

THE FALSE
DOCTRINE
OF
UNCONDITIONAL
ETERNAL
SECURITY

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Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

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THE FALSE DOCTRINE OF UNCONDITIONAL ETERNAL SECURITY

Background Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

In this teaching book we deal with two very different subjects, both of which need to be illuminated through studying them from a clear Biblical perspective. The subjects of “The False Doctrine of Unconditional Eternal Security” and “Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage” are both clouded by misinformation, controversy and scriptural ignorance, and need the light of God’s Word to be shed upon them so that truth can be revealed in relation to the issues they raise. This we endeavour to do through this teaching book.

At all times we have aimed to present basic Biblical truths concerning these two areas, truths which will serve to enlighten Christians so they may walk in freedom and victory rather than bondage and confusion. And truth is needed in both areas to teach Christians how they may serve God better, how they may gain liberty and freedom in Christ, and how they may be released from bondages arising from past problems and mistakes.

It is for freedom Christ has set us free, and we present these teachings for this very purpose (John 8:31-32).

“. . .The subjects of “The False Doctrine of Unconditional Eternal Security” and “Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage” are both clouded by misinformation, controversy and scriptural ignorance, and need the light of God’s Word to be shed upon them. . .”

All around the world, even in Pentecostal churches, there are two main schools of thought concerning the issue of security for the

Believer. One school of thought is based on the theology called Calvinism, and the other on the theology termed Arminianism.

Calvinism or Reformed Theology is based on the teachings of John Calvin (1509 - 1564), a Protestant theologian of the Reformation. Calvinism emphasizes the sovereignty of God in electing, according to predestination, only some to salvation, based solely on God's free and unmerited grace, sovereignly bestowed. Calvinist teaching is often summarized by the acronym TULIP which stands for:

Total depravity of man - every aspect of man is sinful and he is unable, of himself, to even seek for God.

Unconditional election - God chooses who will be saved - man has no part in this process of selection. This is called predestination.

Limited atonement - Christ therefore died only for those designated to become Believers.

Irresistible grace - man cannot resist the grace of God when He chooses to draw individuals to Himself.

Perseverance of the Saints - the saved can never become unsaved.

Arminianism is based on the teachings of Arminius Jacobus (1560 - 1609), a Dutch Reformed theologian. This theology emphasizes the role of man's free will in salvation, and also teaches that genuinely saved people can forfeit their salvation. Arminianism is usually contrasted with Calvinism.

“ . . . Calvinism emphasizes the sovereignty of God in electing, according to predestination, only some to salvation – Arminianism emphasizes the role of man's free will in salvation. . . ”

At a basic level, Calvinist doctrine upholds at all costs the sovereignty of God, so that He and He alone is given credit for human salvation. This view is called “monergism,” whereby God is the sole party operating to effect human salvation. Arminius' view is

called “synergism,” which indicates that God’s grace initiates the action whereby one becomes saved, but to become effective, grace cooperates with the human response to this grace. In other words, God calls and man responds. For Arminius this meant that the grace sufficient for salvation is conferred on the elect and the non-elect; that is, if they will, they may believe or not believe, may be saved or not be saved. (Reid, D.G., Dictionary of Christianity in America). Calvin taught, on the other hand, that man is unconditionally elected to be either saved or unsaved, and that man’s free will plays no part in his eternal outcome. Man cannot become saved unless God specifically draws him. And on the other side of the coin, man cannot resist the grace of God when He chooses to draw individuals to Himself. In other words, God alone decides who will be saved and who won’t - which is predestination. And those God predetermines to be saved are unable to resist His grace which is bestowed for this purpose.

Predestination is a primary doctrine taught by Calvinism - that God elects or predetermines who will go to heaven or hell. This represents a complete misinterpretation of scripture, for God’s Word states “*Who (God) will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:4). As stated, other doctrines associated with Calvinism which likewise deny and disclaim the free moral agency of man (the innate ability of man to make choices based on his own free will) are those of “irresistible grace” (when God calls a man or woman into His Kingdom, that person will not be able to reject the call) and “the perseverance of the Saints” (Christians cannot fall from grace). Calvinism thus teaches that once a person accepts Jesus as Lord and Saviour, that person is saved forever, no matter what he or she does. In other words, those receiving Christ have unconditional eternal security. Another erroneous doctrine springing from the same source is that of “limited atonement.” In other words, Christ did not die for mankind as a whole, only for those who have been arbitrarily and irreversibly predetermined by God to be saved. Such doctrines make a mockery of scripture, for God desires “*that all should come to repentance*” (2 Peter 3:9), Jesus having died for the sins of the whole world (John 3:16).

As we have learned, Arminian doctrine teaches that man is responsible for his ultimate condition, for he is very much a free-willed agent, without a predetermined eternal existence in either heaven or hell. This view maintains that although God is in total control of His creation and overall Plan, in the scheme of things, each person chooses, as he yields to God or not, his or her ultimate spiritual condition and hence destination. If a man or woman chooses to cooperate with God, by His grace (which is made available to that person through the Holy Spirit), he or she can respond to the Spirit's influence and become saved. God actively seeks the lost. Each person is responsible themselves for seeking the Creator, as revealed through Jesus, and is given a lifetime in which to repent and receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Nothing is predetermined, except the Plan of God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Note: Concerning predestination, those who embrace this doctrine will have a different approach to evangelism than those who understand the validity and importance of man's free will in the process of salvation. Those with a passion for the lost will go to great lengths to present the Gospel to the lost and the dying in order to give them opportunity to accept Christ before they leave this earthly life. Those who believe God has already predetermined the eternal fate of such individuals will be less inclined to go the extra mile, believing that God, in His sovereignty, will deal with the individual, no matter what is done or not done on their behalf. Under the false light of predestination, the responsibility of the Christian to respond on a personal level to the Great Commission is severely minimized. After all, if God will do what He will do no matter what, the necessity for bringing the message of salvation to those around us is greatly diminished.

“ . . .man is responsible for his ultimate condition, for he is very much a free-willed agent, without a predetermined eternal existence in either heaven or hell. . . ”

Before the creation of man, God knew that man would sin and fall. God prepared for this and so designed a Plan of Redemption

that would satisfy His great and perfect justice (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:18-10). According to His foreknowledge, God knew, before the beginning of time, who would respond to His grace and mercy. Through His Plan of Redemption, and His provision of mercy to man, even before man came into existence, God predestinated, or a better word would be “foreordained,” that man would be saved in Christ.

This point must be understood when we examine such scriptures as Ephesians 1:5 which speaks of predestination as follows:

EPHESIANS 1:5 Having predestinated (foreordained) us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will

According to God’s Plan, it was “foreordained,” because of the Fall, for all men to be saved before the beginning of time. For this to happen, God has done His part, but on man’s part, each must repent of sin and accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who died on behalf of all. Predestination in these scriptures is not pointing to people but rather to the “Plan of Salvation. One writer comments on the issue of predestination and the Plan of God in this way:

“...Predestination in these scriptures is not pointing to people but rather to the “Plan of Salvation”...”

“WHAT THE WORD ELECTION MEANS

In Scripture, there is not the slightest hint to an election of God whereby one person is chosen to be saved and another is not. There is no teaching that a man is saved because of God’s choice alone; there must also be the choice of the individual to meet God’s terms of Salvation.

It is the “Plan of God” that is elected, chosen, foreknown, and predestined - not the individual or natural choice of man to conform to that Plan. The Plan is the same for all alike and everyone is invited, chosen, elected, foreknown, and predestined to Salvation, without exception on the sole basis of the individual’s choice and total conformity to the Gospel, simply because Jesus died for all.

Otherwise, one will be lost, and there is no exception, nor can there be an exception to this, the Divine Plan.

God's part in Salvation for all men has been completed, and whoever meets His terms will be saved. The whole program of Salvation is simply that of being Born-Again - becoming a New Creature in Christ (Matthew 18:3; John 3:1-8; 14:17; II Corinthians 5:17-18). And the door is open to all (Revelation 22:17).

The "International Standard Bible Encyclopedia" is widely referred to as "the best Bible Encyclopedia." It says:

"Election never appears as a violation of human will. For never in the Bible is man treated as irresponsible. In the Bible, the relation of the human and Divine wills is inscrutable; the reality of both is assured. Never is the Doctrine presented apart from a moral context"

THE MEANING OF PREDESTINATION

The words "foreordain" and "predestinate" come from the same Greek word, "prooridzo," and means "to determine beforehand."

The meaning of the word "Predestination" means that God's Law is the thing that is predestinated, and not the individual conformity to that Law. All Scripture is clear that men are absolutely free to choose for themselves whether they conform to the predestined plan or not (John 3:16-20; Revelation 22:17, etc.). Those that do conform will enjoy forever the predestined blessings and those who do not will suffer eternally the predestined judgements of the Plan.

This, and this alone, is all that the Bible teaches concerning Predestination in connection with free moral agents, even as we have seen regarding "Election."

In the Plan of God, it was predestinated that Christ would die for the world (Acts 4:28); that some (it is not stated who or which ones) would be saved by believing on Jesus as their Saviour (Romans 8:29-30); that those who would freely choose to be saved were predestinated to be holy and to be Children of God through Christ (Ephesians 1:5); that these Children of God have a predestinated inheritance according to the Eternal Purpose (Ephesians 1:11); that they were predestinated to be enlightened with wisdom kept secret from of old (I Corinthians 2:7); but no statement is made that God's predestined Plan and Purpose includes the free acts of free moral agents nor does it name those who will conform to the Plan.

THE MEANING OF THE WORD FOREKNOWLEDGE

The word “foreknowledge” simply means the Omniscience of God, which means that God has the ability to know any and all things, past, present, and future. He has a Plan, and He knows His Plan from the beginning to the end.

However, having the ability to know what will happen in the future, even as God does, in no way means that the free wills of men are necessarily violated. In fact, according to Scripture, they are not violated at all.”ⁱ

***“...Election never appears as a violation
of human will. . . men are absolutely free
to choose for themselves whether they
conform to the predestined plan or
not. . .”***

We know that God, in His foreknowledge, is clearly aware of who will receive salvation and who won't. Yet His foreknowledge is in no way causative in regard to people's spiritual condition and eternal abode. Only the Lord's grace made available to man and man's response to this grace produces change. Thus when the Bible uses the terms “elect,” “election,” “predestined,” etc., in relation to Christians (e.g. 2 Peter 1:10, Ephesians 1:5, Romans 8:33), it is referring to selection according to God's foreknowledge. This is totally different to the concept of pre-selection by God. Therefore we see in 1 Peter 1:2 the address to the “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. . . .” God knows who will respond to Jesus and become saved. This group then becomes the “elect,” not by the force of God's sovereign will, but according to His foreknowledge. This view, rather than that of salvation which is predetermined, integrates harmoniously with the total body of scripture. God never contradicts Himself, and words such as “election” must be interpreted within the context of the general framework of scripture. One writer comments accordingly:

**“FOREORDINATION (PREDESTINATION) IS ACCORDING
TO FOREKNOWLEDGE**

. . . God's foreknowledge is not casual - in other words, a casual selection of some to be saved and some to be lost. Foreordination is according to foreknowledge, which means that God knew beforehand what would be done and as well, done by the free will of the individual, and not because God forced the issue. "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not . . ." (John 6:64).

God knew all things from the beginning and designed His eternal Plans according to what He knew about men from the beginning. The words "predestination" and "election" in no way alter the fact that God formed His eternal Plans for men according to what He foreknew they would do with their free power of decision."

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness: otherwise you also shall be cut off.

"And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again" (Romans 11:22-23).

Paul, greatest of Theologians, stressed this "if-condition" in dealing with questions about God's purposes of Salvation for Jews and Gentiles.

Paul taught that the Jewish branches were broken off their Covenant tree "because of unbelief." This cause was Jewish unbelief - not a mysterious sovereign predestination. The Gentiles were grafted into the Jewish Covenant tree because of their "Faith." It was all a matter of faith and unbelief, and not that God purposely caused the Jews to be damned and the Gentiles to be saved. Paul answered that by saying "God forbid" (Romans 11:1).

The specified "if condition" lies deep in Paul's Doctrine."

***“. . . God formed His eternal Plans for
men according to what He foreknew they
would do with their free power of
decision. . . ”***

"Here in Romans Chapter 11, Paul gave the "if-condition" its full force. As he made

Salvation conditional in Chapter 11, it follows that he did not teach it was unconditional in Chapter 9. There is Salvation in God's Covenant tree for those who "abide" in it. Paul had no doctrine such as "once in the Tree, always in the Tree."

"The interpretation of unconditional Salvation from Romans Chapter 9 tramples over established interpretive Laws. Our interpretation of conditional Salvation from this Chapter satisfies these Laws. It would be a sad day for Christianity if other Bible doctrines had to be defended with the same method of interpretation that is used by some to defend Calvinistic Predestination.

That which we have given you does not pick and choose from a few Texts in Romans Chapter 9 or elsewhere, but reasons from Paul's complete Unit of Thought in the three Chapters of 9, 10, and 11. The "if-evidence" we saw in this unit overturns our opponent's conclusion drawn from a few selected Verses in Chapter 9. In fact, we could have presented further evidence from Romans. Example:

"For if you live after the flesh, you shall die (be lost): but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live (be saved).

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:13-14).

The "ifs" presented here in these two Verses are obvious for all to see, and clear and plain respecting their meaning.

The "if-evidence" in Romans is convincing for conditional Salvation. A proved fact is a proved fact, and no amount of misinterpretation can make it anything else. Let the Reader examine the evidence. There is always hope when people look fairly at all sides.

(Almost all the material on Unconditional Eternal Security, i.e. "Election, Predestination, Foreknowledge," was provided by Guy Duty, "If Ye Continue - a Study of the Conditional Aspects of Salvation.")" ⁱⁱ

(underlines added)

Arminian doctrine likewise teaches that once a person receives salvation, this spiritual condition is not guaranteed on an unconditional basis. In order to stay saved, one needs God's grace plus an ongoing commitment to follow the teachings of Christ. To state this is not to proclaim or embrace a "Jesus plus" Gospel. Rather

it is to recognize, truthfully, the drawing power of the world, the flesh and the devil. Furthermore, people can become saved and then lapse into an unsaved state again, and this can happen numerous times.

Calvinism on the other hand basically states that once you are saved you will always be saved, no matter what you do or do not do. In other words, it is impossible for Saints to fall from grace. According to this doctrine, those who have received Jesus as Saviour, and then fall into serious sin, are in some vague way “backslidden” but not unsaved. When it becomes obvious that a person who once professed Christ has turned his back on the Lord and is steeped in sin, the conclusion reached is that the person concerned was not saved in the first place. For instance, some Christians know of others who were once on fire for God - winning the lost, praying for the sick and being totally dedicated to Jesus. They have then, at some stage, seen these people fall into serious sin - such as fornication, drunkenness or even homosexuality. However, because of their bias towards the false doctrine of unconditional eternal security (derived from Calvinism), they must then reason and conclude that such people could not have been saved in the first place. This makes no logical or spiritual sense.

***“ . . . This is not to proclaim or embrace a
“Jesus plus” Gospel. Rather it is to
recognize, truthfully, the drawing power
of the world, the flesh
and the devil. . . ”***

In the Bible we see people who were obviously “saved” and then fell away, e.g. Adam, Eve and Saul. And the principle of falling from grace, falling away, or losing the words of life, is clearly presented in the scriptures. If a person teaches from scripture the doctrine of “once saved, always saved,” then that person has read into and extracted from scripture something that was never there in the first place. In other words, they have manipulated scripture to say something it does not, instead of allowing scripture itself to teach! As we search, nowhere do we find that eternal life is an unconditional gift. For example, in Matthew 5:13 we find the words of Jesus:

MATTHEW 5:13 *You are the salt (preservative) of the earth: but if the salt has lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast (thrown) out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

It is obviously possible to slip from being “the salt of the earth” to being useless and without value, worthy only of destruction.

“. . .If a person teaches from scripture the doctrine of “once saved, always saved,” then that person has read into and extracted from scripture something that was never there in the first place. . .”

The Word of God gives us further clear direction concerning the potential of the saved, those possessing the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, to become unsaved. For example:

2 PETER 2:20 *For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.*

2 PETER 2:22 *But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb (Proverbs 26:11), “The dog is turned to his own vomit again”; and “the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”*

And we read in Galatians:

GALATIANS 5:4 *Christ is become of no effect unto you (you are severed from Him), whosoever of you are justified (seek to be justified) by the Law; you are (have) fallen from grace.*

This is quite specific. One cannot “fall from grace” unless one is under grace to begin with. Furthermore:

1 TIMOTHY 4:1 *Now the Spirit speaks expressly (pointedly says), that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing (religious) spirits, and doctrines of devils (inspired by such, with man’s cooperation);*

LUKE 8:13 *They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and (but) these have no root, who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*

1 CORINTHIANS 8:11 *And through your knowledge shall the weak brother (therefore a Christian) perish (speaks of the loss of salvation), for whom Christ died?*

None of these scriptures tell us that once we have received Jesus into our lives, there is no possibility of us becoming unsaved. In fact even a cursory reading of the above scriptures would tell us that the opposite is in fact the case, for we can become “*alienated from Christ*,” we can “*abandon the faith*” and we can “*fall away*.”

FAITH AND UNBELIEF

Martin Luther, the great reformer, who was pivotal to the Great Reformation which took place in the 16th Century, found, or should we say had revealed to him, a pearl of great price, worth more than all the treasures of this world. The pearl which was revealed to his heart was that a man is saved not by works but by GRACE through FAITH (Ephesians 2:8). Then came the Great Reformation and the rise of the Protestant Church, and many were won into the Kingdom through the preaching and teaching of the truth concerning salvation.

If we agree with the thinking, or should we say revelation, that by faith we are saved through God’s grace, then it should not be too difficult to accept that by unbelief we can also lose God’s gift (Hebrews 3:12; Revelation 21:7-8). Therefore we find people who were once saved but have since fallen into unbelief in regard to the

fundamental teachings of Christianity. How can those who then deny the virgin birth and thus the Divinity of Christ, the Resurrection of Christ or the power of Christ's shed Blood and substitutionary death to reconcile us to God, enter heaven on physical death? To say "once saved, always saved" is therefore, in this case, to claim that people who have come to deny the basic tenets of the Christian faith are somehow still saved. This cuts across the most essential and elementary teachings of scripture.

***“...If we agree with the thinking
(revelation), that by faith we are saved
through God's grace, then it should not
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we can also lose God's gift. . .”***

As an example we find Paul addressing the Galatian churches in his epistle. These Believers, having been brought to light and life through the Gospel, were in danger of retreating into legalism because of false teachers advocating the necessity of circumcision for salvation. Paul wrote to them in no uncertain terms:

GALATIANS 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage (to works, legalism, anything apart from the Cross brings one into bondage to the sin nature i.e. salvation by works not faith).

GALATIANS 5:2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing (be of no value to you).

GALATIANS 5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you (you are severed from Him), ***whosoever of you are justified*** (seek to be justified) ***by the Law; you are*** (have) ***fallen from grace.***

If they had declared ceremonial works and thus the Mosaic Law as being a prerequisite for salvation, they would have lost Luther's precious pearl - and thus the blessing of their inheritance as children of God. They would have, indeed, as Paul states, "*fallen from grace.*" In so doing they would not have 'backslidden' in some vague sense but would have become unsaved. The doorway to heaven goes through Calvary. There is no other way, no work of the flesh, no other system of belief - only God's way through His Son - "*not of works lest any man should boast*" (Ephesians 2:9).

God will not add to or mix His message of the Cross with another doctrine (Revelation 22:19). Under the New Testament, only through repentance can God in His mercy and grace apply the Blood of Christ to our sins so as we may be forgiven and cleansed. To add to this, as the Galatians were attempting to do, would cause this message of the Cross to be polluted and so nullified. They, in fact, would then not believe in the Atonement.

“. . . If they had declared ceremonial works and thus the Mosaic Law as being a prerequisite for salvation, they would have lost Luther's precious pearl. . . ”

If such unbelief is allowed to run its course, ultimately one's salvation will be at risk as it was with the Galatians. Paul addressed the fact that they were reverting back to law and so moving away from the grace of the Cross. Left unchecked, the Galatians who were doing so would have turned their back on the Cross, substituting the Law as a means to God. Therefore if unbelief is left to run its race through the Christian not having the proper object of their faith, i.e. the Cross - the Atonement, then ultimately they will forfeit their salvation. This is because man is saved by faith in Christ and His finished work. Only by this means can man be joined to Christ and so be saved.

IS ALL SIN THE SAME ?

We have spoken of being brought to salvation by grace through faith, and the destructive potential of unbelief in people's

lives. This is definitely a sin which can cause Christians to forfeit their salvation through becoming blinded to the very truth which set them free in the first place. However, what can we say about other sin?

The most basic definition of sin is that it is anything that does not conform to the character and nature of God. Therefore sin is much more than just doing wrong in thought, word and deed. Sin is also not doing that which is right, morally and spiritually. Without the energies and graces of the Divine Nature empowering us in our lives, we will sin. Indeed this principle is outlined by Paul:

ROMANS 14:23 . . . whatever does not originate and proceed from faith is sin - that is, whatever is done without a conviction of its approval by God is sinful. (Amp.)

Some believe that all sin is the same, and therefore that stealing a loaf of bread is the same as murder. This makes no logical or spiritual sense, for God is not only holy but just. No, all sin is not the same. We see, in scripture, the principle that there are different degrees of sin. It is found, for example, in Luke 12:47-48, where Jesus speaks of servants who received greater and lesser degrees of punishment for their wrongdoing. Let us now see what the Word of God says in regard to serious sin:

REVELATION 21:7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.

REVELATION 21:8 But the fearful (cowardly), and unbelieving, and the abominable (vile), and murderers, and whoremongers (sexually immoral), and sorcerers (those who practise magic arts), and idolaters, and all liars (all this equates with “the works of the flesh” : Galatians 5:19-21), shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9 Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be

not deceived: neither fornicators (sexually immoral), nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (male prostitutes), nor abusers of themselves with mankind (practising homosexuals),

1 CORINTHIANS 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous (greedy), nor drunkards, nor revilers (slanderers), nor extortioners (swindlers), shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

The sins listed in these verses can be termed “sins unto death” or “mortal sins” because of their potency to keep people out of the Kingdom and to transport those who are in the Kingdom of Light back into the Kingdom of Darkness. Murder, drunkenness, and sexual sins such as adultery and homosexuality, are prime examples. If former Christians fall into these types of sin, God calls them to repent. They can then be restored to salvation, for God calls all sinners to repent so that they may be cleansed by the Blood of the Lamb (1 John 1:9).

“. . .The most basic definition of sin is that it is anything that does not conform to the character and nature of God. . .”

Those who lie and even steal to a “small” degree will not be deprived of a place in heaven provided their sin does not become more and more habitual, and lead to greater and greater wrongdoing. The problem is that any sin which is practised and not repented of, can become a stronghold for the enemy, and lead to further sin in other areas. Remember that it is sin which gives Satan legal ground to afflict people’s lives, and he will take every advantage given to him “*to steal and kill and destroy*” (John 10:10) in every way possible. The word “*liars*” can also be equated with the command found in James 3:14 not to “*lie against the truth.*” This means, in this context, to deny the way of salvation - that being repentance from our sin, and the Lordship of Christ. Many do this simply by being in a state of unbelief. If we lie against the truth of our sinfulness, this will deny us God’s grace which comes to us only

through the Cross. Furthermore, we were not saved so that we could practise sin, but so that we could serve Christ, one of the conditions of salvation being that of following the teachings of Jesus and obeying Him. We see this in Hebrews 5:9:

HEBREWS 5:9 And being made perfect, He (Jesus) became the author of eternal salvation unto all them who obey Him

Those who receive Christ as a ticket to heaven but make no attempt to follow His teachings, usually find that the reality of their salvation diminishes until they become entangled again in the world, thus losing everything they had once gained of eternal value (Mark 4:16-19).

“...The problem is that any sin which is practised and not repented of, can become a stronghold for the enemy, and lead to further sin in other areas. . .”

THE BOOK OF LIFE

In the Book of Revelation, we find various references to “*the Book of Life*” (Revelation 3:5), otherwise known as “*the Lamb’s Book of Life*” (Revelation 21:27). This is the heavenly book in which are recorded the names of those who have received salvation through Jesus, the Lamb of God. The condition for entering heaven is therefore that one’s name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

REVELATION 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire.

REVELATION 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles, neither whatsoever works (commits) abomination, or makes a lie (practises falsehood): but (only) they who (whose names) are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

LUKE 10:20 *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:3 *And I intreat you also, true yokefellow, help those women who laboured with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow labourers, whose names are in the Book of Life.*

However we are also warned in scripture that one's name can be blotted out of the Book of Life.

EXODUS 32:32 *Yet now, if You will forgive their sin - ; and if not, blot me, I pray, out of Your book which You have written.*

EXODUS 32:33 *And the Lord said unto Moses, "Whosoever has sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book."*

PSALM 69:28 *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*

REVELATION 3:5 *He who overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.*

This means once again that we can be saved, and then, through sin (death penalty or mortal sin), forfeit our salvation, and hence have our names blotted out of the Book of Life.

"...The condition for entering heaven is therefore that one's name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. . ."

FREEDOM AND SIN

We find in the Book of Romans that Paul discusses the issue of the freedom of the Christian who is now under grace, and not the stringent code of the Mosaic Law. Nevertheless, as Christians we are not free to live as we please, but we have been freed so that we can yield to righteousness, living day by day in obedience to God. We are responsible under grace for making the choice, day by day, to submit ourselves to Christ's Lordship, not to gratify the desires of the flesh. Accordingly, Paul directs us:

ROMANS 6:13 Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin (the sin nature) but yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

ROMANS 6:14 For sin (the sin nature) shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the Law, but under grace.

ROMANS 6:15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under grace? God forbid.

It is by the grace that has been made available to us through the Cross (the Atonement) that we are now able to live righteously. In other words, to live in God's will we must do so by His strength which comes to us through His Divine Nature energizing our human nature. By this means we can believe and trust our Heavenly Father in all things. By His empowerment, we can both desire to do right and then act on that desire. We can then live our life by grace - in fact we must do so if we are to please the Father and avoid sin. Alternatively, to live our life under law is to try to please the Father by works done through willpower alone. This is nothing but religion, man's way of pleasing God, which negates the power of the Cross in our lives. Christianity is not really about do's and don'ts, regulations, rules and the keeping of them to gain God's acceptance and approval. Christianity is about relationship - Divine connection and empowerment. It is about love and obedience through His power working within us, His children, so that we may will and do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

ROMANS 6:16 Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

The free will of man is a sacred scriptural principle, each man and woman having been given the free will to determine their own destiny. And once having found Christ, the Christian is free to yield to righteousness or sin on a daily basis. If we choose to yield to serious sin in an habitual way, we will again become servants of sin, as Romans 6:16 describes. It is really impossible to read this verse (which is speaking to the saved) and continue to believe that Christians cannot backslide and eventually forfeit their salvation, having transferred their allegiance once again, through their actions of sin, to the ruler of the Kingdom of Darkness. So once again we can perceive, through scripture, that our salvation is not unconditional, and that grace, for Christians, cannot be taken for granted on an unconditional basis. We are responsible always for staying in Christ and serving Him as Lord. As we yield to Him, we receive the grace and power to do so.

“ . . . The free will of man is a sacred scriptural principle and the Christian is free to yield to righteousness or sin on a daily basis. . . ”

CAN A MAN BE SAVED AGAIN (AND AGAIN) ?

YES - true Biblical repentance will bring the saving presence of God back into the life of a person who has fallen back into darkness and lost their salvation. People find it hard to reconcile this idea with the widespread teaching, derived from teachers such as E.W.Kenyon, that when we receive Christ, our spirit is re-created. Quite often, in fact, the doctrine of unconditional eternal security is based on this teaching of the re-created spirit, re-created in the image of God. If this is the case, how then could this perfect re-created spirit become polluted or be “un-created”?

The truth of the matter is that our spirit, at salvation, is not re-created but regenerated. Each person has been created in the image of God, but the pollution of death has invaded and encompasses the spirit of man. In order to be reunited with God, we must be regenerated. This means that our spirit must be washed, in a legal sense, by the Blood of Jesus and therefore cleansed of all spiritual pollution by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is called “*the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit*” (Titus 3:5). Therefore our spirit is not re-created but washed and surrounded by God’s saving presence. In this way we are born again and thus restored to God. Our spirit is bathed in the Light of God and is protected by His enveloping presence.

***“ . . . YES - true Biblical repentance will
bring the saving presence of God back
into the life of a person who has fallen
back into darkness and lost their
salvation . . . ”***

When people deliberately commit death-penalty sins, God’s Spirit departs and their spirit returns to a state of spiritual death (spiritual darkness). If people repent and receive Christ back into their lives, this pollution is again removed, as God’s presence comes to surround their spirit again. In this way they are restored once again in Christ to a position of righteousness. This can happen more than once during a person’s lifetime, but what counts as far as their eternal destiny is concerned is their spiritual condition at the point of physical death. Indeed whether we go to live in heaven or hell for eternity is determined by our relationship with the Saviour at the point of physical death (Ezekiel 18:21-24, 26-28). This is quite clearly seen in the scriptures.

WHAT ABOUT CHRISTIANS WHO STRUGGLE WITH SERIOUS SIN?

***EPHESIANS 2:8 For by grace are you saved through
faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:***

EPHESIANS 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

There is no such thing as a Believer who continues to trust Christ and His atoning work at the Cross “falling” from grace. However when we deny or forsake Christ’s Lordship, therefore denying His sacrifice for our sin, at that point we will forfeit our salvation. In other words, this takes place when one no longer trusts Christ and what He did at the Cross on one’s behalf - for this is the basis and foundation of the Believer’s salvation.

How does this pertain to a Christian who is in bondage to sin because they do not know much about the New Covenant and the Blood which delivers and cleanses?

As long as they are trusting Christ for their salvation through repentance and His Blood, regardless of their problems, and great they may be, they are saved. This is even so if this person is in bondage to very serious sin - yet is attempting to gain victory.

An example is as follows:

An alcoholic or drunkard, having accepted Christ as their Saviour, still battles with the demon drink to the point of failing in their efforts, even dying in a drunken stupor - but remaining saved. How could this be so? It is so because the alcoholic trusted Christ for the salvation of their soul. Yes his body was destroyed because of the bondage of alcoholism, but he died trusting Christ, attempting to gain the victory.

***“...There is no such thing as a Believer
who continues to trust Christ and His
atoning work at the Cross “falling” from
grace. . .”***

Does this mean that all alcoholics who accept Christ should not worry about their drinking? God forbid, as scripture tells us (Romans 6:15). However, Paul also said, where sin abounds grace does much more abound (Romans 5:20). This means in this New Testament Age that God by His grace can set the captive free of all bondages - sin and its effects. The alcoholic, after salvation (and this applies to all Saints with any bondage, whether of the body or mind), must seek

God's grace to overcome all manner and forms of sin. Then as long as the Saint maintains their trust in Christ and His finished work at the Cross on their behalf, and continues to repent of their sin, they will stay saved.

Of course if a person accepts Jesus as Lord and Saviour, in a few weeks time to then return willingly and carelessly or wantonly to their former sin-filled, heathen lifestyle, through their action and lack of action, they will have turned their back on Christ and what He achieved for them at Calvary.

It is the intent of the heart that is measured by God. Even if people fail to overcome bondages, if the intent of their heart is to go God's way, this keeps their salvation intact, even in the face of failure.

Christians have an opportunity each day to accept God's way or not accept God's way. However it is not so much about choosing to sin or not to sin. Rather, for the Christian it is all about choosing God and His prescribed way, the way of the Cross. This is because the Cross has afforded to every Saint the power by which they can live for God. Sometimes we need to be delivered from bondage for this to happen, but it is also through the Cross that our deliverance has already been won. Therefore once again the answer is found at the Cross - where Jesus paid the price for the healing of our spirit, mind and body - and the intent of our heart is the key.

***“...Even if people fail to overcome
bondages, if the intent of their heart is to
go God's way, this keeps their salvation
intact, even in the face of failure. . .”***

Satan, physical addiction or a mind that is in torment may keep a person in a bondage that willpower cannot overcome. Many Christians know this only too well because they repeatedly try to overcome sin in their lives in their own strength - and fail, time and time again. More is needed than willpower and self-effort. We must seek, find and embrace God's grace in order to overcome. The Cross has afforded this grace so that every Saint can be an overcomer through Him Who loves us and saves us from all sin. Indeed this is the promise:

1 JOHN 5:4 For whatsoever (whosoever) is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith (which is God-given).

1 JOHN 5:5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes (and trusts) that Jesus is the Son of God?

Nevertheless, many Christians all around the world are hating what they are doing, the sin they are committing, while lacking the power in themselves to stop. In his early Christian experience even Paul had problems in living the Christian life (Romans 7:15), until he found the grace of God to do so (Romans Ch.6). Once again, as we yield to the Holy Spirit, determining to go God's way and not ours (1 Corinthians 10:13), the energies and graces of His Divine Nature will empower us to overcome sin in His strength, not ours.

Let us be clear in regard to the sin that a Christian commits. Whether in ignorance or not, sin is sin and with it comes a cost. The Christian is always responsible for what he does or does not do. With all sin there is a curse of some description and only the Blood of the Lamb can remove that curse as the Christian repents (1 John 1:9). All sin will to some extent frustrate God's grace by which we are to live our life. In other words, while we hold onto our darkness behind a closed door through an unrepentant heart, the Light we need cannot reach us.

“. . . Let us be clear in regard to the sin that a Christian commits. Whether in ignorance or not, sin is sin and with it comes a cost. . . ”

Be assured that sin is a spiritual problem, and if a man puts his trust wholly in a doctor to treat the physical or mental problem that has resulted from sin, the real problem is not dealt with. As the Word tells us:

JAMES 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil (as a point of contact to release our faith) in the name of the Lord:

JAMES 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

JAMES 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Sin has to be dealt with, not just the physical or mental problem it has caused. When the Saint looks wholly and solely either to himself, humanistic psychology, or any other human effort to be delivered from his problems (and his sin), then clearly this man or woman walks away from the power of the Cross.

If this be the case, then the problem is really one of unbelief in God's Word and God's answer to sin. We can see that many Christians do not understand and so do not have a proper focus concerning the atoning sacrifice and the precious Blood of Calvary that would set them completely free. This is because many don't bother to study God's Word and this prevents the Holy Spirit revealing to them God's wonderful delivering graces which have been afforded to them through the Atonement. Man needs, with God's empowerment, to believe that which the Creator has said and done. Unbelief blinds and ultimately blinds completely. To stop this downward spiritual spiral, the Saint must make Christ the centre of their life, with His will being the preeminent desire and goal. It must be all about what Jesus would do and say at every turn. The Word of God must be at the centre of every decision and so the holy filter of our every thought (Hebrews 4:12).

To have a lukewarm Christian existence, straddling the world and Christianity, will usually result in a gradual deadening to the things of God as unbelief grows and flourishes. This along with false or ineffectual, watered-down, compromised teaching usually produces people who, after a period of time, become easily blinded and deceived. They may continue to profess to be Christians but

sadly they reach the point where they no longer know Jesus, having become deadened spiritually and cold to the things of God. Unless their trust shifts back to the Cross for their salvation, they will, after this life, be turned away from heaven to enter into a place of everlasting torment (Matthew 7:21-23; 25:11-12). As we have said, unbelief is a spiritual force which blinds, and ultimately blinds completely (2 Corinthians 4:4).

“...To have a lukewarm Christian existence, straddling the world and Christianity, will usually result in a gradual deadening to the things of God as unbelief grows and flourishes. . . .”

So we must be careful to cling to the Cross of Christ as the focus and foundation of our salvation, and by the Lord's graces to seek to please Him day by day and walk in His will. In all things the Cross (the Atonement) must be the object of our faith, and we must guard our heart by heeding the direction given in His holy Word:

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14 Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness?

2 CORINTHIANS 6:17 “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate,” says the Lord, “and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

2 CORINTHIANS 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,” says the Lord Almighty (Jehovah Shaddai, the all-sufficient One).

2 CORINTHIANS 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

WHAT SINS WILL POLLUTE OUR SPIRIT AGAIN ?

We have discussed the principle of not all sin being the same. All sin is rebellion against God's laws (1 John 3:4). However while all sin will interfere with our fellowship with God, some sin will actually break our relationship with God and cause us to become unsaved. Such sins as murder, adultery, fornication, drunkenness, homosexuality and idolatry are "sins unto death." These sins will, as we have said, when committed deliberately, cause the unrepentant Christian's spirit to again become polluted and the presence of the Holy Spirit to depart from them. This allows spiritual death to claim that person once again as they re-enter the Kingdom of Darkness.

REVELATION 21:7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

REVELATION 21:8 But the fearful (cowardly), and unbelieving, and the abominable (vile), and murderers, and whoremongers (sexually immoral), and sorcerers (those who practise magic arts), and idolaters, and all liars (all this equates with "the works of the flesh" [Galatians 5:19-21]), shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9 Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators (sexually immoral), nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (male prostitutes), nor abusers of themselves with mankind (practising homosexuals),

1 CORINTHIANS 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous (greedy), nor drunkards, nor revilers (slanderers), nor extortioners (swindlers), shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16 Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

1 CORINTHIANS 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Sincere repentance which allows God to apply the Blood of Calvary to our sin, and recommitment to the Lord will reverse the situation. However it makes no sense to believe that a former Christian, when entangled by and willingly committing such serious sin, is still saved and bound for glory - unless they repent and let the Blood of the Lamb wash them clean.

“ . . . While all sin will interfere with our fellowship with God, some sin will actually break our relationship with God and cause us to become unsaved. . . ”

OUR ETERNAL SECURITY

Our eternal security is based on the foundation of the sinless life of our Saviour, His sacrificial death and His glorious Resurrection. We enter into eternal life by grace through faith, and we continue in spiritual life, as opposed to spiritual death, as we continue in Christ and He remains in us. Scripture gives us the following assurance:

JOHN 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me:

JOHN 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.

JOHN 10:29 My Father, Who gave them to Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand.

We have a wonderful inheritance, and no one is able to snatch us from our Father's hand. This is marvellous news, our glorious assurance of salvation. Nevertheless we must stay in the fold with Jesus as our Shepherd.

Scripture tells us that He will never leave us or forsake us (Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 13:5). However we also learn from scripture that God cannot fellowship with the sinner, and this includes someone who returns to their former ways, their pre-conversion lifestyle (2 Corinthians 6:14-18, 1 John 1:5-6). So we need to recognize that while the Lord will never abandon us, our salvation can be lost through our own hand. If we abandon our faith, lose the saving knowledge of Christ and cease to believe in His work of redemption, we will also lose our right to eternal life. We must continue in Christ - continue to have faith in Him, His Blood sacrifice, His virgin birth and His Resurrection. To let go of this is to let go of God, and is, in fact, to reject His Son and His free gift of salvation. Alternatively, if we commit sin unto (spiritual) death and have no desire to repent, then indeed we have chosen of our own free will to violate the conditions of the Covenant under which we remain saved. Therefore a former Christian who has sold himself to mortal (death penalty) sin has taken himself out of the Kingdom of God and once again submitted to Satan as his master and lord. In a similar way, Adam and Eve sold out their birthright through sinning and became enslaved to the father of death.

“. . . If we abandon our faith, lose the saving knowledge of Christ and cease to believe in His work of redemption, we will also lose our right to eternal life. . . “

Some Christians commit deliberate mortal sin, however, and continue to believe, naively, that they are still saved. They have not recognised that the Holy Spirit no longer dwells within, and their spirit is again polluted and in darkness. This particular sad state is addressed in scripture:

MATTHEW 7:21 Not every one who says unto Me, “Lord, Lord,” shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of My Father Who is in heaven.

MATTHEW 7:22 Many will say to Me in that day, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? and in Your name have cast out devils? and in Your name done many wonderful works?”

MATTHEW 7:23 And then will I profess unto them, “I never knew you: depart from Me, you who work iniquity.”

The word “never” on the surface of things would seemingly indicate that these people professing to belong to Jesus had never ever done so. However the sense of the verse may also indicate that these people had at one time received salvation but had not gone on to really know the Lord through fellowship and relationship. From this half-hearted approach to their faith and commitment to Christ, they had then lost the salvation they so readily claimed as being evidenced by former works. Unbelief, deception and darkness had enveloped them until, in ignorance of their plight, they had become unsaved. The Word gives us the boundaries of salvation and the safeguard required:

2 TIMOTHY 2:19 . . . the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His.” And, “Let every one who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

Thus we can say that there is a doctrine of ETERNAL SECURITY contained within the Word of God. However nowhere, using proper hermeneutical principles of Biblical interpretation, can the so-called doctrine of UNCONDITIONAL ETERNAL SECURITY be found. It simply is not there. Paul even warned the Corinthians and this applies just as much to us today that salvation depends on the message of the Cross being stored in our heart through faith and kept in focus. Otherwise people can believe in

vain, losing their salvation because they fall away from the great foundational truths of the Gospel:

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand;

1 CORINTHIANS 15:2 By which also you are saved, if you keep in memory (continue to believe) what I preached unto you, unless (otherwise) you have believed in vain (this speaks of believing then drawing back from these beliefs, causing the loss of one's salvation).

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

1 CORINTHIANS 15:4 And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

Again in Hebrews we find a clear warning to Believers against losing their salvation:

HEBREWS 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

HEBREWS 3:13 But exhort one another daily (share/preach the Cross), while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened (drawn away from God) through the deceitfulness of sin.

HEBREWS 3:14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if (and only if) we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end (if our confidence remains steadfast in Christ).

One writer comments in regard to this issue of so-called unconditional eternal security: “Christians can have Eternal Security if they claim it on God’s terms, not on the terms of man.

Any hope of Salvation, while living in rebellion against God’s Laws, is futile. Any teaching that holds out a promise of Salvation and Eternal Security, while living in sin against God - is false and Satanic.

***“. . . Christians can have Eternal Security
if they claim it on God’s terms, not on the
terms of man. . . ”***

I have witnessed too many funerals where Preachers preached someone into Heaven, who in fact was not living for God when they died, and had not been living for Him for many years, and making no pretense at doing so. In fact, they did not know the Lord, which was obvious to all. And yet, they were preached into Heaven, because at some point in the past it was claimed that they had accepted the Lord, etc. Whether they had or had not, is anyone’s guess. However, to say a person is right with God, who for years has lived a life apart from God, making absolutely no pretense, is fallacious indeed! In other words, it is Satanic!

Scores of people sitting and listening to such sermons, which incidentally are preached everyday somewhere, are made to think that whatever they are doing now and hereafter does not matter, if they had made some type of decision for Christ some time in the past.

The Doctrine of Unconditional Eternal Security, is a damnable Doctrine! It has caused more people to be eternally lost, than possibly any other lie propagated by Satan, at least within the Church.

This Doctrine in no way nurtures Godly living or closeness to Christ. In no way does it create a desire for a person to walk closer to God. However, it definitely does give individuals a licence to sin, with them erroneously thinking that if they have once been saved, then it really does not matter, at least as far as their soul’s Salvation is concerned, what they do thereafter.

This Doctrine is unscriptural, and as such, it has drawn no person closer to God, but rather the opposite.

Multiple millions at this very moment, who make no pretense of living for God, and are openly living a life of sin, erroneously believe their soul is saved, because some Preacher told them so, irrespective of their lifestyle. Their hope is based on a fool's hope, and as such, at least if they die in this condition, they will be eternally lost.”ⁱⁱⁱ

(underlines added)

***“...The Doctrine of Unconditional
Eternal Security, is a damnable
Doctrine! It has caused more people
to be eternally lost, than possibly any
other lie propagated by Satan, at least
within the Church. . .”***

As we have said, no man can pluck a Christian from the Father's hand. But if he or she so desires, by their own volition, they can take themselves out of the Father's hand.

Let us therefore not fall into the trap of judging those who have fallen away as never having been saved in the first place. This is a gross error normally perpetuated to back up the erroneous doctrines of predestination and unconditional eternal security.

On this basis, Christians, the Lord would encourage us to be like the father of the prodigal son. We should welcome back those who were once in the Kingdom but have slipped away to drink from the darkened waters of sin, even to the corruption of their spirit. We should welcome them back, recognizing the power of the Blood of Jesus to cleanse them and restore them to salvation (1 John 1:9). As Jesus said, “*And he that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out*” (John 6:37). We should do likewise.

**ASSURANCE OF SALVATION (OFFICIAL AG POSITION
PAPER) USA ASSURANCE of SALVATION**

**(ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL PRESBYTERY IN SESSION
AUGUST 5 & 7, 2017)**

In view of the biblical teaching that the security of the believer depends on a living relationship with Christ (John 15:6); in view of the Bible's call to a life of holiness (Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 1:16); in view of the clear teaching that a man may have his part taken out of the Book of Life (Revelation 22:19); and in view of the fact that one who believes for a while can fall away (Luke 8:13); The General Council of the Assemblies of God disapproves of the unconditional security position which holds that it is impossible for a person once saved to be lost. (Bylaws, Article IX.B.1)

The Assemblies of God affirms the biblical teaching that people enter into a personal saving relationship with Christ through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, who draws them to repentance and faith in Christ. Jesus described this initial salvation experience as "new birth" (John 3:3–6),¹ as did the apostle Peter (1 Peter 1:3). Likewise, Paul wrote, "He saved us through the washing of rebirth [palingenesias, "rebirth" or "regeneration"] and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5), also using "new creation" for this transformative saving event (2 Corinthians 5:17).

At the time of the believer's new birth, theologically designated "regeneration," the Holy Spirit comes into them, bringing assurance of forgiveness of sins, spiritual renewal, and a personal relationship with God. "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Romans 8:16). This dynamic relationship with God by His Spirit, initiated and sustained through faith, undergirds the security of the believer.

**SALVATION MAY BE FORFEITED OR ABANDONED BY
REJECTING CHRIST**

God, as a loving Heavenly Father, does not desire that any person fall away from the salvation He has graciously provided in Christ. "Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

But, the Bible also teaches that believers who have accepted Christ as Savior can be lost if they repeatedly disregard the teachings of Scripture, continue to resist the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and finally reach the point where they have turned away from their Savior. Jesus makes that point in the Parable of the Sower where, speaking of some who have become believers, He said, "They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away" (Luke 8:13). The writer of Hebrews wrote soberly of believers "who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age and who have fallen away" (Hebrews 6:4–6).

The apostle Peter warned, "If they [new believers] have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them" (2 Peter 2:20–21). The Bible surely warns against the possibility of forfeiting, or abandoning, salvation, but it never ceases to offer hope for anyone who will respond to the appeal of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' invitation is without qualification. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). The apostle Paul, with great assurance, declared, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). So Christians should never prematurely conclude that a struggling brother or sister is irredeemable. If the father did not give up on the lost son (Luke 15:11–31), neither should the Church of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

The Christian faith is one of joyous, victorious life in Christ, in which spiritually transformed believers are informed by God's Word and energized by His Spirit. Christian faith does entail obedience to the commands of Christ and responsible participation in the life of His church and the broader community. It does sometimes lead through sufferings of various kinds. But perseverance in faith is certain as believers remain in relationship with their Lord. With great assurance, Paul's words remind us of our Lord's unflagging commitment that "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).^{iv}

Let us therefore remember, as we consider the issues of life and death, heaven and hell, eternal security and eternal damnation, that we too were once sinners, bound for hell and everlasting torment. Let us therefore pray for the backslidden, for circumstances to restore them to spiritual life, recognizing that "There but for the grace of God go I." To Him be the glory, forever and ever, Amen.

May you have the victory in Christ. Amen!

For further information or teaching material to help you grow in the Christian faith, please visit:

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- i S.B.C., II Corinthians, Vol. 14, pages 232-233.
- ii S.B.C., II Corinthians, Vol.14, taken from pgs 240-241.
- iii S.B.C., John, pgs.279-280.
- iv A.O.G. USA Position Paper 2017.