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**DIALOG ON ETERNAL SECURITY**  
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Our Lost Estate  
Achieving Faith  
Interesting Incidents

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Chapter 1

A candid young attorney-at-law has been listening to an "eternal security" broadcast. He comes to a pastor of the Church of the Nazarene with his frank inquiries. His first question is, "What scriptural ground is there for the teaching 'once in grace always in grace'?"

"Good morning, Dr. Arminius, my name is Sincere, James Sincere. I understand that you are pastor of the Calvary Church of the Nazarene. Am I correct?" James Sincere was an intelligent young lawyer of perhaps one score and a half years. He turned a keen, inquiring, intellectual face toward the older, bespectacled pastor.

"You are correct, my dear sir," responded the older man. "What service can I render you? Are you in trouble?" The pastor's kindly, interested attitude, as well as the fine cordiality of his voice, encouraged the younger man frankly to state his problem to him.

"It is a sort of religious, intellectual trouble that I am in. One of interpretation, perhaps, you'd call it. Having heard you preach a few times, I have felt emboldened to come to you with a sincere inquiry," replied the visitor.

"Indeed, what might your problem be?" suggested the pastor, offering his young caller a comfortable chair in his cozy, homelike study.

"Well," began the keen-minded young man, glancing frankly into the kindly, shrewd eyes of the pastor, "I have been listening pretty regularly to the Rev. Doctor John Calvin's radio broadcast over WOOF. Having been converted to the Lord Jesus last summer at the Holiness Camp Meeting, I naturally have been keenly interested in everything religious. I tuned in on Dr. Calvin's daily sermons, and have found myself frankly puzzled over many of the positions that he has taken. My lack of religious experience and information has induced me to come to you, in order to inquire into the meaning of some of the good Doctor's statements. Have you time to talk with me about these matters, or am I intruding on your busy day?"

"You are not intruding at all, my dear brother," cordially replied the pastor. "I am glad to give you all the time that you may desire. Let us discuss in a candid manner the religious problems that puzzle you. I remember the evening you were converted at the Camp Meeting, and I have been casting about to learn, if I could, your name and your whereabouts. It gives me very great pleasure to meet you, and to have this conversation with you. Tell me what are some of the Doctor's declarations that have bothered you."

Thus encouraged, the young lawyer responded:

"One of the expressions that the Doctor uses very constantly, is 'eternal security.' If I catch his meaning correctly, he teaches that if one is truly converted to Christ, that is, regenerated, or born again, he is eternally secure from ever losing that relationship, no matter what he may do thereafter that is offensive to God. This is the question I would like to ask: is such a teaching scriptural, and may it be relied upon?"

The pastor paused, and reached for a copy of the Bible before he made reply. "We realize," said he, "that many good and noble men and women have held such a belief as you have heard over Dr. Calvin's broadcast. Down through the Christian centuries there has been a considerable group of believers in Christ, who have taught this. However, we do not believe that it can be substantiated by Scripture. 'Tis true, there are occasional passages which taken by themselves, and lifted out of their general scriptural setting, that can be made to sound as though they taught 'eternal security,' or 'once in grace, always in grace,' as it is so many times called. But when one carefully weighs these various portions of the New Testament, over against so many passages that oppose such a teaching, and finds none that supports it when interpreted in the light of its associated context, we unhesitatingly declare that it is not true." Continuing, he thoughtfully turned the leaves of his Bible.

"This Book unquestionably teaches the free moral agency of man, that is, his free and unlimited power of choice. If he will accept the requirements of the gospel, he may be saved; if he rejects them, he will be lost. This power of choice is not destroyed, after he is regenerated. It remains with him. That is to say, he must exercise his power of choice every day, and decide whether he chooses to continue to fulfill the conditions whereby God conferred salvation upon him, or chooses to refuse to continue to qualify, and thus forfeits the grace he had received. Listen to this reading of Joshua 24:15, where this power of choice is clearly recognized:

"'And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

"Again in 1 Kings 18:21 we have the same thing recognized," continued Dr. Arminius. "Listen to Elijah exhorting the people: 'How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God follow him, but if Baal then follow him.' This power of choice is recognized throughout the Word of God, whether it is speaking about saints or sinners. If a man after conversion, deliberately chooses to do evil, it nullifies all the power and grace of God for his salvation. He automatically perishes spiritually. His soul returns to the state of spiritual death from whence it came, when he was born again.

"Listen also to this passage in Ezekiel: 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' Chapter 18:20. Also listen to this: Ezekiel 33:13: 'When I shall say to the righteous that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered, but for his iniquity that he has committed he shall die for it.' And in 33:12: 'The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression. . . . Neither shall he be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth.' "

Young Brother Sincere eagerly interrupted at this point, and a bit excitedly asked, "But, my dear pastor, is that not all found in the Old Testament? Is not its application limited to the dispensation in which it is found? Surely Christians today are not bound by Old Testament teachings, are they?"

"The moral and spiritual requirements, my precious brother," replied the doctor, "of the Old and New Testaments are the same. The ancient Hebrew was saved through faith in the Messiah to come, and His future atonement was evidenced by the slain beasts and smoking altars of that day. The present day Christian is saved through faith in a Messiah who has already come, and shed His blood upon the cross for our salvation, It was only the old ceremonial law given to Moses that was done away, or fulfilled, in Christ. Read Hebrews 8:7-9."

James Sincere quickly thumbed the pages of his Bible, which he drew from his pocket. The very action indicated that he was familiar with its sacred pages. Speedily finding the place, he read:

"'For if the first covenant -- '"

"Which refers to the Old Testament," interrupted Dr. Arminius.

James continued: "'had been faultless, then should no place be found for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.'"

"Here," said Dr. Arminius, "it states that the portion of the old covenant that was given to Moses was to be done away, but the great fundamental standards of spirituality and salvation that antedated the Exodus under Moses were not done away, but are in effect today. Great items like the Ten Commandments, the sanctity of marriage, the need of a Sabbath rest, and the tithe, were in effect ages before Moses published them and are handed right over into the Christian system, not only amplified and adjusted by the Holy Spirit. None of the moral and spiritual requirements were made void, at the coming of Christ, but were filled full of spiritual significance, and are in effect today. Consequently, the passages from Ezekiel, emphasizing the power of choice and its consequence when we choose the wrong, are valid and in effect."

"But have you none of similar import in the New Testament?" fairly shouted the young man.

"We have," calmly replied the pastor. "You handle your Bible with such familiarity that I will ask you to find these passages for me. Turn to Hebrews 10:26."

In a trice young James had the passage.

"Read it," directed the doctor.

In a clear, well modulated voice, James Sinceer read:

"'For, if we sin wilfully after we have received a knowledge of the truth --'"

"Stop there," urged the doctor. "The balance of the verse teaches some matters with which just now we are not interested. Our point of interest is to ascertain whether the New Testament teaches that a regenerated believer can sin his way out of grace, and back into spiritual death from whence he came. Does not that verse seem to teach it?"

"It surely does," said James, studying the verse. "But, may I ask, does the expression 'received the knowledge of the truth' unquestionably imply that the party referred to was genuinely converted? Possibly this means that he had just heard of the privileges of the gospel."

"If that is its meaning," responded the doctor, "how could the 29th verse have any significance? Please read it."

The young man at once complied. "'Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath counted the blood of the

covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace!"

"This seems clearly to indicate," observed the doctor, "that the person mentioned had accepted Jesus as the Son of God, had sampled in his soul the Spirit of grace, had even been sanctified by Christ's blood, and now had sinfully, willfully lapsed from his life in God and was fearfully looking for the fiery indignation that is destined to devour the adversaries."

"But," exclaimed the doctor, "enough of that one, turn to another. Try 2 Peter 2:20-21."

With a quick thumbing of the leaves Brother James Sinceer soon located the passage.

"Let me read this one," urged the pastor, and with a sonorous voice he read:

"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, . For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." The doctor paused, then he added, "The balance of the chapter is such a commentary on the loathsomeness of backsliding, that it is unnecessary to read it. But surely with this scripture staring one in the face, my precious young brother, and with the loathsome picturesqueness of the illustration, you can but admit that the New Testament teaches the possibility of apostasy from Christ, on the part of those who have been saved through His blood."

James was silent as he critically examined the verses.

"Shall we read some more?" kindly inquired the man of God.

"If you will, please," answered the young man. "I am bound to know all the Word of God teaches."

"Very well," answered the other. "Turn now to Colossians 1:21-23, I will be glad if you will read it."

The young attorney quickly found the passage and eagerly read.

"And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight if ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel."

"Look," said the doctor, "at what they were saved from. They had formerly been 'alienated' from God; they were enemies to God till their wicked minds had become saturated with it; they were guilty of 'wicked works.' This clearly indicates that they were certainly deep down in sin. Now look to what they had been saved. Reconciled with God, which evidently means that they were forgiven, regenerated or born again, They had also been led into holiness, indeed, they were

so beautifully saved and filled with grace that as God looked upon them, they were 'unblameable' and 'unreproveable.' And then look at that last statement: 'If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.'"

"But suppose," eagerly interrupted the young attorney, "that it was literally impossible for anything to separate them from Christ, for any one to 'pluck them out of His hand,' as Dr. Calvin alleges in his broadcast?"

"Then the Apostle Paul, who wrote the epistle to the Colossians was guilty of perpetrating a terrible and meaningless blunder, by adding that last warning verse, for the verse could have no warning, no meaning, no sense; indeed, the words would be the sorriest nonsense, if these believers literally could not be lost. Would, or rather we had better say, could a Holy Ghost inspired man write such an untruth? But this 23rd verse is so in harmony with what we have just studied in 2 Peter, and in Hebrews, that it would be a wild interpretation to say that this verse was not virtually a repetition of the ones in Peter's letter, and the one in Hebrews. Couple these New Testament verses we have read with the statements in the Old Testament, and we have a case that only those who are willfully blind to everything but the support of their own pet doctrine can evade."

Young James hastily looked at his watch, and then sprang to his feet.

"I surely thank you, Doctor, for this Bible study. May I ask a favor?"

"You may, what is it?"

"Let me come next week, and will you please explain to me the meaning, as you see it, of those quotations that I just gave you . . . 'nothing can separate them from the love of Christ,' and 'no man shall pluck them out of my hand.' Will you do that?"

"With all my heart, my dear brother. Come next week, and we will spend a few hours searching the glorious old Book of God. I will be glad frankly to discuss any question that Dr. Calvin is broadcasting. Don't hesitate to come. However, before you go, can we not kneel down and entreat our divine Lord to keep us while absent from one another, and to guide our studies when next we meet?"

They knelt together in tender prayer, and the young lawyer ran down the steps toward his home.

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## Chapter 2

The young lawyer and the Nazarene pastor discuss "neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Also whether anything can separate a believer from the love of Christ.

"Good morning, my young friend," heartily exclaimed Pastor Arminius, as his young lawyer acquaintance knocked at his study door, some two weeks after the interview recorded in the first chapter.

"I missed you last week, were you not able to come?" he continued as he took his guest's coat and hat. "Be seated."

"Allow me to apologize, Doctor, for not appearing last week," explained the young man. "Court was in session at the county seat below us, and I was hastily summoned to assist in pleading a case. My absence was in no sense due to lack of interest, but wholly unavoidable. Indeed, I have heard Dr. Calvin again lately, and his reiteration of his 'eternal security' positions makes me all the more eager to discuss this interesting question further with you."

"Very well," answered the pastor, reaching for his Bible and turning its leaves, "where shall we begin?"

"Let me hear your explanation of the statement 'neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand,'" replied young Mr. Sinceer.

"That is found," said the pastor, "in the 10th chapter of St. John's gospel. Will you please read it? Permit me to ask you to read a few verses before the one you have quoted, so that we may be able to secure the correct setting of the text."

The attorney turned to John 10:26, and read in his expressive manner: "'But ye believe not because ye are not my sheep, as I said unto you. 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. My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.'"

"It seems to me," exclaimed the keen young man, with a shade of triumph in his voice, "that this text pretty well settles the matter in favor of the contentions of 'eternal security.' Note those statements, 'Give unto them eternal life;' also 'They shall never perish.' And 'neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand,' which statement is repeated."

His eyes glowed with considerable satisfaction, as he held his Bible toward the elderly pastor, with his finger indicating the emphatic repetition.

"Surely," said that good man, with a smile, "if we allow this passage to stand for its face value, and not be affected by other portions of the Word, then it would certainly appear to teach 'eternal security.' But let us examine it in the light of New Testament teachings elsewhere.

"Take the first statement addressed to the Pharisees 'Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep'; would you want us to infer that these men were excluded from believing on Jesus as the Messiah, because they were unable to do so? That is, had they lost their free moral agency, their power of free choice? Or had they sinned so deeply that His teaching and divine presence convicted them, unmasked their sin, and let them turn fiercely against Him?

"In other words, does it not take humble faith in Jesus, and loyal submission to Him, in order to qualify for being one of His 'sheep'? And was it not their voluntary hatred and rebellion against Him that kept them from belief and submission? Consequently it was not some divinely predestined condition in which they were born, that excluded them from the 'sheep' character, but wholly because of their own willful selfishness and hard-hearted, sinful rejection of Him. That is, it was willful unbelief. It would be manifestly unfair, would it not, for the Creator to predestine some to eternal damnation, regardless of their choice?"

The young lawyer slowly nodded his head as though reluctantly conceding the point, as he continued critically to examine the text before him.

"Then," continued the doctor, "take the next statement, 'My sheep know my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.' This is not difficult to understand. For when once one qualifies for the 'sheep' character, by willing, submissive faith and obedience, at once Christ recognizes him by means of the witness of the Spirit, and through that same witness the one who has thus become a 'sheep' through the new birth, recognizes his Lord, and joyfully follows Him.

"Again, following the verses farther, take the 28th: 'And I give unto them eternal life.' Surely! as a natural, or rather supernatural consequence of knowing Jesus Christ, eternal life is conferred. Does not our Lord corroborate this in John 6:47, where He says: 'He that believeth on me hath everlasting life'? Also in John 17:3, where He says: 'This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.'"

"But," eagerly interrupted the young attorney, "if the Lord accords one eternal life, how can that eternal gift be forfeited? If it's eternal, it's eternal, is it not? And thus it would be nonforfeitable."

"This might be true," replied Dr. Arminius, "if a human being were like a beast, devoid of the power of choice, or were like a machine, constructed to run just as its creator had planned, with no personality or fluctuation of the will to affect its relationships. But if the power of choice is what brings us to repentance and to submission and faith, in order that we may 'know the true God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent,' then it must be a continuing voluntary choice that keeps us where He can continue the eternal life in us. Otherwise, if one could acquire eternal life and then never forfeit it, God would have conferred that eternal gift upon one who later might sin against Him, and become a fearful enemy to His cause and kingdom and yet at death claim a place in heaven with the God against whom he had fought all his life.

"You can readily see that if a person through submission to Christ and faith in His atoning blood could thus secure the new birth, and with it eternal life, and that such an eternal gift could never be forfeited, that this would thereafter place a premium upon sin. It would offer almost irresistible temptation to that poor mortal to rely upon his possession of that nonforfeitable bestowment and then turn toward the sinful gratification of his flesh, satisfy his carnal ambitions and otherwise live a worldly, corrupt life.



"We see examples of this among men whose physical health seems to them to be nonforfeitable, and because of that they plunge into extravagant excesses, which lead to their physical ruin. Also among men whose wealth appears to be so fixed as to be in no danger of loss; consequently they proceed to the wildest and most foolish expenditures.

"There is an inevitable law among human beings that only the momentary possibility of losing a thing induces one to take momentary steps to conserve and preserve that good thing. Must we imagine then, that the greatest boon that can be bestowed upon humanity, that of eternal life, shall be an exception to that law? Can men possess that unspeakable gift and yet play fast and loose with the qualifications by which they obtained it? This is unthinkable."

The keen, intelligent interest of his alert auditor, inspired the good pastor to bring forth further arguments. Said he, "In addition to what I have already said, let me add this: the idea of a nonforfeitable gift of eternal salvation, would not only put a woeful and irresistible temptation to commit sin in the way of millions of Christians, it would clearly indicate a vital defect in the plan of salvation itself, which would belittle the Deity, and reflect upon His power and ability. His redemptive plan, as announced by the angel to the Virgin Mary was to 'save his people from their sins.'

"Now, please note, that it was not to save them 'in their sins.' Not at all. But 'from their sins.' The advocates of 'eternal security,' these men who proclaim 'once in grace always in grace,' have made it possible, if their teachings be true, for a man to be saved, that is to be in possession of eternal life, and yet return to the sinning business and continue in it till life is done, and then, all unprepared and unfitted for heaven, to be caught up to meet a pure and holy God, to live forever in a pure and holy heaven, and consort (at least with some), pure and holy spirits. Such a conception as this is appalling.

"If this be true, then it proves that sin was too much for God. He could not provide a complete cure for it. He had to accommodate Himself to a plan whereby He could overlook it, to hide it from Himself under the robe of Christ's merit. In fact the Deity is beaten when it comes to the solution of the sin question in humanity. He had to provide a plaster that did not quite cover the sore, and a salvation salve that could not quite reach to the roots of the disease. Instead of saving his people 'from their sins,' He only puts a robe of imputed righteousness over their sins and then when they come to die, He is compelled to take them to heaven sin and all. This plan, if it is the truth, naturally and necessarily arranges for sin to exist in heaven eternally with God, instead of being shut up in hell with the devil and his angels. Is this not a fearful thing to allege about our Holy God and His Calvary purchased plan of salvation?

"My dear young friend, you cannot, I am sure, accept a plan that reflects so upon God and makes so great mockery of Christ's atonement as to allow for sin in heaven in the presence of a pure and holy God, and compels those who do become free from it, and utterly saved from it, if they shall make their home in heaven, to live in the presence of it forever in the souls of these sinning 'Christians.' Is this your idea of the holy religion of our Lord Jesus Christ?"

The young attorney was silent for several seconds. At length he aroused himself as from a period of intense thought, and said, "I must confess that I had never followed this teaching into all

its logical sequences. Your argument has considerably staggered me. But we are not near through. Take that next passage; 'They shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.' What do you do with that? It seems to me to be emphatically convincing."

"It means," continued the older man, now thoroughly warmed to his task. "It means just what it says -- 'they shall never perish,' provided they do not themselves invalidate the terms upon which they first received forgiveness and regeneration. 'Neither shall any man pluck them out of God's hand.' Certainly not. It is only the Christian himself who can pluck himself out of the Father's care. This he can do by failure to walk in the light. No man can force him out. No government can compel him to apostatize. No force in hell or earth can drive him from the Father's care. But he can himself, by failure to qualify, by refusing or neglecting to adjust himself to God's provisions of grace, by neglect of the means whereby that grace is made effective, so deflect the life-giving current that flows from God and maintains his spiritual existence as to deprive him of it, and thrust him back into the death of sin, from whence his repentance and faith enabled God to bring him.

"He is eternally safe and will 'never perish,' as long as he whole-heartedly complies with God's wondrous provisions of grace. This is clearly implied in the passage in 1 John 1:7, 'If we walk in the light, . . . we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin.' If we do this we will never perish. If we do not, we are doomed.

"My precious young friend, every good gift, whether earthly or heavenly, is conditioned. It is hedged about by an 'if.' If you always obey the laws of health, you will be well. if you love and cherish your family, and live in honor and chastity before them, they will be glad to own you for a husband and a father. If you obey the laws of mentality and its proper development, you will have a cultured, gifted mind. You cannot recall any good bestowment of God that is not hedged in with a condition. If everything in the physical and mental realm is thus conditioned, can we imagine that our relationship to the highest things of the spiritual world are unconditioned? Would God compel one to fulfill all the conditions of the physical world in order to be well, happy and prosperous; would He compel one to fulfill all the conditions in the mental and intellectual realm in order to be a keen, safe and sane thinker, and then suddenly reverse all His laws, contort all His methods of dealing with men, when He comes to the matter of salvation from sin? This is unthinkable.

"There can be no doubt that our relation to the forgiveness of sins through Christ is conditioned. 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy.' There are your conditions for forgiveness, and they must be met.

"There can be no doubt that regeneration, that is, the new birth, is conditioned. 'As many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, who were born, not of man, or of the will of the flesh, but of God.' There's your condition for the new birth -- to receive Christ with a willing, submissive, obedient faith. Lacking this, no one can be born again.

"There can be no doubt that heart cleansing is conditioned. 'If we walk in the light . . . the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' There's your condition for heart cleansing -- walking in the light. Refusal brings darkness and death.

"Inasmuch then, as there is a condition for obtaining all these experiences of salvation, and if those conditions are not sincerely met, there can be no forgiveness, new birth or cleansing, then, if God be true and equitable and just, there is bound to be a condition for their retention. In Peter's second epistle, first chapter, he gives this. First, he states that those to whom he has addressed his exhortation had through God's great and exceeding promises been 'made partakers of the divine nature,' and 'escaped the corruption that was in the world through lust.' In other words, they were Christians, Then he begs them to add to their faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. At length, he gives us the following most startling statement. If you will be so kind I will ask you to turn to it, and read."

The young lawyer hastily turned to 2 Peter 1:8-10. He read: "'For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, But he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall.'"

"Please note," said the doctor, "the fact that they had been 'purged from their old sins.' That is, they had been not only converted, but sanctified wholly. 'Purged,' you see, it says. That is the most drastic word for cleansing. That suggests most thorough eradication.

"Then also note that after being saved and sanctified, they were to 'give diligence to make their calling and election sure,' that is, their retention of the blessings they had received, were conditioned, And then it adds this very significant statement: 'For if ye do these things ye shall never fall.' Here he clearly declares that their lapse from the faith, their backsliding from grace, their return again to that state of spiritual death from which their conversion and sanctification had brought them, was possible and imminent, and that only the keenest diligence could prevent it. Do you not see this, and does it not appeal to a mind like yours that is accustomed to weighing evidence?"

Again the lawyer slowly nodded his head. "I feel," said he, "that you have given me all that I can carry this time. You surely have put up some arguments that I am not able to answer. However, before I capitulate, I would like to ask you several more questions. Among them are these: Is it not true that once a son is born to his father he is always his son? Also are there not some dispensational truths that must be given consideration in the New Testament? And is there not some truth in the matter of imputed righteousness?"

"I am sorry," continued he, as he reached for his coat and hat, "that I cannot wait till you discuss these this morning, but I will be glad to call again this coming week and listen to your explanation, if you will permit me. Also, if you are minded to do so, I shall be delighted to have you offer prayer again for me, as you did on my last visit."

"With all my heart," responded the pastor. "Let us pray." After a hearty petition from the doctor, he tenderly requested the young lawyer to voice his own requests to God. This the young man somewhat hesitatingly did, closing his prayer with an urgent plea that "thou wilt guide me into all the truth of Thy Holy Word."

Dr. Arminius uttered a solemn "Amen" to this earnest and humble petition, and the young attorney hastened from the study.

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## Chapter 3

The Lawyer and the preacher discuss "Once a son always a son."

Seated for their third discussion in Dr. Arminius' comfortable study with their Bibles open for ready reference, we find Lawyer Sinceer and the pastor. Greetings have been said, the amenities of the day passed, and now they are ready for the lawyer's first question.

"Shall we begin with that favorite expression of the eternal security folks, 'Once a son always a son'?" smilingly inquired the doctor.

"Yes, if you will do so," replied his legal friend. "That has always impressed me as being the strongest spot in their armor. Until I began these discussions with you, I confess that I was just about a full-fledged 'eternal securityite.' This eternal sonship of the believer had me. Indeed, I do not like to admit that I am entirely converted to your view of this matter, yet, though I will admit that you have shaken my defense some. I am keenly curious to know how you can get around this son-ship business, so please proceed."

"Well, you must admit," began the pastor, "that the Bible abounds in figures and symbols. Our human language is so restricted that it is only by borrowing heavily from earthly figures of speech that we can describe and delineate spiritual matters. As samples of this, note the designations that we ascribe to our Lord. He is a 'Sun,' a 'Shield,' a great 'Rock,' a 'Commander,' a 'Fountain,' an 'Altar,' a 'Lamb,' -- indeed, the list is almost endless, and yet in strict literalness, we must admit He is none of these. We also speak of heaven as a 'Home,' to poor earth-stayed orphans; as a 'Haven' for storm-tossed human sailors on the voyage of life; as a 'City that hath foundations,' into which beleaguered souls may run for safety.

"When, therefore, He was seeking for the tenderest figure of speech in our human language that could make God attractive to poor mortals who hated Him and were afraid of Him, Jesus selected the title of 'Father.' What a revelation this was to wretched humanity of God's attitude and love toward them. Pursuing the sequence of such a name for God, it naturally followed that men who were transformed into His likeness should be called the sons of God. Not that we are His sons in the same literal sense that we are the sons of our earthly parents. Not that He is literally our Father. But it means that through His grace and the transforming power of His Spirit we have been made as near like Him as it is possible for redeemed sinners to be, and He therefore, condescends to 'adopt' us, into the heavenly family, according to the Apostle Paul's figure, and to 'constitute' us, according to 1 John 3:2, by means of a heart change that is so radical that it takes its designation from the earthly birth of a child, and is called the 'New Birth,' into a spiritual sonship. That spiritual sonship is brought about by fulfilling the conditions of repentance and faith in His atoning blood. Even the ability to repent, He has to bestow, for sin has so robbed us, crippled us, that we are helpless to help ourselves. But He tells us that if we will come to Him just as we are, and fling

ourselves upon His mercy, He will not cast us out, but will enable us to repent and fulfill His sonship requirements.

"The ability to believe unto salvation must also be imparted by His Spirit. Indeed, we are so utterly unable to make our way to God unaided by His Spirit that the Holy Ghost in inspiring the writers of the New Testament borrowed another human figure, and declared that unregenerate men are 'dead in trespasses and sins.' We know that literally they are not dead, or they could not hear the gospel, or attend the services where it was preached, or do anything else. It merely means that we are as helpless to get ourselves saved from sin and hell and to make heaven as though we were literally dead.

"Now it is clear that the only real son that God has, is Jesus Christ who was begotten of the Father and born of the Virgin Mary. Our only right to spiritual sonship of any character is based upon our voluntary acceptance of the merits of our Lord's death and resurrection, and then because of this, the Holy Spirit transforms us into His image; this is miraculous and revolutionary enough to be called a new birth. Not that we are literally born a second time; Nicodemus could see that such was not the case, and he was puzzled how to apply the figure in a spiritual way, as being a transformation from above.

"Our designation as 'sons of God' is an accommodated term, and not a literal one. The Master called the Pharisees children of the devil, 'the deeds of your father you will do,' He declared. Not that they were literally begotten of Satan, but were so like him, and so animated by his evil spirit as to merit the term. If 'once a son always a son' is correct, and these wicked men were literally 'sons of Satan,' then they could never change and become sons of God, and inasmuch as all men are at sometime sinners and thus 'sons of Satan' it would follow that no one could ever be saved, This is absurd.

"Likewise He terms His disciples 'children of the Resurrection.' Not that they were literally begotten of the Resurrection, such a meaning would be unthinkable, but He means that they were so imbued with the spirit of the resurrected, living Messiah, possessing such a thrilling, glorious victory over death, the grave and its bondage, as to merit the appellation 'children of the Resurrection.' So we, when saved and cleansed and filled with God, can be so radiantly like Him, love what He loves, and hate what He hates, as to merit the glorious name of 'sons of God.' We can look up into His face and call Him 'Abba-Father.'

"But," continued the pastor, "this new birth sonship is a gift from God. The repentance that enabled us to qualify for it was a gift. The faith by which we accepted and received Him and because of which He imparted to us eternal life, was a gift. The eternal life itself was also a gift. Read Romans 6:23, 'The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

"All these salvation gifts including our sonship in Him, are conditioned. Note what it says in 1 John 3:24, 'He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him;' but suppose one ceases to keep His commandments, then what? Why, naturally, he forfeits the gift and backslides. Again, in John's gospel 14:23: 'If a man love me he will keep my words.' And again in the verse following, He states the reverse. 'He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.' And again, 'If we walk in the light,' but suppose we cease to love Him, we refuse to walk in the light,

then what? All this indicates that we do not have even in our relation to God as His sons, any experience, or relationship or position that we cannot forfeit by disobedience, and lose by failure to keep His commandments."

"Even an earthly sonship can be forfeited. It can be lost by such estrangement between the son and his father as to result in his disinheritance. The disinherited son is driven from his father's home, he is denied support that he usually would receive, he ceases to belong to the family, and is only finally mentioned in his father's will to emphasize his disinherited condition.

"An earthly sonship can also be forfeited by death. When death takes a child in any family, his parents cease to shelter the dead one, or give him sustenance or support. He literally ceases to be. His name is not even mentioned in his father's will. If his father is questioned as to the number of his children, he will say, 'I once had two, now I have but one, the other died.'

"In both of these ways can a spiritual son of God, cease to be a son. Through disobedience and sin he is both disinherited, and he also lapses again into the state of death in trespasses and sins in which he was when God quickened him into spiritual life. He forfeited his spiritual sonship. He lost his salvation position in Christ through sin. He despised his birthright of eternal life and it was taken from him, He that was once alive spiritually, died.

"There is no greater fallacy in religious teaching than the idea proclaimed by the eternal security people of 'once a son always a son.' It is not, and cannot be a literal analogy -- it claims, however, that we are literal sons of God which we are not, but are only His sons by the transforming gift of the Holy Spirit, resulting in adoption. If sonship were a strict and literal analogy, then we would have no choice in the matter. No man was ever able literally to choose to be his earthly father's son. He was forced into this world. But God never forces anyone to become His spiritual son. Not being strict analogy, and only a figure of speech, one dare not press it beyond its spiritual sequence. This the eternal security people do, and force it far beyond what it was intended to convey and this course cannot be substantiated by Scripture. The degree of sonship that is accorded by the Holy Ghost is conditioned upon choice, obedience and submissive faith, and can be lost. It can be retained only by giving 'diligence to make one's calling and election sure.'

"To take the position that 'once a son of God always a son of God,' or 'once in grace always in grace,' is also to reflect on God's ability to solve the sin question, that is, utterly to heal and cure the festering sore of sin; for it opens the door to poor tempted man to possess, as they claim, an eternal salvation position in Christ even though living in open sin, This is a teaching that is repugnant to every feature of the New Testament and a burlesque on the mighty salvation that is offered in Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Just as an earthly son can die, by ceasing to adjust himself to the demands of continued life, so can a spiritual son of God die, by ceasing to adjust himself to the demands of continued spiritual life, It is a travesty therefore on the suffering of Calvary, and the agonies of Gethsemane to offer poor sinful humanity a spurious salvation, a false hope, a man-made 'positional' salvation. In order to support this view the Scriptures must be wrested from their plain and unquestioned meaning, and the reader's good human sense, warped out of its customary sane judgment, and

hypnotized into a mythical hope that we can possess an effect without adequately fulfilling the requirements demanded by the cause. This is the essence of fanaticism. The whole eternal security teaching is unthinkable when it is lined up along side of plain Scripture teaching and good common sense. "

The pastor ceased speaking and eyed his legal guest with lifted brows and an interrogation in his eyes. The lawyer drew a long breath. Both men sat for several seconds without a word, intently looking at one another.

"I must admit," the attorney finally said, "that your reference to one's judgment being warped by the eternal security arguments appeals to me, I have found myself repeatedly losing my ordinary common sense moorings, when seeking to follow their interpretations. To state that a man can have a 'positional' salvation in Christ that entitles him to a holy heaven and yet be able down here to disobey God's commands, and flout His moral and spiritual requirements seems to me little short of theological insanity. It doesn't fit the demands of the Bible and of a life in Christ free from sin. But our good Dr. Calvin in his radio broadcasts is such a keen man for theological argument that I admit I was just about wrapped around his finger; hypnotized is none to strong a word. You have certainly done me a favor to clarify the situation. Still, I would be glad to hear you discuss the matter of imputed righteousness. That, I believe, is also one of their very strong points. Have you time for that this afternoon?"

"I fear not," answered the doctor, "I think that we need a bit more time to investigate it than is at our immediate disposal. However, have you a question with which you would like to have me start when we meet next week?"

"Yes," replied Attorney Sinceer, "I think this question, perhaps, would give you scope enough for a comprehensive reply: 'What is the difference between "imputed righteousness" and "imparted righteousness"?' Also this one: 'Is there such a thing as "imputed salvation" and who are its recipients?'"

"That will be fine," commented the doctor. "This will give me opportunity to collect my thoughts on it. Shall we wait on our Lord in a few moments of prayer before we separate?"

Together they knelt and fervently prayed, then cordially clasped one another's hands as they bade farewell.

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## Chapter 4

The preacher and the lawyer talk frankly about the "deep" question of "imputed salvation," and inquire who is eligible.

"Good afternoon, Doctor," cheerfully exclaimed the young attorney. "Here I come again for further enlightenment on the deep subjects involved in eternal security. I find them tremendously

interesting, and facing me with something of a challenge. However, this matter of 'imputed salvation,' has me guessing. I am eager to have you explain it to me."

The young man tossed his hat upon a box of books, and familiarly seated himself in a chair. He pulled a well worn copy of the Bible from his pocket, and waited expectantly for the older man to begin.

"You are, indeed, welcome," the pastor said. "It is a pleasure to review these matters with you. It refreshes my own mind to explore again these old familiar truths. It is a bit thrilling to find one keenly interested in them."

As he spoke, he picked up several copies of the Bible in various versions, and laid them in an array about him, like a surgeon laying out his tools in preparation for a delicate operation.

"I believe," he said, "that we are to discuss the matter of the imputation of the salvation merits of our Lord's death, in contradistinction to the impartation of such merit.

"The word 'impute' in religious phraseology, signifies to credit one with grace, favor, standing and salvation unconditionally. This is accomplished through, and by means of the unmerited benefits of Christ's atonement. The recipient does nothing, is not required to do anything, and indeed, in the case of some classes, which we will mention later, is unconscious of the royal favor.

"'Impart,' means to bestow upon one, in response to his fulfillment of certain conditions, mercy, forgiveness, regeneration and cleansing. This bestowment transforms his very being. Thus the Apostle Peter says that through faith in the mighty promises of God, we are 'made partakers of the divine nature.' Also in John's gospel it states, that 'as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.'

"The 'imputation' or unconditional bestowment of God's mercy and favor is accorded to three classes: the innocent, the imbecilic and the ignorant. Being a preacher, I naturally love my 'firstly,' 'secondly,' and 'thirdly.' With your permission, let us consider these classes in that manner.

"Firstly, the innocent. This class is almost wholly confined to infants. Christ's unconditional eternal life is accorded every baby, the world around, from the hour of its birth, till it reaches the years of moral accountability. If it dies during that time, it already possesses every essential feature of spiritual safety, or if lacking in any, such will be added to it, as it enters eternity. This is taught and inferred by such expressions as our Lord used when He said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Also 'Their angels do always behold the face of my Father.'

"However," continued the doctor, "we must be careful to insist that this imputed, unconditional acceptance with God, so freely bestowed upon innocent children is lost to them, when, after reaching the years of moral accountability, they deliberately sin against God. This is what Paul's classical expression in Romans 7:9 means, where he says, 'I was alive without the law, once; but when the commandment came,' that is, when he arrived at the period of moral



responsibility, 'sin revived, and I died.' He evidently refers to his infantile justification. This he lost when the power of choice came, as he faced the requirements of God's law, for he chose to sin. This is the fate of all human beings; first, they are innocent children possessed of eternal life through Christ's imputed favor, and then they become backsliders because they sinned, when moral accountability arrived. If a child can be led into a conscious faith in Christ, thus resulting in its regeneration, at this critical period, it can pass at once from imputed spiritual safety to imparted salvation. It can become, through conscious faith a partaker of the divine nature. The poverty, not to say the madness, of the position of the eternal security people, is manifested when they deal with this question of innocents. The historic position of classical Calvinism is that all tiny children are damned in hell because, forsooth, they were unable to exercise conscious faith in Christ. One of their outstanding authors has been quoted as saying that 'there are millions of infants in hell not a span long.'

"This position is nothing else than atrocious. It is a blasphemous reflection upon the wisdom, the mercy and the justice of a glorious heavenly Father. 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' inquired Abraham, when he was pleading for mercy upon the vile inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Well might we make the same inquiry, when we consider the diabolic deity that the full-fledged Calvinistic theory requires us to substitute for our loving, merciful heavenly Father.

"And now," declared the man of God, "let us consider my secondly. That is, the imbecilic. This includes the insane, the feeble-minded and the idiotic, This is only an extension of innocence when such mental defect exists in infancy and continues on into adult age. If, however, it appears in one after he has reached the years of accountability, then, if he were in a conscious state of salvation, such a saved relationship justly continues. If, however, he had up to that point rejected the overtures of the gospel, and were in a lost condition, then such an absence of salvation continues to be his lot, on, even, into eternity, just as though he had literally died."

The pastor paused.

The attorney drew his breath with an audible sigh, however, his eyes were bright with thought.

"There's vastly more to this, than I supposed," he declared. "This discussion is leading us much farther than I ever imagined it would. But, now for that 'thirdly' of yours, the 'ignorant.' I am keenly curious about that. What can you make out for them?"

The old doctor smiled. "Very well," said he, "let us try the 'thirdly.' This is about the way we will state it: 'To what extent are the unconditional merits of the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ imputed to the ignorant?'

"It is perfectly safe to state that no human being will be held guilty to the extent of losing his soul for the violation of any divine requirement of which he was ignorant. We realize that this must be carefully guarded against willful ignorance. If a person can know and fails to avail himself of the opportunity either through careless neglect or willful refusal, he is guilty. The ignorance that

receives the unconditional merits of Jesus' atonement must stand only for unintentional, unwitting, inability to know any better.

"Ah," exclaimed the attorney. "This, I see, brings us to a consideration of the moral condition of the heathen. Millions of them are ignorant. Now indeed, I am interested. Are they all damned or are they saved through ignorance?"

"Yes, indeed," stated the pastor, "this is interesting. Let us discuss the heathen. Let us apply our above statement to a group of human beings situated as many heathen are, in gross superstition; in helpless mental and moral darkness. However, it must be remembered, that even these have a moiety of moral light, This is undoubtedly taught in Scripture where it says that there is 'a light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.' Probably this refers to conscience, but it must also refer to that slight moral illumination which every sane, adult human being receives about the outstanding fundamentals of right and wrong. This is stated in Romans 1:19 and 20: 'Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them, for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.' That is, every tribe and race of people recognize that it is wrong, most of the time, to steal and to kill. They may think it permissible some of the time, but they admit that most of the time it is wrong to take human life, and to refuse to others the right to their own property. This is universal. If therefore, a heathen can be found who is living up to all the dim light that conscience and this faint moral illumination sheds on his path, he comes under the unconditional merits of the atonement on account of his ignorance of any higher and better will of God. He will not be condemned to the point of losing his soul, for what he doesn't know, provided he is living faithfully up to the degree of light he does know about. It is, of course, painfully true, that few, if any, such heathen have ever been found. But, if they exist, they possess eternal life through the imputed merits of the blood of Jesus Christ.

"In this same class with the heathen, we can place people in civilized lands who have never heard the gospel, or who have never been privileged to hear the genuine gospel. If they are living up to the dim light of conscience and moral duty that has been accorded them, they will not be condemned and consigned to perdition for the unconscious and unintentional violation of the requirements of God, concerning which they have no knowledge. We must assume, however, that they have done their best to secure a more complete revelation of His will. If they have done that, the merits of Christ are imputed to them because of their ignorance.

"The second class are Christians. Despite the fact that one has with willing submissive faith, given his heart to God and is living up to all the light of the gospel that is falling on his path, still it is true that the complete will of the great God is so perfect, and so far transcends the poor human conceptions of mankind, that one is literally unable to know all the perfect requirements of his heavenly Father. However, beyond what he is able to know, and completing and fulfilling that which is above his reach, the perfect merits of Christ, His life, death and resurrection, are imputed to that sincere Christian's credit. However, this is true only as long as he is walking in all the light that he does know about. This imputation of Christ's merits is conditioned upon sincere obedience to all the requirements that he does know. The moment that he deliberately declines, or refuses or neglects to walk in that gospel and spiritual light that is accorded him, he will lose the benefits of

all that imputed perfect merit of our Lord which are his for the fulfillment of the infinite requirements of God's holy will. This applies only to those things that he does not and cannot know about. For all of his unintentional moral and spiritual defects, for all of his unwitting shortcomings, for all of his failure to measure up to the infinite and absolutely perfect will of God, he is accorded the unconditional merits of the perfect atonement, perfect obedience and perfect service of our divine Lord. But for this, no Christian could stand accepted before God."

"I must admit," smilingly spoke the young man of the law, "that your arguments sound convincing. But where can you find the Scripture to warrant this view? 'To the law and the testimony,' my reverend friend!" he cried, gaily.

"You are right," answered the minister. "We should refuse to accept any religious doctrine that cannot be reasonably proved from the Bible, and that, too, without wresting the natural meaning of it.

"The Scriptures covering the imputation of eternal life to infants I have already given you. Those applying to the heathen and, in fact, all others who are accepted on account of ignorance, are pretty well covered by Paul's statement in Romans 2:11,12,14, and 15. This is the way it reads: 'For there is no respect of persons with God, for as many as have sinned without the law, shall also perish without the law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. For when the Gentiles who have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law are a law unto themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or excusing one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men.'

"The principle laid down here by the apostle applies not only to the heathen, but to every one. Its application to the Christian calls for this -- that God requires every believer to do his best to live up to all the light that he has, and to make as diligent an effort as he is capable of to acquire more light, and to obey all of our Lord's commandments of which he has, or may have knowledge, but beyond that He will not hold him accountable for divine requirements concerning which he is ignorant. As long as he walks in the light, Christ becomes his eternal security."

The young attorney sat as if lost in meditation. Finally, he lifted his thoughtful face and said, "But, Doctor, I have a dim recollection that the Master once said something about a man who knew what was wrong and yet practiced it; he was beaten, as I recall it, with many stripes; and of another who did not know and yet did the wrong thing, he was beaten with few. Is there not something like that in the New Testament? If so, how do you fit that into your idea that a man will not be punished for things concerning which he is ignorant?"

"You are right. But please remember we do not mean to say the ignorant one will not be punished at all; we allege only, that he will not be eternally lost. The passage that you refer to is in St. Luke, the 12th chapter and the 47th and 48th verses. Please read it."

"And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes."

"Now," said the doctor, "you will notice that this is uttered in connection with a preparation for the second coming of our Lord, and the use of the word 'servant,' would indicate that the one referred to was a believer -- a Christian. In other words, this first servant is the case of one who failed to walk in all the light he possessed; that is, light on the return of Jesus to this earth; and he was, in consequence, soundly punished. Indeed, his punishment was extreme. It consisted, so the text states, of being cast out from the company of the believers, and as Matthew puts it, assigned to the 'hypocrites.' This significant addition is also made: 'there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' In other words, he lost his soul, his disobedience was fatal.

"But the second one who did not know, and yet committed things worthy of stripes, was, it states, beaten with few. We admit that he was beaten; there is no question as to his punishment. But you will notice that he was not cast out. That is, he was not eternally damned. His punishment consisted of some sort of penalty visited upon him in this life, or possibly a loss of rewards in the life to come; but it was not eternal death. Possibly the penalty in this life would be the absence of the many blessings that knowledge and obedience in connection with Christ's return would have brought him. Possibly the penalty in the world to come might consist of failure to possess as worthy a position near the person of the King or at the Lamb's marriage supper as otherwise would have been accorded. At all events we allege that he was not eternally lost.

"And this leads me to say," continued the elderly man, "I feel sure that all disobedience subjects the disobedient one to some sort of loss and penalty, even though it was done in ignorance. But the Scriptures teach, I believe, that whatever that penalty is, it will not exclude the sincere, though ignorant one, from heaven and final acceptance with God."

"Well, well, I must admit," said the young man, "I have received light on some matters that I never had before. Surely you have taken me for an excursion today that has been both illuminating and profitable. But," he exclaimed, looking at his watch, and springing to his feet, "I have overstayed my proposed time. Pardon me for keeping you so long from your other duties. But you have this to your credit that you have just about completely knocked my eternal security ideas into thin air."

"It has been, I am sure, a great pleasure to me to have you come," heartily replied his host. "Have you other questions? If you have matters upon which you wish a further discussion, do not hesitate to come again."

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## Chapter 5

Two lawyers and a preacher have another interesting discussion of the way eternal security folks dispose of Ananias and Sapphira, Judas Iscariot and other noted apostates.

Several weeks had elapsed since the last visit of young Attorney Sincere to the Nazarene pastor's study. The morning that this chapter opens, the good doctor was busy preparing a sermon

for his next Sunday's congregation, when his telephone rang. Clapping the receiver to his ear, the pastor said:

"Hello, this is Rev. Arminius talking."

"Yes, Doctor," was the answer, "this is your lawyer friend, James Sinceer, I surely . have another eternal security 'nut' for you to crack. Did you hear Dr. Calvin's broadcast this morning?"

"No," answered the pastor, "I am sorry I missed that. What did he say that was new this time?"

"Well, he certainly did present a new departure -- new, at least, to me. He declared with emphasis that old King Saul, who visited a witch and then committed suicide, was not lost. He said he expected to meet him in heaven. He also mentioned Ananias and Sapphira, who lied against the Holy Ghost and were stricken dead. They are, he said, safe in glory, and walking the blissful streets of gold. Also, to my utter amazement, he stated that Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of our Lord, who committed suicide, was happily reposing on cushions of glory, a saved soul. He declared that all of these, and thousands of other apostates, just so they had once known the Lord, had thus received the gift of eternal life, and possessed a 'positional salvation' in Christ all the time, despite their sins and apostasy. He emphasized the fact that once received, this 'positional salvation' could never be lost, no matter what one did. It was, of course, something of a repetition of 'once a son, always a son.'

"How are you situated for time, this morning, Doctor? If I came up to your study, could you give me the 'once over' on this Judas Iscariot matter? I am sure you can answer Dr. Calvin's statement, but I am eager to hear you do it. And, listen, would you object if I brought my law partner with me? He's a gruff old chap, but quite a theologian. He was reared a Calvinist and thinks he knows all about it. I have been repeating your arguments to him, but he doesn't seem to be as convinced as I think he ought to be. We are both at leisure today, and he is willing to come. Shall I bring him with me?"

"Certainly," heartily replied the doctor, "bring him along. The more the merrier! If our position cannot stand the most scrutinizing questioning and inquiry, then there is something wrong with it. I will look for you at once."

The two lawyers stepped into the study. They handed their hats to the courteous pastor, and took seats. The partner, whom James Sinceer had brought with him, was a middle-aged man, with gray in his hair. He was shrewd-featured and keen-eyed, with a deep furrowed frown that brought his heavy eye-brows together in the middle.

"This is my partner, Doctor Arminius, William Hardhead," genially spoke the young attorney. "He was born in Missouri, he tells me, and says that he has to be 'shown' before he can part with any convictions that he has held." Lawyer Hardhead rose to his feet and he and Doctor Arminius warmly shook hands.

"Well, gentlemen," said the pastor, "just where do you want to begin? I understand from my talk with Mr. Sinceer over the phone that the question of the fate of King Saul, Ananias and Sapphira, and Judas Iscariot was being discussed in a broadcast this morning by Dr. Calvin. Do you want my views and convictions on these cases?"

The men nodded their heads. "That will give us something to start on," declared Lawyer Hardhead, in a deep, rumbling voice.

"Suppose," said the doctor, "that for the sake of argument, we admit the truth of Dr. Calvin's contention. Mind you, we do not believe it to be true, and are fully convinced that we can disprove it; but sometimes the best disproof can be demonstrated by imagining, for the sake of the argument, that the statement is true.

"We will imagine then, that King Saul, because he once was accepted of God, and accorded salvation through faith in the Messiah to come, was granted a 'positional salvation' that was non-forfeitable, regardless of his subsequent lapse into sin. Please note, now, what that sin consisted of."

The doctor paused, reached for his Bible, and then turned toward his visitors. "Brother Hardhead," he inquired of the elderly lawyer, "will you not turn to the Book of i Samuel, and read us some of the statements there?"

The lawyer demurred, saying that he was not as familiar with the Bible as his partner, Sinceer, was. "Anyhow," he grumbled in his gruff tones, "it will sound better if you read it yourself."

The pastor turned to the place indicated, and then continued.

"The king's offenses were numerous, and the account of them is scattered through several chapters. Consequently, it may be better if I sum them up, without reading the references. First, there was hatred and envy toward young David. Then there was a plain disobedience to a frank command of God in connection with the destruction of the Amalekites. True, he seemed to exhibit a species of repentance soon after this, but it was more because he was caught than because he was sincerely seeking forgiveness. There is no record in the Book that he received any forgiveness from God. Then he was guilty of murderous thoughts and efforts toward David, and, after a while, of actual murder of the priests of Nob. Then his decline was rapid. He lost all communication with God, became deeply sullen and hateful. When the Philistines' army came against him, he was in despair. He consulted a witch which was another violation of the law of God, and finally on the morrow as the battle turned against him, with his last remaining effort he murdered himself.

"Now, according to the non-forfeitable 'positional salvation' of the eternal security folks, King Saul is ushered into heaven, to live forever with a holy God, and to partake forever of holy songs, hallowed ceremonies, and sacred services, in the presence and under the eye of the eternally glorious God, with his own soul all befouled and black with hatred, envy, deliberate disobedience, murder, and suicide."

"But, my dear Doctor," grumbled Lawyer Hardhead, "would his soul not be changed in the twinkling of an eye as he entered eternity, and thus be fitted for the sanctities of heaven?"

The pastor smiled into the frowning countenance of the grizzled attorney. "Can you find any scripture to warrant such a transformation?" he answered. "The clear, plain teaching of Holy Writ is that death ends our probation here below. After death there is only an acceleration of the soul in the same moral and spiritual direction in which it was going when it left earth's scenes. There is no change that reverses character after death, so the Bible teaches. Even the Roman Catholics had to invent a purgatory in order to accomplish the very thing for which you are contending. And for the existence of purgatory there is not a shred of reliable Scripture. 'As death leaves us,' so the old religious adage runs, 'so shall the judgment find us.' 'As a tree falleth so it shall lie.'

Lawyer Hardhead's shrewd features were working almost spasmodically as the doctor continued his line of discussion. Finally he broke in:

"But are we not to understand that sin is in the flesh, and that however much we commit offenses against God, they do not affect the soul? In other words, are not my many sins lodged wholly in this body, but my soul retains the eternal life which Christ bestowed upon me when I was born again? When, therefore, I die, does not my freed, purified soul step out of this polluted, sinful body, and enter heaven?"

The lawyer's face flushed, and his listeners could see that he was tremendously stirred by the discussion.

The doctor slowly shook his head while he thoughtfully leafed his Bible. At length he smiled at his deeply interested listener, and said:

"My dear brother, there is no moral content to the physical body. It cannot think, it cannot will, it cannot plan. It has no conscious being. It is not a moral agent. The body, taken by itself, is utterly impersonal. True, it can be used as an instrument of righteousness or of sin, but in and of itself, it cannot be either sinful or righteous. It is the human spirit that thinks, plans, wills, and determines. It is the spirit, or as we usually term it the soul, which is the real human being. It is the free moral agent. Your soul can sin, but your body cannot. When therefore one dies, he, that is, his conscious soul goes straight to the judgment, and if he has been a sinner, it carries its sins, crimes, and offenses with it.

"Paul settles that in Rom. 6:16: 'Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.'

"Here the human spirit, or soul is clearly set forth as the conscious, moral agent, choosing either to serve sin, or to serve righteousness. "

"Now," urged the pastor, "I submit to you, who are accustomed to handling presumptive and probable evidence, is there anything in the whole Bible through that would warrant us claiming that God would approve of the presence in heaven, before His very eyes, in the circles of

the sanctified, of sin, of hatred, of malice, of disobedience, of murder? If these are permitted there, heaven itself will be spoiled. Indeed, their presence will turn it into a species of hell. Was not the Archangel Lucifer evicted when sin was found in him? The truly saved and cleansed people on earth will not be at home in heaven, if they find there souls that are as hateful, as reeking with sin's slime, as murderous as the many they left behind on earth. God could not endure such a situation, and the genuine saints could not endure such a situation, and consequently it is contrary to the eternal fitness of divine and holy things and therefore cannot be true. It is false. It is a trick of the adversary to propagate such an untruth as that a man living in sin and dying in sin can have a 'positional salvation' that entitles him to heaven. No salvation position in Christ can be possessed by a free moral agent unless that agent constantly fulfills the conditions that obtained such a position. The Scripture clearly delineates those conditions -- it says -- 'If we walk in the light.' To be comfortable in heaven, to be at home there, one must be as much like God as redeemed and cleansed men and women can be.

"Why, my dear sir, you can yourself see that if an apostate like King Saul could possess a 'positional salvation' that took him to heaven despite his total unfitness for that holy place, then Satan himself could possess such a non-forfeitable 'positional' relation with God as to possess heaven, instead of being flung, as the Scriptures declare, bound in chains, into the fire that shall torment him forever. For Satan is no worse than King Saul, except that he is a greater character and has been for a longer time a wicked offender and hater of God. He was once an angel of light, and consequently had a salvation relation to God. Did he retain that when he sinned? The Bible distinctly says he did not! Will he be taken to heaven when the final collapse of his kingdom takes place? We are frankly informed to the contrary. Let us read it."

He turned to Revelation 20:10, and asked Lawyer Hardhead to read. The attorney with much shuffling about, took out his glasses, perched them on his nose, and then read in a deep, grumbling voice:

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever."

"There," exclaimed the pastor, with a shade of thrill in his voice, "is the fate of the first and greatest apostate. And all other apostates and sinners, who have retained their free moral responsibility, will share a similar fate."

"But," gruffly cried Lawyer Hardhead, "I have been given to understand that angels and devils are a different order of being from humans, and that they are not eligible for salvation. The atonement of Jesus Christ was not planned for them, nor are they included in any of its benefits. Is this not true?"

"Possibly it is, and probably it isn't," answered Dr. Arminius. "At all events, we have no Scripture to prove that the atonement does not include the angels. They are required to worship him, for in Hebrews it states:

"When he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him."



"If He demands their worship, who knows that the salvation of those who 'kept not their first estate,' is not also included in His atonement. In the last analysis, whether angels and devils are under the atonement or not, if God is just and equitable, then He is bound to save Satan in heaven despite his awful apostasy, if He takes the apostate Saul in, with his soul all weltering in sin."

"Well," doggedly grumbled Lawyer Hardhead, "King Saul was under the old dispensation, and so perhaps was not under the atonement of Christ, what have you to say of the New Testament offenders?"

"God is God," declared the doctor, "whether in the Old Testament or in the New. His conditions for salvation are always the same. The ancients were saved by faith in a Messiah to come. His atonement was represented by the sacrifices every pious Hebrew was required to offer. We are saved through the Messiah who has come. His offering of Himself on the cross took the place of the ancient sacrifices, and is our atonement. The apostate from the Old Testament requirements 'died without mercy, under two or three witnesses, Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath trampled under foot the Son of God and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?' Here we see that apostates in both Old and New were lost.

"Take the historical case of Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of our Lord, He was guilty of avarice, theft, hatred, treason against his Lord, which amounted to murder, and he also committed murder upon his own body. He literally hurled his own soul, reeking with sin, into the face of an offended God. If the 'positional salvation' of the eternal security people be true, then there he is, in the presence of God, forever, but still reeking with avarice, still unforgiven of his theft, still up-cleansed of hatred, still guilty of his Lord's death, and still polluted with the murder of his own body. There is no hint in all Scripture that there is a hope of any change after death for him. He is forever a wicked, devilish -- for it says that 'Satan entered him,' -- hate-filled murderer in a holy heaven. This is simply unthinkable. It is absurd, not to say blasphemous.

"There is also a passage in Acts that at least infers that Judas did not go to heaven, despite the 'positional salvation' claims for him of the eternal security people. Brother Sincere, turn to Acts 1:25, and read for us."

The young man quickly found the reference. He read in his effective way: "'That he might take part of this ministry, and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.'"

"Note that expression," said the doctor, "'that he might go to his own place.' Where is Judas' place? It certainly is unthinkable that it should be a holy heaven in the presence of a holy God, living forever in companionship with the Lord he hated, betrayed and murdered. Such a teaching is a pet theological view gone mad.

"Turn again to John 17:12. Permit your partner, Brother Hardhead, to read this passage."

Lawyer Hardhead again adjusted his spectacles, and gruffly read: "'While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition.'"

"Note that," exclaimed the doctor, "our Lord distinctly states that Judas was a 'son of perdition,' and that he was lost. That ought to settle it."

"Possibly," grumbled Lawyer Hardhead, "Judas was not saved at all, and in that event he did not have any 'positional salvation' to forfeit."

"If that be so," replied the pastor, "the expression, 'was lost,' would be senseless. But there is other evidence that he was soundly converted, and regenerated. Read Luke 9:1, 2 and 6."

The younger lawyer found the place for his partner, and placed the Bible in his hands, with his finger indicating the place. Clearing his throat, the older man grumbled the passage forth.

"Then he called his twelve disciples together --"

"You notice," interrupted the pastor, "that they were all twelve present, which includes Judas. Please read on."

The lawyer continued, "'and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. . . . And they departed and went through the towns, preaching and healing everywhere.'"

"Here we have Judas," declared the doctor, "chosen as a disciple, endued with power and authority over all devils, and diseases, and also commissioned to preach the gospel of the kingdom. He was not only chosen, endued and commissioned, but it states that he went and did all these things. There can be no manner of doubt in the face of this scripture, that Judas was saved," cried the aroused pastor, in a ringing voice. And then, dropping his voice almost to a whisper, he sadly added, "Nor that he was lost and damned in hell. No sonship, no 'positional salvation,' no election, no place in grace, no secure place in the hand of God, could save him in the day that he deliberately sinned. His seeming repentance in Matthew 27:3, was not genuine enough to bring forgiveness, and he was hurled into eternity by his own hand, a hopeless apostate! For any religious teacher to deny that he was saved is to reflect upon the veracity and the wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the statements of the New Testament. For any religious teacher to say that despite his sin and apostasy, he was taken to heaven because of his 'positional salvation' is merely to publish his own theological insanity!

"The arguments in the case of Judas, are paralleled in the instance of Ananias and Sapphira. These people, the New Testament clearly infers, were saved and numbered with the believers. Then it also clearly states that they 'lied to God.' Peter frankly charged them both with 'lying to the Holy Ghost.' So offensive was this to God, that He, himself smote them. To teach, then, that these offensively sinful souls still weltering in their falsehoods went straight to the God to whom they had lied, and who had Himself smitten them for their sins, and were given a place there with Him forever -- eternal liars living with the God of eternal truth -- eternal liars living with the

Holy Ghost, against whom they had lied -- eternal liars dwelling with Jesus the glorified Christ, is little short of madness. To this absurd, preposterous, blasphemous extreme are the eternal security folks forced to go, in order to maintain their contentions."

The doctor ceased speaking. The young attorney was nodding his head with vigorous approval, even saying "Yes, yes," quite out loud. Not so with Lawyer Hardhead. He sprang to his feet, gruffly grumbling, and began looking for his hat. "I never admit a point in law," he growled, "and I shall not give up the good old teachings of my fathers in religion, just because the evidence seems to be against me. I'm not Bible student enough to answer you, but I refuse to be argued out of my position."

He was on his way to the door, and had his hand on the knob, when young Sincere called and said, "Wait, Hardhead, the doctor and I always have a word of prayer when we have finished a discussion of these things. You are a church member, stay and lead us in prayer."

With a snort Lawyer Hardhead jerked the door open and sprang down the steps. In a moment he was out of sight. The other two men looked meaningfully into one another's eyes, smiled a moment, and then laughed outright.

"We can pray without him," the young man said. Together they knelt, and after a hearty prayer by the pastor, the young attorney thanked God for the illumination that had been poured upon his path. He offered praise to God that He had faithful ministers who knew the truth and who could express it.

With a warm handclasp, and with many expressions of gratitude on the part of the young man to the older one, they separated.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Chapter 6

Lawyer Hardhead and the pastor spend an evening cracking more "Eternal Security" nuts.

"Who shows up oftener than I do," called young James Sincere over Dr. Arminius' phone, one evening. "Again I am asking whether you heard Dr. Calvin's broadcast today," he continued. The pastor replied that he had heard it, and that he was keenly interested. He added, "I suppose our friend Brother Hardhead is all heated up again, being so reinforced by Dr. Calvin? Does he want to come over and have another round of discussion?"

After an aside conversation between the two lawyers, the voice of Sincere again came over the wires. "Yes, Hardhead is all loaded up. He took notes on Dr. Calvin's statements and is very volubly discussing them with me. He thinks that he has some fresh ammunition that will silence your guns. If you are at liberty, we will be glad to drive over and exchange shots with you."

Soon there was the purr of an engine, a sound of brakes, and then a knock at the pastor's study door. Greetings were exchanged and all comfortably seated when the doctor inquired:

"Well, gentlemen, what have we on hand for tonight? I understand, Brother Hardhead, that you took some notes on Dr. Calvin's broadcast today, and that you are prepared to fire something of a broadside at me. Tell us what you have."

"Instead of a broadside," grumbled forth the elderly lawyer, "perhaps, we had better say that we have a basket of 'nuts' for you to crack."

"Very well," responded the minister, "what shall be the first one?"

The attorney consulted his note book, and then asked,

"How do you explain the passage in the New Testament which says that nothing can ever separate the Christian believer from the love of God? The statement is so clear and emphatic that it seems to be undeniably on the side of eternal security."

"That," replied the pastor, "is to be found in Romans 8:38 and 39. Brother Sinceer, please turn to that passage, and then let Brother Hardhead read it." The young attorney rapidly turned to the reference, and handed the Bible to the older man. He adjusted his eye-glasses and then read, gruffly clearing his throat as he did so.

"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." Lawyer Hardhead ceased reading in his gruff tones and then glanced significantly at the doctor and added, "Sounds very convincing to me. Looks as though if a person is once saved, he is there to stay."

The pastor cheerfully returned the significant look of the older attorney, and then said, "Certainly, it looks on the face of it as though it taught 'once in grace always in grace.' But wait a moment. In enumerating all the enemies that might make an effort to separate a believer from his salvation in Christ, the apostle did not mention himself. God is abundantly able to keep, provided the individual is keenly willing, and sincerely alert to enable Him to do so. He, himself, then, is the key to the whole matter. His own purpose, his own will, his own determination, his own fulfillment of the requirements of salvation are the chief factors in being eternally secure. Does he, himself, have a great desire to stay saved, if he does, and carefully turns a deaf ear, an unresponsive heart toward the world, the flesh and the devil, and continues to fulfill all the qualifications of salvation, then he is safe from any and every creature. He enables God to keep him eternally secure. Then death and life and angels and principalities and powers and height and depth shall beat at him in vain. With the salvation conditions fully met -- and he, himself, is the only one who can meet them -- which enables God to pour the holy life-giving Spirit in and through his soul, he is then, and only then, eternally secure. Any other interpretation than this, puts a premium on sin, reflects on the wisdom of Almighty God, belittles the atonement of our Lord, opens wide the door for introducing sin into a holy heaven, and charges God with inconsistency.

"Note also that the Apostle Paul, who wrote this passage in Romans, which we are considering, also wrote the first letter to the Corinthians. In closing the ninth chapter, he gives us this significant utterance: 'I therefore run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away.'

"Here he distinctly states that it is he himself who can ruin his own chances of continued salvation, that his lack of sincere compliance with the terms of salvation would prevent God from keeping him secure. He declares in the original Greek that he 'beats his body black and blue' in his efforts to bring it into subjection and not allow it to be the channel through which his soul might be lost. He emphatically teaches that no person can reach a place in Christ where he does not need to be on his constant, watchful guard lest he fall from grace and ruin his own hope of heaven."

The pastor paused and looked full into the face of Lawyer Hardhead. That worthy was grumbling something under his breath. However, he apparently had nothing coherent to offer, so the doctor inquired courteously for his next "nut."

The attorney consulted his note book, and then said, "Somewhere in First John there is a statement to the effect that if one is born again he cannot sin. Is this not equivalent to stating that once saved one can never lose it?"

The doctor quickly turned the leaves of his Bible and then read in his expressive voice, "'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.' That is found in 1 John 3:9. This passage, my dear brother, can hardly be claimed by the eternal security people. Their contention is that they can sin, and yet not lose their salvation because they have a 'positional relation' to Christ that causes His merits to be imputed to them, despite their sin. This passage distinctly claims that if one is born of God he will not sin, for he knows that if he does he will lose the 'pearl of great price,' indeed, it declares he cannot sin as long as His holy life germ remains in him. We holiness people admit that, and declare the same thing. True, we feel sure that this does not teach that a person cannot himself get rid of that holy life implanted in his breast. He surely can so offend the Holy Ghost as to drive Him from his heart, and if he leaves He takes His eternal life with Him. One can certainly so grieve God as to forfeit the life-giving Spirit who deposited the divine seed within him, and, grieved and insulted, He will withdraw it from that person's soul. John says in this same letter, 'these things write I unto you that ye sin not.' No, Brother Hardhead, this is not an eternal security text, this is clear over on the other side. What is your next 'nut'?"

Again the attorney's note book was consulted, and he inquired, "Where is the passage that states that the 'elect' cannot be deceived? If one is 'elect,' and, cannot be deceived, is he not eternally safe?"

"Look in Matthew 24:24, Brother Sinceer, and then let Brother Hardhead read it," responded the doctor.

It was soon found, and with much clearing of his throat, the lawyer read, "'For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.'

The elderly attorney paused a moment and then added, "It seems clear that if one is 'elected,' it looks as though he were beyond the power of deception." The pastor smiled, and then replied, "This is a scene taken from the closing days of the present dispensation. Our Lord's return is very close at hand here, and the great tribulation is on in its fury; Satan is exceedingly active. Many are claiming to be the long looked-for Messiah, and others lay claim to be 'prophets.' These exhibit signs and wonders, and the AntiChrist also proffers the 'mark of the Beast' in order to authorize one to buy and sell. The Master states that the pressure will be so great that His own elect ones will be fearfully subjected to it. It cannot mean, however, that none of the elect will yield to the solicitations of the enemy. Some of His elect in other ages lapsed from the faith. We saw the other day when considering Judas Iscariot's case, how clearly the Scriptures taught that though he was genuinely converted, yet how woefully he yielded, and how pitifully he fell to his eternal doom. We also saw that Ananias and Sapphira were likewise saved and yet how fearfully they were lost, God himself striking them dead. Consequently, it is impossible to believe that these words mean that actually none of God's elect folk will fall and be lost, when the awful scenes of the Tribulation are in the earth, and the enemy is exercising commercial, political and ecclesiastical power. Indeed, the Scriptures constantly tell us of the great 'falling away' that will characterize Christianity about that time. No doubt, the greater portion of this apostasy will occur during the tribulation. Our Lord pathetically states that when He comes He will scarcely find faith on the earth.

"However, we are clearly to understand that if we 'watch and pray always,' as the Master commanded, then we 'shall be accounted worthy to escape all those things that are coming upon the earth and to stand before the Son of Man.' It will, however, require extra diligence in these terrible days to 'make our calling and election sure,' but we are emphatically told that it can be done. However, no 'positional salvation' will carry the believer through such a flood of persecution and trial. No imputed righteousness can be sufficient in that tempest. We must be freed from all sin, cleansed from all carnal principles of sin, and filled with the Holy Ghost, or we cannot maintain the position of the 'elect.'"

"Just what," interrupted young James Sinceer, "does this word 'elect' mean, as employed in the Scripture about God's people?"

"It means," replied the doctor, "to enter, line up with, or be admitted to the plan of God in any age for that particular individual. God elects, or chooses or ordains a life plan for each person, or a career for a nation, or an ordered sequence for a series of events. Thus He elected Abraham, not that Abraham was compelled to accept that election, but he chose of his own free will to accept God's conditions of election, and became, by doing so the 'Father of the Faithful.' In this way God elected the line that was to eventuate in the Israelitish nation. Then He elected the line that was to result in the birth of His Son. In each case He did not violate any man's free moral agency, but carried out His divine will in connection with, and by means of the voluntary choices of all these people.

"Today, election means to surrender, and accept the atoning blood of Jesus, and thus qualify for pardon of one's sins, and then it means to go on into a full consecration and faith that enables the Holy Ghost to cleanse, sanctify and occupy the heart. Following this must come a lifetime of devout service. Then, and only then, is that person 'elected.' He is in the center of God's will for him. However, it requires that throughout his Christian life he shall do his best to please God, and walk in all the light that the Master shall shed across his path, in order to stay in that will, in order to continue to be 'elected.' It is such elect persons as these whom the devil shall attempt to deceive during the Tribulation. Unless they watch and pray always, they will succumb to his wiles and be lost."

Lawyer Hardhead interrupted with an eager remark, "I have a recollection, my dear Doctor, that the Scriptures declare that God raised King Pharaoh up in order to glorify Himself by the king's damnation. Also that He loved Jacob and hated Esau. Does not this prove that the Lord sovereignly created Pharaoh and Esau for destruction, and that He sovereignly created Jacob for promotion and salvation?"

"Not necessarily," answered the pastor. "There can be no doubt but that God 'elected' Pharaoh to become a great channel of blessing to Israel. If he had co-operated with God, if he had accepted this election, this would have been the case, however, when he refused, he suffered an eternal punishment. The statement that God 'hardened Pharaoh's heart,' must necessarily be understood in the light of God's universal dealings with mankind. He has never been known sovereignly to harden men's hearts; men do this themselves. And in case of Pharaoh it can mean only that God so surrounded him with such profuse miraculous evidences of Himself in order to enable him to be a great blessing to His chosen people, that when he refused divine mercy and grace, and declined God's opportunities, the very miracles that would have conspicuously enabled him to be a blessing to God and Israel, caused him selfishly and sinfully to permit them to anger him and to harden his own heart, and thus his damnation was sealed. It was, indeed, God's miracles and His efforts to release Israel that hardened the great Egyptian's heart, but it was the king's wrong, sinful, selfish personal attitude toward those divine activities that produced this damning effect.

"In the case of Esau, the scriptural narrative distinctly states that he voluntarily sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. This birthright was not his personal salvation, but rather his opportunity to be one of the great originators of the Messianic line. While God rejected him from that line, He permitted him to bring about that rejection himself, voluntarily, by selling out to Jacob. God did not hate Esau personally, or reject him personally, or exclude him from obtaining salvation. He chose Jacob to be the progenitor of the Christ-line, and allowed Esau to sell that great privilege for a venison stew. The statement that Esau 'found no place for repentance though he sought it carefully with tears,' does not refer to repentance for his personal sins in order to be saved; not at all; it refers to his efforts to recover his birthright, and to secure a reversal of the patriarchal blessing that his dying father had given to Jacob.

"But," said the pastor, "the evening is passing, and before you are compelled to leave for home, let me call your attention to a 'nut' and ask you to crack it for me. What about the great 'falling away' spoken of by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:2 and 3? Also, something similar is mentioned in Hebrews 6:6, where the author says, 'If they shall fall away.' Again, the same thing is

apparently referred to in Matthew 24: 12, 'And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.'

"Here's my question, gentlemen: How can there be a 'falling away,' (for that is the translation for the word apostasy,) if the teaching of 'once in grace always in grace' is true? The great apostasy referred to in the New Testament must be dismissed as a myth, as a mere figure of speech meaning nothing if those persons who once secure a 'positional salvation' in Christ can never lose His salvation favor."

"But," excitedly exclaimed Lawyer Hardhead, "maybe they had never known Christ, and consequently, had no 'positional salvation' to lose. Could that not be the case?"

"In that event," replied the doctor, "the expression 'falling away' would even be worse than a myth, it would convict the person who used it, (and in these references we see that Paul used it twice, and our Lord used its equivalent once,) of the veriest nonsense, for it would have no meaning at all -- they had nothing, if that be true, to fall away from. Then why mention it? My dear Mr. Attorney, you are too good a lawyer not to see that if you allow the meaning of apostasy, that is, a departing from a salvation once possessed, to be attached to these references, it can have no other significance than that a great host of people who had once known Christ as their Savior from sin, gave Him up under pressure of the awful iniquity of the tribulation days, and denied the Lord that bought them. This being true, where is your eternal security? Your case is gone."

The pastor ceased speaking, and looked at his visitors with an appraising glance. For a full minute there was not a word said. Then the younger man drew a long breath, almost an audible sigh, and said, "Well, I admit that I am fully convinced. Doctor Arminius, you have made a convert out of me."

The older lawyer breathed hard also, and cleared his throat a time or two. "I can see," he almost snorted, "that my case is gone glimmering, but I desperately dislike to admit it. However, a fair estimate of the evidence compels me to recognize it."

All sat silently again for a moment, while the pastor's tiny desk clock ticked painfully loud. At length the young man aroused himself and asked:

"Doctor, it is clear to me that hundreds, yes, thousands of clear-thinking, shrewd, well-meaning men, hold as a sacred truth this idea of eternal security. On all other matters they seem to think with clear, sane, wholesome logic, but when they come to this phase of religion, this peculiar doctrine, they abandon all their logic, leave well-beaten paths of intellectual poise, and accept this very strange notion; one that we can readily see actually belittles the atonement of our Lord, reflects on the goodness, wisdom and ability of God effectively to cure sin, actually opens the doors of heaven for its admittance, and puts an overwhelming temptation in the way of poor struggling humanity here on earth to commit it. The final question I would like to ask you is this: How can you account for this? Why do they do it? What makes their minds go so suddenly and so completely awry?"



It was the pastor's turn, now, to draw a full breath before he made any reply. For several seconds he sat as in a keen meditation. Then he said, "It's all because of a wrong view of sin and its treatment. The entire Bible, primarily, is a treatise on the sin question and its solution. It tells of its introduction in the Garden of Eden; it traces its course through the ages; it delineates the horror, anguish, woe and final damnation produced in all who refuse to be delivered from it. It then, in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord, and His atoning grace, introduces the great cure. We holiness people believe that the cure is complete. We also believe that it can be possessed in its completeness right here on earth, if the simple directions of the Book are faithfully followed, if the divine conditions are sincerely met. We believe that complete cure can be continued up to the moment of death and then on into eternity, provided we do not violate the conditions and that this full salvation, this likeness to God, is what qualifies the recipient for admission to a holy heaven and association and fellowship with a holy God. But this holiness must be imparted, and not imputed, Christ must live in the believer's heart.

"Now, if one takes any other view of sin, one must make provision for its solution, its removal elsewhere. The Roman Catholics do not admit that it is possible to be cleansed from it wholly down here on earth and consequently they have invented purgatory, in order to have the matter attended to before the soul reaches heaven. For it is naturally repugnant to every honest thinking person to think of sin: raw, black, polluted, uncovered, unforgiven, uncleansed sin, appearing in heaven in the presence of the holy Deity there. Unfortunately for the Roman Catholics, there is not a shred of scriptural evidence for purgatory. It is created out of their own desires and imaginations.

"The eternal security people also deny the possibility of a full and complete cleansing of the soul from all sin in this life. Indeed, they declare that any coming short, although ignorantly and unwittingly, of the perfect and holy will of God, is sin, and that we must consequently commit it in thought, word and deed, every day we live. We holiness people do not believe that all mistakes, blunders, fallings short of the perfect will of God through ignorance, errors of judgment and absence of holy ideals, are sin. We denominate them as human infirmities and frailties. We believe they are under the unconditional merits of Christ's atoning blood. These infirmities and frailties are innocent because they are due to ignorance. They are not sin-tainted; they are not antagonistic to God. They are not inseparable obstacles to the possession of a holy character here on earth. When 'that which is perfect is come' at the resurrection, then these limiting, handicapping infirmities will disappear, and with the dawn of perfect knowledge, 'we shall know as we are known.'

"But if your theory of sin demands that it remain in your soul all your earthly life, if you cannot have it cleansed away here in this life, you must have it removed, or cleansed, or dealt with, or arranged for somewhere. You cannot ignore it; you dare not fail to deal with it. You must do something about it. The eternal security folks have insisted upon a theory of sin that requires it to remain in their hearts and lives all their earthly sojourn, consequently, they must deal with it here and also in the eternal world. They do not recognize purgatory. They have no purification of the soul either here or after death. It is a theology gone insane to allege that sin resides in the human body and that when it dies, the sin question is solved. As a consequence of not having it cleansed away they must cover it up; fix it so God cannot see it. Their plan is an imputed salvation, in which the purity and holiness of Christ is unconditionally put on and over their sinful souls. It is a 'positional salvation,' an unconditional, unmerited covering of one's sins by the robe of Christ's

righteousness, so that God will see His holy Son and not the sinful human soul hiding beneath His robe of righteousness. Mind you, this is not just for the innocent, the idiotic and the ignorant; we holiness people believe that Christ's unconditional atonement covers these classes and also that it covers the human frailties and infirmities of the sincere Christian, and that these are not held against a believer. But the eternal security folks hold that Christ's imputed merits cover the believer from the moment that he accepts the Lord's salvation, and continues to cover him afterward even though he lives in open sin and rejection of righteousness, and then they still cover him when he comes into heaven.

"As long as one holds an erroneous view of the sin question, as long as one does not secure its complete solution and its utter cleansing in this life, by means of our Lord's merits and the baptism with the Holy Ghost, he is bound to accept either the view of the Roman Catholics and invent a purgatory in order to have it cleansed away in eternity, or else he is compelled to accept the eternal security position that sin is covered with Christ's righteousness and no matter how actually sinful you are, if you have believed in Christ, God then cannot see your sins, for they are covered by the Savior's merits and His imputed holiness. In this way your soul, all polluted with sin, can enter heaven just so it continues to be covered by Christ's spotless robe. With such an arrangement, a sinner needs only to repent and believe long enough to secure the new birth, and then having established his 'positional salvation' in Christ, he can renew his sinful course, live as wickedly as he pleases, and then, covered by the spotless robe of Christ, he can enter heaven, and all unforgiven, uncleansed, unpurified, he can live there forever, concealing his polluted soul with that spotless robe. Surely, men of sober mental poise, accustomed to weighing evidence in law cannot accept this. This is an unthinkable doctrine.

"Eternal security is one of the most subtle and dangerous heresies that the Christian cause has ever known. It is peculiarly the fatal fallacy of many noble and good men. They have been led to believe that they cannot possess full salvation in this life, and consequently, embrace this cunning sophistry of the Adversary. It is so often the vice of the virtuous; the pitfall of thousands of splendid men and women. It has also become the hiding place of other thousands who have a desire to escape hell, and reach heaven, and yet who do not care to pay the price of genuine salvation from sin and a holy life. They forget that hell is not only a place, it is a condition. Hell's prime ingredient is hate, and hate is a factor of all sin. Unless a man has hate cast out, and perfect love imparted, he has hell on board wherever he is, whether on earth or standing in the blazing presence of the glorified Christ. Can he possibly then be comfortable in the presence of the glorified Master with his soul all weltering in hate? This is unthinkable."

The pastor ceased speaking. Young Sinceer lifted his hand with a peculiar affirmative gesture and with a happy smile. He burst forth:

"I am glad that I got converted in the old-fashioned camp-meeting way. I feel right now the joy bells ringing in my heart. I am sure I have eternal life through Jesus Christ my Lord. But, pastor, your remarks have made me hungry for this second work of grace that you have mentioned. I must be sanctified wholly. I shall come and hear you preach on it; I am a seeker already for that experience."

The doctor nodded at him with a happy smile. "Good, good," he exclaimed.

Lawyer Hardhead looked troubled. He shifted his eyes from one of these happy men to the other. Evidently Sinceer's testimony had stirred him tremendously. He finally fairly shouted:

"You men have just about got me 'buffaloed,'" he blurted out. "I must admit that I am a sinner, a wicked sinner; I have stolen and defrauded, and lied, and taken God's name in vain. I was converted, soundly converted in a great revival years ago. I got on fairly well for a while, but I heard this 'eternal security' notion preached and talked about, and its effect upon me was to make me careless. I assumed that if I had a 'positional salvation' in Christ that I could not forfeit. I did not need to pray so much, or be so faithful in my attendance on church and prayermeetings. I reckoned that I was a son of God, and 'if a son, then always a son.' I was sure I had eternal life, and if it was eternal, then nothing could rob me of it. I quit praying and testifying; I soon fell into open sin; I excused all my sin on the grounds that it was my body that sinned and not my soul. I rested in the doctrine of 'once in grace always in grace.' I felt secure of my ultimate reception in heaven. I knew I had no joy. I knew that I was offensive to God, in fact I knew I was a miserable, black-hearted, devil-possessed sinner, but I depended on 'eternal security.' Now you men have convinced me that 'eternal security' is not true; that though I was once a son, I have lost that sonship by sin, that I am now dead again in trespasses and in sins. Men I . . ."

He lifted his voice while his face lost its ruddy hue and turned deathly white, and great beads of sweat stood on his forehead; he stood to his feet, and fairly yelled:

"Men, I'm a lost soul! I have hell in me now; I feel the horrors of the damned. Is there hope for one who has for twenty years crucified the Son of God?"

Doctor Arminius quickly arose and caught the elderly lawyer's hand. He looked calmly into the other man's agonized eyes, and quietly said:

"There's abundant hope for the convicted penitent, Brother Hardhead. There's infinite mercy in the blood of Christ. Kneel here and let us beg God for forgiveness and salvation."

Lawyer Hardhead fairly fell thunderingly to the floor. He lighted upon his knees beside the chair, and poured out his soul in a great, gruff yell to God. No one had to urge him to pray. He was desperate. James Sinceer knelt on one side, and the pastor on the other, and all three were calling on God without regard to the babel it caused. The doctor kept patting the old lawyer on the back, and between petitions the young attorney would shout in his ear, "Trust the blood, Hardhead, trust the blood!"

Suddenly the older man ceased screaming and beating the chair. For a full moment he was silent, with his eyes wide open gazing off into space, and then he yelled, "I see it. Christ bore all my sins in His own body on the tree, and if I walk in the light He and I will have fellowship one with another and the blood of God's great Son will cleanse me from all sin. Walking faithfully and sincerely in all the light I can get, I will have eternal security . . . I'm saved! I'm saved! The ponderous attorney leaped to his feet like a boy. He laughed, he shouted, he hugged the other two men, he capered about the study like a great animal threatening to turn it into a rough house. He

shook hands with both his associates again and again. He tried to sing, but broke down in a ridiculous yowl!

Sinceer was as excited and happy as his partner. He was almost beside himself. At last they both started for home. With great affection they bade the pastor good night, and started half laughing, half singing and sometimes half crying toward their car. The doctor laughed with them. As he closed the study door, he whispered to himself, "They are surely intoxicated on the new wine of the kingdom."

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THE END