against eternal security.

That this statement isn't made concerning believers is clarified in verse 9. "Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things [than those mentioned] in your case - things that accompany salvation." Thus these persons haven't been saved. Who then were they? This explanation is suggested. The letter is written to the Hebrews. Read the first three verses of the chapter and notice how perfectly they describe Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night. Yet Jesus refused to be addressed by him as "a teacher who has come from God," but told him that he needed to be born again. While with Jesus, Nicodemus entered into those things mentioned in verses 4 and 5. Had Nicodemus gone away from Jesus and "fallen away" from all that he received there, then he could not have been brought back to repentance, for he would have gone back and continued to try to establish his own righteousness, as did the other Jews of whom Paul writes in Romans 10:1-3. Thus this passage refers to Jews passing from under the covenant of the law into salvation and can't be said to be concerning saved people.

Hebrew 10:26-29, 39 is a similar passage.

3. OBSCURE PASSAGES WRONGLY INTERPRETED

A third error in the use of scripture passages to deny the eternal security of the believer is to wrongly interpret passages, the meaning of which depends upon the meaning of some word or phrase in the passage. A favorite passage of this class is First Corinthians 9:27. In *Voices from the Silent Centuries*, Dr. Harry Rimmer has the following to say concerning this passage. It is quoted here with his consent:

"Strange as it may seem, however, there are some who do not care to rest in the security of the finished work of Christ, and these reject the provisions of the doctrine of Grace; contending that we are safe only as long as we are able to keep ourselves. This school of thought would have us saved one day and lost the next, losing sight of the gracious promise of Jesus, 'I GIVE unto them eternal life, and they SHALL NEVER PERISH.' Pressed for some verse of scripture on which to base their unhappy doctrine, they generally refer to First Corinthians 9:27. Here Paul writes, 'But I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others I myself should be a cast-away.' this implies, according to these mistaken friends, that Paul was afraid he would be lost after he had been saved and serving!

"This erroneous idea would never have been rooted, if we had possessed the knowledge, when the New Testament was rendered into the English, that has since come to us from archeology. The whole matter turns on the meaning of the word Paul uses here, ADOKIMOS. This Koine word was lost to the world for ages, and is just recovered from the ostraca. It was a common household word in the days of Paul, and was applied to a certain pottery vessel in sad condition. Remembering that all the utensils of a household service were pottery. it is easy to understand how often such would be cracked or broken. A woman, busy about the hearthstone with a pottery cooking vessel in her hand, in careless haste might bump the pot against the stones and crack it so that it would no longer hold water.

"Did she then throw away this leaky vessel? You know she didn't! Just look at your own pantry and see how many tea cups are on the shelf, with a handle broken off, or an unsightly crack marring the smooth surface of the porcelain! Never forget that we are dealing with FOLKS in these old discoveries, and that human nature has not changed one iota in two thousand years! so the ancient housekeeper, having a cracked pot that was no longer fit for boiling water, PUT IT ON THE SHELF. Perhaps she hoped to use it again as a receptacle for beans or wheat, perhaps she was just thrifty; but when a pot was cracked and laid on the shelf, it was called ADOKIMOS! Was it Lost? No! It was just laid aside.

"So Paul, contemplating the effects of sin in the Christian life, states in terms that his readers could most appreciate, 'I strive so to live that I may not be PUT ON THE SHELF!' To how many living men would that phrase be aptly applied! Do we not all of us know men who have been used of God in His service, who allowed the flesh to gain the ascendancy? Where are those men today? In the language of Paul, which is strangely reminiscent of the slang of this age, 'they are on the shelf.' So Paul writes of his ministry, and says, 'I do not want to be a cracked pot! (Adokimos).'"

In Philippians 3:10-11 Paul says, "I want to know Christ and the power of his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead." This is made to teach that Paul could have been lost, because his participation in that resurrection that takes place when Christ comes for his Church was dependent upon his present striving as indicated in the preceding verses.

So interpreting this passage, not only compromises grace principles, but it completely denies that salvation is by grace and that eternal life is a gift of God.

This passage can't possibly refer to the resurrection of the body. In the next verse Paul says that he hasn't yet attained it. It would be meaningless for someone not yet dead to say that he had not been raised from the grave. The resurrection Paul refers to must be something attainable in the earthly life of the believer.

The following interpretation is offered, not only as in perfect harmony with the sure teachings of the grace of God, but also as suggested by other scripture passages.

In these verses the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ and becoming like him in his death are related to the resurrection of the dead. In Second Corinthians 4:10, and 11 are also found, though in different words, the same two conditions, the fellowship of suffering and being like Christ in his death. There it clearly states the purpose of these two, that the life of Christ may be revealed in our mortal (subject to death) body. This then suggests that the resurrection of Philippians 3:11 is the same as the revealing of the life of Christ in the present mortal body of the believer. This suggestion is strongly supported by Romans 6:4, where the new life of the believer is likened to Christ's resurrection from the dead.

Furthermore the words, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect," (Philippians 3:12) seem to support even further the suggestion that "the resurrection from the dead" (in this context) means the full revelation of the life of Christ in the present mortal body. Surely here is life out of death.

First John 5:16 is sufficient grounds for some to deny the eternal security of the believer. It reads: "If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that." The meaning of this verse depends on the meaning of the words death and life. They are said to mean eternal life and everlasting death or condemnation. No other scripture passage is ever quoted to support the interpretation. This interpretation is fraught with at least five distinct errors:

1. It flatly contradicts the words of Jesus (also recorded by John): "Whoever ... believes ... has eternal life and will not be condemned" (John 5:24).
2. It denies the interceding work of Christ (also recorded by John and in the same letter): "If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins" (First John 2:1, 2).

3. To teach that one man can pray for another and thereby the one prayed for is delivered from the guilt of his sin and given eternal life is to recognize a human mediator between God and man as the Roman ('Catholic') church does. This is contrary to God's own word: "There is one ... mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (First Timothy 2:5).

4. It classifies sin (in the sense of transgression of the law) into two classes; those capable of being forgiven and those that take away grace and involve the death of the soul. These are the venial and mortal sins of Roman theology, pure and simple. In relation to eternal life or everlasting death, there are no degrees of sin, all are the same. James writes (James 2:10): "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."

5. It teaches that through the prayer of another a believer secures forgiveness of sin. This cannot be supported by other scripture passages. In fact it is contradicted by a passage which also is recorded by John and in the same letter: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (First John 1:9). It is one's own confession, not the prayer of another, which God honors in forgiving a sinning saint.

This illustrates the awful error it's possible to fall into when an individual passage is interpreted without reference to the great fundamental (primary and essential) doctrines of the Bible.

There is another interpretation of this passage that can be supported by other passages and does not do violence to any of the great doctrines of the Bible. This interpretation considers the word "death" to mean physical death. That physical death can result from sin is clearly taught in First Corinthians 11:29, 30, "For anyone who eats and drinks [the Lord's supper] without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen aslee" The word "sleep" is a euphemism for the physical death of believers. Jesus said that Lazarus slept when he was dead (John 11:11). When stoned, Stephen "fell asleep" (Acts 7:60).

Thus there were those in the Corinthian church who had died physically because of sin, but they were not lost because the word "sleep" is never used for death except in the case of those who are saved. It is therefore, correct to interpret the word death as meaning physical death. Thus it seems most reasonable in the light of other scripture to interpret the passage in question as an command to pray for people who are (or may become) sick because of sins committed that they may be restored to health, yet in the case of some sin, prayer shall not be offered. This

interpretation must not of course be made to support the false teaching that all sickness is due to sins committed by the sick person.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Misinterpreted Bible Passages – Continue

4. USING PASSAGES IN FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE TO FORMULATE A DOCTRINE.

A SERIOUS ERROR committed by those who deny eternal security is to use passages that are in figurative language to prove the contention that one who has been saved can be lost. It is only after a given interpretation of a figurative passage has been fully authenticated by other scripture that it can be used as proof. To use interpretations not so authenticated is to base doctrine on purely human thinking and reasoning. Doctrine, which is truth, in order to be true must be a divine revelation.

A SOWER WENT OUT TO SOW

The parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1-23) is an outstanding example of this class of passages. It is claimed that the seed that grows in the stoney ground and among the thorns represents persons that are saved, but who became backsliders and are lost. This interpretation is never sustained by other scripture texts. In the first place, such interpretation directly denies salvation by grace through faith and all the other truths considered in chapters 5-17 and therefore must be dismissed.

There is a key word in this parable, the significance of which is learned from several passages. That word is "fruit." There were two kinds of growth, that which bore no fruit and that which bore fruit. In connection with the first use of the word fruit (Genesis 1:11), it is said that it contains the seed. Therefore, according to the law of first mention where there is fruit, there is seed and where there is no fruit, there is no seed. That which grew among the rocks and the thorns, bore no fruit hence it had no seed in it, while that which bore fruit did have seed. As has been previously mentioned, all who are born again (ie. saved) are born "not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, thought the living and enduring word of God" (First Peter 1:23), and that seed remains in them (First John 3:9). Thus the Bible clearly makes the continuing presence of seed a sign of new birth. The absence thereof becomes a sign that regeneration has not occurred. Natural man and all the moral development and the so-called Christian culture, apart from regeneration is flesh which is as the grass and the flower of it that withers. Jesus

speaking of himself said: "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." ["much fruit" (KJV)] This "much fruit" are those who are saved through his death and resurrection. Note carefully, they are "fruit" or the "seed" - not the blade and the stalk which withers.

The life that is in the seed of any grain today is the same life as was in the seed, of that same kind of grain, that God made and put into the earth on the third creation day. Therefore, seed means the enduring life and stands for the eternal life of a saved person; whereas the stalk which has a life of a very limited duration, represents flesh or the earthly life of a man.

It is very interesting to notice that to the perfect creation before the fall, God gave to the beast "every green plant", but to man he gave "every seed-bearing plant" and "every tree that has fruit with seed in it Here seed undoubtedly stands for spiritual food, whereas green plants represent mere bodily food. In the light of these different texts, harmonizing with each other, it seems only reasonable to conclude that only that which bore fruit represents saved men and women. That which bore no fruit represents merely natural men who have either been stirred emotionally with outward signs similar to spiritual evidence or who have only been morally improved due to hearing the teachings of the word. That the word of God is a great influence for human uplift, even in the lives of people who are not born again, cannot be denied. Considerable space has been given to this passage not only because of its important, but also because the same issue arises in the next passage for consideration.

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

In John 15:1-6 is the record of the words of Jesus concerning the vine and the branches. This passage is a particular favorite of those who claim that someone who has been saved can be lost. It is said that every branch in Jesus is a saved person and the branches that are cut off are saved persons who are lost.

Much can be said to refute this interpretation. All agree that there are two kinds of branches; those not bearing fruit and those bearing fruit. It has already been shown at considerable length in the discussion of the previous passage that fruit and seed are a sign of being born again. As the unfruitful branches do not have this sign, it is only reasonable to conclude that they cannot represent saved persons.

On the other hand, the fruitful branches have seed and are children of God. But the Father Husbandman cares for these branches in a special way - he purges

them. He removes part of the woody growth so that they will bear more fruit. This is exactly what the "Father" does with every one who is born of imperishable seed - everyone who is his child.

"The Lord disciplines [or chastens] those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son" and, "If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons" (Hebrews 12:6, 8). And significantly enough, the purpose of this chastening is exactly the same as the purging of the fruitful branches, to bear more fruit in the form of righteousness (Hebrews 12:11).

The unfruitful branches are not purged. Thus in two ways, the two kinds of branches are identified by other scripture passages. The unfruitful branches cannot be saved persons, because they definitely lack the two indispensable signs of son ship, having seed in them and being chastened.

It is still contended that the expression, "in me," can only mean a saved person for, "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (Second Corinthians 5:17). This would be true if the words "in me" had the same meaning as "in Christ," but there is much to show that they don't. The message of the gospel of John is "the Word was made flesh" -the Son of God becomes the Son of Man and in him is life - life both in a universal sense for all men, and in an individual sense only for those who believe.

It was as the Son of Man that he became identified with the whole human race. He said, "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32). That he said this of himself as the Son of Man is clear from the immediately preceding statement, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (verse 23) and an earlier statement, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up" (John 3:14).

By the drawing of "all men to" himself, life went from him to all men. Death entered the human race by sin (Romans 5:12). On the cross the Son of Man took away all sin, for he was "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Thus that by which death entered the human race (Romans 5:12) was removed, and life was brought back to the human race. That he gave life to all is clearly taught in John 6:33, "For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "In him was life, and that life was the light of men." "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world" (John 1:4, 9).

There is still another statement as to life in the Son of Man that applies to all men. "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his [the Son of Man's] voice and come out - those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned" (John 5:28, 29). This is the bodily resurrection of all men which was made possible only by the death and resurrection of the Son of Man. "For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (First Corinthians 15:21). Thus in he who said, "every branch in me," there is life in a universal sense. It is for all men. This life is on a purely human plane. It is not divine [of God], nor is it eternal. In the figure, it is represented by the perishable wood and leaves of the branches.

"In him" there is also a divine life that becomes available to all because of the fact that he has overcome for all, the physical death which came through Adam's sin. He, on the cross, became, in his humanity, united with all men. Those who through faith in him as the Son of God become united with him in his divine being have become children of God. They are "in Christ" and have eternal life.

As the gospel of John clearly teaches the universality of life, of a human nature, in the Son of Man, so it also teaches the certainty of a divine eternal life in the Son of God for a limited number - all who believe. While he drew all men to himself on the cross, only those who receive him are born of God (John 1:12, 13) and those who believe in him as the only begotten Son of God have eternal life (John 3:16). He was the bread of God from heaven that "comes down from heaven and gives life to the world," but only "whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life" (John 6:33, 54).

Thus Jesus (as recorded by John) taught that there was life in him in this double sense. He also made it clear that for some the resurrection of the body was to life, while for others it was to condemnation (John 5:29). In other words, some are raised to life which is a continued union with God while others are raised to life in order to be condemned, that is separation from him. Isn't this in perfect harmony with what happens to the branches? Some are separated and some continue in union with him.

Thus this word picture of the vine and the branches, with perishable wood representing humanity, and fruit with its seed, divine life, is a perfect and full illustration of what he who was both Son of Man and Son of God accomplished for the human race. He spoke this himself at the very moment that he faced the cross by which all was to pass. What harmony there is in it all! Contrast this with that school of interpretation of scripture which never hesitates to make some

difficult passage contradict the, "Verily, verily, I say unto you" (John 5:24 KJV) of the Son of God.

Much more can be said about this passage, but this is not an exposition of it, except insofar as it is used to deny the eternal security of every saved person.

There are, however, two other verses in this passage that are made to deny eternal security. The words, "Remain in me, and I will remain in you" and "unless you remain in me" are offered as a proof that someone who is in Christ can be separated from him. As the words "remain in me and I will remain in you," are addressed to people who have been declared to be clean (verse 3), they must be applied to saved people only and not to saved and unsaved as in verse two. Here is a definite command by God and the reason for it follows; but it is not an obligation placed on the saved person, as is clear from the last three words. A comparable command is found in Luke 5:13. Jesus there said to the man covered with leprosy, "Be clean." This clearly does not imply that the man was to cleanse himself. So also the command, "Remain in me, and I will remain in you," does not mean that those who have been cleansed by a similar command on his part must keep themselves in him. The Lord's command to the sinner to be clean and to the cleansed person to remain in him are both brought to realization by God's own power (See chapter 16). This command then states the law of divine life in Christ as being a continuous need on the part of the one who has been washed by the washing of regeneration, to remain in continuous union with him. From his own words (recorded in the same gospel), "Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal [everlasting union with him] life and will not be condemned [separation from him]," it is clear that his command cannot be broken. It can just as truly be said that unless the sun and earth remain in their orbits, day will not follow night and spring will not follow winter as to say, "Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me." No-one would say that the sun and the earth must by their own power remain in their orbits. No. They are kept there by the Creator's power. And so is every saved person kept in Christ by the power of God.

The sixth verse is also used to prove that a saved person can be lost. Those who so use it, overlook the statement that those spoken of are gathered and cast into the fire by men. [orig. 'they are gathering them up' etc., KJV 'gathered by men, and cast'.] To be lost is to be cast out by God, as in the second verse. Anything which is said to be done by men cannot by any stretch of the imagination be interpreted as meaning condemnation.

This same error is made by those who misinterpret Matthew 5:13, as teaching that a saved person can be lost. When the salt has lost its saltiness, it is trodden

under foot by men. These verses deal only with an earthly condition and have nothing to say regarding the eternal state. The purpose of this passage as applied to believers is to warn them that their influence for God among the unsaved can be lost, but not that they will lose their eternal life.

The parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) is another favorite passage used by those denying eternal security to prove their contention. There are probably more different interpretations of this passage than any other. To make such a passage contradict the clear teaching of the doctrines of the grace of God is to explain the known by the unknown. It is to interpret the clear by the vague and the result can only be confusion. The very fact, that a disputed passage as this is used to deny the eternal security of the believer is a confession of weakness on the part of those who so use it.

Additional misinterpreted passages that are quoted to prove that someone who has been saved can be lost, might be quoted at considerable length, but space does not permit, nor is it necessary. Those quoted ought to be sufficient to point out that the purported scriptural support for the denial of eternal security consists only in misinterpretations of Bible passages. These interpretations deny the plain, fundamental truth of God's word. True Bible exposition demands that obscure and difficult passages be carefully studied in the light of plain teachings.

To misinterpret God's word is a strategy of Satan that started in the garden of Eden and caused the first Adam to sin and become the head of a sinful race. He used it also, though unsuccessfully, when he was permitted to tempt the Son of Man, the last Adam. Though he cannot rob them of their eternal life, he does it today to rob God's children of their assurance which brings peace and joy and a fruitful life for God. And he does this through men who are innocent of his activities.

If anyone who still rejects this precious truth feels that an insufficient number of difficult passages have been explained, let him go back and first harmonize his own position with the great doctrines of the grace of God as explained in chapter 5 to 17. When that has been done, it is time to seek explanations for any remaining difficult passages. In fact, many difficulties will then of themselves have disappeared, just as do the difficulties of the infidel, when he is willing to accept the essential truth concerning God and His Christ.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Part Five

Evils of Arminianism

A Veil Over the Understanding

IN DISCUSSING the evils of Arminianism in this and the following three chapters, the term is used in its popular sense which restricts it to the single doctrine that "man may relapse from a state of grace"; that is, one who has been saved may be lost. That's the only point of that theological system this discussion is concerned with.

In this criticism of Arminianism, it is not the individuals themselves who reject eternal security, to a greater or lesser degree, who are being considered. With many of them, their rejection is largely a matter of terminology. With others it is a lack of knowledge, for which they themselves can hardly be held responsible because they have never been taught. The criticism here is directed at the teaching itself.

Furthermore, what is here said must not be construed as meaning that the good that has been accomplished by sincere and consecrated men and women has no value because of their views on this question. Nothing that follows must be taken to minimize in any way the work done for the Lord by many who do not hold the views presented here.

It can be granted freely that there have been Arminian Christians who have accomplished more for God's Kingdom than some Calvinistic Christians, without refuting the statements made in these four chapters. The question is; what is the influence of the teaching that one who has been saved can be lost, upon those who are being taught?

Throughout the foregoing pages, references have been made to evils resulting from the Arminian teaching. In order that the full significance of these might be realized, even at the danger of repetition, these are brought together and additional ones are mentioned in this section.

The teaching that a person who has been saved can be lost casts a veil over the understanding in the reading of the great doctrinal letters. More than one person will testify that the Pauline [by Paul] letters could not be understood by them as

long as they did not accept the doctrine of eternal security. Why this is so can be made clear by a simple illustration.

BLEEDING THROUGH

Everyone familiar with painting knows how difficult it is to cover with some other color that which has been painted red. The red always, in the words of the painter, "bleeds through." Even the red in brown paint will bleed through and change any color that is painted over it. So also is it with the teaching that one who has been saved can be lost. To illustrate: There are many who say that they believe that a person is saved by grace. But what do they mean? Certainly it is something vastly different than explained in chapter 6. To them, to be saved by grace means to have all sins committed up to that moment, forgiven. The saved one is placed in a position so that if he maintains the proper conduct (whatever that might be), he will receive eternal life when the earthly life's journey is ended. They do not put it that clearly, but that is a perfectly fair statement of their position. The requirements to maintain the state of grace vary. One man said most emphatically, "One is saved by grace, but one must keep the Sabbath." With others the "musts" are quite different, but it is exactly the same principle. The saved one must do something, be it this or that, or he will be lost.

This notion that a saved person can be lost, bleeds through the statement: "Therefore he [Jesus] is able to save completely [or forever] those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:25) and makes this passage mean that Christ is able to save from the lowest depths of sin [KJV for "completely" is "to the uttermost"]. The beautiful shade of meaning intended in this verse is the continuing salvation because, "he always lives." God's color scheme is therefore entirely destroyed.

One man who for years had listened to Arminian preaching discovered that man is not justified by the works of the law. But instead of seeing that it was by grace alone through faith, he came to the conclusion that the one who has been saved by grace is justified by the works of faith which he does. This was nothing but the "bleeding through" of the notion that a Christian would be lost if he did not maintain good works.

And so all of the doctrines of grace are bled through so much that they lost their beautiful color that God has given them.

There is a veil over the understanding so that the doctrines of grace, as revealed in Paul's writings, are not understood. They cannot be understood until the veil is

removed. But when it has been removed, what a glorious splendor these doctrines shine!

CANNOT BELIEVE

But the evil goes even further than to hinder the understanding: it even becomes impossible to believe. In chapter 10 was the story of someone who, on being told that eternal life is a present possession of every believer, said: "I can't believe that we now have eternal life, for that would be eternal security and I won't believe that." It is sadly true that rejection of the doctrine of eternal security actually makes it impossible for some to believe the doctrines of grace.

CAUSES CONFUSED TEACHING

The interpretation of the Bible from the Arminian viewpoint leads to confusion rather than clarity. By interpreting warnings against the loss of rewards as meaning the possible loss of eternal life, the two entirely separate subjects of eternal life and rewards are sadly confused. In the same way, what God's word teaches about those who are mere professors of Christianity is confused as applying to true believers. By applying Old Testament teachings and passages of a purely legal nature to saved persons of this era, law and grace become hopelessly mixed in the thinking of vast numbers of Christians. As Paul place much emphasis on the fact that believers are "not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14), this confused teaching is decidedly harmful.

People ask, "Why is the Bible written in such a way that it is so hard to understand?" The difficulty is not with the Bible, but with much teaching that causes the Bible to seem to be confused. The mistaken idea that man must do something meritorious to get into heaven, which is inherent in the Arminian teaching, is responsible for many of the difficulties which are a hindrance to a clear understanding of the Bible.

INCONSISTENT POSITIONS

Those who reject eternal security often place themselves in inconsistent positions.

A minister who, to a considerable extent, in his public utterances has denounced eternal security, made the following statement in a sermon: "God saved me and God keeps me. I don't know which is the more important." By considering God's keeping work equal to his saving work, he either admitted his own eternal security or otherwise he questioned his own salvation. It is reasonable to assume

that he did not question his own salvation. If so, then he contradicted all his attacks on eternal security.

It is not uncommon for an unsaved person who is being begged to "become saved" to answer, "I would like to be a Christian but I feel I cannot hold out." To this many an Arminian has replied, "God will keep you." Honestly, do they really mean that? If so, how then can they deny eternal security? To press this matter just a little further, why does the unsaved man make such a statement as he does? There is just one reason for it - the Arminian teaching that one who has been saved can be lost. The teaching of those who are begging him to become saved has created a state of mind in the unsaved which hinders the acceptance of the gospel.

It is true that many who reject the doctrine of eternal security are absolutely certain of their own eternal state. they are certain that they will not be lost. How inconsistent! has God made a special provision for them? Has the blood of Christ greater effectiveness for them than for others? Or does Christ, the Advocate, plead their case better than that of someone else? Possibly they have a stronger character than the weaker brother who might be lost because he is addicted to alcohol or some other habit? Maybe that's the thought unconsciously lurking in their minds. But then salvation would be of works, and God says it is not.

If it is possible for anyone to become lost, the same possibility exists for every saved person. To feel secure as to yourself, and by your teaching rob others of their assurance is worse than being inconsistent.

Thus the Arminian teaching that someone who has been saved can be lost, casts a veil over the doctrines of grace so that they cannot be fully understood; in fact at times cannot be believed. It also causes a confused presentation of the gospel of the grace of God and often places its adherents in inconsistent positions. If this were all that could be said against this doctrine, it would be enough to condemn it, but there is more.

CHAPTER THIRTY

It Causes Spiritual Depression

IF THE TRUMPET does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?" (First Corinthians 14:8). If this challenge is true, and it is, then what effect will the uncertain Arminian message that is both yea and nay have upon those to whom it is given? What type of Christian life can be expected from it?

The very possibility of being lost causes uncertainty as to eternity.

The basic cause of the unprecedented economic depression of the last few years is lack of confidence, or uncertainty as to the future. Men do not invest money in enterprises from which returns are questionable. So also in spiritual matters uncertainty causes a depression in the level of Christian living.

IT ROBS BELIEVERS OF ASSURANCE

This uncertainty as to eternity first of all robs the believer of his assurance. There seems to be those who go through life without ever a moment of enjoyment of the anticipated glory that lies ahead. This is so because they are not certain that they will ever reach that glory. With others, the periods of doubt and questioning are broken by flashes of hope and joy at special occasions.

The thought of the Lord's return, instead of being a blessed hope that brings you joy and peace, becomes the cause of fear and trembling that you might be left.

With some there seem to be times in their lives, especially during periods of revival, when there is no question whatsoever about their security. The promises of God are accepted without reservation. But when the enthusiasm and emotions of the revival are over and temptations come, when mistakes have been made, then the assurance is gone. There is nothing left to carry them through the times of testing.

SELF-CENTERED INSTEAD OF CHRIST-CENTERED

When Christians are told that they might be lost, it is often as a warning to desist from something they are doing, or to do that which is being neglected. That type of preaching centers the believer's thoughts upon himself. He begins to look into his life and compares it with the lives of others. He sees his failures and checks them with what he has wrongly been told is God's requirement for entrance into glory. The more honest he is, the more despondent he becomes, and it doesn't take long before he dares not say that he is saved. This is not theory. It has been the sad experience of altogether too many young people within churches condoning the Arminian doctrine.

All of the believer's hope for eternity is centered in the perfection of Christ and in his finished work. But whatever might be said of that fact is largely lost by the repeated warnings that one might be lost.

Assurance, which is greatly lacking in many groups, is indispensable to a consistent, happy and fruitful Christian life.

FEAR AS DYNAMIC FOR GODLY LIFE

One who for years has attended a church that hold the Arminian view, once said, "It seems that our preachers think that they must frighten us into being good." That man struck at the very heart of one of the great evils of Arminian teaching. To threaten Christians with the possibility of their being lost in order to arouse them from spiritual lethargy is directly opposite to Paul's - "Christ's love compels us."

There is a real place for the fear of God in the life of a Christian, but that is filial [befitting a son or daughter] fear and not that servile fear which results from threats of condemnation.

Servile fear of God leads to attempts at self-justification. And so the attempt to arouse from spiritual lethargy by the principle of fear leads to a struggle to accomplish by one's own meritorious acts that which Christ has already done.

Fear tears down, it destroys what already exists. It sends no man into battle. It is a hindrance, not a help. And it has no place in the Christian life: "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of son ship [or 'adoption']. And by him we cry, "Abba [Daddy], Father" (Romans 8:15). "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity ['fear' KJV], but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline" (Second Timothy 1:7).

Love, not fear, is the true motive of the Christian life. These two are contrary to each other. "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love" (First John 4:18).

How terrible it is then to teach the possible loss of eternal life and instill fear in the lives of believers. It causes untold torment and keeps people from becoming perfect in love.

DESTROYS REST THAT COMES FROM TRUST IN GOD

No Christian who is in fear of being lost can rest in the promises of God. There is a constant struggling in self-effort to keep oneself saved. Such cannot realize the meaning of Hebrews 4:10, "For anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his."

WEAKENS FAITH

As has previously been pointed out (see chapter 26, final page), it is through lack of faith that the Christian fails to enter into rest. Lack of faith also hinders and even interferes with the Lord's work. Therefore that which weakens or destroys faith is clearly a hindrance to the furtherance of the Kingdom of God.

To magnify the object of a person's faith is to increase his faith in that object, but to detract from the value of such an object is to lessen faith in it. Therefore, to magnify the work of the Triune [Threefold] God in salvation, strengthens the believer's faith; but to minimize it weakens his faith. To teach that one who has been saved through the operation of the grace of God can be lost, is to minimize his work. either God is not able to finish what he has begun, as is implied in the argument of the free moral agency of man, or he does not hold himself responsible to do so. Whatever view one might wish to take, it certainly discounts God. He is either not omnipotent, or he ceases to love and exercise grace. Thus God becomes finite instead of infinite. The one who teaches eternal security points to an omnipotent God who loves with an everlasting love, and whose grace is sovereign. Those who reject eternal security may contend that they believe in an infinite God, but their arguments do not bear this out. See the next chapter for more on this subject. Thus, by limiting God, the Arminian position weakens the faith of the believer.

But that is not all. Only as an object attracts attention can it inspire faith. By constantly speaking of the believer's condition, whether it be the sufficiency of his faith or his conduct, attention is centered in the believer instead of in God. Faith is thereby still further weakened. Certainly the Arminian teaching does not help to strengthen faith in God and his Son and the finished work on Calvary.

IT CAUSES CARELESS CHRISTIAN LIVING

In the third section of this book, it was shown that the denial of the truth of eternal security discounts the mercies of God on which he bases his appeal for a godly life and therefore the Arminian position causes carelessness in Christian living. But that is not all that can be said to place responsibility for low Christian standards of life upon those who contend for that position.

There is a teaching that seems to go hand in hand with the denial of eternal security., This can be stated as follows: our God is gracious and long-suffering and will overlook our failures and shortcomings. Let the reader judge for himself. Which is the most conducive to careless Christian living: this teaching that small

sins are overlooked by God, or the teaching on which eternal security rests, that Christ suffered and died on Calvary's cross as a propitiation [sacrifice of atonement] for even the smallest sin committed by a believer?

It is here charged then that Arminianism by teaching uncertainty as to eternity causes spiritual depression. It robs believers of assurance; tends to make Christians self-centered instead of Christ-centered. It makes fear the dynamic of godly life instead of love. It destroys the rest and peace that come from trusting in the finished work of Christ. It weakens faith and is conducive to careless Christian living.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Denies the Infiniteness of the Word, Work and Nature of God

HE [GOD] alone is my rock and my salvation" (Psalms 62:2). The one who accepts this statement at its face value, but Arminianism does not. It teaches: "Salvation is by God and myself." This is the fundamental difference between the two positions. Many a person who rejects the truth of eternal security will deny this statement, but the arguments that are presented to support the Arminian position conclusively prove that this is true.

No argument has yet been offered to prove that a saved person can be lost, which is not based on some human element. It is said, man can will to go away from God; man can cease to believe; man can willfully sin and be lost; if a saved man does not confess his sins, he is lost; man must remain in Christ; et cetera. What are these but human increments which are added in order to guarantee salvation? Surely it is nothing other than, "Salvation is by God and man."

To insist on this human increment in order to remain saved, is to teach that God cannot save without the assistance of man. Thus God is limited in relation to man's salvation. Salvation, as far as has been revealed to man, is the greatest work that God has undertaken. If he is limited in this, his work is not infinite, nor is he himself infinite.

The purpose of this chapter is to show that the Arminian position denies that God is infinite. Arminian will deny that this is so, but the proof of the statement lies in comparing their arguments with God's word.

GOD'S WORD MADE FINITE

If the possibility of a single saved person being lost is granted, then the following statements and others from God's word, as quoted in chapter 4, are not absolute; they have only a relative meaning and therefore they are finite. "All that the Father gives me will come to me" (John 6:37). "I give them [my sheep] eternal life, and they shall never perish" (John 10:28). "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). "The Lord will deliver me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom" (Second Timothy 4:18). These statements are all made concerning those who are saved. Everyone of them is being limited by the human (finite) interpretations of the Arminian teachings and thus is made to partake of a finite nature.

GOD'S WORK IS MADE FINITE

In the doctrines of the grace of God, that which he has accomplished through Christ on behalf of every saved person is revealed. If the work that God has done is infinite, then there can be no failure; but if there is possibility of failure, then the work cannot be infinite. To contend that one who has been saved can be lost, is to say that there is possibility of failure, and this in turn, is nothing less than to deny the absolute and infinite nature of God's work in saving man.

This may be seen more clearly by considering separately some of the things God has done.

In the first place, before God can work on the principle of grace, it is necessary that there be no merit in man. There can be no place whatsoever for human boasting. This is made clear in God's word. It is "not by works, so that no-one can boast" (Ephesians 2:9). And again, "Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith" (Romans 3:27). God's program excludes all human boasting. No-one may boast in his presence (First Corinthians 1:29).

But the Arminian view, by insisting on introducing a human element into man's salvation, denies this position of absolute worthlessness on the part of man. With them there is something in man that has value, and consequently there is human boasting. Thus God's fundamental requirement to act in grace is not absolute. If that is granted, it is impossible for God's work to be infinite; because what he would then do is just to add to what is already in man. However minute a particle of merit is conceded to be in man, it is sufficient to keep God's work of salvation from being infinite.

By denying the absolute depravity of man, the absoluteness of grace is also denied, for grace cannot operate when there is human merit. "And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. But if by works, then it is no longer grace, if it were, work would no longer be work" (Romans 11:6). Thus the grace of God by which man is saved becomes finite.

Again, the argument that man is a free moral agent and can go away from God limits grace and very definitely reduces the grace of God from being of an infinite nature to a finite thing.

The calling of God to sharing of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (Second Thessalonians 2:14) becomes a limited calling, if it was possible for someone who has been called to fall short of sharing in that glory. It too becomes finite instead of infinite.

The gifts of God - his Son, eternal life, righteousness and the Holy Spirit - are not gifts in the absolute sense of the word, if it is possible to lose them through the failure to comply with some requirement as the Armenians teach. According to man's finite thinking, things are called gifts which would never have been given had not something else previously been given. Man "exchanges" gifts with his fellow man. But with God a gift is so in an unqualified sense. To teach otherwise is to make God's gifts finite instead of infinite.

If one who has been saved by the substitutionary death of Christ, can be lost, then the death of Christ does not have unlimited value. There must be something that in some way neutralizes its value. Then the statement that he has appeared to "do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26) does not have infinite value for everyone who bases his hope of glory on that sacrifice.

Redemption is only finite if one who has been redeemed can again be placed in a position of condemnation under the law. Then also, the blood of Christ which is the redemption price does not have infinite value. The Arminian teaching thus denies the infinite value of the blood of Christ as a propitiation [sacrifice of atonement] for sin.

As justification is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24), it also loses its infinite character if redemption is not of an infinite nature.

The eternal life given through the new birth, the regeneration by the imperishable word of God, is not infinite if it can die. (See chapter 10.)

If one who has been saved and is of the new creation in Christ Jesus can be lost, then that creation is subject to death and cannot be infinite in its nature.

And finally the Arminian position does not allow absolute glory to God, for if the human element is recognized in salvation then not all the glory belongs to God. He cannot accept glory for that which he has not done.

The Arminian teaching is most inconsistent with that scene pictured in Revelation of infinite honor and glory being given to he "who sits on the throne" (Revelation 4:9-11 and 5:9-13).

Thus by insisting on a human element in salvation, Arminianism not only attacks the absoluteness of God's word, but also denies the infinite nature of grace in salvation.

THE INFINITE NATURE OF GOD IS QUESTIONED

But the implications from their arguments are even more serious if that is possible. These attack the very character and nature of God himself.

Jesus prayed, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me" (John 17:11 KJV). That this is on behalf of all believer is made perfectly clear by his words uttered later on in the same prayer: "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message" (verse 20). In this prayer, then, Jesus asks the Father to keep in his own name all who are saved through believing in him. If a single saved person becomes lost, this prayer is not fully answered. Therefore the Arminian, by saying that some are lost, says that the Father does not completely answer the prayer of the Son. Such a condition would demand either that the Father is unable to answer it or that the Son has not met the requirements of the Father in order to receive an answer. If the Father cannot answer, he is not omnipotent and consequently he is not infinite. If the Son has not met some condition necessary to receive answer to his prayer, then he is not fully in the will of the Father. If not fully in the will of the Father, he is not absolutely righteous and consequently not infinite.

Thus the very nature of the Godhead is attacked by the argument that someone who has been saved can be lost. Both his righteousness and his omnipotence are questioned, and either one or the other is denied.

The teaching mentioned in the preceding chapter, that god is gracious and long-suffering and will overlook our failures and shortcomings, denies the absolute righteousness and justice of God. Called by their Biblical name, shortcomings and

failures are sins. god's holy law demands the death penalty for sin. For God to overlook a single sin would be for him to compromise his own righteousness and justice. To contend that there is one compromise is to say that he is finite. Thus God cannot be infinite in his righteousness and justice and do as so many Armenians teach that he does.

In chapter 12, point 1, it was shown that the omniscience of God is called into question by rejecting the truth of eternal security. Thus, in still another of his attributes, is the infiniteness of God questioned.

It has been shown (chapter 15) that god loves those who are his own with an everlasting love. If one who has become his very own should by sinning be lost, then the eternal love would cease and be replaced by wrath. Then God's love could be limited by an act of finite man and would not be infinite.

Thus the infinite nature of God, which shows he is God, is denied. This is all done by adding the human increment as necessary to that salvation, which God claims is entirely for himself.

It must be apparent from this, that there is no room even for the position: "It is not probable that a saved person will be lost, but there is a possibility." If a single person can be lost, then God in all of these attributes that have been mentioned is not infinite - there is some limitation. If it were just one out of a billion it would be sufficient to destroy the infinite nature of God's work in saving men.

There are many who contend for the infinite nature of God, of his works and of his word, who teach that a saved person can be lost. This, however, does not alter the claim that is made here, that the teaching that a saved person can be lost attacks the very nature of God, of his works and of his word.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Arminianism and Modernism

IT HAS already been stated that not a single argument is offered against eternal security other than what is based on some human element as necessary to salvation. Often this is in so subtle a manner and to such a degree that it is not recognized. None the less the human element is present. The arguments for eternal security are based on the sufficiency of God and his work to the exclusion of every particle of the human element. The difference is of tremendous importance, for the Arminian arguments establish the principle that man must

contribute to his salvation from the penalty of sin. The gulf between these two is nothing less than the gulf that exists between the divine and the human, the infinite and the finite.

After the principle has one been established, it is only a matter of degrees to add more and more of the human, a little at a time, and require less and less of the divine. By this process Modernism is soon reached. The next step is Humanism, which rules God out entirely - man is sufficient in himself, and this culminates in the Antichrist who sets himself up as God.

An illustration from the economic life of this country of ours is illuminating in this connection.

About twenty years ago an amendment to the Constitution of the United States was passed, giving the federal government power to levy taxes in incomes. A great struggle had been waged for and against this for years and years; but finally the amendment passed because, as has been reported, it was agreed that the tax should be a very small per cent of the income. Nevertheless the principle became established. Since then the matter income tax has been one of degrees. At first only one per cent, then two, and gradually more and more until at present (1936) on some incomes, it is sixty-three per cent. Even higher rates have been suggested and will undoubtedly come. The all important step in bringing about an income tax which can take almost all that a man earns over a given amount was the establishment of the principle under which the first extremely low rate was assessed.

A more specific presentation will be helpful. Modernism denies the miraculous in the Bible. It tries to explain all miracles on a natural basis. After this has been done, it is said that this does not take away from the value of the Bible but improves it, because it is easier to understand. In short, the Bible is lowered to the human, finite plane. The greatest miracle of all recorded in the Bible is the salvation of man - taken from the position of disobedience and rebellion against God and raised not to his original state, but far higher, into the very image of the Son of God and made to the fullness of Him. To introduce a human element as necessary in this miracle and thereby limit the supernatural in the greatest of miracles, is to limit the supernatural in all that is miraculous. It is just the beginning of Modernism which denies all that is miraculous.

Modernism accepts part of the Bible as truth, but rejects whatever its human reasoning can not explain. The stories of Genesis are nothing but myths, and legend and figurative language. The great prophecies of Daniel and others are said to be history, written after the events had taken place. The truths of the Bible

are changed to conform to the imaginations of human minds. Human reason is more important than divine revelation. but isn't this the same principle employed in the Arminian arguments? Jesus said "My sheep hear my voice and follow me." The Arminian

argument says: "My sheep hear my voice and if they follow me." Jesus said: "He that believes ... has eternal life." They say: "He that continues to believe receives eternal life as long as he continues to believe." Here also it is a matter of human reason opposed to God's clear revelation.

Modernism by questioning God's word undermines the foundation of man's faith in God. It causes men to doubt. Anyone who knows anything about university life knows of young men or women who have come back with their spiritual foundation seriously shaken if not gone. Arminianism causes Christian young people especially, but elders too, to doubt the promises of God. They too have their foundations sadly disturbed and their doubts have a blighting effect on their lives.

Modernism teaches a social gospel. follow the teachings of Jesus and do good. Live up to the golden rule. That is all that is necessary. It is purely a salvation by good works. Such teaching can never result from a strict adherence to the position that nothing whatsoever in man can contribute to his salvation as held by those who accept eternal security. On the other hand it is but the natural result of the Arminian teachings that unless man does this or does not do that, he will be lost. The principle in Arminianism and Modernism is exactly the same. They differ only in degrees.

There is another similarity in these two, closely related to that of salvation by works. Modernism says: "What is needed is practical Christianity and not doctrinal teaching." Sad to say it is not uncommon to hear the voice of Arminianism complain: "What we need is greater emphasis on practical Christianity rather than doctrinal teaching." Furthermore, it can hardly be denied that relatively little clear doctrinal teaching comes from preachers who are doctrinally Arminian. This is only natural, for the denial of eternal security contradicts in greater or less measure every doctrine of grace. The clearest doctrinal teaching heard these days comes from the lips of those who hold and cherish the truth of the eternal security of the believer.

Thus again, Arminianism by confusing the meaning of the doctrines of grace and by neglecting the teaching of them has but started a tendency which Modernism finishes by rejecting entirely.

THE VALUE OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST

The focal point of this whole discussion is the value of the death of Christ. The doctrine of eternal security rests solidly on the absolute and unlimited value of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. It is sufficient as a propitiation for every sin committed during the entire life of the believer. Because of the infiniteness of this propitiatory [atoning] work, the believer has been eternally redeemed from the condemnation of the law and cannot be lost.

Arminianism limits the effectiveness of the blood. If a single "must" or "must not" is necessary to become saved or to remain saved, then the shed blood does not have infinite value for salvation of the one who believes. Thus the principle of a limited value of the blood is established, and as this principle is in the realm of the relative, the value given to the blood can be diminished until it reaches the vanishing point; as it does in Modernism, where it is taught that the blood of Jesus was of as great value in his veins as when it was shed on the cross. But there was no atonement in his blood until it was shed.

Arminianism limits the substitutionary death and thereby says that Christ died as a means of our salvation. "A means" signifies that there are also other means. This is in perfect accord with the teaching that one can be lost because of some human element.

The Modernist will also subscribe to the statement that the death of Christ is a means of salvation. to him it means that Christ in dying gave an example of supreme sacrifice for man to follow. to the Arminian "a means of salvation" means much more than that, but just how much it means one can hardly know. It all depends on what conditions are added to maintain one's salvation, be it the observance of the Sabbath and the Old Testament tithe, et cetera, or be it the matter of "holding out to the end." Both Modernists and Armenians can use this same term, because it ascribes only a relative value to the death of Christ.

How different is the value given to the death of Christ on which eternal security rests! That value is infinite, for it is taught that the shed blood of Christ is the only redemption price. It is the only means of being saved from the penalty of sin. That position can never be confused with Modernism, nor can it lead to it.

These are very grave charges. It would have been more agreeable, had this chapter been left unwritten, but the Arminian denial of eternal security is a subtle error that is boring into the very foundation on which the Church is being built, and it is needful that this be known.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

Conclusion An Appeal

THE CONSIDERATION of the theme "... shall never perish" would be incomplete without an earnest appeal for greater and clearer teaching and preaching of those facts and promises of God which produce assurance in the heart of the believer, and righteousness, godliness and steadfastness in the outward life.

A crying need of the church today is the simple teaching of the doctrines of the grace of God. This is needful both in order to reach the unsaved and that those who are saved might grow in the grace and knowledge of their Lord and Saviour.

When the representative of a firm offers the product of that firm for sale, he is very careful, if he is properly qualified, to show the prospective buyer all of the benefits that will accrue to him if he buys, and what will be lost if the goods are not purchased. He will explain all of the fine qualities of his merchandise and will not neglect to inform the buyer as to the dependability of his own firm to stand behind every article sold.

Is this what is done when salvation is offered? In most cases, no. One often wonders whether or not the unsaved know what it is all about.

Salvation is the greatest thing that any mortal has ever been privileged to offer to another mortal, and yet what salvation is is seldom explained. that which is being offered is a deliverance from the power of Satan; redemption from condemnation of the law (the penalty for all of one's own sins); justification, or a perfectly righteous standing in God's reckoning; a new eternal spiritual life; a citizenship in heaven; the Holy Spirit as a continually resident power in the life; the promise of eternal glory in the likeness of God's own Son; and, in addition, the absolute guarantee that God is fully responsible. What a proposition God's children and his ministers have to offer!

And in making a sale it is important that the consideration and terms be clearly explained, for these are a part of the sale. The consideration is "without money, and without price." It is all a gift of God in his own absolute meaning of that word. And the terms? They are an unconditional acknowledgement of one's own sinfulness and worthlessness and hopelessly lost condition. "Nothing in my hands I bring. Simply to Thy cross I cling."

One often wonders: what would be the result in evangelistic meetings of a consistent setting forth of these things, to the exclusion of all human emotional appeal and strategy? If the seller is sold on the proposition which he offers there must be results.

Is the lack of this what Jesus meant when he said: "The children of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light." (Luke 16:8)?

And the good salesman, after he has made a sale, keeps his customer "sold" on the house and the merchandise.

Isn't this also needed in the church? Don't those who have been saved need to be taught more and more the meaning of God's wondrous work in salvation, his power and faithfulness for the present, and his promises for the future? Only in this way will the saved person remain an enthusiastic "customer" of God.

The more a saved person is "sold" on the wonders of salvation and God's faithfulness, the more fervently will he sing with the psalmist, "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my fortress, I shall never be shaken" (Psalms 62:1, 2).

How much need there is for awakening from the lethargy of the present age! Here also the power to revive consists in what God has done, is doing and shall do, as revealed in the doctrines of the grace of God. To urge more practical Christian living without offering as a condition, the doctrines of the grace of God, is to follow Satan's methods of reversing the order of God's plan. God says, "I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies" (Romans 12:1). Is that the method being used to revive spiritual life in churches? Is the mercy of God (the same doctrines of grace that bring salvation) clearly taught as a basis for the appeal? If not, why not? It is God's plan.

A few years ago, three men were emerging from a church where they had listened to a simple and effective explanation of Ephesians 2:14-18, by an internationally known Bible teacher. At the door, one man said: "I agree with every word that was said; but our people would not be satisfied with such a simple message."

It was the simplicity of the message that made it effective. If it was good enough for that great Bible teacher to present his message in simple terms, why isn't it good practice for all preachers and teachers to do so? It is the teaching of God's word [message] in the simplest way possible that many are longing for these days. It is God's word (not man's preaching) of which he says: "It will not return

to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).