



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Worship Music

[He's Alive-](#)
[Don Francisco](#)

[As It Was-](#)
[Don Francisco](#)

[Bird With Broken](#)
[Wing-Don Francisco](#)

Prayer

Lord, I ask You to help me open my heart so that agape love can flow up from within me. I realize that I've allowed myself to get clogged up with my own self interests far too often. I need to be more focused on the needs of others than I am on myself. I realize that the only way I can become this selfless is to yield to the Holy Spirit so He can do a deep work in my life. Holy Spirit, I am asking You today to do whatever is necessary to teach me how to regularly walk in this high-level, agape love of God. In Jesus' name. Amen...

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

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Charles Stanley

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1 THEN JOB answered, 2 I have heard many such things; wearisome and miserable comforters are you all! 3 Will your futile words of wind have no end? Or what makes you so bold to answer [me like this]? 4 I also could speak as you do, if you were in my stead; I could join words together against you and shake my head at you. 5 [But] I would strengthen and encourage you with [the words of] my mouth, and the consolation of my lips would soothe your suffering. 6 If I speak [to you miserable comforters], my sorrow is not soothed or lessened; and if I refrain [from speaking], in what way am I eased? [I hardly know whether to answer you or be silent.] 7 But now [God] has taken away my strength. You [O Lord] have made desolate all my family and associates. 8 You have laid firm hold on me and have shriveled me up, which is a witness against me; and my leanness [and wretched state of body] are further evidence [against me]; [they] testify to my face. 9 [My adversary Satan] has torn [me] in his wrath and hated and persecuted me; he has gnashed upon me with his teeth; my adversary sharpens his eyes against me. 10 [The forces of evil] have gaped at me with their mouths; they have struck me upon the cheek insolently; they massed themselves together and conspired unanimously against me. 11 God has delivered me to the ungodly (to the evil one) and cast me [headlong] into the hands of the wicked (Satan's host). 12 I was living at ease, but [Satan] crushed me and broke me apart; yes, he seized me by the neck and dashed me in pieces; then he set me up for his target. 13 [Satan's] arrows whiz around me. He slashes open my vitals and does not spare; he pours out my gall on the ground. 14 [Satan] stabs me, making breach after breach and attacking again and again; he runs at me like a giant and irresistible warrior. 15 I have sewed sackcloth over my skin [as a sign of mourning] and have defiled my horn (my insignia of strength) in the dust. 16 My face is red and swollen with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death [my eyes are dimmed], 17 Although there is no guilt or violence in my hands and my prayer is pure. 18 O earth, cover not my blood, and let my cry have no resting-place [where it will cease being heard]. 19 Even now, behold, my Witness is in heaven, and He who vouches for me is on high. 20 My friends scorn me, but my eye pours out tears to God. 21 Oh, that there might be one who would plead for a man with God and that he would maintain his right with Him, as a son of man pleads with or for his neighbor! 22 For when a few years are come, I shall go the way from which I shall not return.

Chapter 16

So Job answered and said, I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are you all. Shall empty words (Job 16:1)

Talking about vanity, he said,

Shall empty words have an end? or what emboldens you that you answer? I also could speak as you do: if you were in my place, I could heap up words against you, and shake my head at you (Job 16:1-4).

So, here now, visualize it when they're talking. They're just shaking their head, and they do that, they shake their head and yell at each other. And he said, "Hey, if I were in your place and you were in my place, I could yell at you and shake my head at you too. You know, it's nothing to that. I could do it."

But I would rather to strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief. Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged: and though I forbear, what am I eased? (Job 16:5-6)

If I'm quiet, you tell me to be quiet, I ought to be quiet. What good would it do? You guys will mouth off.

But now he hath made me weary: you have made me desolate all my company. And you have filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me: and my leanness rising up in me bears witness to my face. He tears me in his wrath, who hates me: he gnashes upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me (Job 16:7-9).

So here they're talking through their teeth at him, and they're looking, sharpening their eyes, squinting as they're looking at him and yelling in his face. And, oh man, what a sight this must have been.

They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me. God hath delivered me unto the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked. I was at ease until you came. (Job 16:10-12),

but he also has taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark (Job 16:12).

Now he's referring to God again.

His archers compass me round about, he cleaves my reins asunder [he cuts me in two], he does not spare; he pours out my gall upon the ground. He breaks me with the branch upon branch, he runs upon me like a giant. I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my horn in the dust. My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death; Not only for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure. O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place. Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high (Job 16:13-19).

Okay, "God is my witness," is what he is saying. "My record is on high. God has the records, my witness is there in heaven. I'm not even going to try to justify myself before you guys. Think what you will of me. God knows the truth." It's comforting when we are misunderstood by others. Totally misunderstood sometimes. Our motivations are misread by others. Many times we are accused of things of which we are not at all guilty. Someone has totally misread our thought, our ideas, our motivations. They've imputed wicked, evil motivations to us when they weren't there. But my witness is in heaven; God knows the truth about me. And that's to

me a comfort. That God keeps the books. He knows the truth. He knows what's in my heart. He keeps the records.

My friends scorn me: but my eye pours out tears unto God. Oh that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleads for his neighbor! (Job 16:20-21)

"Oh, that you'd intercede for me, that you'd pray for me." I wonder why they hadn't thought of that. Here their friend's in trouble, why didn't they come and pray, intercede for the guy? As one intercedes for his friends, instead of just heaping all kinds of abuse upon him.

When a few years are come, I'm going to go the way from which I shall not return (Job 16:22).
(Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries,1979-1986)

Final Perseverance: What is it?; C. H. Mackintosh – Index

Dear Friend,

The question of final perseverance, though, in our judgment, a very simple one, has perplexed a great many; and the questions which you introduce to our notice, and the passages of scripture which you adduce, furnish abundant proof that your own mind is not quite clear or settled on the point. It may be, however, that the object of your communication is rather to superinduce such a discussion of the doctrine, in the light of holy scripture, as may prove helpful to others, than to obtain any aid for yourself. However this may be, we are always happy to give to others the benefit of any light with which the Lord may have graciously favoured us, in reference to subjects of common interest to all lovers of truth.

In seeking, then, to reply to your interesting letter, we have three things to do, namely, first, to establish the doctrine of final perseverance, or in other words, the eternal security of all Christ's members; secondly, to answer the questions which you have given us, and which we take to be those usually or frequently put by the opposers of the doctrine; and, thirdly, to expound those tests which you have quoted, and in which you seem to find considerable difficulty. May the Holy Spirit be our teacher, and may He give us minds entirely subject to scripture, so that we may be able to form a sound judgment on the question now before us.

1. And, first, as to the doctrine of final perseverance; it seems to us exceedingly clear and simple, if only we look at it in immediate connection with Christ Himself. This indeed is the only true way to look at any doctrine. Christ is the soul, centre, and life of all doctrine. A doctrine separated from Christ becomes a lifeless powerless, worthless dogma — a mere idea in the mind — a mere item in the creed. Hence, therefore, we must look at every truth as it stands connected with Christ. We must make Him our point of view. It is only as we keep near to Him, and look at all points from that one grand point, that we can have a correct view of any point. If, for example, I make self my point of view and look from thence at the subject of final perseverance, I shall be sure to get a false view altogether, inasmuch as it then becomes a question of my perseverance, and anything of mine must, necessarily, be doubtful.

But if, on the other hand, I make Christ my viewing point, and look at the subject from thence, I shall be sure to have a correct view inasmuch as it then becomes a question of Christ's perseverance, and I am quite sure that He must persevere, and that no power of the world, the flesh, or the devil can ever hinder His final perseverance in the salvation of those whom He has purchased with His own blood, seeing "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." This, surely, is final perseverance. It matters not what the difficulty, or what the hostile power may be. "He is able to save to the uttermost." The world, with its ten thousand snares, is against us; but "he is able." Indwelling sin, in its ten thousand workings, is against us; but "he is able." Satan, with his ten thousand devices, is against us; but "he is able." In a word, it is Christ's ability, not ours; it is Christ's faithfulness, not ours; it is Christ's final perseverance, not ours. All depends upon Him, as to this weighty matter. He has purchased His sheep, and surely He will keep them to the best of His ability; and, seeing that all power is given unto Him in heaven and on earth, His sheep must be perfectly and for ever safe. If aught could touch the life of the feeblest lamb in all the flock of Christ, He could not be said to have "all power." Thus it is immensely important to consider the question of final perseverance in inseparable connection with Christ. Difficulties vanish. Doubts and fears are chased away. The heart becomes established, the conscience relieved, the understanding enlightened. It is impossible that one who forms a part of Christ's body can ever perish; and the believer is this, We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph 5: 30) Every member of the body of Christ was written in the book of the slain Lamb, before the foundation of the world, nor can anything or any one ever obliterate that writing. Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith in reference to those that are His: "My sheep hear my voice, and know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man, devil, or any one else] pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John 10: 27-29)

Here then, most assuredly, we have final perseverance, and that moreover, not merely the perseverance of the saints, but of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Yes, dear friend, this is the way we would have you view the matter. It is the final perseverance of the Holy Trinity. It is the perseverance of the Holy Ghost in opening the ears of the sheep. It is the perseverance of the Son in receiving all whose ears are thus opened. And, finally, it is the perseverance of the Father in keeping through His own name, the blood-bought flock in the hollow of His everlasting hand. This is plain enough. We must either admit the truth — the consolatory and sustaining, truth of final perseverance, or succumb to the blasphemous proposition that the enemy of God and man can carry his point against the holy and eternal Trinity. We see no middle ground. "Salvation is of the Lord," from first to last. It is free, unconditional, everlasting salvation. It reaches down to where the sinner is in all his guilt, ruin, and degradation, and bears him up to where God is, in all His holiness, truth, and righteousness. and it endures for ever. God the Father is its source, God the Son is its channel, and God the Holy Ghost is the power of application and enjoyment. It is all of God, from beginning to end, from foundation to top-stone, from everlasting to everlasting. If it were not so, it would be presumptuous folly to speak of final perseverance; but, seeing it is so, it would be presumptuous unbelief to think of aught else.

True, there are great and manifold difficulties in the way — difficulties before, and difficulties after, conversion. There are many and powerful adversaries; but that is the very reason why we must keep the question of final perseverance entirely clear of self and all its belongings, and make it repose simply upon God. It matters not in the least what the difficulties or the adversaries may be, for faith can ever triumphantly inquire, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" And again, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8: 35-39)

Here, again, we have final perseverance taught in the clearest and strongest way possible: "Not any creature shall be able to separate us." Neither self, in all its forms; nor Satan, in all his wiles and machinations; nor the world, in all its allurements, or all its scorn, can ever separate the "us" of Romans 8: 39, from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. No doubt, persons may be deceived, and they may deceive others. Spurious cases may arise; counterfeit conversions may take place. Persons may seem to run well for a time and then break down. The blossoms of spring-time may not be followed by the mellow fruits of autumn. Such things may be; and, moreover, true believers may fail in many things, they may stumble and break down in their course. They may have ample cause for self judgment and humiliation, in the practical details of life. But, allowing the widest possible margin for all these things, the precious doctrine of final perseverance remains unshaken — yea, untouched — upon its own divine and eternal foundation. "I give unto my sheep eternal [not temporary or conditional] life, and they shall never perish." And again, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." People may argue as they will, and base their arguments on cases which have come under their notice, from time to time, in the history of professing Christians; but, looking at the subject from a divine point of view, and basing our convictions on the sure and unerring word of God, we maintain that all who belong to the "us" of Romans 8, the "sheep" of John 10, and the "church" of Matthew 16, are as safe as Christ can make them, and this we conceive to be the sum and substance of the doctrine of final perseverance.

2 And now, dear friend, we shall, in the second place, briefly and pointedly reply to the questions which you have put before us.

1. "Will a believer be saved, no matter into what course of sin he may fall, and die in?" A true believer will, infallibly, be saved; but we consider that salvation includes, not only full deliverance from the future consequences of sin, but from the present power and practice thereof. And, hence, if we find a person living in sin, and yet talking about his assurance of salvation, we look upon him as an antinomian and not a saved person at all. "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." The believer may fall, but he will be lifted up; he may be overtaken, but he will be restored; he may wander, but he will be brought back because Christ is able to save to the uttermost, and not one of His little ones shall perish.

2. "Will the Holy Spirit dwell in a heart where evil and unholy thoughts are indulged? The body of the believer is the temple of the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. 6: 19) And this precious truth is the ground of exhortation to purity and holiness of heart and life. We are exhorted not to grieve the Holy Spirit. To "indulge" evil and unholy thoughts is not Christian walk at all. The Christian may be assaulted, grieved, and harassed, by evil thoughts, and in such a case he has only to look to Christ for victory. Proper Christian walk is thus expressed in John's first epistle; "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." (1 John 5: 18) This is the divine side of the question. Alas! we know there is the human side likewise; but we judge the human side by the divine. We do not lower the divine to meet the human, but ever aim at the divine notwithstanding the human. We should never be satisfied with anything lower than 1 John 5: 18. It is by keeping up the true standard that we may expect to raise our moral tone. To talk of having the Spirit and yet "indulge" in evil and unholy thoughts, is in our judgment, the ancient Nicolaitanism (Rev. 2: 6, 15), or modern antinomianism.

3 "If it be so, then, will not people say, they may live as they like?" Well, how does a true Christian like to live? As like Christ as possible. If one had put this question to Paul, what would have been his answer 2 Cor 5: 14, 15, and Philippians 3: 7-14, furnish the reply. It is to be feared that the persons who ask such questions know but little of Christ. We can quite understand a person getting entangled in the meshes of a one-sided theological system, and being perplexed by the conflicting dogmas of systematic divinity; but we believe that the man who draws a plea from the freedom, sovereignty, and eternal stability of the Grace of God, to continue in sin, knows nothing of Christianity at all, has neither part nor lot in the matter, but is in a truly awful and dangerous condition.

As to the case which you adduce, of the young man who heard a minister state in his sermon, that "Once a child, always a child," and who took occasion from that to plunge into, and continue in, open sin; it is only one of thousands We believe the minister was right in what he said, but the young man was wrong in what he did. To judge the words of the former by the acts of the latter is utterly false. What should I think of my son, if he were to say, "Once a son always a son, and therefore I may proceed to smash my father's windows and do all sorts of mischief?" We judge the ministers statement by the word of God, and pronounce it true. We judge the young man's conduct by the same rule and pronounce it false. The matter is quite simple. We have no reason to believe that the unhappy young man ever really tasted the true grace of God, for if he had, he would love and cultivate and exhibit holiness. The Christian has to struggle with sin; but struggling with it and wallowing in it, are two totally different ideas. In the one case, we can count on Christ's sympathy and grace; in the other, we are actually blaspheming His name by implying that He is the minister of sin.

We consider it a very serious mistake to set about judging the truth of God by the actings of men. All who do so must reach a false conclusion. The true way is just to reverse the order. Get hold of God's truth first, and then judge everything by that. Set up the divine standard and test everything thereby. Set up the public scales and weigh every man's load therein. The scales must not be regulated by every mans load, but each mans load tested by the scales. If ten thousand professors were to fall away, and live and die in open sin, it would not shake our confidence in the divine doctrine of final perseverance. The self-same word that proves the doctrine to be true,

proves them to be false. "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) "The foundation of God standeth sure, having, this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. 2: 19)

3. We shall now proceed to examine the various passages of scripture, which, as you say, are generally adduced by those who seek to overthrow the doctrine of final perseverance. But, before doing so, we deem it of importance to lay down the following fundamental principle, which will, in our judgment, be found most helpful in the interpretation of scripture generally. The principle is very simple. No one passage of holy scripture can, by any possibility, contradict another. If, therefore, there be a seeming contradiction, it must arise from our want of spiritual intelligence. Thus, for example, if any one were to quote James 2: 24, in defence of the doctrine of justification by works, I might not be able to answer him. It is quite possible that thousands, like Luther, have been sadly perplexed by that passage. They may feel the fullest and clearest assurance that they are justified, and that not by any works that they have done, but simply "by faith of Jesus Christ," and yet be wholly unable to explain these words of James, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

Now, how is one to meet such a difficulty as this? He really does not understand the apostle James. He is involved in much perplexity by the apparent contradiction between James and Paul. What is he to do? Just to apply the principle above stated. No one passage of scripture can possibly contradict another. As well might we apprehend a collision between two of the heavenly bodies, while moving in their divinely appointed orbits, as that two inspired writers could possibly clash in their statements. Well, then, I read in Romans 4: 5 such plain words as these: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Here I find works entirely excluded as a ground of justification, and faith alone recognised. So also in Romans 3 I read: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without [or apart from] works of law." And, again, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Exactly similar is the teaching in the Epistle to the Galatians, where we read such plain words as these, "Knowing that a man is not justified by works of law, but by faith of Jesus Christ, even we [Jews] have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by faith of Christ, and not by works of law: for by works of law shall no flesh be justified." (Rom. 2: 16)

In all these passages, and many more which might be quoted, works are sedulously excluded as a ground of justification, and that, too, in language so plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. If, therefore, we cannot explain James 2: 24, we must either deny its inspiration, or have recourse to our principle, namely, that no one passage of holy scripture can possibly contradict another, and so remain, with unshaken confidence, and unruffled repose, rejoicing in the grand foundation truth of justification by faith alone, apart from law-works altogether.

Having called the readers attention to the famous passage in James 2, it may not be amiss to offer him, in passing, a word or two of exposition which will help him in the understanding of it. There is a little word in verse 14 which will furnish the key to the entire passage. The inspired apostle inquires, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith?" Had he said, "What doth it profit though a man have faith?" the difficulty would be insuperable, the perplexity hopeless. But the important word "say" quite removes all difficulty, and unfolds, in the simplest possible way, the point which the apostle has in his mind. We might inquire, "What doth it profit though a man say he hath ten thousand a year, if he hath it not?"

Now, we are aware that the word "say" is constantly left out in quoting James 2: 14. Some have even ventured to assert that it is not in the original. But any one who can read Greek has only to look at the passage, and he will see the word *legee* (say) placed there by the Holy Ghost, and left there by all our leading, editors and biblical critics; nor can we well conceive a word of more vital importance in a passage. Its influence, we believe, is felt throughout the entire context in which it occurs. There is no use in a man merely saying he has faith, but if he really has it, it "profits" him for time and eternity, inasmuch as it connects him with Christ, and puts him in full inalienable possession of all that Christ has done, and all that He is for us before God.

This leads us to another point, which will greatly tend to clear away the seeming contradiction between the two inspired apostles, Paul and James. There is a very material difference between law-works and life-works. Paul jealously excludes the former; James as jealously insists on the latter. But, be it carefully noted, that it is only the former Paul excludes; as it is only the latter that James insists on. The acts of Abraham and Rahab were not law-works, but life-works. They were the genuine fruits of faith, apart from which they would have possessed no justifying virtue whatever.

It is well worthy of note that, with the history of four thousand years before Him, the Holy Ghost, in the apostle, should have fixed upon two such works as that of Abraham in Genesis 22 and that of Rahab in Joshua 2. He does not adduce some acts of charity, or benevolence, though surely He might easily have selected many such from the vast mass of materials which lay before Him. But, as if anticipating the use that the enemy would make of the passage now before us, He takes care to select two such illustrations of His thesis as prove, beyond all question, that it is life-works, and not law-works, He is insisting upon, and leaves wholly untouched the priceless doctrine of justification by faith, apart from works of law.

Finally, if any should feel disposed to inquire as to the difference between law-works and life-works, it is simply this: law-works are such as are done in order to get life; life-works are the genuine fruits of life possessed. And how do we get life? By believing on the Son of God. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life." (John 5: 24) We must have life before we can do anything; and we get life, not by "saying" we have faith, but by really having it, and when we have it, we shall manifest the precious fruits thereof, to the glory of God.

Thus, then, we not only implicitly believe that Paul and James must harmonise, but we can plainly see that they do.

Having thus sought to define and illustrate our principle, we shall leave you, dear friend, to apply it in the various cases of difficulty and perplexity which come before you in the study of scripture, while we endeavour to expound, as the Lord may enable us, the important passages of scripture which you have laid before us.

1. The first quotation is from the second Epistle of Peter: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Peter 2: 1) The difficulty of this passage arises, we suppose, from the expression, "Denying, the Lord that bought them." But there is, in reality, no difficulty whatever in these words. The Lord has a double claim on every man, woman, and child beneath the canopy of heaven. He has a claim founded on creation, and a claim founded on redemption. It is to the latter of these two that the apostle refers. The false teachers will not merely deny the Lord that made them, but even the Lord that bought them. It is of importance to see this. It will help to clear away many difficulties. The Lord Jesus has a purchased right over every member of the human family. The Father has given Him power over all flesh. Hence the sin of those who deny Him. It would be sin to deny Him as Creator; it is a greater sin to deny Him as Redeemer. It is not at all a question of regeneration. The apostle does not say, 'Denying the Lord that quickened them.' This would indeed be a difficulty; but as the passage stands, it leaves wholly untouched the truth of final perseverance.

2. The second passage occurs at the close of the same chapter, verses 20 and 22: "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..... But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again: and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." The diffusion of scriptural knowledge and evangelical light may and does frequently exert an amazing influence upon the conduct and character of persons who have never known the saving, quickening, emancipating power of the gospel of Christ. Indeed, it is hardly possible for an open Bible to be circulated, or a free gospel to be preached, without producing very striking results which, after all, will be found to fall far short of the grand result of regeneration. Many gross habits may be abandoned, many pollutions" laid aside, under the influence of a merely intellectual "knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" while, at the same time, the heart has never really been savingly reached at all. Now, it will be invariably found that when persons shake off the influence of evangelical light — even though that influence never extended beyond their outward conduct — they are sure to plunge into greater depths of evil, and greater excesses of worldliness and folly than ever; "The latter end is worse with them than the beginning." The devil takes delight in dragging the quondam professor through deeper mire than that in which he wallowed in the days of his ignorance and thoughtless folly. Hence the urgent need of pressing on all with whom we have to do, the importance of making sure work of it, so that the knowledge of truth may not merely affect their external conduct, but reach the heart and impart that life which, when once possessed, can never be lost. There is nothing in this passage to terrify the sheep of Christ; but very much to warn those who, though they may for a time put on the outward appearance of sheep, have never been, inwardly, aught but as the dog and the sow.

3. Ezekiel 18: 24, 26; "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.... When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity, that he hath done, shall he die." With this we may connect your reference to 2 Chronicles 15: 2: "The Lord is with you while ye be with him: and if ye seek him, he will be found of you: but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." We feel constrained, dear friend, to say that it evidences a sad want of spiritual intelligence to adduce such passages of scripture as bearing, in any way, upon the truth of the final perseverance of Christ's members. These, and numberless other scriptures in the Old Testament, as well as similar passages in the New Testament, unfold to us the deeply important subject of God's moral government. Now to be merely a subject of God's government, is one thing; to be a subject of His unchangeable grace is another. We should never confound them. To elaborate this point, and to refer to the various passages which illustrate and enforce it. would demand a volume; we would here only add our full persuasion that no one can understand the word of God who does not accurately distinguish between man under government, and man under grace. In the one case, he is looked at as walking down here, in the place of responsibility and danger; in the other, he is looked at as associated with Christ above, in the place of inalienable privilege and eternal security. These two Old Testament scriptures to which you have referred us, are entirely governmental, and, as a consequence, have nothing whatever to do with the question of final perseverance.

4. Matthew 12: 45: "Then goeth he and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be unto this wicked generation." The closing sentence of this passage quite explains the whole context. Our Lord is describing the moral condition of the Jewish people. The spirit of idolatry had gone out of them, but only for a time, and to return again in sevenfold energy and intensity, rendering their last state worse, by far, than ought that has yet appeared in their most marvellous history. This passage, taken in a secondary way, may be very intelligently, applied to an individual who, having undergone a certain moral change, and exhibited a measure of improvement in his outward conduct, afterwards falls back and becomes more openly corrupt and vicious than ever.

5. 2 John 8, 9: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." In verse 8, the apostle exhorts the elect lady and her children to look to themselves lest, by any means, he should lose ought of the fruit of his ministry. They were to form part of his reward in the coming day of glory, and he longed to present them faultless, in the presence of that glory, that his reward might be full. Verse 9 needs no explanation; it is solemnly plain. If one does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, he has got nothing. Let slip the truth as to Christ, and you have no security as to anything. The Christian most assuredly needs to walk watchfully in order to escape the manifold snares and temptations which surround him; but whether is that watchfulness better promoted by placing his feet upon the shifting sand of his own performances,

or by fixing them firmly upon the rock of God's eternal salvation? Whether am I in a more favourable position for the exercise of watchfulness and prayer, while living in perpetual doubt and fear, or reposing in artless confidence in the unchangeable love of my Saviour God? We think, dear friend, we may very safely anticipate your reply.

6. Revelation 3: 11: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Two things are here to be considered, namely, first, this is an address to an assembly; and, secondly, it does not say, That no man take thy life." A servant may lose his reward; but a child can never lose his eternal life. Attention to this would remove a host of difficulties. Sonship is one thing; discipleship is quite another. Security in Christ is one thing; testimony for Christ is quite another. If our security were dependent upon our testimony — our sonship upon our discipleship where should we be? True, the more I know my security and enjoy my sonship, the more effective will be my testimony, and the more faithful my discipleship, but these things must never be confounded.

In conclusion, dear friend, you say that "All those texts which speak of enduring to the end, and overcoming, are thought to mean that, since there is a possibility of our not doing so, we may not be saved in the end." As to this we would merely add that we shall be most happy, at any time, to enter with you upon the close examination of every one of those passages to which you in this general way refer, and to prove, by the grace of God, that not one of them, when rightly interpreted, militates, in the smallest degree, against the precious truth of final perseverance; but that on the contrary, each passage contains within itself, or within its immediate context that which will clearly prove its perfect harmony with the truth of the eternal security of the very feeblest lamb in all the blood-bought flock of Christ.

May the Lord establish our souls more and more firmly in His own truth, and preserve us unto His heavenly kingdom, to the glory of His holy name! C. H. M.

P.S. — Paley observes that "we should never suffer what we know to be disturbed by what we know not." And Butler remarks nearly the same when he says, "If a truth be established, objections are nothing. The one is founded on our knowledge. and the other on our ignorance"

A SACRED UNION.

'TWIXT Jesus and the heavenly race
Subsists a bond of sovereign grace —
A tie which hell's tremendous train
Can ne'er dissolve or rend in twain.
Life's sacred bond shall never break,
Though earth should to its centre shake:
We rest in hope, assured of this;
For God has pledged His righteousness.
By Him 'twas counselled, planned, and done,
Wrought in the blood of His dear Son —
The Christ appointed to redeem
All that the Father chose in Him.
Oh sacred union, firm and strong!
How great the grace! How sweet the song!
To God alone be all the praise
Of rich, eternal, heavenly grace.
In spirit one with Him who rose
Victorious o'er His mighty foes;
Who went on high and took His seat,
Pledge of the serpents full defeat.
Triumphant thus o'er adverse powers,
(For all He is and has is ours),
With Him, the Head, we stand or fall —
Our Life, our Surety, and our All.
Thus saved in Him, a chosen race,
Here may we prove our faithfulness,
And live to Him who for us died,
With whom we shall be glorified.

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 782-784)

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