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Perseverance of God’s Love—Romans 8:31–39

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Introduction

31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Many Christians needlessly agonize over the question of whether once they have become a Christian, will they know for sure that they are saved? Can a person lose his or her salvation once they have put their faith in Christ? If a Christian should fall into sin, walks out onto

the street, and gets killed by a speeding car, will he or she have lost their salvation and go to hell for having unconfessed sin? Hasn't every Christian committed sins both consciously and unconsciously every day? At what point can one know when a person has fallen from grace? Certainly it is not just when one has committed one of the "deadly sins," for James tells us, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it" (Jas 2:10). Do we not break the law of God in our hearts regularly in our lusts and anger, not to mention our failure to do what we ought to do in love for others? So how can we ever have any assurance that we will be saved? How can we ever have a sure hope of eternal life?

Looking at the passage from a perspective of assurance of our faith, as we face discouragement, despair, suffering or opposition, we may find ourselves wondering if God really cares. Does God really love me? If he does, we ask, "Why am I in such desperate straits?"

A. Who Can Be Against Us?

Paul raises five unanswerable questions of possible objection to the idea that "God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (v. 28). The answers to these questions leave us with no doubt about our eternal security and the assurance we have of God's eternal love for us. Therefore we can confidently say of the true Christian, "Once saved, always saved."

First, Paul asks, "*If God is for us, who can be against us?*" (v. 31). Although opposition to the Christian is expected, no power can destroy the faith that has been given to us by God. Our faith will most certainly survive because "*God is for us.*" As our Creator and the One who chose us in love before the foundation of the world, there is no doubt that God will eternally secure our salvation. Paul confirms this assurance to Timothy saying,

"If we are faithless, he will remain faithful,
for he cannot disown himself" (2 Tim. 2:12).

Although we are called to remain faithful to God and to endure to the end (Mk 13:13), our salvation does not ultimately depend upon us, but on the faithful character of God (1Th 5:23, 24) who is *for us* through Christ. Believers do not persevere in faith and obedience due to their own strength and commitment, but because of the perseverance of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "All

that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day” (Jn 6:37–39). The redemption of all that the Father elected will definitely be given to the Son to save. Not one of these lost but found sinners would ultimately lose their salvation because Christ perseveres with them. Paul rejoices over the Philippians because he is confident “that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Php 1:6). Knowing *God is for us* gives us great confidence in him and in what he has promised us.

B. If the Greater, Then Certainly the Lesser

Second, Paul asks, “*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*” (v. 32). The argument in the question goes from the greater to the lesser to assure us that if God gave his own Son to die for our sin, certainly he will provide for us everything needed to secure our salvation. As sure as the Father has given rule and authority to the Son over the kingdom of God, we have graciously been given, along with Jesus, all things. We have been called to be co-heirs with him of this kingdom (Ro 8:17), reigning with him (2Ti 2:12). God’s supreme gift guarantees us the gift of eternal life and final glory. Eternal life is not only a future condition, but begins from the moment of a person’s regeneration by the Spirit. As Jesus promised, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life” (Jn 5:24). How can one have eternal life if it can be lost again? Then “eternal” loses its meaning. It is a present reality for the believer from him who has graciously given us all things, for he has crossed over from death to life.

Since our salvation is solely through what God did for us through the giving up of his Son, we cannot earn it through anything we do (Eph 2:8-9) nor merit it through anything we are (1Co 1:18–31; Jer 9:23, 24). That being the case, we cannot lose it by having fallen into sin (1Jn 2:1). Didn’t God demonstrate his love for us while we were still sinners by sending Christ to die for us? (Ro 5:8). Of course, we will not continue in sin if we are truly a new creation in Christ (1Jn

2:3–6). We will grow in holiness and Christ-likeness. By persevering in faith and godly living to the end of our lives we will be saved (Heb 3:6; 6:11; 10:35–39), as God preserves us. The Holy Spirit will bring the truly regenerate back to conviction and repentance for sin (Jn 16:8) and to confession of our sin to be cleansed by the blood of Christ (1Jn 1:9).

C. Who Charges Us?

The third question affirming God’s perseverance with us is “*Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?*” Isaiah had the same question when he says:

He who vindicates me is near.

Who then will bring charges against me?

Let us face each other!

Who is my accuser?

Let him confront me!

It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me” (Isa 50:8, 9a).

Our vindication is found in Jesus Christ. Since he was sinless, he nullifies any charges being brought against the believer in him.

These charges calls to mind Satan, who is called “the accuser of our brothers” (Rev 12:10). He “accuses them before our God day and night.” The prophet Zechariah gives us a dramatic illustration of this. It concerns Joshua the high priest, whose name means “the LORD saves.” He represents the sinful nation of Israel, as well as all of us elect sinners. Standing in filthy clothes expresses his unfitness for being in God’s presence.

THEN HE SHOWED ME JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST STANDING BEFORE THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, AND SATAN STANDING AT HIS RIGHT SIDE TO ACCUSE HIM. THE LORD SAID TO SATAN, “THE LORD REBUKE YOU, SATAN! THE LORD, WHO HAS CHOSEN JERUSALEM, REBUKE YOU! IS NOT THIS MAN A BURNING STICK SNATCHED FROM THE FIRE?”

Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.”

Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.”

Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by (Zec 3:1-5).

Although we are not told what Satan’s accusations were against Joshua, certainly it had to do with the disgrace and vileness of his filthy sin in the presence of God.¹ Satan continues to accuse us as well, attempting to cause us to doubt God’s forgiveness and love. Although Satan is a liar and deceiver, he doesn’t need to lie when he accuses us of our sin. Joshua could not speak in his own defense, as we can’t. But notice what God took the initiative to do. The angel of the LORD had them take off the dirty clothes from Joshua and put on clean rich garments, which symbolized cleansing from sin and reinstating of a priestly mediator for the people of God. As chief prosecutor in the heavenly court, Satan remains silent and is rebuked by the LORD. Meanwhile, Joshua is accepted as one who has been justified by God.

Paul’s response to the question of who will bring a charge against us is, “*It is God who justifies.*” The question envisions us in a court of law before our Judge. The Day of Judgment is in mind, when all people will be brought before the throne of God to be judged for their thoughts, words and deeds. It is an awesome and frightening thing to have to appear before our Lord on the Day of Judgment, for we are all terribly guilty of sin. However, those people who are God’s elect, who have been chosen before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4), God has pronounced them not guilty! We were like a burning stick in the fire. But God has snatched us from it and rescued us for good. If God, the Judge of all the earth, has given us a verdict of not guilty, then there is no one to charge us with guilt. There is no higher court to which anyone could appeal. If anyone should attempt to appeal the verdict God “will refute every tongue that accuses you” (Isa 54:17). We are set free. God sees us as holy and righteous through Jesus

¹ John Phillips, *Exploring Romans* (Chicago: Moody Monthly, 1969), 139.

Christ. John's vision in Revelation tells us that the accuser of our brothers "has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" (Rev 12:10, 11). They testified that they had put their faith in the atoning work of Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Therefore God has justified them, welcoming them into his kingdom.

D. Who Condemns Us?

The fourth question Paul raises to give us assurance is "*Who is he that condemns?*" We have just seen that there is no one who could bring a charge against us. But if someone could, who could condemn us? Isaiah asked the same question saying, "Who is he that will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up" (Isa 50:9). This means that they will be destroyed. But the LORD'S "righteousness will last forever," his "salvation through all generations" (Isa 51:8). This response in Isaiah anticipates Paul's response.

He responds to the question of who condemns saying, "*Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*" Jesus Christ as our perfect Advocate fully stops anyone who would seek to condemn us. Paul's answer includes four important reasons why no one can condemn God's elect. First, Christ Jesus died for us, his chosen ones. This point is extremely significant, but has been thoroughly dealt with previously by Paul in this letter. There we see that "God presented [Jesus] as a sacrifice of atonement... to demonstrate his justice... so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" (Ro 3:25-26). His death was particularly for the elect. If it had been for potentially every person who ever lived, then we may see failure in Jesus' advocacy and intercession for us. But knowing that Jesus will never fail in what he has come to do, we can have confidence that his death will be completely effective for the salvation of his elect.

"He was delivered over to death for our sins..." (Ro 4:25). Jesus took the condemnation we deserve by dying on the cross in our place. Since Jesus was already condemned to death, we no longer need to be condemned for our sins. Paul has already assured us of this at the beginning of this chapter when he says, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin

and death” (Ro 8:1-2). Through Christ “the righteous requirements of the law” were fully met in us. Christ was sinless and had fully kept the whole law of God, thus satisfying its holy requirements. Besides, Jesus himself will be our Judge on the last Day (Mt 25:31, 32; Jn 5:22), the one who made “no condemnation” possible for us.

If Satan should seek to accuse us we have the upraised pierced hand of our Savior who stops him in his tracks. Yes, we were once guilty and condemned, but Paul explains what happened to us as he writes the Colossians: “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith...” (Col 1:21–23a). So it was through Christ’s death that we are made holy and free from accusation.

Second, no one can condemn God’s elect because Christ Jesus was “*raised to life*.” Earlier Paul tells us that Jesus “was raised to life for our justification” (Ro 4:25). Jesus’ death and resurrection are inseparable to God’s plan of redemption. If Christ was not raised he could not accomplish our salvation and insure our security as believers. As we are united with Christ in his death, we are united with him in his resurrection (Ro 6:5). Because Jesus is alive and ruling, he gives us new life in the Spirit, free from condemnation.

Third, Jesus has ascended to “*the right hand of God*.” Using anthropomorphic language taken from Psalm 110:1, Paul indicates that Jesus is in a position of glory and sovereign power, having conquered the enemies of sin, death and Satan. He now has all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18), making it impossible for any adverse circumstance or hostile force to wrench us out of his hand (Jn 10:28, 29) or separate us from his love.²

Fourth, no one can condemn God’s elect because Christ is “*interceding for us*” before God the Father. He is our Mediator and Advocate, continually praying for us. As the author of Hebrews says, “Because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them” (Heb

² John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), 329.

7:24, 25). Through Christ's intercession we are upheld and kept safe from the enemy of our souls who seeks to condemn us. Jesus prayed for his disciples as he must be interceding for us now saying, "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one" (Jn 17:15). He went on to pray for all believers, "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory..." (Jn 17:24). Knowing that God the Father will answer every prayer of his dear Son, we can be assured that we are free from condemnation and will be brought into his presence in heaven. Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah's intercession for us.

For he bore the sin of many,

And made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa 53:12c).

John assures us of Jesus' intercession for us. He writes, "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One" (1Jn 2:1). John Murray sums up the importance of Jesus' intercession for us with this:

For nothing serves to verify the intimacy and constancy of the Redeemer's preoccupation with the security of his people, nothing assures us of his unchanging love more than the tenderness which his heavenly priesthood bespeaks and particularly as it comes to expression in intercession for us.³

Not only is Christ interceding for us, but also we see earlier in the chapter that "the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will" (Ro 8:27). Thus the Spirit leads us in how to pray and Christ is praying on our behalf. Thus all the spiritual work on our behalf is completely the work of God. For Christ died on the cross for the elect so that their sins have been dealt with; he rose from the dead that we may have victory over sin, death and Satan; he ascended to the right hand of the Father being given authority over all; and he continually intercedes for us before the Father. Therefore God receives all the glory in our salvation.

³ *Ibid.*, 330.

E. Any Separation from Christ's Love?

We now come to a climax in the five questions Paul asks to dissuade any doubt that we are assured of God's love and a place in his kingdom. "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*" "*The love of Christ*" from which we can never be separated refers to Christ's love for his people, not our love for him. This is confirmed by the following verses where it says, "*Through him who loved us*" (v. 37), and "*the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (v. 39). It is Christ who has taken the initiative in loving us. Because of that we can rest secure in knowing that while we were still sinners and enemies of Christ, he died for us out of his love for us (Ro 5:8).

Paul continues his argument by listing seventeen possible obstacles to Christ's continued love for us. He asks, "*Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*" Each one of these adversities is answered with an assured and triumphant denial. The Old Testament saints encountered these adversities as they are by believers today. Paul experienced all of these but the sword, which he was to experience later in Rome. As Paul speaks in defense of his ministry against the false apostles to the Corinthians, he lists his imprisonment, flogging, stoning, shipwrecks, dangers, hardships, sleeplessness, hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, and continual pressure of his burden for the churches (2Co 11:23–33). Despite all this, Paul writes confidently of his assurance of God's unchanging love.

Paul confirms his argument with a quotation from Psalm 44:22. *As it is written:*

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

Old Testament believers too continually faced opposition and hardship unto death. Persecution is not to be unexpected for us as believers. As Hebrews lists the examples of faithful men and women in days of old he gives examples of those who suffered too.

OTHERS WERE TORTURED AND REFUSED TO BE RELEASED, SO THAT THEY MIGHT GAIN A BETTER RESURRECTION. SOME FACED JEERS AND FLOGGING, WHILE STILL OTHERS WERE CHAINED AND PUT IN PRISON. THEY WERE STONED; THEY WERE SAWED IN TWO; THEY WERE PUT TO DEATH BY THE SWORD. THEY WENT ABOUT IN SHEEPSKINS AND GOATSKINS, DESTITUTE, PERSECUTED AND MISTREATED—THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY OF THEM. THEY WANDERED IN DESERTS AND MOUNTAINS, AND IN CAVES AND HOLES IN THE GROUND (HEB 11:35–38).

Following the Lord is not easy, but full of many difficulties. Paul and Barnabas told the new believers in Derbe after they had been stoned in Lystra, “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God” (Ac 14:22b). Does this mean that Christ has forgotten us, or does not love us any more, or loves us less than he loves others? Not at all! Note that the quotation from Psalm 44 says that it is for the Lord’s *sake* that we are considered only worthy of being slaughtered. It is for the reproach of Christ we as believers are persecuted. After Peter and the other apostles had been arrested and questioned, they “left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name” (Ac 5:41). If we can rejoice in persecution, we are assured of God’s love for us. We can rejoice in our suffering for the sake of Christ because it is the pathway to our hope in glory. It is a means used by God for his glorification and for our perfection in faith and holiness.

F. More than Conquerors

Paul continues his argument, “*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*” He exults in the triumphant victory we have over all adversity through the love of Christ. Although martyrdom appears to be victory for those who inflict it, it is actually to their loss. Although we may escape the clutches of the evil one, as it seems, by the skin of our teeth, we are in fact having a glorious triumph. We are triumphant in victory “*in all these things,*” in every encounter with hostility and evil, even in death. This may seem unbelievable were it not for having eyes of faith to perceive the ultimate victory we have in Christ.

Also, our triumphant conquering is “*through him who loved us.*” This love of Christ was exhibited in his death on the cross for us when we were alienated from him as sinners. In that we see the intensity of his love for us. Yet, his love is not just something from the past, but is an abiding love, insuring our security. This love which goes beyond our comprehension is the explanation of how it is possible that *we are more than conquerors*, even when there is apparent defeat. As mentioned in the previous verse, because Christ is risen, is in the place of authority and power, and is interceding for us, we know that through his love we have ultimate victory. This was accomplished through Christ’s death where “having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (Col 2:15).

Our persevering in God’s grace is *through him who loved us*. We are eternally secure because of his preserving us. Often people speak of “perseverance of the saints” as the fifth point of the five points of Calvinism, as *our* perseverance leading to eternal security. Rather it is God’s work through Christ of preserving that allows us to persevere through trial, opposition and discouragement. Jesus Christ works through the Holy Spirit to preserve us in faith and obedience. Even if our faith in Christ is very weak we can be assured that we are safe in his loving arms. John Murray has stated clearly why this is so: “Though your faith is as weak as a single strand of a spider’s web, if it is faith in Christ, it is saving faith; because it is not faith that saves, it is not even faith in Christ that saves, it is Christ who saves.”

It is true that some make a false profession to be believers and attempt to live the Christian life on their own strength. Such people will fall away, as the parable of the sower spreading the seed illustrates (Mt 13:20–22). Many professing Christians who are waiting for the Lord’s return will find on the Last Day that they were not prepared to meet him, as Jesus taught in the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins (Mt 25:1–13). God will not acknowledge them when they call upon him saying, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Instead Jesus will tell them plainly the shocking response, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ (Mt 7:22, 23; cf. Mt 13:11, 12). But those who continue in their love for God and neighbor, pursuing a life of holiness, and

testifying to the power of God unto salvation, thus showing their transformed life, have every right to believe that they are eternally secure in Christ's love. If the true believer should fall into sin, the Holy Spirit will bring him or her to conviction of sin and repentance, restoring him or her to righteousness. When a true believer humbly seeks to serve and please God, he will be encouraged to serve the Lord all that more faithfully with the knowledge that Christ has pledged to keep him safe.

G. Nothing to Separate Us

Paul winds up his arguments for assurance of God's love with a crescendo saying, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

No event such as *death* or *life* can separate us from God's love. What a comfort to know at the time of our death and that of our loved ones that we are still in God's hands. It is not like the despair and fear of those who do not know God. As Muslim boxer Muhammad Ali is quoted as saying he is afraid of "not going to heaven."⁴ For the Muslim has no assurance of God's love for them.

Nothing in time, in *neither the present nor the future*, neither in this age nor in the next, can sever us from Christ's love. And what is not now either in the present or to come? As the great I AM, God is eternally in the present (Ex 3:14; Jn 8:58). As to the future, Jesus is coming again with glory and power. He has gone to prepare a place for us and will come back to take us to be with him that we may be where he is (Jn 14:2, 3).

"*Nor any powers*" refer to the evil forces in the universe opposed to God. It may refer to a hierarchy in the spiritual realm of demonic angels who followed Satan. Paul tells the Ephesians that we are in a spiritual warfare. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph 6:12). Although all principalities and powers are not

⁴ Brian Duffy, "Truth Tellers: Muhammad Ali," *U.S. News & World Report* (August 20–27, 2001), 63.

evil, these would not be ones seeking to destroy the security and love a believer has in Christ. But the powers and authorities opposed to us have been defeated at the cross, as we saw earlier.

“*Neither height nor depth*” means that nothing in space can hinder us from God’s love, for it is everywhere. As David sings,

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast (Ps 139:7–10).

Possibly *height* and *depth* are technical terms used during Paul’s day in astrology and pre-Gnostic thought in which they referred to spiritual powers which controlled the heavenly bodies, especially the planets, thus determining our destinies. These powers would have been the greatest fear for Paul’s readers. But none of these astrological powers can interfere with God’s loving hand keeping hold of us.

To leave no loophole Paul concludes with “*nor anything else in all creation,*” either in the physical realm or the spiritual realm that can destroy the love God the Father has for his children through Jesus Christ. For as the Creator of all, he has sovereign authority over all that he has made.

“*The love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord*” is exclusive in the sense that it is only through Christ Jesus. It is only in him that it exists, has been shown to us, and operates. It is only through Christ that we can know God’s love and be embraced by it. Therefore it is imperative that we have put our faith and trust in him alone for our eternal hope.

At some point or another in your Christian walk you may come to a point of despair, having wandered into the easy path of sin, such as self-confidence, without reliance upon the Lord. John Bunyan writes in his allegory *Pilgrim’s Progress* that Christian and Hopeful were captured by Giant Despair and put in his Doubting Castle. There

upon the advice of his wife Gloom, Giant Despair beat and threatened Christian and Hopeful in the dark dungeon and sought to have them commit suicide.

ABOUT MIDNIGHT SATURDAY NIGHT, CHRISTIAN AND HOPEFUL BEGAN TO PRAY, AND CONTINUED UNTIL ALMOST BREAK OF DAY. THEN CHRISTIAN SUDDENLY BROKE OUT IN AMAZEMENT, “WHAT A FOOL! WHAT A FOOL I AM TO LIE HERE IN THIS STINKING DUNGEON WHEN I MIGHT WALK FREE ON THE HIGHWAY TO GLORY! I HAVE A KEY IN MY BOSOM CALLED PROMISE WHICH I AM SURE WILL OPEN ANY DOOR IN DOUBTING CASTLE.”

HOPEFUL: That is certainly good news, by brother. Get out your key and try it.

Then Christian took the key of Promise and pushed it into the lock of the dungeon door. The bolt fell back and the door came open. They walked out into the castle. Then they went to the door leading to the castle yard. The key opened that door also. Now they came to the great iron gate leading outside. The lock to the gate was exceedingly difficult, yet they unlocked it and pushed the gate open to make their escape. But the gate made such a creaking sound that it woke the giant, who jumped out of bed to pursue his prisoners. Then he was seized by one of his fits and lost the use of his limbs. The prisoners ran to the King’s highway, where they were safely beyond Despair’s jurisdiction.⁵

We have in our text a precious promise from God of his everlasting love that is a key that can be used to free us from the dungeon of despair and gloom. Can you now say with Paul that salvation is entirely of God and that he will keep you safe to the very end? If you are still uncertain of this truth, you are looking at your own strength rather than upon God’s omnipotence to save you out of sin. Knowing the security that Jesus loves us for all eternity will set us on the narrow path to the celestial city singing “Hallelujah!” all the

⁵ John Bunyan, *Pilgrim’s Progress in Modern English*, retold by James H. Thomas (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964), 117, 118.

way. Put your confidence and sure hope in the promises of God that he will never ever let you go from his love if you have trusted in him for your salvation.

Benediction: “To him who is able *to keep you from falling* and *to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy*—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen (Jude 24-25).