

BIBLE TRUTHS EXPLAINED

What God's Word teaches about

PERSEVERANCE

Gordon Lyons

KJV Edition

Important Notice

The series *Bible Truths Explained*
may be downloaded, printed and used free of charge
by individuals, groups, and institutions

However, none of these Doctrinal Notes
may be offered for sale or for commercial publication

Bible Truths Explained: Perseverance
Revised: 1988, 1991, 1996, 2005
First published: 2005
1-word.com web site publication

Copyright Notices

Bible Truths Explained

Perseverance

Copyright © 2005 Gordon Lyons
All Rights Reserved

Limited extracts from this work may be quoted elsewhere, on condition that the name and author of the original work is acknowledged in a format similar to the following:

'Quoted from
Bible Truths Explained: Perseverance
Copyright © 2005, Gordon Lyons
Used by permission'

Scripture quotations taken from
The HOLY BIBLE
KING JAMES VERSION
unless otherwise stated

Additional Scripture quotations taken from
The HOLY BIBLE
NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, by International Bible Society
Used by permission

Principal Works Consulted

- Barnes, Alfred *Notes on The Bible*, Electronic edition (public domain)
- Bauer, Walter /
revised and edited by
Danker, Frederick William *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Third Edition BDAG) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Berkhof, Louis *Systematic Theology*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1939, 1941 reprint.
- Boettner, Loraine *Roman Catholicism*, Phillipsburg: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962
- Calvin, John *Institutes*: [Beveridge Translation, 1800, Battles Translation Vols. 1-4, 1960] Rio, WI, USA: Ages Software, Inc., The John Calvin Collection, 2000, Electronic edition (CD).
- Clarke, Adam *Commentary on the New Testament*: Electronic edition (public domain)
- Dabney, R. L. *Systematic Theology*, [St. Louis: Presbyterian Publishing Company of St. Louis, 1871, second ed. 1878] Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust edition, 1985.
- Gill, John *Exposition of the Entire Bible*, Electronic edition (public domain)
- Hodge, Charles *Systematic Theology*, Vols. 1-3; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977 reprint.
- Hodge, Charles *Princeton Sermons*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1879, 1979 reprint.
- Jamieson, Fausset & Brown *Commentary on The Whole Bible* (Revised edition, 1961): Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1991.
- Murray, John *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955.
- Poole, Matthew *A Commentary on The Holy Bible* Vols. 1-3 (1685-1700): Edinburgh, Banner of Truth Trust, 1878, 2000 reprint.
- Robertson, A.T. *Robertson's Word Pictures*, Electronic edition (public domain)
- Ryle, J. C. *Practical Religion*: Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1939, 1941 reprint.
- Vincent *Vincent's Word Studies*, Electronic edition (public domain)
- Westminster Confession of Faith*, Inverness: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1976 reprint.

Special Acknowledgement

I must acknowledge a genuine debt of gratitude to the work of Dr. Charles Hodge. The writings of this theologian from a previous generation have helped considerably in preparing this work. On a number of occasions—as will be seen when reading these studies—I have cited or alluded to Dr. Hodge’s remarks in his three-volume *Systematic Theology*. These references have been acknowledged in the footnotes to the study text.

Perseverance

Contents

BIBLE TRUTHS EXPLAINED	i
PERSEVERANCE	i
Contents	vi
Part 1	1
Synopsis: Perseverance of the Saints	1
Note 1	1
Final Perseverance is Assured	1
Scripture References	1
Note 2	2
Perseverance Depends on God's Faithfulness	2
Scripture References	2
Note 3	2
True Believers Cannot Fall Away	2
Scripture References	3
Note 4	3
Perseverance Must be Accompanied by Holiness	3
Scripture References	3
Related Bible Truths	4
Part 2	5
Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints	5
Justified, Sealed, and Sanctified	5
Security of Believers	6
Summary of Arguments	6
Part 3	9
Grounds of Security (A)	9
Secure by Justification	9
Secure by The Holy Spirit	11
Part 4	13
Grounds of Security (B)	13
Secure by Adoption	13
Secure by Election	14

Part 5	19
Grounds of Security (C) _____	19
Secure by God's Love _____	19
Secure by The Atonement _____	20
Part 6	23
Kept Secure by God _____	23
Kept by the Power of God _____	23
Kept by Redeeming Blood _____	24
He Who Stands Firm Will be Saved _____	24
Part 7	25
Perseverance Involves Spiritual Warfare _____	25
(1) Perseverance in the Fight Against Sin _____	25
(2) Perseverance in the Fight Against Sloth _____	26
(3) Perseverance in Doing the Will of God _____	27
Faithful to God _____	29

Part 1

Synopsis: Perseverance of the Saints

The perseverance of the saints involves the absolute and infallible assurance that every regenerated and justified child of God will certainly continue in his or her faith and calling unto the day of final redemption in glory. Perseverance does not depend on the degree of faith of the believer nor on his degree of assurance. Perseverance depends on the immutable decrees of God in election, which he purposed in Christ Jesus from before the creation of the world. All those whom God has called to himself in Christ Jesus will, without fail, persevere in their calling unto the end. Perseverance applies only to the elect of God—none of whom can ever perish. Once saved, they can never be lost. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of every child of God to make their calling and election sure by producing consistently in their lives the fruit of the Spirit, and by engaging in spiritual warfare in the strength of the Lord.

Note 1

Final Perseverance is Assured

To persevere means to continue steadfastly in the faith, in spite of all the obstacles, difficulties, trials and dangers. The perseverance of the saints is guaranteed to all those who belong to Christ. Although, often, they may stumble, they cannot stumble to the extent that they fall away from God's grace. At times, a believer may be beset—and nearly overwhelmed—by many doubts concerning his or her salvation. Yet, regardless of their lack of assurance at these times, their perseverance to the end is rendered certain. Those who truly belong to Christ, and who are endeavouring to walk with Christ in their daily lives, are doing so because the Lord has given them eternal life and is sanctifying them by his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit also seals them eternally unto God until the day of final redemption: therefore, they can never perish. (John 10:28; 2 Cor. 1:8-11; 4:8-14; Eph. 1:13-14)

Scripture References

John 10:27-28

⁽²⁷⁾ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: ⁽²⁸⁾ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. (See vv.24-30)

2 Corinthians 1:8-11

⁽⁸⁾ For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, in-somuch that we despaired even of life: ⁽⁹⁾ But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: ⁽¹⁰⁾ Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver *us*; ⁽¹¹⁾ Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift *bestowed* upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf. (See vv.3-7)

2 Corinthians 4:8-10

⁽⁸⁾ *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; ⁽⁹⁾ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; ⁽¹⁰⁾ Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. (See vv.7-14)

Ephesians 1:13-14

⁽¹³⁾ In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, ⁽¹⁴⁾ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Note 2

Perseverance Depends on God's Faithfulness

Perseverance does not rest on the believer's fluctuating faith, but on the unchanging faithfulness of God. What God has promised, that he will surely fulfil; and nothing in heaven or earth can hinder or thwart his intentions. From before the creation of the world, God, in Christ Jesus, purposed the full and final redemption of all his elect people. That purpose cannot fail of accomplishment. Nor can it be hindered in its execution by the present imperfections of God's own people, or by their temporary lack of faith, or by their temporary lack of assurance. (Eph. 1:4-14; 1 Thess. 5:24; Heb. 10:22-23)

Scripture References

Ephesians 1:4-5

⁽⁴⁾ According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁽⁵⁾ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (See vv.1-10)

Ephesians 1:11

⁽¹¹⁾ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (See vv.12-14)

1 Thessalonians 5:24

⁽²⁴⁾ Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*.

Hebrews 10:22-23

⁽²²⁾ Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. ⁽²³⁾ Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) (See vv.9-25)

Note 3

True Believers Cannot Fall Away

Perseverance of the saints is guaranteed only to those who belong to Christ by the grace of adoption. Many people belong to a church, but they do not necessarily belong to Christ. Many people make a profession of faith in Christ, and they may continue in their profession for a while. These people may give all the outward evidences of belonging to Christ. However, in time of trial or persecution, they renounce their profession and abandon their faith. Such were never true believers, for true believers—those whom God has called, regenerated, justified, and sealed by his Holy Spirit, cannot apostatise or abandon their faith. True believers have been born of God, and they belong to God. Again, true believers are being kept by the power of God unto (final) salvation, and unto the inheritance that God has prepared for them in glory. They cannot fall away from God's grace or salvation until the day that God can prove unfaithful to his promises. (John 6:66; Heb. 10:38-39; 1 Pet. 1:1-9)

Scripture References

John 6:64-66

⁽⁶⁴⁾ But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. (See vv.60-69)

Hebrews 10:38-39

⁽³⁸⁾ Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. {*Hab. 2:3-4*}

⁽³⁹⁾ But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. (See vv.35-37)

1 Peter 1:3-5

⁽³⁾ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁽⁴⁾ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁽⁵⁾ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (See vv.1-9)

Note 4

Perseverance Must be Accompanied by Holiness

God guarantees to all of his redeemed children the grace to persevere to the end. However, holiness of life and the fruit of the Spirit must accompany perseverance. Those who do not endeavour to pursue holiness of life, and who are not bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit in their lives, are barren branches. If barren, however, the Lord will cut them from the vine, and cast them into the fire. For barren professors of faith are false professors, and false professors possess no inheritance in the kingdom of God. (John 15:2,6; Gal. 5:22-24; Heb. 12:14)

Scripture References

John 15:2

⁽²⁾ Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

John 15:6

⁽⁶⁾ 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. (See vv.1-8)

Galatians 5:22-24

⁽²²⁾ But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ⁽²³⁾ Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. ⁽²⁴⁾ And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. (See vv.25-26)

Hebrews 12:14

⁽¹⁴⁾ Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: (See vv.15-17)

Related Bible Truths

Closely related to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, is that doctrine concerning the predestination of the elect. The doctrine of perseverance also connects inseparably with the believer's assurance of grace and salvation, and with the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit on behalf of all his people. Because of their election, the perseverance of the saints in their faith and calling, and in increasing holiness of life, is absolutely certain. All those whom God has called, justified, and sealed by his Spirit will—through God's grace—certainly persevere until the end.¹

¹ See further on *Bible Truths Explained: Predestination; Assurance*, by Gordon Lyons

Part 2

Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints

Justified, Sealed, and Sanctified

In Romans chapter 8, Paul discusses and proves the perseverance of the saints, and the Spirit-inspired apostle assures the people of God of the certainty of their final salvation.

The chapter begins by declaring:

Romans 8:1

⁽¹⁾ *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (See vv.2-17)

Believers are no longer under God's wrath and condemnation. In his grace, God's Holy Spirit has called and regenerated them. Upon their confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, God has justified them, and has adopted them into his family as children and heirs. As proof of their regeneration and adoption, God has given them the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, by whom they are sanctified and sealed.

Thus, the Scripture says:

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

⁽²¹⁾ Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is* God; ⁽²²⁾ Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. (See vv.18-20)

Ephesians 1:13-14

⁽¹³⁾ In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, ⁽¹⁴⁾ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (See vv.11-12)

From this, it follows that everyone whom God has regenerated and justified must live a new and holy life. This new life, or new creation, expresses itself by being separated from the world and being set apart and consecrated to God in body and soul. *Separation* from the world, however, does not imply *isolation* from the world.

Those whom God has regenerated and justified must no longer live to fulfil the desires of the flesh—i.e. the old sinful nature. Rather, they must live to fulfil the desires of the Spirit. For the Spirit of God indwells and sanctifies them—and the Spirit of God is holy. There is no such thing as salvation *in* sin, or salvation *apart from* holiness of life.

Security of Believers

Summary of Arguments

The following points, derived mainly from Romans chapter 8, exhibit Paul's argument for the certainty of the believer's salvation.² We will summarise each point briefly below. Then, we will consider these points more fully under the section entitled, *The Grounds of Security*.

1. The first argument for the security of believers is founded on *the perfect righteousness of Christ*. Those who have believed on Christ can never perish. This is because God has imputed the perfect righteousness of his Son to the believer's account. By that righteousness, every demand of God's law has been fully met and satisfied on the sinner's behalf. By that righteousness also, God has fully and forever justified the repentant and believing sinner. He has passed from a state of condemnation to justification, and from death to life. (Isa. 53:11b; Rom. 4:23-25; 2 Cor. 5:21)
2. The second argument for the security of believers is founded on *the gift of the Holy Spirit*. Every believer receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit seals and signifies each believer as belonging to God, until the day of final redemption. The same Holy Spirit sanctifies the believer, or continues the process of making him holy in all manner of life. Those whom the Holy Spirit indwells, and who are walking by the Spirit, have Christ—together with eternal life. Those who are not indwelt by the Holy Spirit do not have Christ, nor do they have eternal life. (Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30)
3. The third argument for the security of believers is founded on *the believer's adoption*. As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. Since they are God's children, then they are also heirs. God has adopted every believer into his own family, and has pledged to give them an eternal inheritance in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the earnest—i.e. the pledge or deposit—of that inheritance. His indwelling presence guarantees its fulfilment. Those who are heirs in the household of God, therefore, cannot fail to inherit the promise. This promise includes the preservation or safe-keeping of every child of God until he or she inherits the promised reward. It also includes the gift of eternal life, the completion of the believer's salvation in his or her glorification, and a place in our heavenly Father's dwelling. (Rom. 8:14-23; Gal. 3:26 - 4:7; Eph. 1:5)
4. The fourth argument for the security of believers is founded on *the eternal purposes of God in election*. From eternity, God purposed the salvation of everyone whom he had given to his Son, and whom the Holy Spirit would draw or effectually call to God's Son in repentance and faith. These, and these alone, constitute the elect of God; and all whom the Spirit of God thus calls to repentance and faith in Christ are members of God's elect. As such, they can never perish. They are being kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation; and they are being kept for the redemption that the Lord will reveal to them in the last day. (John 6:37,44,65; 17:2,6,9,24; Eph. 1:4,11; 1 Pet. 1:3-5)
5. The fifth argument for the security of believers is founded on *the love of God*. God did not spare his one and only Son, but gave him up to the cross for our redemption. Therefore, it is certain that his plan of redemption will not fail, nor will it fall short of its accomplishment. Everyone whom the Son has redeemed (ransomed) will be included in God's kingdom—and not one will be missing. God loves each believer with an everlasting love, for he sees in each one the perfect righteousness of his one and only Son. Again, concerning God's Son, having loved his own, he loves them unto the end. Nothing in heaven or earth can separate the believer from the eternal love of God in Christ Jesus. (John 3:16; 15:9,13; Rom. 5:5-8; 8:35-39)

² Based on C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3 [Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1977 reprint] pp.110-113.

6. The sixth argument for the security of believers is founded on *the vicarious atonement*. Christ died to make full atonement for the sins of his people. This atoning sacrifice was vicarious; i.e. Christ died as a substitute (for sinners). He bore their sin, guilt and condemnation in his own body on the tree. He did this so that everyone whom the Spirit effectually calls and who repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ might experience forgiveness, justification, and reconciliation with the Father. Through the death and resurrection of his Son, God has forgiven and reconciled the repentant and believing sinner to himself. How much more, therefore—now that he is no longer at enmity with God—shall that believer be saved from God’s wrath through Christ his living Redeemer and Mediator? (Rom. 3:25-26; 5:9-11; Heb. 10:10,14)

Part 3

Grounds of Security (A)

Secure by Justification

1. Our first argument for the security of believers is founded on *the perfect righteousness of Christ*.

But how do we relate this to the perseverance of the saints?

The people of God have been justified by faith; i.e. God has declared them righteous in his sight. God has clothed the believer with the perfect righteousness of Christ. When, therefore, God looks upon a justified sinner, he sees in him the righteousness of his own Son.

Therefore, God's Word says:

Isaiah 53:4-6

- ⁽⁴⁾ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
- ⁽⁵⁾ But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
- ⁽⁶⁾ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Cf. 1 Pet. 2:24)

Isaiah 53:11

- ⁽¹¹⁾ He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Zechariah 3:1-5

- ⁽¹⁾ And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. ⁽²⁾ And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: *is* not this a brand plucked out of the fire?
- ⁽³⁾ Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.
- ⁽⁴⁾ And he answered and spoke unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him.

And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.
- ⁽⁵⁾ And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by. (See vv.6-10)

1 Corinthians 1:30

⁽³⁰⁾ But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (See vv.18-31; cf. 2 Cor. 5:17)

2 Corinthians 5:21

⁽²¹⁾ For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (See vv.11-20)

Philippians 3:9

⁽⁹⁾ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: (See vv.1-14)

Concerning the fact that God imputes this righteousness to the believer by faith, the Scripture says concerning Abraham:

Romans 4:20-22

⁽²⁰⁾ He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; ⁽²¹⁾ And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. ⁽²²⁾ And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. (See vv.1-19; see Gen. 15:1-6; cf. Heb. 11:11-12)

Romans 4:23-25

⁽²³⁾ Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; ⁽²⁴⁾ But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; ⁽²⁵⁾ Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

We must remember that we are speaking of imputed righteousness—not inherent righteousness. God has imputed Christ's perfect righteousness to the believer's account. This act, however, does not make the believer inherently (inwardly) righteous. The justified believer is still very imperfect. He is still subject to sinful attitudes, inclinations, thoughts, words and deeds. God, however, is not looking upon the believer's imperfections. Rather, he is looking upon the perfections of his one and only Son, which, by grace, he has credited or imputed to the believing sinner's account.

God considers the believer to be righteous (with the imputed righteousness of his own Son). Therefore, he treats the believer as though he were actually righteous (even although the believer is not inwardly and personally righteous). Since God treats the believer as righteous, then—according to God's Word—the believer is entitled to the inheritance of eternal life. And if entitled to share in the Father's inheritance in glory, then the believer must be kept secure for that inheritance. He cannot be lost.

Justification is the declaration or pronouncement that a believing sinner is righteous in God's sight. This is a legal pronouncement and it is based on the fact that God has imputed the perfect righteousness of his Son to the believer's account. Thus, in virtue of Christ's substitutionary payment of the death penalty on the sinner's behalf, God is able, in perfect righteousness, to acquit or justify the believing sinner.

Since God justifies everyone who has faith in Jesus, who is he that condemns? (Rom. 8:31-34)

First Argument Summation: **Justification** (the imputing of Christ's perfect righteousness to the believer), guarantees the believer's perseverance in the faith unto the end.³

Secure by The Holy Spirit

2 Our second argument for the security of believers is founded on *the gift of the Holy Spirit*.

Firstly, we must emphasise that only those who walk by the Spirit are indwelt by the Spirit. Those who claim to be indwelt by the Spirit—but who live consistently according to the desires of the sinful nature (i.e. the flesh)—have no part in kingdom of God.

Thus, the Scripture says:

Romans 8:8-9

⁽⁸⁾ So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁽⁹⁾ But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (See vv.5-11; cf. John 14:16; Gal. 4:6; 1 John 3:24; 4:13)

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of holiness. Every born again believer must show the fruit of holiness in his or her life; for, without holiness, no one will see the Lord. None, therefore, but the redeemed of the Lord receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In what way, however, does God's Spirit guarantee the perseverance of the saints?

The indwelling Holy Spirit is the firstfruits of the believer's redemption. The Bible also speaks of the Spirit as the earnest of the believer's inheritance. An 'earnest' is a pledge or deposit of more to follow. It is the guarantee that those whom God's Holy Spirit has sealed, will certainly be kept secure unto the day of final redemption.

To this end, God's Word tells us:

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

⁽²¹⁾ Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is* God; ⁽²²⁾ Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Ephesians 1:12-14

⁽¹²⁾ That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.
⁽¹³⁾ In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, ⁽¹⁴⁾ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (See v.11)

Ephesians 4:30

⁽³⁰⁾ And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

³ See further on *Bible Truths Explained: Justification*, by Gordon Lyons.

We must remember that the Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son in power and in glory. It is he—the eternal Spirit of God—who indwells each believer. It is by his almighty power that the believer is being preserved. It is by his sanctifying influences that the believer is being prepared for his inheritance in glory. Similarly, it is by the same work of the Spirit of holiness that the Lord Jesus will present the believer faultless and blameless before the throne of God, with rejoicing.

Colossians 1:21-22

⁽²¹⁾ And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled ⁽²²⁾ In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable in his sight: (See vv.18-23)

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

⁽¹³⁾ But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: ⁽¹⁴⁾ Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (See v.15)

Jude 1:24-25

⁽²⁴⁾ 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, ⁽²⁵⁾ To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

If a single regenerated child of God should fail to attain to his promised inheritance, then the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Almighty God—would have proved incapable of keeping that believer safe. Manifestly, this is an impossibility.

Second Argument Summation: The **Holy Spirit** indwelling, sealing, preserving and sanctifying every true believer guarantees the believer's perseverance in the faith unto the end.

Part 4

Grounds of Security (B)

Secure by Adoption

3 The third argument for the security of believers is founded on the *believer's adoption*.

Every person whom God has regenerated and justified, has been adopted into the family of God. He or she is a child of God, and is entitled therefore to all the rights and privileges of heirship or inheritance. All those whom God has made his own children by adoption will share in the inheritance of the saints in light, together with God's one and only Son.

As the Scripture says:

Romans 8:14-15

- ⁽¹⁴⁾ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
⁽¹⁵⁾ For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (See vv.12-13)

Romans 8:16-17

- ⁽¹⁶⁾ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ⁽¹⁷⁾ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. (See vv.18-25)

Galatians 3:26-27

- ⁽²⁶⁾ For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. ⁽²⁷⁾ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (See vv.28-29)

Galatians 4:4-7

- ⁽⁴⁾ But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, ⁽⁵⁾ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. ⁽⁶⁾ And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. ⁽⁷⁾ Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (See vv.1-3)

Ephesians 1:4-5

- ⁽⁴⁾ According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁽⁵⁾ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (See vv.3-10)

A member of God's family can never be disowned or disinherited. As a loving Father, God will discipline his children—sometimes severely. However, as a Father who is faithful to his promises, he will never disown or disinherit the children he has chosen to adopt.

God disciplines his own children in love, so that they might share in his holiness. The fact that we receive discipline is proof that we belong to God. Each believer experiences and endures discipline, to prepare him in character and conduct for his Father's home. From this it follows, that—until that day—our heavenly Father will keep each one of his redeemed children secure in his everlasting love, compassion, and protective care.

The Scripture reminds all those who are undergoing God's discipline:

Hebrews 12:4-6

⁽⁴⁾ Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. ⁽⁵⁾ And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children,

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: ⁽⁶⁾ For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. {*Prov. 3:11-12; cf. Ps. 94:12-14*} (See Heb. 12:1-3)

Hebrews 12:7-8

⁽⁷⁾ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ⁽⁸⁾ But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. (See vv.9-11)

God always disciplines his own true sons and daughters. Discipline, however, involves instruction and training in the ways of the Lord, as well as chastisement and punishment. The Lord does not intend all discipline to be punitive in nature. However, he intends all discipline to be instructive and corrective, and to lead to ever-increasing holiness of life.⁴

At the Last Judgment, the Lord will judge every believer according to his deeds. Many will be rewarded. Some will lose part or all of their reward. None, however, will lose their inheritance in glory.

Third Argument Summation: The **believer's adoption** into the family of God, and his being made a joint heir with Christ to the Father's inheritance, guarantees the believer's perseverance in the faith unto the end.⁵

Secure by Election

4 The fourth argument for the security of believers is founded on *the eternal purposes of God in election*.

From before the creation of the world, God decreed to set apart a people for himself. The Father implements this eternal decree through Jesus Christ his Son. All whom, by God's grace, the Holy Spirit effectually calls, are enabled—freely and willingly—to respond to that grace by repenting and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ See further on *Bible Truths Explained: Adoption*, under *Discipline*, by Gordon Lyons.

⁵ See further on *Bible Truths Explained: Adoption*, by the same author.

Regarding this decree, God's Word says:

Ephesians 1:4-5

⁽⁴⁾ According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁽⁵⁾ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (See vv.1-12; see esp. v.11)

Romans 8:29

⁽²⁹⁾ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be conformed* to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (See v.28)

Romans 8:30

⁽³⁰⁾ Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (See vv.31-39)

All those whom the Father had thus predestined from eternity, he also gave to his Son. The Son of God undertook to redeem his elect out of every tongue, tribe, people and nation on the face of the earth. All those whom God has given to the Son are effectually called or drawn to the Son by the Holy Spirit.

Thus, the Lord Jesus says:

John 6:37

⁽³⁷⁾ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (See vv. 35-42)

John 6:44-45

⁽⁴⁴⁾ No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. *{Isaiah 54:13}* Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. (See vv. 43-59,65; cf. Matt. 11:25-30)

John 17:2

⁽²⁾ As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

John 17:6

⁽⁶⁾ I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. (See vv.1-26; see esp. vv. 9,11-12,24)

From all eternity, God had purposed to redeem everyone whom he had given to his Son, and whom his Holy Spirit would draw to his Son in repentance and faith. Because the Father has given every elect child of God into his Son's safekeeping, it follows that they are eternally secure.

The believer's perseverance is assured because they belong by gift to the Son of God. He has ransomed them by his precious blood, and they are being kept by him. No one can pluck them out of the Son's safekeeping, or out of the Father's hand. For both Father and Son are one. They are the same Almighty, and Eternal God.

To this end, Jesus said:

John 10:27-30

⁽²⁷⁾ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: ⁽²⁸⁾ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. ⁽²⁹⁾ My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

⁽³⁰⁾ I and *my* Father are one. (See vv.22-33; cf. v.27 with vv.4,14)

It is utterly inconceivable that God's purposes should fail of accomplishment. The Almighty God has predestined the elect unto eternal life. In fact, they have eternal life from the moment that they believe: for they have passed from death to life—abundant and eternal life. Again, it is impossible that anything in all creation should be able to remove the believer from the Father's hand. Each believer is being held secure by the Almighty God and no power in heaven or on earth can prevail to pluck that believer from the Father's hand.

It is of no avail to say that a believer may lose his salvation through his own sinfulness. If he is a true believer, and if he possesses the Holy Spirit, then God's Spirit has sealed that believer unto the day of redemption. God already knew about that person's sinfulness when Christ died as his substitute, and that sinfulness was punished in Christ when he hung upon the tree. God will never again condemn those whom he has justified through faith in Christ. This is because Christ, the spotless Lamb of God, has borne—and atoned for—their sin, and freed them from condemnation and guilt.

We must never, however, use this fact as an excuse for practising any form of sinful behaviour. Those who continue to practise sin show by their evil behaviour that they do not belong to Christ. For the Spirit of holiness cannot live in the temple of sin. That temple is the believer's body.

Again, we must remember that although a truly born-again child of God cannot forfeit his salvation, he can forfeit his life. This happened to certain believers in the church at Corinth when they despised the sanctity of the Lord's ordinances, desecrated the Lord's Supper, and brought the name of Christ into disrepute. (1 Cor. 11:20-22; 27-32)

However, the Word of God gives this certain assurance of final salvation to all of God's true people:

1 Peter 1:2-5

⁽²⁾ Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

⁽³⁾ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁽⁴⁾ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁽⁵⁾ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (See vv.1-9; see esp. v.9; cf. Jude 1:24)

Fourth Argument Summation: The **election** of God's children according to, and in fulfilment of, the eternal purposes of God, guarantees the believer's perseverance in the faith unto the end.⁶

⁶ See further on *Bible Truths Explained: Predestination*, by Gordon Lyons.

Part 5

Grounds of Security (C)

Secure by God's Love

5. The fifth argument for the security of believers is founded on *the love of God*.

All mankind has sinned, and all unregenerate mankind is living in a state of enmity and rebellion against God. Even so, God still loves men, women and children throughout the entire world. Although man must perish eternally because of his sin and rebellion—unless he be redeemed—yet God still loves lost sinners. God, however, is not only a God of infinite love, mercy and compassion; he is also a God of infinite righteousness, justice and holiness. He can by no means clear the guilty. God loves sinners, yet the world of fallen mankind must pay the penalty of sin. The penalty of sin is death; and since all have sinned, all must die.

All mankind would indeed die, and would perish eternally—for this is the just penalty of our sin. God, however, intervened. Out of the whole fallen human race, God determined that a vast multitude—whom no one could number—should be saved; and should live to the praise of his glory. On these especially, God set his everlasting love. Out of his great love for men, women and children, he gave his one and only Son to be their Redeemer. As the Scripture says:

John 3:16

⁽¹⁶⁾ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (See vv.14-18; cf. Rev. 1:5-6; 5:9-10)

All those who believe on Christ receive the gift of eternal life. They are born of God; and if born of God, they have the received the Spirit of God. They are children of God, and they are being kept eternally secure by the love of their Father in heaven.

As has been said already, God disciplines all those whom he receives as his children. He does this in love, to effect their holiness (cleansing and separation), and to prepare them for future glory. Some forms of discipline may be painful—but the pain is temporary. The love of God is eternal. God's love for his people shall never end, until the day that God ceases to be—for God is love. Since God is love, he will never cast away from his presence anyone whom he loves.

The love that God has for his one and only Son is fully reflected in the Son's love for each believer. Thus, the Scripture says:

John 15:9

⁽⁹⁾ As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. (See vv.10-17; cf. John 17:23-24,26)

The following Scripture further exemplifies God's love:

Romans 5:5-8

⁽⁵⁾ And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

⁽⁶⁾ For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁽⁷⁾ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure

for a good man some would even dare to die. ⁽⁸⁾ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (See vv.1-11)

Regarding the degree and permanence of Christ's love, and therefore of the believer's security and perseverance, the Scripture says:

Romans 8:35

⁽³⁵⁾ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 8:38-39

⁽³⁸⁾ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ⁽³⁹⁾ 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. (See vv.36-37)

All whom God the Father has loved from eternity, and whom he has given to the Son, will appear with their Lord in his glory. There, these beloved saints of God will worship with the angels in the presence of the Lamb.

Fifth Argument Summation

The **love of God** for the believer (a love that transcends the eternal ages and that is based on God's matchless love for his one and only Son) guarantees the believer's perseverance in the faith unto the end.

Secure by The Atonement

6. The sixth argument for the security of believers is founded on the nature and purpose of the *vicarious atonement* or atoning sacrifice of Christ.

Before a sinner's conversion, and because of his evil deeds (or 'wicked works'), he is living in a state of alienation from, and enmity with, God. These wicked works—these unrighteous attitudes and inclinations of the mind, and sinful deeds of the body—are the fruit of his sinful nature. Because of his sin, the unbeliever is at enmity with God, and the just wrath of God remains on him. To turn aside this wrath, propitiation (or satisfactory atonement) must be made to God. A holy, just and righteous God can be propitiated only by an acceptable sacrifice of atonement—a sacrifice of infinitely meritorious value. Nothing less can make atonement for sin, or turn away the just wrath of God against sinners.

This sacrifice of atonement for sin must be holy, spotless, and undefiled; separate from sinners and from sin. The blood to be shed—or the life to be sacrificed—must be pure, spotless or perfect in every respect. Such was, and is, the Son of God. God set forth his one and only Son—Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God—as a propitiation [from Gk. *hilasterion*, mercy seat]. Christ died to make atonement for our sin. He was the Lamb slain from the creation of the world (Rev. 13:8) to redeem those whom God had chosen from before the creation of the world. With his life of perfect obedience to God, and with his atoning sacrifice, Jesus satisfied God's justice—fully and forever. In his life and death, Christ suffered vicariously. On this ground, God can now justify the believing sinner. That is, God can pardon (or forgive) the repentant sinner, and furthermore he can pronounce him righteous in his sight.

God does not justify the believer for what he is, or for what he has done. Rather, he justifies him for what Christ is, and for what he has done on the believing sinner's behalf. By Christ's atoning death and subsequent resurrection, God can now reconcile the believing sinner to himself. Christ, by his death and resurrection, has removed the enmity and sin that once created an impassable barrier between God and man. Furthermore, since God has reconciled the believing sinner to himself by the death of

Christ, and since Christ now lives to intercede for him, the believer is forever delivered from God's enduring wrath against sin.

Concerning these things, the Scripture says:

Romans 3:24-26

⁽²⁴⁾ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ⁽²⁵⁾ Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; ⁽²⁶⁾ To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (See vv.21-31)

Romans 5:8-11

⁽⁸⁾ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

⁽⁹⁾ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. ⁽¹⁰⁾ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. ⁽¹¹⁾ And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. (See vv.6-7)

Hebrews 10:10

⁽¹⁰⁾ By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

Hebrews 10:14

⁽¹⁴⁾ For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. (see vv.1-18)

The believer has received the benefits of the atonement. (Rom. 5:11.) God has justified him and reconciled him to himself. Therefore, that believer can no longer be condemned. Christ has died in the believing sinner's place. God has accepted the atoning death of his one and only Son as fully sufficient for every sin the believer has committed, or will commit. He stands secure on the grounds of the shed blood of Christ, his Redeemer. Since, on this ground he stands, then his perseverance is assured.

Sixth Argument Summation: The **vicarious atonement** of Christ, which he effected once-for-all on behalf of all God's people, and which fully satisfies the demands of God's justice against the sinner, guarantees the believer's perseverance in the faith unto the end.⁷

⁷ See further on *Bible Truths Explained: Justification*, by Gordon Lyons.

Part 6

Kept Secure by God

Kept by the Power of God

Because of the perfections of Christ, and of what he has done on the believer's behalf, every true child of God will certainly persevere in holiness of life, and in his or her salvation, unto the end. Perseverance does not depend on the believer's sometimes wavering faith, but on the unwavering faithfulness and almighty and sovereign power of God. It is God who keeps the believer safe. God's Son—who has gone to prepare a place in heaven for the believer—will one day take every believer safely into his Father's glorious presence.

The Lord Jesus gives this assurance to each child of God:

John 14:1-3

⁽¹⁾ Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ⁽²⁾ In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ⁽³⁾ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also. (See v.4)

Hebrews 9:28

⁽²⁸⁾ So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (See vv.23-27)

God's Word reminds us of the nature of the inheritance, which the Father is reserving for every believer in glory. The Word of God also reminds us of the power that keeps the believer secure until that day:

1 Peter 1:3-5

⁽³⁾ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁽⁴⁾ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁽⁵⁾ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (See vv.8-9; see esp. v.9)

The promise is secure, for it is founded on the eternal purposes of God. It is, however, the believer's duty and responsibility to make his calling and election sure. In everything that he says and does, he must show the evidences of holiness of life and conduct. Everyone who is bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit, is proving by their actions that they are sealed by the Spirit. Everyone whose life is thus controlled by the Spirit—and not by the flesh or sinful nature—is a true child of God. Since he is a child, then he is also an heir: an heir of glory, and a joint heir with the Son of God. We will share with the Lord in his glory, provided we share with him in his sufferings; i.e. provided we endure suffering and hardship for the sake of his name. For if sinful men have despised and rejected the Master of the house, how much more will they despise and reject the Master's servants?

Kept by Redeeming Blood

The perseverance of the saints is assured, and the security of believers is certain, because each child of God has been redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb. Through the redeeming work of God's Son, and through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, each believer is being brought to glory. Perseverance, therefore, does not depend on the believer's sometimes faltering faith, but on the work of redemption. The work of redemption is a work of eternal redemption. (Heb. 9:12.) Christ has accomplished this work once-for-all. It can never be repeated, and it can never be augmented. It is a finished work, and it is a perfect work. Even now, Christ—our Great High Priest—ministers in the heavenly sanctuary; pleading the merits of his atoning sacrifice on our behalf.

For the redeemed child of God, the work of the Holy Spirit begins at effectual calling and regeneration. The work of the Spirit continues throughout the believer's life, in the ongoing process of sanctification. However, none are ever sanctified who do not belong to Christ. By contrast, none who belong to Christ will ever fail of their eternal redemption.

He Who Stands Firm Will be Saved

While, however, it is true that the perseverance of the saints is certain of accomplishment, it is also true that each child of God must prove the reality of their faith and salvation. Believers afford proof of their salvation to others, by the fact that they continue to persevere in the faith—even under the most arduous of circumstances. The Bible warns clearly of a time when the love of many will grow cold because of increasing wickedness in the world. It is under circumstances such as these that a true child of God makes his calling and election sure. He does this by continuing to persevere in the faith; i.e. by pressing on toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, regardless of unfavourable circumstances. Thus, the Scripture says:

Matthew 24:10

⁽¹⁰⁾ And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Matthew 24:12

⁽¹²⁾ And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

Matthew 24:14

⁽¹⁴⁾ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (See vv.9-13)

The true child of God perseveres in the faith, even in the teeth of fierce opposition—opposition that may include being shunned or abandoned by friends and loved ones.

Thus, God's Word warns:

Mark 13:12-13

⁽¹²⁾ Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. ⁽¹³⁾ And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (See vv.9-11)

In the reference quoted above, we read the following phrase (v.13b): ... *but he who stands firm to the end will be saved*. Essentially, this phrase means that those who persevere under such opposition are proving—by their perseverance—that they are being kept by the Lord. The fact that they are able to withstand such intense opposition, is proof that they are the redeemed of the Lord.

Part 7

Perseverance Involves Spiritual Warfare

The fact that the believer's perseverance in the faith is guaranteed must never be made the grounds of complacency. It is by his grace that God has saved us, and it is by his grace that he will keep us. However, we must never presume upon the grace of Almighty God. The believer has been called by the grace of God. God has called him, however, to enlist in spiritual warfare. The Lord expects each of his redeemed people to engage in that spiritual warfare—on every appropriate battlefield. Thus, it is written in the Word of God:

Philippians 1:28-30

⁽²⁸⁾ And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. ⁽²⁹⁾ For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; ⁽³⁰⁾ Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me. (See v.27)

Ephesians 6:10-12

⁽¹⁰⁾ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. ⁽¹¹⁾ Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ⁽¹²⁾ For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. (See vv.13-18)

As an example of the need to fight in persevering, we will consider briefly three areas of conflict in the Christian life. These are (1) *perseverance against sin*, (2) *perseverance against sloth or laziness*, and (3) *perseverance in doing the will of God*. There are, of course, many other similar areas of conflict in the Christian life. These three, however, will serve to illustrate the point that perseverance involves active engagement in the war against sin, laziness, and opposition.

(1) Perseverance in the Fight Against Sin

Many types of sin are obvious to everyone for what they are. The Bible, however, speaks of the deceitfulness of sin, thereby implying that there are occasions when sin does not immediately appear as pernicious or evil. These forms of evil may not always be immediately recognised and identified as sin—perhaps because of some immaturity or lack of spiritual knowledge on the part of the believer. Again, an immature believer may not immediately recognise certain forms of evil as sin. This may happen because—over a prolonged period before his conversion—that person had become accustomed to accepting these types of sinful behaviour as normal.

Whatever the reason, the believer must continually guard against being deceived by sin. Sin is sin, no matter what guise it assumes. Sin is sin, whether a person recognises it as sin or not. Sin is sin, no matter what form it takes. Sin is sin, no matter how acceptable it has become to other people. The only safe way of recognising sin for what it is, is to become thoroughly familiar with the teaching of God's Word. Those who know that Word, are able to discern much more clearly between right and wrong, and to help and exhort others in knowing the difference between good and evil. Thus, the Scripture tells us:

Hebrews 3:13-14

⁽¹³⁾ But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ⁽¹⁴⁾ For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; (See vv.7-19; cf. v.14 with Col. 1:23)

The fact that the believer perseveres in the faith, and in the fight against sin, is an evidence that he belongs to the Lord and that he is being kept secure by the power of Almighty God.

(2) Perseverance in the Fight Against Sloth

Those whom the Holy Spirit has called to faith and partnership with Christ, have been called to suffer for the sake of Christ's name. God has called them to endure ill treatment, unfounded suspicion, and hostility, as a mark of the fact that they belong to Christ.

If, however, a believer has not taken up his cross to follow his Lord and Master, the marks of discipleship will not appear in that person's life. Those who do not follow the Lord wholeheartedly may escape much of the unjust criticism directed at times against the true followers of Christ. They may succeed in avoiding many of the hostile accusations and malicious remarks that the Lord Jesus enjoins his servants to endure without retaliation. They may escape the persecution of the world—but perhaps only because they have not proved faithful to their Lord and Master. This principle is expressed by the Scripture that says:

Matthew 10:32-33

⁽³²⁾ Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. ⁽³³⁾ But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. (See vv.17-31)

Matthew 10:38-39

⁽³⁸⁾ And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. ⁽³⁹⁾ He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. (See vv.34-37)

Such believers, however, will have little experience of spiritual warfare and of standing against the opposition of the world. They will fail to understand the trials and difficulties of the truly faithful people of God. They will be unable to support and encourage these saints because they themselves lack practical experience. Again, they will prove unfit for the Lord's service, simply because they have not prayerfully and actively engaged in the conflict to which God has called them.

Those who belong to Christ must *follow* Christ—regardless of the cost. Those who belong to Christ must *walk* with Christ—regardless of the sufferings that the Lord may call upon them to endure. Those who belong to Christ must *run* with the message of the Gospel—for those who do not belong to Christ will perish without it. There can be no place for sloth, apathy, laziness, prayerlessness, or any other form of inactivity in the lives of God's redeemed people. Discipleship demands full surrender of our lives to Christ's sovereign control. If, however, we will not yield all to him, and if we fail to follow him unreservedly, then we are withholding ourselves from God's rightful control. This is the sin of rebellion.

The way of the cross is the way of suffering. If we would be faithful in persevering for the Master, we must be diligent in following that way—regardless of the cost. As the Scripture says:

Hebrews 6:11-12

⁽¹¹⁾ And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: ⁽¹²⁾ That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (See Heb. 5:11 - 6:10; cf. Heb. 11:1-40)

The fact that a believer perseveres against apathy, sloth, prayerlessness, and every other lazy inclination, and that he remains diligent in following the Lord under all circumstances, is an evidence of one thing: It demonstrates that he belongs to the Lord, and that he is being kept secure by the power of Almighty God.

Thus, it is written:

Hebrews 10:32-34

⁽³²⁾ But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; ⁽³³⁾ Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. ⁽³⁴⁾ For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. (See vv.19-31)

Hebrews 10:35-39

⁽³⁵⁾ Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. ⁽³⁶⁾ For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

⁽³⁷⁾ For yet, a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

⁽³⁸⁾ Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. {*Hab. 2:3-4*}

⁽³⁹⁾ But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

(3) Perseverance in Doing the Will of God

It is the will of God that the believer should be sanctified. It is, therefore, imperative that the fruits of sanctification are always being produced in increasing measure in each believer's life. Thus, God's Word says:

1 Thessalonians 4:3

⁽³⁾ For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: (See vv.1-8)

2 Peter 1:4-7

⁽⁴⁾ 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.

⁽⁵⁾ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁽⁶⁾ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; ⁽⁷⁾ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. (See vv.1-3)

2 Peter 1:8-9

⁽⁸⁾ For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ⁽⁹⁾ But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

2 Peter 1:10-11

⁽¹⁰⁾ Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: ⁽¹¹⁾ For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

It is the will of God that the believer should engage in good works—works that benefit others, and that bring glory to God. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that the believer proves the validity of his faith by his actions. Thus, it is written:

Ephesians 2:10

⁽¹⁰⁾ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (See vv.1-9)

James 2:14-17

⁽¹⁴⁾ What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? ⁽¹⁵⁾ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ⁽¹⁶⁾ And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? ⁽¹⁷⁾ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. (See vv.18-26; see esp. v.26)

It is the will of God that each believer should seek to know the purposes of God for his life. It is, therefore, essential that—once these purposes are clearly known—the believer applies himself with all diligence to fulfilling the will of God. Thus, God's Word says:

Romans 12:2

⁽²⁾ And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (See v.1)

Ephesians 5:17

⁽¹⁷⁾ Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*. (See vv.8-21)

Colossians 1:9-10

⁽⁹⁾ For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ⁽¹⁰⁾ That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; (See vv.3-14)

Whatever God calls him to do, that he must do. Wherever God chooses to send him—whether near or far—there he must go. For however long the Lord chooses to keep him in that service, there he must remain—until the Lord himself directs otherwise. Thus, the Scripture says:

Hebrews 10:36

⁽³⁶⁾ For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. (See vv.35-39)

1 Peter 4:19

⁽¹⁹⁾ Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. (See vv.12-18)

The fact that a believer perseveres in doing the will of God in all its various aspects, and under all circumstances, is an evidence that he belongs to the Lord. Again, since he is persevering in the faith, then it is certain that he is being kept secure by the power of Almighty God.

Faithful to God

Perseverance in the fight against sin, against sloth, and in doing the will of God, are three examples of what it means to persevere in our faith and calling unto the end. We could cite many more, but these three examples demonstrate the principle of remaining faithful to God—regardless of the circumstances.

God remains faithful to all his promises, and he has promised to bring every believer safely to glory. For his part, the believer must remain faithful to God in every aspect of his life and work. He must show by his manner of life and conduct that he is persevering in the faith and in his holy calling, against all difficulties, trials and dangers.

The grace of God alone keeps the believer secure. God's grace toward the believer, however, must be matched by a resolute determination on the part of each believer to continually make progress in the faith. Those who are persevering can never become indifferent about doing God's will. For they realise that God has chosen them to live to the praise of his glory, and not for the satisfaction of self. Thus, God's Word declares:

1 Peter 3:13-17

⁽¹³⁾ And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

⁽¹⁴⁾ But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; *{Isaiah 8:12}* ⁽¹⁵⁾ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: ⁽¹⁶⁾ Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. ⁽¹⁷⁾ For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. (See vv.8-22)

