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# CHRISTIAN SECURITY

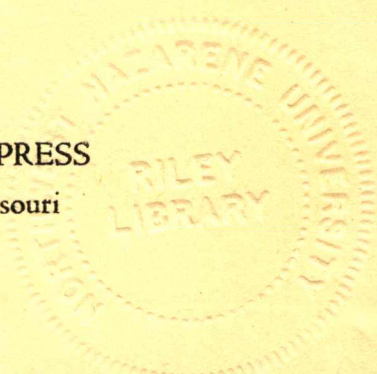
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by

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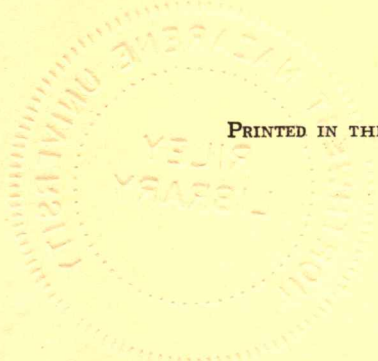
The ABC's of Holiness

The ABC's of Stewardship

The ABC's of Christian Doctrine

The ABC's of Christian Living

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## FOREWORD

The message of this booklet, before revision, was printed in a booklet entitled *The Meaning of Christian Security*. It has been out of print for several years, and the author has had numerous requests to have it reprinted and brought back into circulation. The response to this booklet, in the circulation of many thousands of copies, has encouraged the author to present it in this revised form. The publishers accepted without hesitancy the suggestion that it be revised and printed again.

The last chapter, "God's Verily's and God's If's," has been added at the request of many friends who had the opportunity of reading the message in manuscript form. The inclusion of this chapter brings a duplication of some of the scripture references used in the earlier message of the book, but it is hoped that these are presented in such a form as to make the message of the book more convincing.

We send the message on its way with the prayer that God will help the readers to have a better understanding of the scriptural message of Christian security, and that some who may become disturbed in their minds by the false teachings of the "eternal security" theory will be saved from being overtaken with this most dangerous and unscriptural doctrine.

D. SHELBY CORLETT

## CHAPTER I

# Security, a Divine Provision

All scriptural statements about the work of God in salvation indicate its permanency and its ultimate victory. Redemption was no afterthought in the mind of God, not some expediency to meet an unforeseen emergency. He planned it before the foundation of the world as a permanent part of His program (I Peter 1:20; Rev. 13:8). His purpose in Christ is an eternal purpose. The redemption provided by His Son is a permanent and finished work.

The thought of permanency and security runs all through the work of God in providing salvation for man. In giving His Son, a gift of infinite love, there is an act that made an eternal change in God's relation to man, when in the Incarnation He "was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). This act also opened the way for a permanent change in man's relation to God, a change made through man's belief in and acceptance of Christ as Saviour (John 3:16).

In the work of Jesus in redemption He provided something permanent and eternal. "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). This is a complete and finished redemption: complete in that all men are included in its scope and in that all sin was judged and atoned for through the death of Jesus; finished in that all was done by Christ that can be done to provide salvation for every man, woman, and child of all the human race. There never will be another Calvary, for Christ when He died provided redemption for all.

God's work with man as a result of the Incarnation and Atonement is spoken of in terms that suggest permanency. Through this God has established an everlasting covenant with man (Heb. 13:20), a covenant sealed with an unending priesthood (Heb. 9:23-28), a covenant which is based upon a radical change within the persons accepting it, bringing them into a definite spiritual relation with God (Heb. 8:10, 11).

A further phase of His work is that of establishing a Kingdom, and a kingdom is not a temporary affair. His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). It is spiritual (Rom. 14:17); man enters this Kingdom through a spiritual birth (John 3:5). It is an everlasting Kingdom (II Peter 1:11). Closely related to the thought of His kingdom is that of establishing His Church, and the thought of a church suggests something permanent. In the midst of fierce opposition from "the gates of hell," He is building His Church (Matt. 16:18). It is being established on a firm foundation; "the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20). It is a spiritual body formed by the Holy Spirit of all who believe in Christ unto salvation (I Cor. 12:13, 27).

Everything in God's work of redemption carries the thought of permanency and security. It is as enduring as God himself.

On the other hand, the work done by God within the hearts of people in salvation is also something real and abiding. All of the terms used in the Scriptures relative to the work of salvation in man suggest a permanent relationship with God. Salvation is not an experiment; it is a vital experience of God within the heart of man effecting a mighty and permanent change.

In the work of salvation Christ has entered upon the formation of a new race, a race composed of persons

who are saved by the grace of God (Rom. 5:12-21). These people of the new race are redeemed by His blood; their sins are forgiven; they are made new creatures in Christ; they are partakers of His Spirit; and they become His servants here, serving in loyal obedience all through their lives. All of this suggests something permanent in their relationship with Christ, a race of redeemed people living eternally.

Children of God is another term used to designate the inner change wrought by grace, the relationship sustained and the outward conduct of those who are saved. This change is accomplished by a definite choice by the person who believes in or accepts Christ as Saviour—to “as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born . . . of God” (John 1:12, 13); and by a work of God’s Spirit through which the believing person is “born of the Spirit” (John 3:5) and adopted into God’s family (Romans 8:15, 16). The thought of being made children of God through spiritual birth and adoption into His family speaks of a permanent relationship. Other terms, such as eternal life, temples of God, My friends, salvation, redemption, also suggest the thought of a relationship and work that are substantial and continuous.

Other statements make clear the plan of God for a continued relationship with Him through His cleansing and keeping power. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved [kept] blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (I Thess. 5:23, 24); and that “he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God” (I Thess. 3:13). His keeping power is expressed thus: He “is able to keep you from falling” (Jude 24); and, we “are kept by the power of God

through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:5). All of these scriptures suggest continuation and permanency.

The relation of the believer to God is a conscious reality, not a mere mental attitude. God's children know Him, have become personally acquainted with Him in spiritual experience, live in blessed fellowship with Him, grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him. His Spirit dwells in them, revealing Christ to them, filling them, empowering them, giving them His victory and leadership. It is a life in glorious relationship with God, continuous and increasing in its blessedness unto eternal life.

Thus we see that everything about salvation, on God's side and also on man's, has about it the thought of permanency and security. Salvation is personal, real, and eternal. Anything that might interrupt this spiritual relationship is abnormal and sinful.

There are statements of scriptures warning us against our severing of this relationship, against our backsliding, against eternal loss; but these by no means intimate that backsliding is to be the rule in the Christian life; backsliding is always the exception. It should be a very rare exception for a child of God, especially one who has been sanctified wholly, to sever his relation with God or to backslide. It is possible; but with the permanency of God's provision in redemption, with His power to keep, and with the definiteness of our surrender to and acceptance of Christ as Saviour and Lord, backsliding is the exception, and hence God warns against it.

Security is provided by Christ. We enjoy this security in Him as we walk with Him in faith, as we live our lives in the flesh (the human nature) by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us (Gal. 2:20). Such faith is the result of our delib-



erate choice to accept Christ as Saviour. It continues in obedience, in trust, in full abandonment to Him, "with a commensurate activity of the will in the direction of that abandonment." It is a vital security, not a mechanical, dead, unalterable something. It is a security dependent upon our choice of, our love for, and loyalty to God; and hence it brings true spiritual and moral content to our lives. We are secure in Him because we love, trust, and obey Him!

## CHAPTER II

# What Is Eternal Life?

Eternal life is so interwoven with the thought of Christian security that to think of one is to think of the other. It is emphasized as the gift of God to all who believe in Christ. It marks the great distinction between the saved and the unsaved—the saved, the Christians, have eternal life; the unbelievers have not.

Of the numerous scriptural statements concerning this gift of God we quote but a few: "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:15). "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10:28). "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

What is eternal life? Jesus answered this partially when He said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). The import of that word know is experience that comes by possession or acquaintance. Hence, to know God means to experience Him in the personal possession of His life and Spirit, to become acquainted with Him through faith in Christ. It is therefore a quality of life which belongs to God and which becomes our possession through a personal experience of God, through knowing God by faith.

The word eternal in the truest sense refers to God alone, for it means without beginning or ending; eternal life is "the life of the ages" as distinguished from the life which is temporal. "Eternal life is far more than unending life, because of what it is itself. It is much

more than life that continues. It is life that contains, that is, life which in itself belongs to the ages, breathes their atmosphere, enters into their realizations. It is full-orbed life."—*Morgan*. "Do not bring eternal life down to the narrow and inadequate conception of unending existence. It involves that, but it means a great deal more. It means life of a sort as is worth calling life, which is life in union with God, and therefore full of blessedness, full of purity, full of satisfaction, full of desire and aspiration, and all these with the stamp of unendingness deeply impressed upon them. . . . Union with Christ by faith is the condition of eternal life."—*Maclaren*.

Eternal life is not something confined to hereafter; it is a full life, a fullness of spiritual life here. Such statements of Jesus as, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10), indicate a free, full, abundant life enjoyed by those who are living in a spiritual union with Christ. Spiritual life here is the quality of life which God's children shall enjoy in its perfection in His eternal kingdom.

Eternal life and immortality are not the same. Man as we know him belongs to two spheres of life: because he is physical he is mortal; because he is soul he is immortal. "We maintain that the unconditional destiny of all men is immortality; but we at the same time teach that mankind are saved only conditionally by being born again and made holy. . . . Immortality comes of life itself; it is the attribute which man cannot lose. Blessedness is on the contrary an attribute or destiny to be accomplished and fulfilled—an immortality rich in its contents, divinely replenished, in other words eternal life; . . . a moral and religious destiny obtained only by regeneration and sanctification, by progressive moral and religious endeavors."—*Martensen*. Eternal

life, then, is a quality of life enriching our earthly life because of our union with Christ by faith, and giving rich content to immortality because of the heavenly perfection and unending duration of our relation with God. It is the gift of God to the believer. It is not his unconditional and nonforfeitable possession, as is immortality. Eternal life is dependent upon a continued union with Christ, the Giver of all life.

Jesus revealed the conditions for receiving and retaining eternal life when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth [that is, hears now and continues to hear] my word, and believeth [that is, believes now and continues to believe] on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). The condition for receiving eternal life is to "hear" and "believe"—this brings a knowledge of God in personal salvation, and the believer is "passed from death unto life." The condition for retaining eternal life, this knowledge of God, is continued "hearing" and "believing." When a person fails to hear, whatever may be the cause of this failure, when he does not continue as a believer, he breaks his relationship with God, he forfeits everlasting life, and he dies spiritually.

Note another statement of Jesus: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27, 28). This blessed scripture is a statement emphasizing the power of God to keep and His constancy toward His sheep. In a preceding verse Jesus states the condition for becoming sheep. Certain Jews believed not, and because of this unbelief they were not His sheep. Others believed and by believing they became His sheep; therefore He knows them, they

follow Him, they have eternal life, they shall never perish, no man can pluck them out of His Father's hand.

What is this believing which makes one a sheep? It is a personal act, an attitude of heart, an acceptance of Christ as Saviour. There may be a change in this act or attitude; a person may by another choice become an unbeliever, may deny Christ. What happens then? He loses his relation as a sheep; he forfeits eternal life; he does what no other man or power could do—he takes himself out of the Father's hand. But let us note further that this is a collective statement. The word "sheep" is plural, as are also the pronouns used, "them," "they." If one sheep ceases to continue in believing, if he leaps from the Father's hand and forfeits His protection and power, eternal life remains with the group, the believers have everlasting life. God's power, His constancy remain unchanged; the believing sheep continue to enjoy the glorious privileges and blessings promised the sheep, but the unbeliever forfeits all of this.

Eternal life is a quality of life, the life of the ages. By believing in God we may live in its enjoyment and blessedness all the days of our lives; we may live in the consciousness of the protection of the Shepherd over the sheep, and in the end enjoy immortality made perfect in eternal life. Eternal life is a gift of God to the believer; it is the essence of our Christian security.

## CHAPTER III

# Security, a Vital Relationship

Security in Christ is something living and conscious, a vital relationship. The different figures used in Scripture to designate the relation of the Christian to Christ all emphasize this truth. There is the figure of the branch in the vine, a living relationship; eternal life, a quality of life, the life of the ages, a gift of God to those who are by believing brought into spiritual union with Him.

Faith or believing is the secret of this vital relationship and of Christian security. Faith is always something living and real, a very active element in the Christian life. It is the medium of contact with God, the only channel for receiving God's blessings, and the active means by which all spiritual life is maintained and nurtured. "The just shall live by faith" (Heb. 10:38)—without faith, the just die.

Faith is more than a mere mental assent to truth. There is no more moral saving benefit in a mere mental acceptance of the truth that Jesus is the Son of God than in the mental acceptance of some scientific truth. Faith is the going out of the whole inner life toward God. We do not believe in Him unless we act on it, unless we give the whole life to Him. To believe in God is a definite attitude of the heart, a surrender, a decision, an acceptance, something active and continuous, bringing a state of confidence and trust in Him.

As an active principle of life faith enables us to maintain a vital relation to God, and such a relationship

issues in righteousness. It is the branch abiding in the Vine, bearing the fruit of the Vine. "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, . . . . And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him" (I John 3:23, 24). The practical results of abiding by faith in Christ are obedience, love, and righteousness. "Whosoever doeth [habitually practices] not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (I John 3:10). When righteousness is not the habitual practice of a life, no matter how much faith and spiritual life there may have been at a previous time, faith is gone, the relationship with God is broken, security is forfeited.

Grace is prominently mentioned as the medium of establishing a vital relation with God. We are saved by grace, through faith (Eph. 2:8). Grace becomes an active principle within the heart of the believer, not an outward something simply imputed to him; grace *reigns* "through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21). Grace in the heart issues in righteousness in conduct. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11, 12). If a Christian fails to live according to the teachings of grace, if he lives in unrighteousness, he breaks his vital relationship with God and forfeits grace. If he thoughtlessly or otherwise should turn from his confidence in Christ to a dependence upon purely legal righteousness, he falls from grace (Gal. 5:4). Christian security rests upon maintaining a vital relationship with Christ through His grace reigning in righteousness.

The analogy of the branch in the vine pictures Christian security in a vital relationship. This relation-

ship is maintained by two things: first, by fruit bearing, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away"; and second, by abiding in Christ, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered . . . cast . . . into the fire, and . . . burned" (John 15:2, 6). Through carelessness or by a deliberate act a person may cease to abide in the Vine; he thus severs his relation to Christ and forfeits his security. Through negligence and carelessness a person may fail to bear fruit, and because of fruitlessness be taken from the Vine. The relationship is maintained by abiding; and abiding in Christ issues in an active prayer life, in continuing in Christ's love, in keeping His commandments, and in loving one another (John 15:6-12). To become negligent in these practical issues of the Christian life will eventually lead to a failure to abide in Him, a broken relationship, a loss of security.

Eternal life, so closely associated with our thought of security, is something vital and real in spiritual relationship with God. It is real only as the relationship is maintained. "The fellowship with the Father and the Son in which eternal life consists, is maintained by walking in the light." Eternal life is to know God (John 17:3), and this knowing God is contingent upon maintaining a vital relationship through obedience to Him. "And hereby we do know that we know him [that is, have eternal life], if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him [that is, says he has eternal life], and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:3, 4). Paul said that eternal life is dependent upon continued well-doing (Rom. 2:7). Jesus is declared to be the Author of eternal life to all that obey Him (Heb. 5:9). Jude says, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (v. 21). Our security, eternal life, is dependent upon our



maintaining a vital relationship with God through walking in faith, obedience, and righteousness.

Christian sonship is a term also used relative to our relation to God, and this suggests something living or vital. We become sons of God through believing on Him, through the work of the Holy Spirit in the new birth and adoption. Sonship issues in likeness to the Heavenly Father, in Christlikeness. A child of God is not of the world; he doeth or practices righteousness; he does not commit or practice sin; he loves the brethren (I John 3:1, 7, 9, 14). The willful and habitual practice of sin or unrighteousness, the hatred of a brother and a love for the world (I John 2:15) mean the forfeiture of Christian sonship; the individual becomes dead in his sins and has forgotten that he has been purged from his old sins (I Peter 1:9). He is not a sinning child of God; he is not a disobedient son; he is dead—he is the “late” son of God, as we commonly speak of dead folks—his relationship with God is broken and his security forfeited.

Christian security rests on a continued or a vital relationship with God. A beautiful analogy of this relationship is that of the marriage state, and this figure is used in Scripture. Where two married people live in true devotion and loyalty to each other, while the possibility of separation exists always, it is not probable. Such a step never enters their minds; it is abhorrent to their thinking. Their hearts are united in love; life to them is the beautiful and satisfying development of this heart union. Not once is there any thought, no worry about breaking the relationship. They do not live in fear of losing each other; their relationship is much too precious to be broken by one or the other.

On one occasion the writer was approached by an exponent of “eternal security” teaching in this manner.

"Do you know that you are saved now by the grace of God?"

"Yes, I do," was the confident reply.

"Do you believe that you could backslide, break your relationship with God, and be eternally lost?"

"Yes, I believe it is possible, although I have not the slightest idea of doing so."

"I have something better than that," he said, "for I have a position in Christ which cannot be forfeited. I cannot break my relationship with Him and be eternally lost no matter what I do. If I believed as you do I would be the most miserable man in the world and would be in constant fear lest I would be lost. Do you not feel worried all of the time about your eternal salvation?"

"Tell me," I inquired, "are you a married man?"

"Yes, I am. I have been married for a number of years."

"Is your wife with you at present?"

"Oh, no! She is at our home back in an Eastern city."

"Are you not worried all of the time lest your wife should leave you? She is two thousand miles away and it is entirely possible that she could be unfaithful to you in your absence. It seems to me that you should be worried all of the time about whether or not she is true to you."

At this he became quite indignant, and replied: "I'd have you know, Sir, that my wife and I are deeply in love with each other. We write to each other every day. There is never the slightest doubt in my mind about her faithfulness to me or of my faithfulness to her. We are pledged to each other for life, and on this basis of devotion and love we live in faithfulness and confidence until we are separated by death."

"Well," I declared, "that is just the kind of security I have in my Lord. I have given my whole life to Him. I love Him with all of my heart. He has accepted me in Christ and I have confidence in Him that He will never leave me nor forsake me. I have not the slightest worry—no more than you have about the faithfulness of your wife—about being kept by His power until I see His face in my eternal home. By the grace of God I am saved, and by His grace I live in confidence and assurance in His keeping power, not in any fear or worry about being lost. I am His and He is mine."

The child of God who is devoted to Him, who gives loving loyalty to Him, desires not a mechanical, unbreakable, loveless security; he wants only the ties of love to bind his heart to Christ. He rests secure in the unchanging love of Christ; and while it is true that he may break this glorious relationship with Christ, he would rather die than to break it. There is no thought in his mind of ever doing it—no worry, no fear of backsliding, no anxiety about the future. He has committed his life to Christ; he is abiding in Him; his life is hid with Christ in God; he is kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last time. He has no other thought but that of enjoying eternity with the Christ he now loves, so he continues in the present spiritual relationship to Him and rejoices in Christian security.

## CHAPTER IV

# Security Through Co-operation

The Christian life in all its phases is a co-operative affair; God saves, man believes; God provides grace, man appropriates that grace; God keeps, man walks in faith in Him. In no part of life is the co-operation more manifest than in our Christian security.

The Christian life is a relationship between two personalities, between an infinite, loving, sovereign God, and man, who is a finite moral agent. This spiritual relationship is the result of a deliberate choice on the part of both God and man. God, who is changeless in His character, has chosen us to salvation through Christ. In Christ's death and resurrection He has provided a complete and finished redemption for man; and all morally responsible persons who will choose Christ as Saviour, who believe on Him unto salvation, are saved. They enter into the relationship of children of God and thus they enjoy the security assured the believer.

Since this relationship, this salvation through faith, is the result of a deliberate choice and act of the believer, this same man by another deliberate choice and through unbelief may break that relationship and lose salvation. The Christian life is a co-operative matter between the believer and Christ. Christ offers him security in salvation; the believer enjoys this security through co-operation with Christ in faith and obedience. Christian security comes by co-operation with and reliance upon God, not by divine decree.

Let us note some scriptures which stress security through co-operation:

Every branch in me *that beareth not fruit* he taketh away: . . . . *If a man abide not in me*, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned (John 15:2, 6).

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For *if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live (Rom. 8:12, 13).

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight: *if ye continue in the faith* grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel . . . . (Col. 1:21-23).

*Holding faith, and a good conscience*; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme (I Tim 1:19, 20).

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, *if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end* (Heb. 3:12-14).

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation *unto all them that obey him* (Heb. 5:9).

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for *if ye do these things*, ye shall never fall (II Peter 1:10).

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing that ye know these things before, *beware* lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness (II Peter 3:17).

. . . . If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father (I John 2:24).

There are scriptures that stress the possibility of eternal loss through our failure to co-operate with God. Let us note some of these:

Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, *if thou continue in his goodness*: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off (Rom. 11:20-22).

Having damnation, *because* they have cast off their first faith . . . For some are already turned aside after Satan (I Tim. 5:12, 15).

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, *if* they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Heb. 6:4-6).

For *if* after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them (II Peter 2:20, 21).

And *if* any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:19).

We rejoice in a vital relationship with God, in a security that is based upon our co-operation with Him, by our abiding in Him, by continuing in goodness, by walking and living after the Spirit, by holding fast our confidence unto the end, by obeying Him.

Is a co-operative security a security at all? It is! It is a security of moral and spiritual content. It encourages us to the cultivation of our relationship with

Christ, to the deepening of our fellowship with Him. It is based upon love, a security of love, the changeless love of Christ for us and the increasing of our love for Him. It encourages us to watchfulness, to diligence, and to obedience to a loving Lord and Saviour. It inspires us to righteous living, to Godlikeness in character, and to holiness in all of our human relationships. It is a security of dependence upon the power of God, upon a growing confidence and trust in His never-failing presence and grace. Not a mechanical security, not a security by divine decree, not a nonforfeitable security—this could not work toward true moral and spiritual ends in our lives; it is a vital spiritual relationship with God, a full and continuous loyalty to Him, and loving co-operation with Him in Christian living; such security issues in righteousness in life.

Thank God for His grace that saves us, that purifies our hearts, that keeps us as we walk with Him in obedience and confidence through all the changing scenes of our lives. Thank God for a security through a full heart co-operation with God.

## CHAPTER V

# Security, Its Scope

One of the most assuring and comforting facts of our Christian life is the security we enjoy in Christ: a security based upon the unchangeable character of God, "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17); upon the permanency of His word, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5); upon the definite spiritual relationship the believer enjoys in Christ, "Your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3); and upon the power of God to keep His children, He "is able to keep you from falling" (Jude 24).

This is a Christian security, a security in Christ, and its scope is as broad as the needs of God's children. It brings a consciousness of protection and safety during our probation on earth and the pledge of an eternal inheritance through Christ. It is the eternal security of the *believer*—the person who believes unto salvation and continues to believe unto the end.

The thought of salvation carries with it the suggestion of security. To be saved is to be safe, to live under the safe protection of God's power and grace; "that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74, 75).

Christian security begins with deliverance from sin: its power is broken upon us, "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14); a deliverance from its practice, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his



seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:9); and deliverance from its pollution, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

It is the security of our commitment to God; "I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12). It is a security of divine possession and sealing; "In whom, having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession" (Eph. 1:13, 14, R.V.). It is a security of establishment in grace; "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2); and, "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God" (I Thess. 3:13).

This security comprehends a definite spiritual relationship with Christ; we are "in Christ." We are by the Holy Spirit made members of His body, the Church (I Cor. 12:13); we are made branches of Christ, the true Vine (John 15:5, 6); our lives are "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). Because of the work of the Holy Spirit a great spiritual change has been wrought in the heart and life of the believing person. He has been born again, he is the possessor of spiritual life; hence he is secure in this spiritual relationship in Christ. He is under God's protection.

Protection or security is provided for all circumstances of life; nothing of an outside power or force can separate us from the love of Christ. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels,

nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8: 35-39).

Security in the temptations of life is assured. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13). It is not deliverance from temptation, but security in temptation.

Divine equipment is provided us, that we may successfully combat the forces of evil on life's battlefield. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:11, 13). The Christian thus clothed with God's armour, "by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left" (II Cor. 6: 7), is victorious on any and all battlefields. It is not a victory in and of himself, but he conquers "because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4).

The secret of all this security is mentioned by the Apostle Peter. After stating the eternal inheritance for which we are all looking and toward which we are going, he declares, "who are kept [garrisoned] by the power of God." What power can reach us! What foe can break down that power of God with which we are garrisoned, kept in security! Absolutely none! But this quotation is not complete, we are "kept . . . . *through faith* unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:5). It is the believer, the person who continues in faith, that is "kept by the power of God . . . . unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

To the true child of God this faith is most normal and continuous. He lives in a vital spiritual relationship with Christ, and by believing he rejoices "with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Peter 1:8). He lives in the glorious liberty of the sons of God, rejoicing in his inheritance among the saints of light, with not one shadow of worry or anxiety in his mind about his relationship with God. He recognizes that during his earthly period, the period of probation, it is possible for him to break with God, to lose his faith, and if he should pass from this probationary life in such a state his loss would be eternal. But such loss is unnecessary; it need not worry a believer any more than a healthy man need worry about sickness. He might "war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" (I Tim. 1:18, 19). Through faith he is saved, he is safe, he is secure, he is protected or guarded by the power of God. This is Christian security!

## CHAPTER VI

# God's Verily's and God's If's

In the preceding pages a positive discussion has been given on the subject of Christian security, a security of love and faithful relationship between the believer and God through Jesus Christ our Saviour. In this chapter a series of parallel scriptures will be presented which teach the relation between sovereign grace and human responsibility, scriptures upon which any Biblical teaching of Christian security must be based.

There is a favorite expression used by the exponents of the "eternal security" theory—a theory presenting a security by decree of a sovereign God, a security which cannot be lost or forfeited, regardless of the attitude or action of the person who has once accepted Christ as Saviour—which runs, "Those who do not accept the teaching of eternal security follow the practice of putting an 'if' in the Scriptures where God puts a 'verily.'" In the scriptures here presented it is shown that God puts a balance between His verily's or sovereign grace, and His if's or human responsibility. There can be no question but that we are saved by the sovereign grace of God; but likewise there can be no question about the necessity of the Christian's following and obeying Christ to the utmost of his responsibility if he is to keep under the provision of God's grace for his security.

We present some of God's verily's and His if's opposite each other, that the balance God gives to them in His Word may be made clear. Since most of the ardent advocates of "eternal security" do not accept the Old

Testament teachings as binding upon the Christians under grace, only statements from the New Testament are used. However, the Old Testament abounds in statements which reveal this truth, statements which are as much God's Word for us today as they were for His people in other days.

GOD'S VERILY'S

or

Sovereign Grace

GOD'S IF'S

or

Human Responsibility

### ETERNAL LIFE

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

". . . . He that heareth\* . . . . and believeth\* . . . . hath\* everlasting life" (John 5:24).

"To them who *by patient continuance* in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Romans 2:7).

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All words marked by the asterisk (\*) in these references are in the present tense and denote continued action. For example: He "that believeth [i.e., he that believes now and continues to believe] . . . . hath [i.e., continues to have] everlasting life." Such action in our Christian security involves both the sovereignty of grace and human responsibility. Dr. Mark R. Vincent (Methodist), in his *Word Studies in the New Testament*, says that the original word from which "believeth" is translated means "faith in its active aspect." Dr. A. T. Robertson (Baptist), in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, says that the original words from which "believe" and "believeth" are translated in these verses has this meaning: "that ye may keep on believing" and "the continuance relation of trust." Never does the meaning of these words indicate a "once for all" act of acceptance which can never be changed or forfeited; always it is a continuous relation of trust between the believer and his sovereign Lord. Dr. Alexander Maclaren (Baptist) says of John 6:51, "If any man eat . . . .": "Under this eating is included not only some initial act of faith, but a continuous course of partaking." Dr. Vincent says relative to the gift of eternal life (John 10:25), "The gift is present and continuous." Nowhere does the Word of God teach that God's gift of eternal life is nonforfeitable. Sovereign grace and human responsibility are always involved. We must always keep in mind that God gives us the gift of eternal life, NOT an eternal gift of life.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, . . . my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. . . . I am the bread of life: he that cometh\* to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth\* on me shall never thirst" (John 6: 32, 35).

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise him up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth\* the Son, and believeth\* on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:37, 39-40).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth\* on me hath everlasting life. . . . If any man eat\* of this bread, he shall live for ever" (John 6:47, 51).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you . . . he shall never see death" (John 8:51).

"My sheep hear\* my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27, 28).

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the power of the world to come, if *they shall fall away*, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:4-6).

". . . . I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, *but the son of perdition*" (John 17:12).

". . . . they that are unlearned and unstable wrest . . . the . . . scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, *beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.*" (II Peter 3:16, 17).

"He that believeth\* on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47).

". . . . he that *doeth the will of God* abideth for ever" (I John 2:17).

". . . . *If a man keep my saying*, he shall never see death" (John 8:51).

"Take heed, brethren [sheep], lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, *in departing from the living God*" (Hebrews 3:12).

" . . . . and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:29).

"And this is the record, that God hath\* given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (I John 5:11).

"He [Christ] became the author of eternal salvation . . ." (Hebrews 5:9).

"And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (I Peter 3:13.)

"He that hath\* the Son hath\* life; and he that hath\* not the Son of God hath\* not life" (I John 5:12).

". . . . unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

### FINAL PERSEVERANCE

"And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight" (Col. 1:21, 22).

"The just shall live by faith" (Hebrews 10:38).

"We are not of them that draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:39).

"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Timothy 1:12).

". . . . waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:7, 8).

"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard" (Col. 1:23).

"If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Hebrews 10:38).

". . . . if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Hebrews 3:6).

"But he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22).

"I have fought a good fight . . . . I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day" (II Timothy 4:7, 8).

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy" (I Cor. 3:16, 17).

" . . . the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

"*Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption*" (Ephesians 4:30).

"*Quench not the Spirit*" (I Thess. 5:19).

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

"For we are made partakers of Christ, *if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end*" (Hebrews 3:14).

### PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:4).

"For *if* after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them*" (II Peter 2:20, 21).

"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" (II Timothy 2:19).

"And, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity*" (II Timothy 2:19).

### IN CHRIST

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

"For *if we [Christians] sin wilfully* after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment [condemnation] and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Hebrews 10:27, 28).



"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15:1, 5).

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, . . . nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39).

"If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye shall continue in the Son, and in the Father" (I John 2:24).

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit *he taketh away* . . . If a man abide not in me, *he is cast forth as a branch*, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:2, 6).

"Keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21). "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (I Peter 3:13.) "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway [rejected, R.V.]" (I Cor. 9:27).

### SAVED BY GRACE

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). "For by grace are ye saved" (Eph. 2:8). ". . . grace wherein we stand" (Romans 5:2).

"*Holding faith*, and a good conscience: which some having put away concerning faith *have made shipwreck*" (I Timothy 1:19).

"By which also ye are saved, if *ye keep in memory* what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (I Cor. 15:2).

"*Ye are severed from Christ*, ye who would be justified by the law; *ye are fallen from grace*" (Galatians 5:4, R.V.).

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Timothy 1:9).

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Romans 5:8, 9).

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (II Peter 1:10).

". . . . thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Romans 11:20-22).

#### KEPT BY GOD'S POWER

"Who are kept by the power of God . . . unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:5).

"But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil" (II Thess. 3:3).

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

"Who are kept by the power of God *through faith* unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:5).

"Keep thyself pure" (I Tim. 5:22). ". . . . to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). "Keep yourselves from idols" (I John 5:21).

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21).

#### ONCE A CHILD

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Peter 1:23).

"If ye [born-again Christians] live after the flesh, ye shall die [spiritually]. To be carnally minded is [spiritual] death" (Romans 8:13, 6).

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:35, 37).

"But the younger widows [Christians] refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ [for as soon as *their affections stray wantonly from Christ*—Weymouth], they will marry; having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. For some are already turned aside after Satan" (I Tim. 5:11, 12, 15).

### THE BLOOD OF JESUS

"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light" (I John 1:7).

"By his [Christ's] own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:12).

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were . . . redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ" (I Peter 1:18, 19).

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Hebrews 10:29.)

### NAMES WRITTEN IN HEAVEN

". . . . rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20)

"And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:19).

There is definitely a scriptural balance between the sovereignty of grace and human responsibility, between God's verily's and His if's.

We must always realize, however, that the primary emphasis in all things related to salvation is upon the grace of God and not upon our works. We are saved by the grace of God, not by our works. We are kept by the power or grace of God through faith, not by our works. We shall reach heaven at last by the grace of God, not through our works. Having begun the Christian life in the Spirit, we cannot be made perfect by the law or by works.

We have no security outside of the grace of God. Not for a moment could we enjoy the favor of our infinitely righteous God except through our Lord Jesus Christ, for we are accepted in the beloved and through the merits of His redeeming blood. There is nothing we can do to merit our acceptance with Him and to earn His security in life and for eternity; we have these only through His grace by our active faith or a continual relation of trust. Such continual relation of trust or active faith for security by grace is no more "works" than is the initial faith in Christ by which we were saved by His grace. We could not have this continual relation of trust without the active working of faith by love in maintaining an obedient heart, a yielded will, and purposes and motives for righteous living inspired by the love of Christ; for love is the fulfilling of the law.

Because we teach a Christian security of loving relationship with God through active faith and not a non-forfeitable eternal security by divine decree, we are not advocating backsliding or falling from grace. Because we preach that it is possible for a Christian to backslide and be eternally lost, we need not practice what we preach by backsliding.

Somewhere I heard this story.

A Presbyterian approached a Methodist minister with this question: "I understand that you Methodists believe in falling from grace. Is that so?"

The minister replied: "I understand that you Presbyterians believe in horse-stealing. Is that so?"

"No, we do not," was the indignant reply of the Presbyterian.

"Well," said the minister, "do you not believe that it is possible for a Presbyterian to steal a horse?"

"Yes," said the Presbyterian, "but we wouldn't do it."

"Well," said the minister, "we believe it is possible for Christians to fall from grace, but we do not believe in doing it."

Thank God! There is a Christian security. We are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

As a concluding paragraph to this message there is perhaps no better statement of warning given than that given by Dr. Alexander Maclaren, the great Baptist preacher from Britain, who passed to his reward in 1910. In commenting on "and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life" (Rev. 3:5), he said:

"What I especially note here is, not so much this reiteration which has met us in preceding letters, the promise of a secure, eternal life, as that plain and solemn implication that a name *may* be struck out of that book. Theological exigencies compelled our fathers to deny that, but surely the words of our text are too plain to be neglected or misunderstood. It is possible that a name, like the name of a dishonest attorney, shall be struck off the rolls. Do not let any desire for theological symmetry blind you, brother, to that fact. Take it into account in your daily lives. It is possible for a man to 'cast away his confidence.' It is possible for him to make shipwreck of his faith. . . . Brethren, it is the victors whose names are kept upon the roll. A student goes up for his examination. He thinks he has succeeded. The pass-lists

come out, and his name is not there. Take care that you are not building upon past faith, but remember that it is the *victor's* name that is not blotted out of the Book of Life."

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