

# EXCERPTS FROM

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## THE LINK

North Road Chapel (Evangelical)

BIDEFORD

# Internet Edition

## ETERNAL SALVATION

Over the past twelve months we have set out in this magazine the Biblical doctrine of salvation, and this can be summarized in five words. "SALVATION IS OF THE LORD" (Jonah 2:9). In salvation, as in all things GOD IS SOVEREIGN.

Further to the assertion of the Scriptural teaching relating to the ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY of God in salvation much reference has been made to those who do not accept this doctrine in its entirety, but have become side-tracked by the deficient and often heretical interpretations which have been propounded throughout history, namely, those who preach 'DEPRAVITY', but not as being TOTAL; rather that man has an ability still to turn to God if he so wills. 'ELECTION' may not be entirely dismissed by such, but it is held to be conditional upon man's decision. 'ATONEMENT' is presented as having been made for all men, and the CALL of the Holy Spirit in regenerating power can be accepted or rejected at the sinner's will. When carefully examined, this theory amounts to the fact that SALVATION IS OF MAN; for in the final analysis MAN DECIDES IT.

The origins of these beliefs have been briefly explained in previous issues of THE LINK. They stem in the main from the teachings of Pelagius, Cassian and Arminius, with smatterings of Amyraldus and Baxter; but broadly speaking it is ARMINIANISM. However, it must be pointed out that within this broad theological camp there are considerable variations, and this is seen yet again in that which is the subject of this article.

The question is frequently asked by many people: IS SALVATION ETERNAL? Is it possible for one born of God to so fall from grace as to be lost at the last?

Arminianism teaches that just as man's will is all important in initial belief, so is it in the Christian life, and that it is possible to be once saved yet lose one's salvation, as indicated in the following Confession:

"It is an inseparable part of the Arminian system, following necessarily from their views of election,

of the design and effect of Christ's death, and sufficient grace and free-will, that those who were once justified and regenerated may, by neglecting grace and grieving the Holy Spirit, fall into such sins as are inconsistent with true justifying faith; and continuing and dying in the same, may consequently finally fall into perdition"

'CONFESSIONS OF THE REMONSTRANTS'

A. A. Hodge.

It is fully recognized that not all sections of Arminianism hold and teach this, for many have added to their FREE-WILL theory that which they term ETERNAL SECURITY. Such terminology when used within the Biblical framework of the doctrine of Salvation is absolutely correct, but within the context of other Arminian tenets, it is a nonsense, for it implies that man can opt into salvation yet he cannot opt out. Of his own DEPRAVED WILL he can DECIDE to get into the kingdom, but once in he cannot DECIDE to get out: this, surely, is anomalous!

There can be no doubt whatsoever but that Arminian FREE-WILL preaching with this so-called ETERNAL SECURITY tacked on has deluded and deceived many.

Christ is portrayed as having made complete satisfaction to God for ALL MEN and it is up to the individual to avail himself of that salvation\* it rests with him entirely as to whether or not he will decide to have it. So, of his own WILL and by his personal CHOICE an individual is said to DECIDE for Christ. Such an one is then immediately given that which is termed the 'ASSURANCE OF SALVATION'. He is told that he is now saved; God has given him eternal life; he will never perish; he is perfectly justified at the bar of Divine justice; once saved - always saved; henceforth he is ETERNALLY SECURE, and various verses of Scripture are given to provide the proof.

All this is perfectly true within the context of the TRUE DOCTRINE of salvation; indeed, it is part of that very doctrine, but when such vital truths are given within the framework of FREE-WILLISM it can, indeed it has, put many in a false position. In missions and so-called gospel campaigns many there are who have been

given words of assurance of salvation, but in the course of time it became apparent that such words never really applied to them. One of the classic verses used is: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power (or authority) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12).

People are told: "you have decided for Christ; you now believe on the Lord Jesus; you have received Him as your Saviour; then you are a child of God; an authorized member of His family". Is this the truth of this portion of Scripture? Does it not go on to say: "Which are BORN, not of blood, nor of the WILL of the flesh, nor of the WILL OF MAN but of GOD".

It is the sovereign power of God that regenerates the spiritually dead, and imparts new life. It is not of man's CHOICE or WILL, and only when truly BORN OF GOD can such be given the assurance that they are children of God and that they have eternal salvation.

What then is the Biblical teaching? Are TRUE BELIEVERS ETERNALLY SECURE? The simple answer is YES! but one is not to be trite in this, for there is much underlying teaching on the subject.

Great theologians of the past coined the term 'THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS'. This too needs to be defined carefully, for it is liable to be misunderstood. However, when fully explained it is very meaningful and conveys the truth in a most comprehensive way. What does it mean? Able men of God have stated it thus:

"Perseverance is that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of Divine grace that is begun in the heart, is continued and brought to completion. It is because God never forsakes His work that believers continue to stand to the very end".

L. Berkhof

"Those who are truly regenerated, effectually called, and really converted, and internally sanctified by the Spirit and grace of God, shall persevere in grace to the end and shall be

everlastingly saved; they shall never finally if and totally fall, so as to perish everlastingly".

John Gill.

"They whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved"

William Cunningham.

"The doctrine does not affirm certainty of SALVATION because we have ONCE believed, but certainty of PERSEVERANCE IN HOLINESS if we have TRULY believed".

A.A.Hodge.

A mere profession is not of itself sufficient. If a true work of grace has been wrought in the heart then it will be evidenced in the life: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt.7:20).

The Bible teaches that there are those who profess the faith and yet are not of the faith; such as have a name to live yet are dead (Cf. Rev.3:1). "They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, ... but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2:19). "Many will say to me in that day Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity" (Matt.7:22-23).

If a person is effectually called of the Holy Spirit it will soon become apparent, for such an one is CONVERTED: the word means CHANGED. They will give diligence to make their calling and election sure (Cf. 2 Peter 1:10). That is, the reality of their salvation will be evidenced. It will be evinced convincingly. On this John Calvin has ^ made the following comments:

"God effectually calls whom He has pre-ordained to life in His secret counsels before the foundation

of the world; and He also carries on the perpetual course of calling through grace alone. But as He has chosen us, and calls us for this end, that we may be pure and spotless in His presence; purity of life is not improperly called the evidence and proof of election, by which the faithful may not only testify to others that they are the children of God, but also confirm themselves in this confidence ... The import is that the children of God are distinguished from the reprobate by this mark that they live a Godly and holy life, because this is the design and end of election".

As has been previously stated, these varying tenets of the Faith are inseparable, they stand or fall together, for they are A UNIT of truth, EFFECTUAL CALLING presupposes ELECTION and the result of the call is CONVERSION - a CHANGED life. This will be followed by PERSEVERANCE in the paths of righteousness; "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph.2:10).

God did not elect men and call them by His Spirit just to accept Christ, but that there should be this ongoing walk, and a life of faith, persevering unto the end, and to be saved to the uttermost. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt.10;22) - "The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger" (Job 17:9).

This is the hallmark of grace. The proof of a genuine conversion is that the person shall, 'hold on his way'. He will not go back, turn aside, or stand still but 'press toward the mark' (Cf. Phil.3;14). 'Running with patience the race ... looking unto Jesus' (Cf. Heb.12:1-2). Those who thus look off unto Jesus and wait upon the Lord, renew their strength; they become 'stronger and stronger'; 'they run and are not weary, they walk and are not faint' (Cf. Isaiah 40:31). They are seen to be those who are going on 'to perfection' (Cf. Heb.6:1). "Perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor.7:1).

If these distinguishing features are missing, and there is no evidence of change; no striving after holiness; NO

PERSEVERANCE, then, we are not to speak of preservation or ETERNAL SECURITY, for such persons might well be still in the: "Call of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:23). They are 'goats' not 'sheep'. It is the sheep for whom Christ died, and it is those sheep who are effectually called; they follow, and they have eternal life, and ONLY THEY have eternal security. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27-28).

The sheep for whom the Good Shepherd gave His life were KNOWN by Him. Each one was chosen by God and given to Christ in eternity - ELECTION. He gave His life for those sheep - PARTICULAR REDEMPTION. They hear His voice - EFFECTUAL CALLING. They follow Him - PERSEVERANCE. He gives unto them eternal life and they shall never perish - ETERNAL SECURITY.

These are the great principles of the DOCTRINE OF SALVATION. Each is a vital part of the whole and must ever be kept together. It is only when held and taught in their entirety that the truth is presented. To fail to teach that salvation is ETERNAL is to deny the truth; to say nothing of the dishonour done to God.

It is equally dishonouring to Him, as well as deceiving and leading many into a false position to attach the truth of ETERNAL SECURITY to that which is in fact 'ANOTHER GOSPEL'.

Eternal salvation pertains only to the ELECT. Thus the apostle Peter says that those who are: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God" and "Begotten again unto a lively hope" are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:2-5).

By almighty power the true child of God is preserved and kept so that he ultimately enters into the final blessedness of salvation in glory. It can be no other, for this is the eternal purpose. It is according to the everlasting covenant which is 'ordered in all things and sure'. When God established His covenant with His

people in Christ it was SURE and ETERNALLY SECURE. None that figure in that eternal document will ever perish: "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee" (Isaiah 54:10).

When the Holy Spirit comes upon an elect soul who is 'dead in trespasses and in sins' that person is regenerated and born again; new life is imparted; it is spiritual life; ETERNAL LIFE. This life never dies. "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 5s24). This life CANNOT be lost: if so, how could it be ETERNAL? But again, it must be emphasized, such life will bear fruit after its kind.

SPIRITUAL LIFE will produce SPIRITUAL FRUIT. "The root of the righteous yieldeth fruit" (Prov.12: 12). The life which is given us at regeneration is rooted in Christ, that is why it is ETERNAL. In consequence of the ROOT there is bound to be FRUIT. Christ is certain to be manifested in the life of one who has been born of God; it can be no other. This verse in Proverbs chapter twelve infers that if there are no FRUITS of righteousness then quite obviously the ROOT has not been implanted, and such would indicate a false profession.

There are, sad to say, many who come into this category, as is so clearly set out by the Lord himself in Matthew 13:20-21 and Luke 8:13: "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no ROOT, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away". Though the word be preached to them, their hearts are of stone; there is no sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in taking away that stony heart and replacing it with a heart of flesh (Cf. Ezek.36:26). NO EFFECTUAL CALL, consequently NO ROOT implanted within, although 'they received the word with joy'. Many do this. Herod heard John gladly, but later took off his head (Cf. Mark 6:20 & 27). Also, in Mark 12:37 we read of the Lord, that the common people



heard him gladly, yet, after a very short space of time they were saying» "away with Him, crucify Him". Not a few have listened with favour to the preaching of the Word of God, and there are those who find an interest and may claim to have a certain gratification in subscribing to religious exercises. Others have expressed joy after making a profession at an evangelistic campaign, but alas it has so often to be said, there is NO ROOT. It is the joy of the hypocrite - FALSE. Their faith was an ACT of man; a belief of the WILL of man; it was not the faith of God's elect, for that faith is of the same source as grace; it is THE GIFT OF GOD (Cf. Eph. 2:8). This is a faith which is not a mere assent or decision, rather is it a 'principle' sovereignly implanted within, which not only saves and justifies a person, but from henceforth enables that person to live by FAITH. "The just shall LIVE by faith" (Heb.10:38).

This Scripture continues» "But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." The man who draws back was never justified; he had no true faith; no true work of grace in the heart; consequently, NO PERSEVERANCE. His was not a belief to the salvation of the soul.

To sum up:- The answer to the question, ARE BELIEVERS STERN ALLY SECURE? is, within the context of the teaching of God's Holy Word, YES! That is, that man of himself is TOTALLY DEPRAVED: God has unconditionally ELECTED every believer\* Christ has made ABSOLUTE ATONEMENT for all the elect. All of these will be EFFECTUALLY CALLED by the Holy Spirit in their generations. Such will PERSEVERE in faith by the grace of God and be PRESERVED unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and thus saved with an ETERNAL SALVATION. But to those who are relying upon some experience or decision, when there has been no true work of the Holy Spirit, and no consequent change of heart and life, the authoritative Word of God demands that we say NO! For such have a hypocritical hope» it is FALSE - NOT TRUE: "The hypocrites hope shall perish: whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web." (Job 8:13-14).

It is not without very real purpose that the Holy Spirit, speaking through the apostle Paul, says: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor.13:5). A PERTINENT WORD FOR THIS AGE.

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

W.H.Molland.

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"There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel end nothing else ... We have gone back to the old school; we can trace our descent from the apostles. We can run a golden line up to Jesus Christ Himself, through the holy succession of mighty fathers, who all held these glorious truths ... No doctrine is so calculated to preserve a man from sin as the doctrine of the grace of God. Those who call it a licentious 'doctrine' do not know anything about it. Poor ignorant things, they little know that their own vile stuff is the most licentious doctrine under heaven. ... Nothing makes a man so virtuous as a belief of the truth. A lying doctrine will soon beget a lying practice. A man cannot have an erroneous belief without by-and-by having an erroneous life. I believe the one thing begets the other ... The old truth that Calvin preached, that Augustine preached, is the truth that I must preach today or else be false to my conscience and my God. I cannot shape the truth; I know of no such thing as paring off the rough edges of a doctrine. John Knox's gospel is my gospel. That which thundered through Scotland must thunder through Great Britain again."

C.H.Spurgeon

## ON PERSEVERING GRACE

There has been a deplorable lack of Scriptural balance in the presentation of this subject. Calvinists have thrown their emphasis almost entirely upon God's preservation of His people, whereas Arminians have insisted only upon the necessity for their persevering. Since the great majority of our readers have been influenced far more by the former than the latter, let us point out, first, that God's Word teaches both.

While it must be insisted upon that it is the power of God, and that alone, which preserves the saints from apostasy (total and final), and not in any degree their own grace, wisdom, strength or faithfulness, yet we must not fail to press the fact that Christians are responsible to keep themselves: that is, to avoid and resist temptations, abstain from everything injurious, and make diligent use of all those means which God has appointed for their well-being. The Christian is exhorted to "Keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). We are bidden, "keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21), yea, to "abstain from all appearance of evil", and "keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21). It is criminal for preachers to ignore such passages as these.

God's Word not only enjoins the saints to preserve themselves, but the Holy Spirit has not hesitated to affirm they actually do so. He moved David to aver, "By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" (Psa.17:11). "I kept myself from mine iniquity" (Psa. 18:4). "I have refrained my feet from every evil way" (Psa.119:101). Those were not the boastings of self-righteousness, but rather testimonies to the sufficiency of God's enabling grace. The apostle Paul, jealous as he ever was of the glory of God, after exhorting the saints "so run that ye may obtain" (the Incorruptible crown') and pointing out that the mastery over physical lusts calls for being 'temperate in all things', affirmed, "I therefore run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor.9:26-27)

There is a deadly and damnable heresy being widely propagated today to the effect that, if a sinner truly accepts Christ as his personal Saviour, no matter how he lives afterwards, he cannot perish. That is a Satanic lie, for it is at direct variance with the teaching of the Word of truth. Something more than believing in Christ is necessary to ensure the soul's reaching heaven. "If ye continue in my Word, then axe ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31). 'My sheep,' said Christ, 'hear (heed, obey) my voice, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they (those who plainly evidence themselves to be of his 'sheep' by yielding to his authority and following the example which he has left them - and none others) shall never perish<sup>1</sup>' (John 10:27-28). It is not honest to generalize the promise of verse 28: it must be restricted to the characters described in verse 27: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Col.1:23) was how the apostle guarded and qualified his statement in verse 22!

Different far from the soothing opiates now being ministered by the false prophets was the holy balance of truth preserved by that prince of theologians among the Puritans, John Owen. Yea, far more candid and faithful was he than those hyper-Calvinists who profess to admire his teachings. Said he, when exposing the sophistries of one who opposed the certainty of God's preservation of his people unto eternal glory, on the ground that it encouraged loose living\* "Doth this doctrine promise, with height of assurance, that under what vile practices so ever men do live, they shall have exemption from eternal punishment? Doth it teach men that it is vain to use the means of mortification because they shall certainly attain the end, whether they use the means or no? Doth it speak peace to the flesh, in assurance of blessed immortality, though it disport itself in all folly in the meantime? ... The perseverance of the saints is not held out in the Scriptures on any such ridiculous terms\* carry themselves well, or wickedly miscarry themselves; but is asserted upon the account of God's effectual grace preserving them in the use of the means and from all such miscarriages."

A.W.Pink

# A MAP SHEWING THE ORDER & CAUSES OF SALVATION & DAMNATION

WHEN THOU DOST READ THIS SIDE, THEN LOOK INTO THY HEART, AS IN A BOOK, AND SEE IF THOU CANST READ THE SAME IN THEE FROM GOD BY CHRIST HIS NAME, IF NOT, THEN FEAR THE OTHER SIDE, WHICH NOT TO LIFE BUT DEATH DOTH GUIDE.

THESE LINES ARE BLACK, AND SO ARE THOSE THAT DO ETERNAL LIFE OPPOSE; WHICH THOSE WILL DO MOST WILLINGLY WHOM GOD DOTH LEAVE TO LIVE AND DIE.

SO WOULD THOSE ON THE OTHER SIDE ALSO IF GOD DID NOT THEM GUIDE, HE HELPS THE ONE, THEN, BY HIS GRACE, AND LEAVES THE OTHER TO HIS RACE.

FOLLOW THE LINE BY THE FIGURES OVER EACH CIRCLE, AND THEN YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU READ.

HE THAT DOTH MISS THE SAVING CALL, INTO GOD'S WRATH HE SOON WILL FALL.

WHEN GOD AT FIRST THE WORLD DID MAKE 'T WAS DARK UNTIL AGAIN HE SPAKE: 'T IS SO WITH MAN, HE IS ALL NIGHT; AT FIRST, TILL GOD DOTH GIVE HIM LIGHT.

BECAUSE YE ARE SONS, HE HATH SENT FORTH THE SPIRIT OF HIS SON INTO YOUR HEARTS.

THE WORK BEGUN GOES SWEETLY ON THROUGH CASTING DOWN AND MAKING STAND.

WHAT SHALL I DO TO BE SAVED?

THE PRAYER OF FAITH OUR GOD WILL HEAR; AS THE WORD SAITH, WE NEED NOT FEAR!

HAVE LOVE TO GOD A WATCHFUL EYE; BEAR YOU HIS ROD, AND SWEETLY DIE.

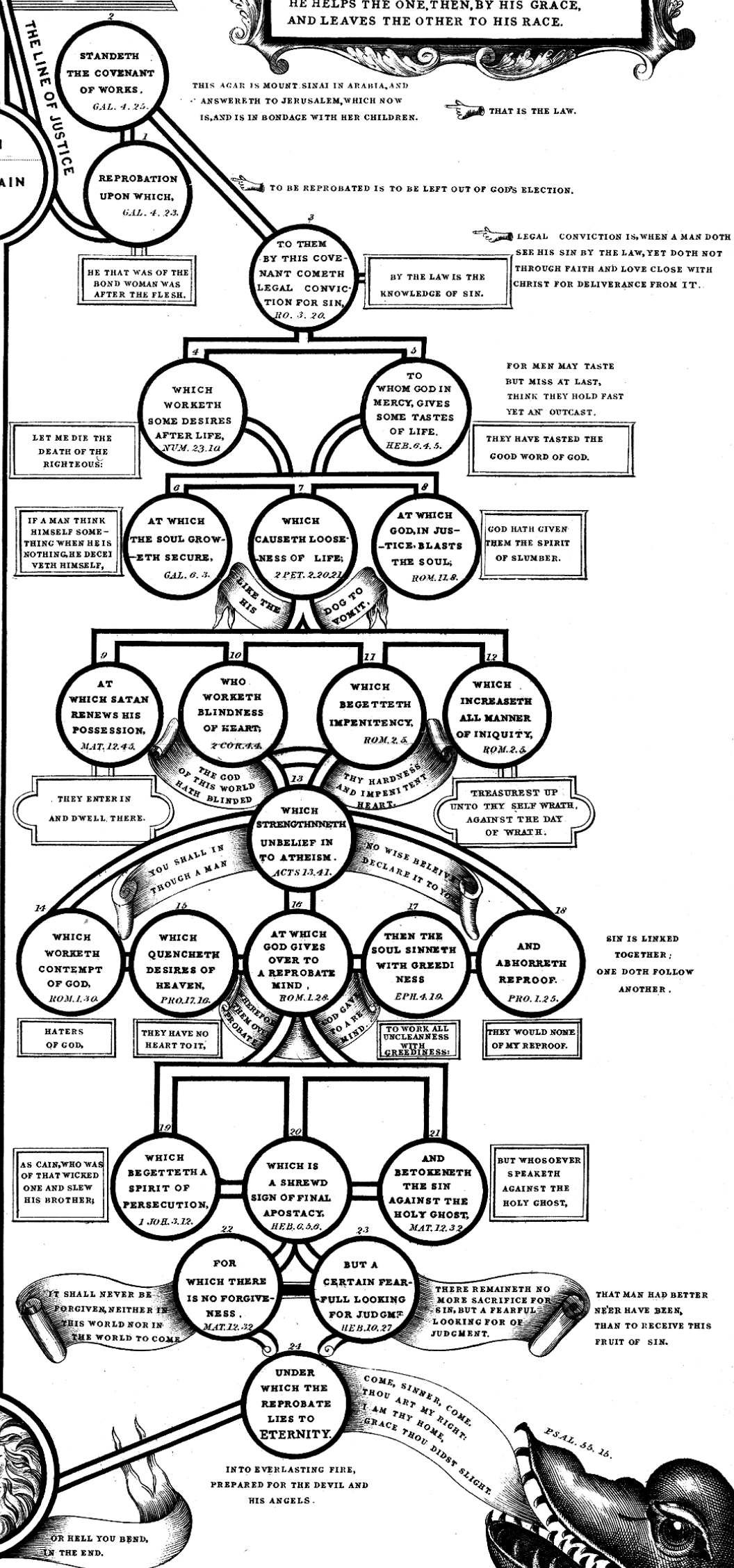
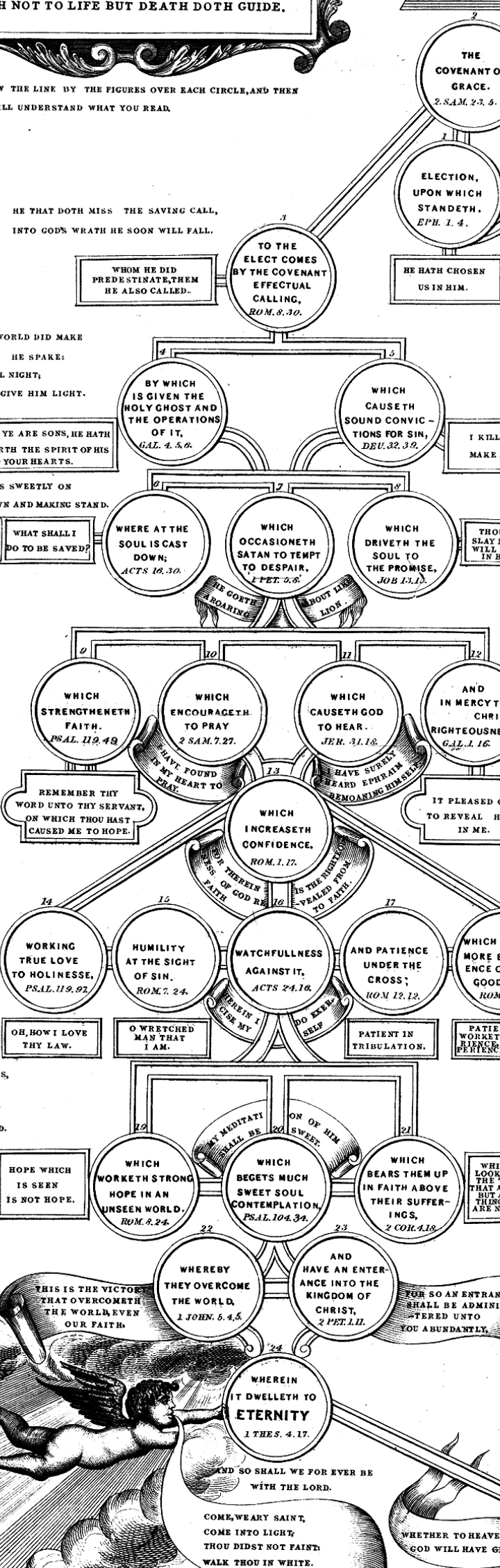
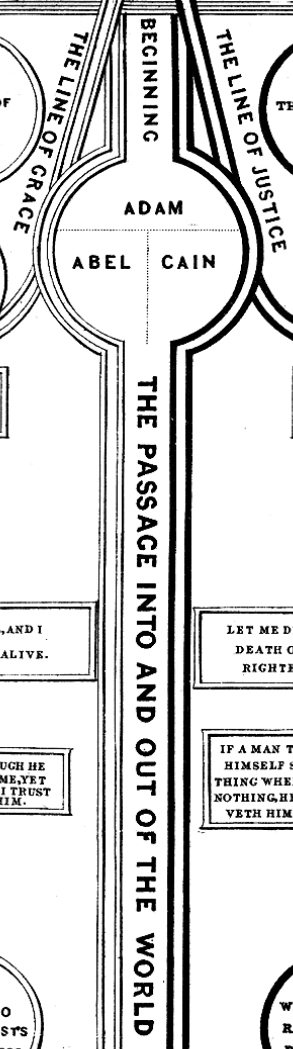
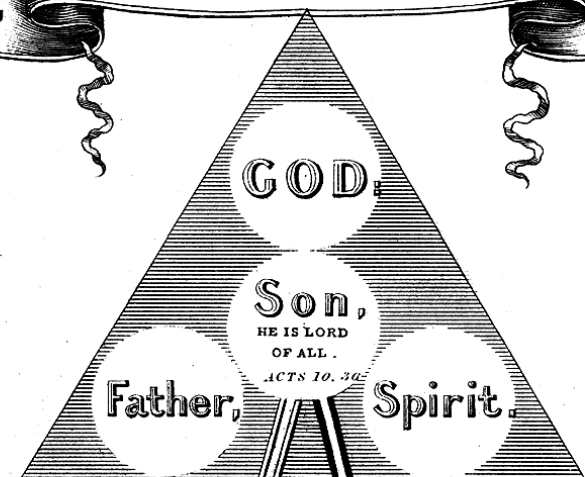
THOUGH SATAN TEMPTS, AND WITH HIS FAN WINNETH, GOD'S OWN BY GRACE SHALL STAND.

HERE YOU MAY SEE THAT GRACE BEGUN DOTH KEEP THE SOUL TILL HEAVEN BE WON.

THIS IS THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, EVEN OUR FAITH.

WHEREIN IT DWELLETH TO ETERNITY 1 THESS. 4. 17.

AND SO SHALL WE FOR EVER BE WITH THE LORD. COME, WEARY SAINT, COME INTO LIGHT; THOU DIDST NOT FAINT; WALK THOU IN WHITE.



THIS AGAR IS MOUNT SINAI IN ARABIA, AND ANSWERETH TO JERUSALEM, WHICH NOW IS, AND IS IN BONDAGE WITH HER CHILDREN.

TO BE REPROBATED IS TO BE LEFT OUT OF GOD'S ELECTION.

LEGAL CONVICTION IS, WHEN A MAN DOTH SEE HIS SIN BY THE LAW, YET DOTH NOT THROUGH FAITH AND LOVE CLOSE WITH CHRIST FOR DELIVERANCE FROM IT.

FOR MEN MAY TASTE BUT MISS AT LAST, THINK THEY HOLD FAST YET AN OUTCAST. THEY HAVE TASTED THE GOOD WORD OF GOD.

GOD HATH GIVEN THEM THE SPIRIT OF SLUMBER.

SIN IS LINKED TOGETHER; ONE DOTH FOLLOW ANOTHER.

THAT MAN HAD BETTER NEER HAVE BEEN, THAN TO RECEIVE THIS FRUIT OF SIN.

By John Bunyan, Author of the Pilgrim's Progress.

## HUMBLE OBEDIENCE. THE TRUE IMITATION OF CHRIST

### Scripture is the Rule of Life.

A sincere repentance from the heart does not guarantee that we shall not wander from the straight path and sometimes become bewildered. Let us then search Scripture to find the root principle for the reformation of our life.

### Holiness is the key principle.

The plan of Scripture for a Christian walk is twofold: first, that we be instructed in the law to love righteousness, because by nature we are not inclined to do so; second, that we be shown a simple rule that we may not waver in our race. Of the many excellent recommendations, is there any better than the key principle. Be thou holy, for I am holy?

When we were dispersed like scattered sheep, and lost in the labyrinth of the world, Christ gathered us together again, that he might bring us back to himself.

1. When we hear any mention of our mystical union with Christ, we should remember that holiness is the channel to it. Holiness is not a merit by which we can attain communion with God, but a gift of Christ, which enables us to cling to him, and to follow him.

It is God's own glory that he cannot have anything to do with iniquity and uncleanness; therefore, we must keep this in mind, if we desire to pay attention to his invitation. For why were we delivered from the quagmire of iniquity and pollution of this world, if we want to wallow in it as long as we live?

God's holiness admonishes us that we must inhabit the holy city of Jerusalem, if we wish to belong to the people of God. Jerusalem is hallowed ground; therefore it cannot be profaned by impure inhabitants. The Psalmist says, This one shall abide in the tabernacle of the Lord who walks uprightly and works righteousness.

The Sanctuary of the Holy One must be kept immaculate.  
Lev.19:2 - 1 Peter 1:16 - Is.35:10 - Ps.15:1-2 -  
Ps.24:3-4.

The Imitation of Holiness means obedience to Christ.

1. Scripture does not only show the principle of holiness, but also that Christ is the way to it. Because the Father has reconciled us to himself in Christ. Therefore he commands us to be conformed to Christ as to our pattern.

Let those who think that philosophers have the only just and orderly system of morality show us a more excellent plan than to obey and follow Christ. The sublimest virtue according to philosophers is to live the life of nature, but Scripture points us to the perfect Christ as our example.

We should exhibit the character of Christ in our lives, for what can be more effective than this one stirring consideration? Indeed, what can be required besides?

2. The Lord has adopted us to be his children on this condition that we reveal an imitation of Christ who is the mediator of our adoption. Unless we ardently and prayerfully devote ourselves to Christ's righteousness we do not only faithlessly revolt from our Creator, but we also abjure him as our Saviour.

3. Scripture accompanies its exhortations with the promise of God's countless blessings and of our all-embracing salvation. Therefore, since God has revealed himself as a Father, we would be guilty of the basest ingratitude if we did not behave as his children. Since Christ has purified us through the baptism in his blood, we should not become defiled by fresh pollution. Since Christ has united us to his body as his members, we should be anxious not to disgrace him by any blemish. Since Christ, our Head, has ascended to heaven, we should leave our carnal desires behind, and lift our hearts upward to him. Since the Holy Spirit has dedicated us as temples of God, we should exert ourselves not to profane his sanctuary, but to display his glory. Since both our soul and body are destined to inherit an incorruptible and never-fading crown, we should keep them pure and undefiled till the day of our Lord. Such are the best foundations for a proper code of conduct. Philosophers never rise above the natural dignity of man. (But Scripture points us to our only sinless Saviour, Jesus Christ. Rom 6, 8:29.)

### External Christianity is not enough.

1. Let us ask those who possess nothing but church membership, and yet want to be called Christians, how they can glory in the sacred name of Christ? For no one has any communion with Christ, hut he who has received the true knowledge of him from the word of the gospel.

The apostle denies that any one actually knows Christ who has not learned to put off the old man, corrupt with deceitful lusts, and to put on Christ. External knowledge of Christ is found to be only a false and dangerous make- believe, however eloquently and freely lip servants may talk about the gospel.

2. The gospel is not a doctrine of the tongue, hut of life. It cannot he grasped by reason and memory only, hut it is fully understood when it possesses the whole soul, and penetrates to the inner recesses of the heart. Let nominal Christians cease from insulting God by boasting themselves to he what they are not, and let them show themselves disciples not unworthy of Christ, their Master.

We must assign first place to the knowledge of our religion, for that is the beginning of our salvation. But our religion will he unprofitable, if it does not change our heart, pervade our manners, and transform us into new creatures.

3. The philosophers rightly condemn and banish with disgrace from their company those who profess to know the art of life, hut who are in reality vain babblers. With much better reason Christians ought to detest those who have the gospel on their lips, but not in their hearts. The exhortations of the philosophers are cold and lifeless, if compared with the convictions, affections, and boundless energy of the real believers. (Eph. 4:20ff.)

### Spiritual progress is necessary.

1. We should not insist on absolute perfection of the gospel in our fellow Christians, however much we may strive for it ourselves. It would be unfair to demand evangelical perfection before we acknowledge anyone as a Christian. There would be no church if we set a standard of absolute perfection, for the best of us are



still far from the ideal, and we would have to reject many who have made only small progress.

2. Perfection must be the final mark at which we aim, and the goal for which we strive. It is not lawful for you to make a compromise with God\* to try to fulfil part of your duties, and to omit others at your own pleasure.

The Lord first of all wants sincerity in his service, simplicity of heart without guile and falsehood. A double mind is in conflict with the spiritual life, for this implies an unfeigned devotion to God in the search for holiness and righteousness.

No one in this earthly prison of the body has sufficient strength of his own to press forward with a due degree of watchfulness, and the great majority (of Christians) are kept down with such great weakness that they stagger and halt, and even creep on the ground, and so make very slight advances.

3. But let everyone proceed according to his given ability and continue the journey he has begun. There is no man so unhappy, that he will not make some progress, however small. Let us not cease to do the utmost, that we may incessantly go forward in the way of the Lord} and let us not despair because of the smallness of our accomplishment. Though we fall short, our labour is not lost if this day surpasses the preceding one.

4. The one condition for spiritual progress is that we remain sincere and humble. Let us keep our end in view, let us press forward to our goal. Let us not indulge in pride, nor give in to our sinful passions. Let us steadily exert ourselves to reach a higher degree of holiness till we shall finally arrive at a perfection of goodness which we seek and pursue as long as we live, but which we shall attain then only, when, freed from all earthly infirmity, we shall be admitted by God into his full communion.

John Calvin.

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"So shall we faultless stand at last  
Before thy Father's throne,  
The blessedness for ever ours  
The glory all thine own."

Extract from the writings of Mr.A.W.Pink on the subject of:

### DOCTRINAL PREACHING - THE SUPREME NEED

There is much preaching, but sadly little teaching. It is the task of the teacher to declare all the counsel of God, to show the relation of one part of it to another, to present the whole range of truth» thereby will the hearer's mental horizon be widened, his sense of proportion promoted, and the beautiful harmony of the whole be demonstrated. It is his business not only to avow but to evince, not simply to affirm but to establish what he affirms. Of the apostle we read that he 'reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must need have suffered, and risen again from the dead' (Acts 17:2-3). He was eminently qualified for such a task both by nature and by grace. He was not only a man of God, but a man of genius and learning. He made considerable use of his reasoning faculty. He did not ask his hearers to believe anything that he averred without evidence, but furnished proof of what he taught. He usually preached on the basic and essential doctrines of the gospel, which he felt ought to be verified by plain and conclusive reasoning.

'And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks' (Acts 18:4, 19). Because such reasoning may be abused, it does not follow that it should have no place in the pulpit. To reason fairly is to draw correct consequences from right principles, or to adduce clear and convincing arguments in support thereof. In order to reason lucidly and effectively upon the truth of a proposition, it is usually necessary to explain it, then to produce arguments in support of it, and finally to answer objections against it. That is the plan Paul generally follows, as is evident from both the Acts and his Epistles. When he preached upon the existence of God, the first and fundamental truth of all religion, he reasoned simply yet impressively: 'Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of' God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device' (Acts 17:29) - 'For the invisible things of him from the creation of

the world are clearly seen' (Rom.1:20). When he enforced the doctrine of human depravity, he proved it first by a lengthy description of the character and conduct of the whole heathen world, and then by quotations from the Old Testament, and concluded, 'we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin' (Rom.3:9).

It is the teacher's task to explain, to prove, and then to apply, for hearts are reached through the understanding and conscience. When he appeared before Felix, the apostle 'reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come' so powerfully that the Roman governor 'trembled' (Acts 24:25). But alas, solid reasoning, exposition of Scripture, doctrinal preaching, are now largely things of the past. Many were (and still are) all for what they term experience, rather than a knowledge of the doctrine. And today we behold the deplorable effects of the same, for our generation lacks even a theoretical knowledge of the truth. That which was termed experimental and practical preaching displaced theological instruction, and thus the grand fundamentals of the gospel were brought into contempt. No wonder popery has made such headway in the countries once Protestant. It may be that that satanic system will yet prevail more awfully. If it does, none will be able to overthrow it by any experiences of their own. Nothing but sound doctrinal preaching will be of any use.

No wonder, either, that practical godliness is also at such a low ebb, for the root which produces it has been unwatered and has withered. 'Where there is not the doctrine of faith, the obedience of faith cannot be expected ... On the other hand, doctrine without practice, or a mere theoretical and speculative knowledge of things, unless reduced to practice, is of no avail.... Doctrine and practice should go together, and in order both to know and to do the will of God, instruction in doctrine and practice is necessary and the one bringing first light will lead to the other' (J.Gill). That is the order in 2 Timothy 3:16, 'All-scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable (first) for doctrine, (and then) for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' Thus Paul exhorted Timothy, 'Take heed

unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee' (1 Tim.4:16). So too he enjoined Titus, 'This is a faithful saying, and these things (namely the doctrines of verses 3-7) I will that thou affirm constantly, that (in order that) they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works' (3:8).

Alas, very, very few now preach the doctrine of Christ in all its parts and branches, in all its causes and effects, in all its bearings and dependences. Yet there can be no better furniture for the spiritual mind than right and clear apprehensions thereof. Our preservation from error lies therein; our spiritual fruitfulness depends thereon. Doctrine is the mould into which the mind is cast (Rom. 6:17), from which it receives its impressions. As the nature of the seed sown determines what will be the harvest, so the substance of what is preached is seen in the lives of those who sit regularly under it. Where are the purity, the piety, the zeal, that close walking with God and uprightness before men, which were so pronounced in Christendom during the 16th and 17th centuries? Yet the preaching of the Reformers and Puritans was principally doctrinal, and, under God, it produced such a love of the truth that thousands willingly suffered persecution and great privations, and hazarded their lives, rather than repudiate the doctrines and ordinances of Christ. To say it matters not what a man believes so long as his practice is good is utterly erroneous. Indifference to the truth betrays a heart that is not right with God.

It also requires to be pointed out that those men whose ministry was most owned and used of God during last century were those who followed in the steps of the Puritans. C.H.Spurgeon, César Malan, Robert Murray McCheyne, and the great leaders of the Scottish Free Church disruption, gave a prominent place to doctrinal instruction in all of their preaching. An observant eye will soon perceive that there is a distinct spirit which attends different types of preaching, manifesting itself more or less plainly in the regular attenders thereof. There is a solidity and soberness, a stability and godly fear seen in real Calvinists, which is not

found among Arminians. There is an uprightness of character in those who espouse the truth which is lacking in those who imbibe error. Where the sovereignty of God is denied there will be no holy awe of him. Where the total depravity of man is not insisted upon, pride and self-sufficiency will obtain. Where the impotence of the natural man is not stressed there will be no dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Where the holy demands of God are not maintained there will be the absence of its effects on the heart and life.

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SPOKEN TO MINISTERS by Bishop J.C.Ryle (1858)

"We should aim to speak 'as of God'. We ought to strive to feel like men commissioned to speak for God and on His behalf ... We too often forget the language of the apostle: "I magnify mine office". We forget how great is the responsibility of the New Testament minister ... We should aim to speak as 'in the sight of God'. We are to ask ourselves, not what did the people think of me? but, what was I in the sight of God? ... Do we ever handle the Word of God deceitfully? Do we realize what it is to speak as of God, as in the sight of God and in Christ? Let me put to all a searching question. Is there any text in God's Word which we shrink from expounding? Is there any statement in the Bible which we avoid speaking about to our people, not because we do not understand it, but because it contradicts some pet notion of ours as to what is truth? If it be so let us ask our consciences whether this be not very like handling the Word of God deceitfully.

Is there anything in the Bible we keep back for fear of seeming harsh, and of giving offence to some of our hearers? Is there any statement, either doctrinal or practical, which we mangle, mutilate or dismember? If so, are we dealing honestly with God's Word?

Let us pray to be kept from corrupting God's Word. Let neither fear nor favour of man induce us to keep back, or avoid, or change, or mutilate, or qualify any text in the Bible. Surely we ought to have holy boldness when we speak as ambassadors of God. We have no reason to be ashamed of any statement we make in our pulpits

as long as it is Scriptural. I have often thought that one great secret of the marvellous honour which God has put on a man who is not in our communion (I allude to Mr. Spurgeon) is the extraordinary boldness and confidence with which he stands up in the pulpit to speak to people about their sins and their souls. It cannot be said he does it from fear of any, or to please any. He seems to give every class of hearer his portion - to rich and poor, the high and low, the peer and the peasant, the learned and the illiterate. He gives to every one plain dealing, according to God's Word. I believe that very boldness has much to do with the success which God is pleased to give to his ministry.

Let us not be ashamed to learn a lesson from him in this respect. Let us go and do likewise."

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#### EDITORIAL

The article on the subject of ETERNAL SALVATION brings to an end the series which has engaged our attention for this and the five previous editions of THE LINK.

Much interest has been created and it is apparent that these articles have been of considerable help and blessing to many in different parts of the Country, and for this we thank God.

The suggestion has been made by several of the Lord's people that these six expositions, briefly setting out the Biblical teaching on salvation, should now be produced in book form. This we are quite happy to do if there is sufficient interest to warrant it', If any of our readers feel that there would be a demand for such a publication, or should have an outlet through their local church, we should be grateful to hear as this would be of help to us in making a final decision.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS and INFORMATION

### Visiting Preachers

Sunday	6th April	Mr.J.Thackway	(Devizes)
Sunday	13th April	Mr.M.Watts	(Salisbury)
Sunday	27th April	Mr.H.Roberts	(Penzance)
Sunday	15th June	Mr.J.Hooper	(Exeter)
Thursday	1st May	Mr.F.Stanbury	(Bow)
	5th June	" "	"
	3rd July	" "	"

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### Preliminary Notice

12th July 1986 ANNUAL BIBLE CONVENTION

Speaker: Dr. Peter Trumper Th.M. Th.D.  
(Holywell, N.Wales)

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### Obituary

Two valued members of the church have been called home since our last magazine.

Mr.Percy Poole. A most sincere man, marked by a quiet and consistent Christian life; always on the spot when there was work to be done, and a staunch supporter of the Truth. His funeral took place at the Chapel on 31st December 1985.

Mrs.Ruth Hyam. After a short illness. She attended North Road Chapel from her earliest days. A steadfast and godly woman, and one with a great zeal and concern for missionary work. Her funeral service was held on the 14th January 1986

"BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD"  
(Rev. 14:13)