

# Safekeeping in Grace

by Lewis Sperry Chafer

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*The keeping power of God through grace is the foundation of the Christian's eternal security and standing in grace.*

**Scripture:** John 3:18, John 14:1, Romans 5:2, Romans 8:1, Romans 8:31, Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 1:6, 1 Peter 5:12

**Topics:** "Eternal Security", "Divine Grace"

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## Description

Lewis Sperry Chafer emphasizes the believer's standing in grace, highlighting the concept of enduring and continuing in grace. He explains that divine grace is the sole basis for salvation and the only means by which one can be kept saved. Chafer discusses the twofold classification of divine grace - the grace that saves and the grace that keeps, emphasizing that there are not two separate efforts of grace but one indivisible purpose of God. He refutes theological systems that suggest salvation can be lost due to lack of human merit or works, asserting that God's saving and keeping ministries of grace are inseparable and secure for all eternity.

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## Transcript

Not only is the believer said to be saved by grace, but he is said to "stand" in grace.

The word stand, as used in the New Testament, gives expression to the thought of continuing and enduring, and to "stand" in grace is to abide unchanged, to endure, and to continue in grace. We read: "We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. 5:2), and, "This is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (1 Pet. 5:12).

The continued exercise of divine grace toward the Christian is the one and only basis upon which one may hope to endure, for, as certainly as grace is the one and only basis upon which God can save a meritless sinner, so certainly grace alone is the basis upon which God can righteously keep one saved. Having begun in the Spirit, or wholly in the power and grace of God, there is no hope for continuance to be found in the flesh, or in the resources of human strength.

Human ability can no more maintain a right standing before God than it can attain such a standing.

Since the application of divine grace for the salvation of the sinner precedes, in point of time, the application of that grace for the keeping of the one who is saved, it is perhaps permissible to contemplate the operation of divine grace in a twofold classification--the grace which saves, and the grace which

keeps. But, on the other hand, an overemphasis of this twofold classification is misleading in the extreme, for in no sense are there two efforts, or operations, of divine grace.

The keeping ministry of God in grace is but the realization of that which is purposed, programmed, and wholly provided for in His saving ministry in grace. In reality, God offers no saving ministry of grace which does not include and guarantee His keeping ministry of grace. The varied operations of divine grace in behalf of the sinner, which contemplate his every need to the end of eternity, are one indivisible purpose of God.

The wholly artificial, twofold classification of the ministries of grace into that which saves, and that which keeps, has been emphasized by certain theological systems.

These systems, while professing to believe in the doctrine of salvation by grace, ignore or repudiate at the same time the doctrine of the keeping power of God through grace. The promoters of these systems have contended that God in grace might save a sinner for the moment, but the endurance in that salvation would, of necessity, be conditioned on human merit and works. In other words, the saved one would remain saved only as long as he remained good.

Such a conception of saving grace is so far removed from the fundamental ground upon which all grace must be based, that it must be concluded that the framers and supporters of these doctrines have in no sense discovered the true character of saving grace and are, therefore, unable to advance on the true lines of revelation which lead to the perfectly secured consummation of all saving grace. This consummation is no less than the keeping of the saved one throughout all time and eternity. Multitudes who have been trained in these false doctrines are saved, but they are saved in spite of their doctrines, and those who are saved have in every case been kept from the moment they were saved; not because they remained good, but because of the fact that unmerited favor is provided for every one who is saved by grace.

Since there is a difference as to time of application of the indivisible operations of divine grace, and since certain theological systems have forced this division to the point of an avowed belief and confidence toward the grace which saves, and to the point of avowed disbelief and discredit toward the grace which keeps, grace will be treated throughout this and remaining chapters as though it were subject to this twofold classification.

The fact that God keeps the saved one on a grace principle alone has been anticipated already in the preceding chapters; turning to a more specific consideration of the fact and force of divine grace as related to the keeping power of God, the subject may be given a threefold classification:

- (1) The keeping power of God through grace is included in every consideration of the principles of grace.
- (2) The keeping power of God through grace is implied in every revelation wherein is presented the truth that grace reaches into the coming ages for its consummation.
- (3) The keeping power of God through grace is seen in the manifold provisions and safeguards which He has made to that end.

These three viewpoints of the keeping power of divine grace are essential.

I. The Keeping Power of God Through Grace Is Included in Every Consideration of the Principles of Grace

If God has found a way whereby He can righteously save hell-deserving, meritless sinners, apart from all complications with human resources or limitations, He has, by the continued application of those principles, found a way whereby, without reference to merit or demerit, the saved one can be kept saved to the ages of the ages. This, though most reasonable, is purely a question of divine revelation, and therefore its consideration should not be influenced by rationalistic systems of thought.

From observation of the natural workings of the human mind, it may be concluded that it is a greater test of faith for the individual to repose on the keeping power of God through grace, than it is to repose on the saving power of God through grace; yet, as has been stated, to have accepted the true grace principles in salvation is to be committed to those selfsame principles which, in turn, form the very basis of the keeping power of God through grace.

To restate--the basis upon which God can exercise grace in the salvation of the sinner is threefold:

(1) There must be the disposal of every condemnation which divine righteousness could impose because of sin. This has been perfectly accomplished in the cross of Christ.

(2) There must be a disposal of every human obligation. This has been provided in the offer of salvation to man as a gift from God. And,

(3) there must be a disposal of all human merit. This has been supplied by the divine decree which places the whole world "under sin" before God.

If these great principles of grace, which belong to salvation, shall be applied and continued to the believer after he is saved, there is formed thereby the same righteous freedom for the infinite love of God to be exercised to its own satisfaction in the eternal keeping of the one who has been saved.

With more specific reference to these three principles in grace, it may be observed:

A. There Must Be the Disposal of Every Condemnation Which Divine Righteousness Could Impose Because of Sin

Since the problem of the keeping power of God is related only to the believer, the crucial question which is confronted at this point may be stated thus: Are the sins which Christians commit after they are saved divinely judged and disposed of in the Cross equally with the sins of the unsaved? The Scripture is clear on this point: "And he is the propitiation for our [Christians] sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"; "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us [Christians] from all sin" (1 John 1:7; 2:2).

To these passages may be added all the Scripture which contemplates the universality of the efficacious death of Christ for sin, for sin is sin in any and every case, whether it be committed by the saved or the unsaved, and it can be cured only by the precious blood of the Son of God. All sin taken together formed the unmeasurable burden which was laid on Him. The supposition that the sins of Christians were excluded from the redeeming work of Christ can be entertained only without serious thought. Equally erroneous is the supposition that God does not deal judicially with the Christian's sins until they are committed. Every sin that humanity--saved or unsaved--had committed, or ever would commit, was dealt with in perfect divine judgment by Christ at the cross. He was God's Lamb who "taketh away the sin of the world." Being universal, this divine judgment contemplated the sin of the saved as much as the sin of the unsaved.

As certainly, then, as grace may be extended to the unsaved on the basis of the fact that Christ has already borne the condemnation of his sin, so certainly grace may be extended and continued to the saved on the basis of the fact that Christ has already borne the condemnation of the Christian's sin.

In this dispensation, the unsaved are not said to be condemned primarily because of their sins which Christ has borne; they are condemned because they do not believe on Christ who bore their sins. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). In like manner, the Christian will never be condemned because of the sin which Christ has borne. So, also, the Christian, having accepted Christ, can never be condemned for lack of saving faith. It is therefore said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that hath sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1, R.V.). "He that believeth on him is not condemned" (John 3:18).

By this Scripture it is seen that the cross of Christ is the foundation of the Christian's eternal security and standing in grace, but it should never be disassociated from the supplementary, though wholly unrelated, truth that God, while never condemning either the saint or the sinner because of sin, since Christ has died, does undertake, upon an entirely different basis, to safeguard the Christian from every practice of sin, and He chastens, where there is need, as only a righteous Father can do.

Does sin unsave the Christian? This is a fair question, and if it be answered in the affirmative, there are but two possible positions in which the Christian might stand: he must, at a given time, be either sinlessly perfect, or a lost soul. There could be no intermediate ground.

The true reply to this important question will be found

(1) in the Scriptures and

(2) in human experience.

1. Revelation not only infers, but directly states that Christians sin. It also presents the cure for such sin, which, it may be added, is wholly different from that which is provided for the cure of the sins of the unsaved. This body of truth, both directly and indirectly, constitutes a very large proportion of the Epistles of the New Testament, for the Epistles are written to believers only, and disclose both the believer's eternal standing and his present state before God. This message, while plainly declaring that Christians do sin, as plainly declares that Christians are not condemned. This seeming moral inconsistency is not adjusted by blindly supposing the Christian to be lost because of his sin; it is adjusted by that higher morality made possible through the death of Christ, which, alas, too few have comprehended or acknowledged, either for their salvation or keeping.

2. Human experience also testifies to the indisputable fact that Christians do remain saved in spite of their evident imperfections and sin. This fact must not be slighted. Christians are now standing, and the continuance of Christians as such for an hour, or a moment, is a final proof that there is some divine provision for their keeping; in no sense could it reasonably be supposed that they are standing in any goodness or perfection of their own. The fact that they are now standing is final proof, also, that they are neither lost when they sin, nor sinless when they remain saved. They are, rather, "kept through the power of God," and that power is not only directly exercised in their behalf, but it has been made righteously free to act through the shed blood of the Lamb of God. Sin does not overcome the blood; it is blood that

overcomes sin.

Thus grace is extended toward the believer for time and eternity, not on the ground of impossible perfection, nor by slighting the fact of sin; it is extended to him because it is the Father's good pleasure to keep His child, and the Father is unconditionally free to do this through the blood that has been shed.

#### B. There Must Be a Disposal of Every Human Obligation

It is most evident from the Scriptures that every human work has been set aside and salvation is now offered to men only as the gift of God.

There are no payments to be made, past, present, or future, else grace is no longer grace. This fact is the second foundation principle of grace, as grace is exercised toward the sinner. This aspect of divine favor is equally effective when grace is exercised toward the Christian.

Do Christians pay their way, or do they, by their good lives and service, make it imperative for God to keep them saved? The answer is evident. There could be no peace of heart under such relations to God. Who could ever assure himself that he had accomplished all his Christian duty, or complied with all the demands found in the holy ideals of God? Who can repay God for the riches of His grace?

To attempt to do so is to place a sordid value on the priceless treasures of heaven's glory. God proposes to keep every believing soul, for He has said, "I will in no wise cast out." But His keeping will not be on a basis of exchange wherein Christian faithfulness, as important as it is, will be made the purchasing medium of the measureless goodness and blessing of God. He will keep by grace alone.

#### C. There Must Be a Disposal of Every Human Merit

Through the divine decree, as has been seen, every human merit has been set aside in order that pure grace might reign unchallenged and uncomplicated. That salvation might be by grace alone, God has removed every possible conflicting issue which might arise because of human merit. The whole human family is now "under sin"; only thus are they objects of pure grace.

Such grace can be exercised only toward the meatless. Salvation is based on the loving goodness of God and never on the supposed worthiness of the sinner.

In like manner, God is now equally free to continue the exercise of His boundless grace toward the Christian without reference to the Christian's merit. All that the love of God may prompt Him to do in grace, He is free to do. His unconditional covenant of eternal blessings is the guaranty of His abiding purpose.

This leads to the consideration of the second classification:

### II. The Keeping Power of God Through Grace Is Implied in Every Revelation Wherein Is Presented the Truth That Grace Reaches into the Coming Ages for Its Consummation

Through the cross of Christ, which has dealt with sin, and through His decree against all human obligation and merit as related to salvation, God is righteously free to preserve His child forever. And since His supreme purpose in all the ages will not be realized until the sinner is saved, transformed into the image of Christ, and lifted up to the highest glory, He will continue the exercise of His grace toward every believer until the divine objective is consummated. How perfectly He has delivered Himself from every limitation! How absolutely gracious are all His ways with those whom He saves! And how irresistible is His purpose

and power!

The great covenant promises of salvation are not limited to the moment when the sinner accepts the saving grace that is in Christ Jesus; they all reach on and guarantee every step of the way from the first moment of faith to the last moment of fruition. Even the word salvation, in its largest biblical meaning, covers all that is past, all that is present, and all that is future, in the outworking of the grace of God for the one who believes.

"He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6)

"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" (John 3:16)

In the great promises of grace there is no measurement as to time, nor any human condition imposed other than believing.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power [right] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12)

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36)

"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)

"And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37)

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16)

"That he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26)

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4)

Such is the unalterable and unconditional covenant of God in grace.

### III. The Keeping Power of God Through Grace Is Indicated by the Manifold Provisions and Safeguards Which He Has Made to That End

The eternal purposes of God in grace can never fail since He has anticipated and provided for every emergency that could arise.

Some of these provisions are:

#### A. The Power of God

His power, which is supreme, is ceaselessly engaged in the keeping of His own to the realization of His eternal purpose. Able is the great New Testament word that is used to indicate the omnipotent power of God. By use of this word, God is said to be of sufficient power to do whatever is predicated of Him.

"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man [nothing] is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:29)

"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 [created being], shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39)

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Rom. 14:4)

And God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20)

"According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:21)

"For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12)

"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18)

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost [without end] that come unto God by him" (Heb. 7:25)

"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)

"And being fully persuaded that, what he has promised, he was able to perform" (Rom. 4:21)

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

## B. The Love of God

Not only is God able to do according to His eternal purpose, but His love as a supreme motive will never fail. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end [without end]" (John 13:1)

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:8-11)

As He loved the unsaved enough to give His Son to die for them, even when they were "yet without strength" and "enemies," "much more then, being now justified by his blood" and "reconciled," they shall be "saved from wrath through him," and "saved by his life."

Such is the unchangeable love of God.

"Much more" than His love for the "enemies," which drew out the unspeakable gift of His Son, is His love for His own who are now "justified" and "reconciled." So, also, there is a boundless assurance as to the future: "saved from wrath through him," which points to the unchangeable position of the believer "in Christ," and "saved by his life" which points to the living presence and ministry of Christ in glory. With such provisions, God's love can know no disappointment concerning those whom He has saved in grace.

## C. The Prayer of the Son of God

Christ prayed while here on earth: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, 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. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil... Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:9-12, 15, 20).

It is wholly impossible that any prayer of the Son of God should be unanswered. Too much emphasis cannot be placed on this assuring fact.

While the "son of perdition," who was never saved, was lost that, in his case, "the Scripture might be fulfilled," the Son of God could say of the saved ones: "And none of them is lost."

Thus, since He has prayed, as well, for "them also which shall believe on me through their word," He will yet say, of all believers: "And none of them is lost," and in the same manner will the Scriptures be fulfilled in the presentation of every saved one in glory.

As Christ began to pray for His own while He was yet here in the world, so He has continued to pray for them, and will continue to pray for them, in heaven: "Seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

Who can measure the security of the children of God when they are the objects of the ceaseless intercession of the Son of God, whose prayer can never be denied?

#### D. The Substitutionary Death of the Son of God

The death of the Son of God is the sufficient answer to the condemning power of sin, even as sin appears before the righteous throne of God. Not even the unsaved are now condemned because of sin which Christ has borne; how much more are the saved free from condemnation through the death of Christ! Thus the Holy Spirit boldly inquires: "Who is he that condemneth?"

The answer He also gives: "It is Christ that died"; "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"; "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

The eternal purpose of God in grace is assured through the death of the Son of God.

#### E. The Resurrection of the Son of God

When he is saved, every believer partakes of the resurrection life of the Son of God. He receives a new life from God. It is the gift of God which is eternal life, and it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Speaking of this imparted life, Christ said:

"I am come that they might have life," and, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

So, again, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 3:36; 10:10, 28).

It is the imperishable life of the eternal Son of God which is imparted to every believer. God never gave this gift in blindness, not knowing what might be the future character of the one He thus saved. He knew the end from the beginning. He anticipated every failure and sin; yet, through Christ, He can assure us that, having received the gift of eternal life, we shall never perish. According to the unalterable gift of eternal life, made possible through the death and resurrection of the Son of God, the purposes of God in grace are secured.

#### F. The Present Advocacy of the Son of God

The Lord Jesus Christ is now "appearing" in the presence of the Father as Advocate for every one who is saved by grace. As Advocate, He is concerned with the actual sins of the Christian. He is not there before the Father making excuses for their sins, nor is He imploring the Father to be merciful; He is rather presenting His own blood before that throne as the answer to the condemnation of every sin. "If any man sin, we [Christians] have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

In Rom. 8:34, assurance is given by four great facts that the child of God will never be condemned. One of these is that Christ "is even at the right hand of God." To the same purpose it is declared in Heb. 9:24, that "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

In view of the presence of the Advocate before the Father's throne, meeting the force of every sin, even meeting the challenge of Satan who is there to accuse the brethren night and day before God (Rev. 12:10), there can be no doubt remaining as to the realization of the eternal purposes of God in grace.

#### G. The Intercession, or Shepherdhood, of the Son of God

The intercession of Christ extends beyond His present ministry of prayer for the saved, which has just been considered, and includes, as well, His shepherd care over them.

As Shepherd, He is guarding their path against the snares of the Evil One, and guiding their feet in the ways of His blessing and peace. Peter knew nothing of the fact that Satan had designs against him, or that Christ had anticipated those designs and had prayed for him. All this was revealed to him when Christ said: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you [obtained thee by asking], that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:31-32). Peter's ignorance of that which had transpired in heaven concerning him did not change the fact that he was, nevertheless, under the shepherd care of Christ the Lord. So it is at every moment concerning the child of God.

As Shepherd and Intercessor, Christ is now the High Priest in heaven for His own. The priesthood ministry of the old dispensation was continually interrupted by the dying of the priests; but this Priest--Christ--has an "unchangeable priesthood," one that is assured because "he continueth ever"--Christ will never die again. His priesthood will never cease. Because of this it is also said: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost [without end] that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:23-25). He will save them as long as He lives, which is forever.

David, too, had learned of the shepherd care of his Lord: for he said, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

His confidence concerning the future which is expressed by the words, "I shall not want," is that which is even more to be expected in the believer of this dispensation, who has all the added revelation regarding

the present ministry of Christ in heaven. The instructed believer is thus made certain that the eternal purposes of God in grace will never fail.

#### H. The Regenerating Work of the Spirit

By the regenerating work of the Spirit the believer is made a legitimate child of God. God being actually his Father, he is impelled by the Spirit to say, "Abba, Father." Being born of God, he has partaken of the "divine nature," and, on the ground of that birth, he is an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ (John 1:13; 3:3-6; Titus 3:4-6; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 3:9).

The impartation of a nature is an operation so deep that the nature thus imparted is never said to be removed for any cause whatsoever. This statement may be verified from the Scriptures. The vital fact of relationship through birth is never said to be disannulled. Thus, again, the fulfillment of the eternal purpose of God in grace is to be anticipated with unwavering confidence.

#### I. The Spirit's Indwelling

The fact that the Spirit of God now indwells every believer may also be verified from the Word of God (John 7:37-39; Rom. 5:5; 8:9; 1 Cor. 2:12; 6:19; 1 John 3:24).

It is also clearly revealed that the Spirit has come to "abide" in the heart He has once entered. This abiding presence of the Spirit is in answer to the prayer of the Son of God, which prayer cannot be unanswered. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16).

The Christian may "grieve," and "quench" (resist) the Spirit; but there is no Scripture which teaches that the Spirit will be grieved away, or quenched away. So long as the Spirit indwells, the eternal purposes of God in grace are sure, and He must abide forever.

#### J. The Baptism with the Spirit

The Christian has been so vitally united to Christ by the baptism with the Spirit that he is said to be "in Christ," and Christ is said to be "in" the believer.

According to the Scriptures, there is no other meaning to the baptism with the Spirit than this (1 Cor. 12:13). Thus, being placed by the Spirit in organic union with Christ, the believer is related to Christ as the branch is to the vine, or as a member of the human body is to its living head. Because of this most vital union to Christ through the baptism with the Spirit, the believer is said to be a partaker in all that Christ is, all that Christ has done, and all that Christ will ever do. This is a limitless theme since it opens before one the eternal realities of an unchangeable identification with Christ.

One of these eternal realities is "the imputed righteousness of God." This garment in which every believer is now clothed and because of which he is now, and will be forever, accepted before God, is reckoned to him because he is "in Christ":

"That we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21);

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us... righteousness" (1 Cor. 1:30);

"That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness,... but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:8-9).

"In him" we are made near through the blood of Christ, and we are "made accepted in the beloved." There is a righteousness from God which is to all and upon all who believe (Rom. 3:22).

This is the imputed righteousness of God.

It covers the Christian, because he is "in Christ," and God sees him only as Christ is seen. Being "in Christ" he is in God's sight what Christ is. This position is that of being accepted as a living member in the body, of which Christ is the living Head. God sees the member only in the body of His Son. As long, then, as Christ abides and is Himself what He is--the very righteousness of God--so long the member of His body will abide under the imputed righteousness of God. Thus the eternal purposes of God in grace are certain through the baptism with the Spirit.

#### K. The Sealing with the Spirit

Likewise, every believer is now sealed with the Spirit. The immediate value of this accomplishment seems to be more for the sake of God than for the sake of the believer.

This particular ministry is mentioned only three times in the New Testament, but it is of vital import:

"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1:22);

"Having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13, R.V.);

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).

It is also said of Christ that He was sealed of the Father (John 6:27; Cf. Isa. 42:1). The sealing of the believer with the Spirit is "unto the day of redemption." It is the very presence of the Spirit in the heart. He is the Seal. The thing accomplished by His sealing is so vital and enduring that it precludes the possibility of interruption or deflection. Thus, as for reasons given above, the eternal purposes of God in grace are to be received without distrust because of the sealing with the Spirit.

#### L. The New Covenant Made in His Blood

The several great covenants into which God has been pleased to enter with human beings are either conditional covenants, or unconditional covenants.

A covenant is conditional whenever it is made to depend at any point on the faithfulness of people. The law as given by Moses was a conditional covenant. Its terms might be stated in the words, "If you will do good, I will bless you."

On the other hand, a covenant is unconditional when it stands as a simple declaration from God as to what He purposes to do, and without relation to the faithfulness, or unfaithfulness, of people.

The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-4; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8) is an unconditional covenant. It will be seen that God relied at no point on the character or conduct of Abraham. He simply declared to Abraham what He purposed to do. This was based on Abraham's faith; but not on Abraham's faithfulness. The covenant was, and is, assured through the faithfulness of God alone.

In like manner, the New Covenant made in His blood, by which every Christian is now related to God, is an unconditional covenant. It is God's declaration of what He proposes to do for the one who places his faith in Christ. Belief in Christ, it should be noted, is not a condition within the covenant; it is the one condition of entrance into the covenant.

Turning to the great promises of the keeping of God through grace, it will be discovered that they are always unconditional.

These promises are made to depend only on the goodness and faithfulness of God. As fruit of the saved life, good works are closely related to the Christian's life under God, and are the ground of all future rewards; but human works, as important as they are, do not enter as a condition into either the divine plan of salvation by grace, or of divine keeping through grace.

This, too, may be verified from the Word of God.

Three very brief and unconditional promises of eternal security are here given:

"I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37);

"They shall never perish" (John 10:28); and,

"shall not come into condemnation" (John 5:24).

Under such unconditional promises the eternal purposes of God in grace may be received with unwavering confidence.

Certain passages, it should be noted, have been interpreted by some writers to teach that, in spite of this overwhelming body of revelation concerning the purpose and power of God in grace, the Christian who is truly saved might be lost again. The passages are worthy of careful consideration but such consideration cannot be entered into here.

Scripture does not present a contradiction, and, as must be concluded from what has gone before, it will be found upon careful examination of these Scriptures, considering their context and dispensational character, that there is no Scripture which lessens the force, or discredits the revelation, concerning the eternal purposes of God in grace.

Salvation by grace is, then, the indivisible whole of God's redeeming purpose in Christ and that which rescues a sinner from the lowest depths of human standing, and transforms, preserves, and presents that sinner in the highest eternal glory. At infinite cost, God has made Himself free to do all of this. His unmeasured love will suffer Him to do no less in behalf of every one who comes to Him through His Son. Divine grace is God's all. It is the expression of the last degree of His love. In no sense could He exercise a part of His grace. It must be all or none. He must save perfectly for all time and eternity, or not at all. There is no other salvation offered in the Word of God.

Failure to trust in Christ alone is disclosed when salvation is supposed to depend on anything other than believing in Christ, and when security is made to depend at any point whatsoever on human faithfulness.

Men and women are saved and kept in sovereign grace through simple faith in Christ alone. This is the heart of the gospel of divine grace. If any other gospel than this be preached, it must fall under the unrevoked anathema of God (Gal. 1:8-9).

The zeal engendered by modern religious movements which are even accompanied with signs and wonders is no guaranty of sound doctrine. The enthusiasts responsible for these movements almost universally deny that salvation is by simple faith in Christ, and that the grace of God will keep those who are saved as His own forever.

Those who discredit the absolute reign of grace in the salvation and keeping of a soul should ponder well the fact that there is no other way of salvation.

We have thus complete evidence that the eternal purposes of God in grace are unalterable, since

His keeping power through grace is included in every consideration of the principles of grace,

His keeping power is implied in every revelation in which is presented the truth that grace reaches into the coming ages for its consummation, and

His keeping power is indicated by the manifold provisions and safeguards which He has made to that end.

Should His eternal purpose fail by the slightest degree, the object of salvation, the object of the death and resurrection of Christ, and the object of creation itself, will have failed. It shall not fail; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

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