

The Security of the Church

A Sermon

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“As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.” —[Psalm 125:2](#).

THE CHANGES of society may well illustrate the immutability of God. In the days of David, Jerusalem was looked upon as an impregnable fortress. It is surrounded by a natural rampart of hills; and appears to lie in the center of an amphitheatre raised purposely for its defense. By the ancient Jew it was considered to be an impregnable citadel. How changed now are the manners of war! A small troop could easily take the city, and it must indeed be a strong army that would be able to garrison it in its present condition. Yet whilst Jerusalem is changed, and the figure has become inappropriate, Jerusalem’s God remains, for with him is “no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” We must this morning consider the text, not as we should understand it in our day, but as we should have understood it in David’s time. David looked upon the city of Jerusalem, and he thought within himself, “No army can ever be able to surprise this city, and however numerous may be the invading hosts, my people will always be able to hold their own in the midst of a city so firmly fortified both by nature and by art.” In his time, indeed, and in the time of his son Solomon, I suppose it would have been utterly impossible for any enemy, possessed only of the tactics of ancient warfare, to have scaled those mighty ramparts of earth which God had piled about the city. And therefore, when David said in his day, “As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people;” he meant this—“As Jerusalem is fortified by the mountains, so are God’s people castled in the covenant, fortified in the Omnipotence of God, and therefore they are impregnably secure. We shall thus understand the text, and endeavor this morning to work out the great thought of the security of God’s people in the arms of Jehovah their Lord.

We shall consider the text, first, *as relating to the Church as a whole*, and then we shall endeavor to note *how it applies to every individual in particular*.

I. FIRST, THE CHURCH AS A WHOLE is secured by God beyond the reach of harm. She is ably garrisoned by Omnipotence, and she is castled within the faithful engagements of the covenant. How often has the Church been attacked; but how often has she been victorious? The number of her battles is just the number of her victories. Foes have come against her; they have compassed her about, they have compassed her about like bees, but in the name of God she has destroyed them. The bull of Bashan and the dog of Belial, the mighty

and the insignificant, have all conspired to overthrow the Church; but he that sitteth in heaven hath laughed at them, the Lord hath had them in derision, and his church hath been as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but which abideth for ever. Turn ye now to the roll of history and read how the Church has been fortified by God, when fiercely attacked by men.

1. *Persecution* has unsheathed its bloody sword, and sought to rend up the Church by its roots, or fell it with its axe. Tyrants have heated their furnaces, have prepared their racks, have erected their stakes, the martyrs of Christ have been dragged by thousands to a terrible death, the confessors have had to stand forth at the risk of their lives, protesting the gospel of God against the dominant of the times. The little flock has been scattered hither and thither, and the dogs of persecution have worried them in every corner whither they have fled. Into every nation of the earth have they wandered; in sheepskins and goatskins have they been clothed; their houses have been in the rocks and their sleeping places in the caves of the earth. Like the stag pursued by the hounds, they have not had a moment's space for so much as to take their breath. But has the Church been subdued? Has she ever been overcome? O God, thou hast proved the invincibility of thy truth; thou hast manifested the power of thy Word, for thou hast not only preserved thy Church in the time of greatest trouble, but, blessed be thy name thou hast made the hour of her peril the hour of her greatest triumph. You will find that whenever the Church has been the most persecuted she has been the most successful. The heathen Pro-consuls wondered when they saw the many who were prepared to die. They said, "Surely a madness must have seized upon mankind, that they cannot be content to commit suicide, but are so fond of death that they must come to our bar and plead that they are lovers of Christ as if they sought to compel us to execute them." God gave grace for the moment and in the day of persecution he braced the nerves of his people, and made them mighty to do or die, as God would have it. But, surely, had not Christ's Church been surrounded by the mountains of God's Omnipotence, she must have fallen a prey to her numerous enemies.

2. But by-and-bye the devil grew wiser. He saw that overt persecution would not suffice for the putting down of God's Church, and he therefore adopted another measure not less cruel but more crafty. "I will not only slay them," said he, "I will *malign* them." Did you ever read in history the horrible reports which were set afloat in the early ages of Christianity concerning the Christians. I dare not tell you with what vices the early Christians were charged in their private assemblies. It is certain that they were the purest and most virtuous of men, but never were men so fearfully belied. The very heathens who revelled in vice, despised the followers of Jesus on account of crimes which the voice of the liar had laid to their charge. A few years elapsed and the mud which had been cast upon the snow-white garments of Christ's Church fell off from them, leaving them whiter than before, the clouds that sought to obscure the light of the heaven of the gospel were blown away, and "fair as

the moon and clear as the sun” the innocence of Christ’s Church shone forth again. But the devil has adopted the same plan in every period. He has always sought to slander any race of Christians who are the means of revival. I would not believe any minister to be eminently successful, if I were informed that everybody praised him. I am certain that such a case would be an exception, a glaring exception to all the rules of history. You remember what was said of Whitfield in his day. He was charged with crimes that Sodom never knew; and yet a more pure and heavenly man God never sent to tread this wicked earth. And it ever must be so. The Church struggling with sin and wickedness, must through the enmity of the evil one find herself bespattered and besmeared with slander. The wicked when they can do nothing else against the righteous, will spit falsehood on them. But has the Church suffered through their slander, or hath ever a solitary Christian lost aught by it? No, the Lord God who set the mountains round about Jerusalem has so put himself about his people, that no weapon that is formed against us shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth against us in judgment we shall condemn. This is the heritage of the people of the Lord. Fear not, O Church of Christ, the slimy serpent of slander for even in thy cradle, like Hercules, when the snakes of slander came against thee thou didst slay them in thine infantile grasp, more than a conqueror through him that loved thee. And now that God is with thee, and the shout of a king in thy midst, fear not, though all men should speak against thee, thy Master will yet honor thee, and thou wilt come up from the pool of slander like a sheep from the washing, the fairer for thy black baptism, the more admired, the more lovely for all the scorn and ignominy that men have cast upon thee.

3. Again, Satan learned wisdom, and he said, “Now inasmuch as I cannot destroy this people, neither by sword nor slander, lo, this will I do, I will send into their midst wolves in sheeps clothing, I will inspire divers *heretics*, carried away with their own lusts, who shall in the midst of the church promulgate lies and prophecy smooth things in the name of the Lord. And Satan has done all this with a vengeance. In every era of the church there have been numberless bands of heretics. Only a small company have in certain times adhered to the truth, whilst the mass of professing Christians have gone aside and have perished in the gainsaying of Korah. Look at the earliest days of Christianity. Scarcely were the apostles in their graves, and their souls in paradise, than there sprang up men who denied the Lord that bought them—some who did evil that good might come, whose damnation was just. Heresies of all kinds began to spring up, even in the first fifty years after the departure of our Master. Since that time the world has been very prolific of every shape and form of doctrine except the truth, and down to these modern times heresies have prevailed. Now behold how Satan seeks to quench the light of Israel. There is the heresy of Rome, she that sitteth upon many waters seeketh as far as she can to delude the Church, and to draw the rest of the world aside from the truth of God. She, with all the craft of hell, seeketh to proselyte where’er she may from those who are the professed followers of the truth; she will change

her shape in every land; in her own dominions she will build the dungeon, and practice intolerance—in a land of freedom she can plead for liberty, and pretend to be its warmest friend. Base harlot that she is, her whoredoms have not yet ceased, nor is the cup of her fornications full. She seeketh still to devour the nations and swallow them up quick. There is her sister the Puseyism of the Church of England, I speak nothing now concerning my evangelical brethren. God Almighty shield them and bless them! My only marvel is, that they do not come out altogether, and touch not the unclean thing. But, alas, Puseyism is seeking to eat out the very vitals of our godliness, telling the masses that the priest is everything—putting down Christ and exalting the man, putting baptismal water in the place of the influences of the Divine Spirit, and exalting sacraments into the place which is only to be held by the Lord our God. Truly this dangerous and deceptive, beautiful and foolish system of religion is much to be feared, although we know that the true Church of God must ever be safe, for against her the gates of hell shall not prevail.

Alas! that we should have to say something else! and this concerning those who are commonly called evangelical, who have a form of error more insidious and evil still. Alas that I should have to “cry aloud and spare not,” concerning these matters. These are days when a false charity would have us hold our tongues against the evils that we hate. My brethren, in the midst of our dissenting churches especially there is a system which does not deserve the name of system, except from its systematic desire to crush every system. There is a system springing up which takes out of the Gospel every truth that makes it precious plucks every jewel out of the crown of the Redeemer, and tramples it under the foot of men. In a large number of our pulpits at this time you will not hear the Gospel preached by a month together. Anything else you like you may hear preached: Anti-state Churchism, political affairs—these are the current staple of the day; Christ and him crucified may go to the dogs for them. Politics fill up the pulpits, and philosophy stands in the place of theology. And when there is a little theology, what say they? Instead of exalting the Holy Spirit as the first and prime agent, they are ever exhorting men to do what only God’s Spirit can do for them, and not reminding them that the effectual grace of God is necessary; the covenant, the “everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure” is sneered at the banner once held so manfully by Calvin, who took it from the hand of Augustine leaping over centuries to grasp it, who again received it from the hand of the apostle Paul—the banner of the old fashioned truth is to a great degree furled, and we are told that these old doctrines are effete and out of date. Puritanical divinity, they say, is not the divinity for these times; we must have a new gospel for a go-a-head era. We must have sermons preached which, if they be not absolute denial of every doctrine of the gospel, are at least sneers at them all. The man effects to be so supremely wise, that he in his own brain can devise a gospel better, fairer than the ancient gospel of the blessed God, Now, this is one of the attempts of the enemy

to put down the truth, but he will never be able to do it, for “As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.”

I will not be hard, but I must say a word to many of my brethren of the denomination to which I belong. There are many of you call yourselves Particular Baptists, by which you mean that you are Calvinists, and yet, gentlemen, your consciences are easy, and some of you have never preached upon election since you were ordained. The peculiarities of “the five points” are concealed. These things, you say, are offensive. And so, gentlemen, you would rather offend God than you would offend man. But you reply, “These things, you know, are high doctrines; they had better not be preached: they will not be practical.” I do think that the climax of all man’s blasphemy is centred in that utterance. Will you dare to say, “There are some parts of God’s truth that we do not want to preach to the people.” Tell me that God put a thing in the Bible that I am not to preach! You are finding fault with my God. But you say, “It will be dangerous.” What! God’s truth dangerous? I should not like to stand in your shoes when you have to face your Maker on the day of judgment after such an utterance as that. If it be not God’s truth, let it alone; but if you believe the thing, out with it. The world will like you just as well for being honest, and if the world does not your Master will. Keep back nothing; tell the whole gospel out. Tell out man’s responsibility: do not stutter at it. Tell out divine sovereignty: do not refuse to talk of election, use the word, even if they sneer, tell men that if they believe not the blood is on their own heads, and then if the high people turn against you, snap your finger in their face; tell them you do not care—that to you it is *nothing, nothing* at all to please man; your Master is in heaven, and him will you please, come fair, come foul. This done, Satan would be balked and defeated; but at the present moment, he is mightily striving thus to overthrow the church by ill doctrine.

4. The craftiest invention of the devil, with which he seeks, in the last place to put out the church, is a device which has amazed me above every other. “Now,” says Satan, “If I can quench the church, neither by persecution, nor slander, nor heresy, I will invent another mode of destroying her.” And I have often marveled at the depths of deceit which are centred in this last invention of Satan. Satan seeks to divide the church, to set us apart from one another, and not allow those who love the same truth to meet with each other and to work together in love, and peace, and harmony. “Now,” says the devil, “I have it. Here is one body of good men—they are very fond of one part of God’s truth. Now, there are two sets of truths in the Bible. One set deals with man as responsible creature, the other class of truths deals with God as the infinite Sovereign, dispensing his mercy as he pleases. Now these dear brethren are very fond of man’s responsibility: they will preach it, and they will preach it so that if they hear the brother over the other side of the street preach God’s sovereignty, they will be very wroth with him. And then I will make the brethren who preach divine sovereignty forget the other part of the truth, and hate the brethren that preach it.” Do you not see the craft of the enemy? Both of these good men are right; they both preach parts of truth; but

they each so set their part of truth at the top of the other that a rivalry commences. Why, I have stepped in and heard a godly brother preach a sermon that sent my blood through my veins at a most rapid rate, whilst he earnestly preached of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come but he spoilt all his sermon by indirectly hinting—"Now, take care you don't hear Mr. So-and-so, because he will contradict all this, and tell you that you are saved by grace, and that it is not of yourself but it is the gift of God." I went, of course, and heard the good man, because I was told not to go. Well, he was preaching that "it is not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," and I thought he handled the text very manfully, when he showed that God was the author of all salvation; only in a parenthesis he told us not to go to that work-mongering shop on the other side of the road. Why, they were both right, but they had each got different parts of the truth; one, that truth which dealt with man as responsible; the other, that which deals with God as a Sovereign; and the devil had so perverted their judgment that they could not see that both things were true, but they must go fighting each other just to make sport for Satan. Now, I wonder that the church has not been utterly destroyed by this last device, for it is the craftiest thing, I believe, that Satan has yet brought under our notice, though without doubt his depths are too deep for our understanding. But, brethren, despite all this, let bigotry rave, let intolerance rail till it goes mad, the church is just as secure, for God hath set himself round about her, "even as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, from henceforth even for evermore."

And now just notice, before we leave this point, that as the Church always has been preserved, the text assures us she always will be, *henceforth even for ever*. There is a nervous old woman here. Last Saturday night she read the newspaper, and she saw something about five or six clergymen going over to Rome: she laid down her spectacles, and she began crying, "Oh! the Church is in danger, the Church is in danger." Ah! put your spectacles on; that is all right; never mind about the loss of those fellows. Better gone; we did not want them; do not cry if fifty more follow them, do not be at all alarmed. Some church may be in danger, but God's Church is not. That is safe enough, that shall stand secure, even to the end. I remember with what alarm some of my friends received the tidings of the geological discoveries of modern times, which did not quite agree with their interpretation of the Mosaic history of the creation. They thought it an awful thing that science should discover something which seemed to contradict the Scriptures. Well, we lived over the geological difficulty, after all. And since then there have been different sets of philosophic infidels, who have risen up and made wonderful discoveries, and poor timid Christians have thought, "What a terrible thing! This surely will be the end of all true religion; when science can bring *facts* against us, how shall we be able to stand?" They just waited about another week, and on a sudden they found that science was not their enemy, but their friend, for the Truth though tried in a furnace like silver seven times, is ever a gainer by the trial. Ah! ye that hate the church, she shall ever be a thorn in your side! Oh! ye that would batter her walls to pieces, know

this, that she is impregnable, not one of her stakes shall be removed, not one of her cords shall be broken. God hath fixed her where she is, and by divine decree established her on a rock. Do you hate the Church? Hate on: it will never be moved by all your hate. Do you threaten to crush it? It shall crush you, but you shall never injure it. Do ye despise and laugh at it? Ah! the day is coming when the laugh shall be on the other side. Wait a little while, and when her Master shall suddenly come in his glory, then shall it be seen on whose side is the victory, and who were the fools that laughed.

Thus we have disposed of the first point; THE CHURCH impregably secure, fortified, and castled by God.

II. What is true of the mass is true of the unit. The fact which relates to the Church includes in it EVERY MEMBER OF THE CHURCH. God has fortified his people; so that every believer is infallibly secure. There are in the world certain people who teach that Christ gives grace to men, and tells them, "Now, you shall be saved if you will persevere; but this must be left to yourself." This reminds me of an old Puritanical illustration, "The Duke of Alva having given some prisoners their lives, they afterwards petitioned him for some food. His answer was, that, 'he would grant them life but no meat.' And they were famished to death." The deniers of final perseverance represent the Deity in a similar view. 'God promises eternal life to the saints if they endure to the end,' but he will not secure to them the continuance of that grace without which eternal life cannot be had! Oh! surely if that were true, eternal life were not worth a fig to any of us. Unless our God who first saves us did engage to keep us alive and to provide for all our necessities, of what use were eternal life at all? But we bless his name,

"Whom once he loves he never leaves,
But loves them to the end."
Once in Christ, in Christ for ever,
Nothing from his love can sever."

The Christian is fortified and secured from all harm. And yet, O child of God, there be many that will seek to destroy thee, and thy fears will often tell thee that thou art in the jaws of the enemy. *Providence* will often seem against thee, thine eyes shall be seldom dry; it may be funeral shall follow funeral. Loss shall follow loss; a burning house shall be succeeded by a blasted crop. The Christian in this world is not secured against the perils which happen to manhood. Oh! child of God, it may seem that all things are against thee; perhaps all God's waves and billows will go over thee; thou mayest know what hunger, and nakedness, and thirst do mean; thou mayest be found in this world houseless, friendless, fatherless, motherless, but oh! remember, that neither famine, nor hunger, nor poverty, nor sickness, nor weakness, nor contempt, can separate thee from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus thy Lord. Thou mayest sink ever so low, but thou canst never sink lower than the arm of God can reach. Thy poor ship may be drifted before the gale, but it shall never go so fast

but God can keep her off the rocks. Be of good cheer, the trials of this mortal life shall work out for thee “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

Again, you may be *tempted* by the world! traps may be set for you on every hand, you may be tempted by your flesh, your corruptions may have great power over you, and often stagger your faith, and make you tremble, lest you should be utterly overthrown, and the devil may set upon you with fiery darts, he may pierce you with foul insinuations, he may almost make you blaspheme, and with terrible suggestions he may drive you well-nigh to despair. But oh! remember,

“Hell and thy sins obstruct thy course,
But hell and sin are vanquished foes;
Thy Jesus nailed them to his cross
And sang the triumph when he rose.”

And thou mayest, too, be overcome by *sin*. Thou mayest fall God grant thou mayest not; but though thou be kept eminently consistent and extremely virtuous, thou wilt sin and sometimes that sin will get such a head against thee that thou canst scarcely stem the torrent. Conscience will whisper, “How couldst thou be a child of God, and yet sin thus?” And Satan will howl in thine ears, “He that sinneth knoweth not God.” And so thou wilt be ready to be destroyed by thy sin. But do thou then, in the hour of thy dark distress, read this verse—“As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.” Be thou confident in this, that even sin itself shall not be able to cut the golden link which joins thee to thy Saviour.

Have you never heard the sermons of those people who believe in the apostacy of the saints? Have you not heard them very pathetically enlarge on the dangers of Christians? They say, “Yes, you may serve God all your life, but perhaps in the last article of death your faith may faint, sin may prevail, and you may be destroyed.” And they illustrate their very beautiful and comfortable idea by the figure of a ship foundering just as she reaches the harbour. Now, many wooden ships, I doubt not, do founder, and many ships built in free-will dockyards founder too; but the chosen vessels of mercy are insured against perishing, and were never known to be shipwrecked yet. As an old divine says, there are no wrecks to be seen on the sea which rolls between Jerusalem on earth and Jerusalem above. There are many tempests, but never any shipwrecks. Bishop Hooker sweetly says “Blessed for ever and ever, be that mother’s child whose faith hath made him the child of God. The earth may shake, the pillars thereof may tremble under us, the countenance of the heavens may be appalled, the sun may lose his light, the moon her beauty, the stars their glory, but concerning the man that trusted in God, if the fire have proclaimed itself unable as much as to singe a hair of his head; if lions, beasts ravenous by nature and keen by hunger, being set to devour, have, as it were, religiously adored the very flesh of a faithful man; what is there in the world that shall change his heart, overthrow his faith, alter his affections towards God, or the af-

fection of God to him?” Oh, when we once believe this doctrine and receive it in our hearts as true, what a tendency it has to make the spirit buoyant in the deep waters, to enable us to sing in the midst of the fierce billows. Who need fear, if our salvation is made secure by the covenant of God?

And now for a few moments, without detaining you too long, I will try to show some reasons why it is quite certain that the believer cannot by any possibility perish. I want to do this, because I have a multitude of letters from this large congregation every week, and I have to say to the glory of God, there are many of those letters that make me so glad I can scarcely contain myself, whilst others arouse all the anxiety of my heart. Among them is one something like this. “Sir, I know that I was once a child of God; many years ago I had such delightful feelings, and such ecstasies, that I cannot doubt but what if I had died then I should have gone to heaven; but now, sir, I am in such distress that I am quite sure if I were to die now I should be lost.” Now, my brother, I know you are here. You may take it to yourself. There are only two solutions to your mystery. If you were a child of God *then*, you are a child of God *now*, and if you would have gone to heaven then you will go to heaven now, be you what you may; if you ever were regenerated, regeneration is a work that is never done but once, and if it has been done once for you, it has not lost its efficacy—you are a child of God yet. But I am inclined to think you never were a child of God: you had a few fine ecstasies; but you never knew the plague of your own heart; I am afraid, young man, you were never taken into God’s stripping room, never were tied up to the halberts, and never had the ten-thonged whip of law on your back. But, anyhow, do not tell me any more that you were converted once but not now, because if you were converted to God, God would have kept you. “The righteous *shall* hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.”

And now shall I tell you why it is certain a believer cannot perish? In the first place, how can a believer perish if that Scripture be true, which saith, that every believer is a member of Christ’s body! If you will only grant me my head afloat above the water I will give you leave to drown my fingers. Try it: you cannot do it. As long as a man’s head is above the flood you cannot drown him—it is clean impossible—nor yet drown any part of his body. Now, a Christian is a part of Christ, the Head. Christ, the head of the body, is in heaven, and until you can drown the head of the body, you cannot drown the body, and if the head be in heaven, beyond the reach of harm, then every member of the body is alive and secure, and shall at last be in heaven too. Dost thou imagine, O heretic, that Christ will lose a member of his body! Will Christ dwell in heaven with a mangled frame? God forbid! If Christ hath taken us into union with himself, though we be the meanest members of his heavenly body, he will not allow us to be cut away. Will a man lose a arm, or a leg, or an hand, whilst he can help himself? Ah! no, and whilst Christ is omnipotent, nought shall pluck his children from his body, for they are of “his flesh and his bones.”

But again: how can a believer perish, and yet God be true? God has said “When thou passest through the rivers I will be with thee, and the floods shall not overflow thee.” Now, if they should overflow us, how can God be true? “When thou passest through the fires thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” Then if we could ever find a believer consumed, we could prove God’s promise broken. But we cannot do that. God is with his children, and ever will be. Besides has he not said, “I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands?” Ay, beloved, how can God be God, and yet his people plucked out of his hand? Surely he were no God to us, if he were unfaithful to a promise so oft repented and so solemnly confirmed. Besides, mark ye this. If one saint should fall away and perish, God would not only break his word, but his oath, for he hath sworn by himself, because he could swear by no greater, “that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” No, an oath-breaking God, a promise-despising Jehovah, were an impossibility; and therefore a perished child of God is alike impossible.

But we need not fear, beloved, that we shall ever perish, if we love the Saviour for the last reason is all potent. Will Christ lose that which he has bought with his own blood? Yes, there are men with judgments so perverted, that they believe Christ died for those that are damned, and bought with his own blood men that perish. Well, if they choose to believe that, I do not envy them the elasticity of their intellects; but this I conceive to be but an axiom, that what Christ has paid for so dearly with his own heart’s blood he will have. If he loved us well enough to bear the excruciating agonies of the cross, I know he loves “well enough to keep us to the end.” If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.” For I am persuaded that he that spared not his own life, but delivered it up for his people, will not withhold aught that Omnipotence can “ire.

And now I close by addressing myself for a moment or two to ungodly persons present. Thinking persons they must be, or else what I say will not be likely to be noticed by them. When I was a boy I remember having a meditation something like this: “Now, I should not like to be a thief or a murderer, or an unclean person.” I had such a training that I had an abhorrence of sin of that sort. “And yet,” thought I to myself, “I may be hung yet; there is no reason why I should not turn out a thief,” because I recollected there were some of my schoolfellows, older than I was, who had already become very eminent in dishonesty; and I thought, “why may not I?” No one can tell the rapture of my spirit, when I thought I saw in my Bible the doctrine that if I gave my heart to Christ he would keep me from sin and preserve me as long as I lived. I was not quite sure of it—not quite certain that was the truth of the Bible, though I thought so; but I remember when I heard the minister of some small hyper chapel utter the same truth. Oh! my heart was full of rapture; I panted after that gospel.

“Oh!” I thought, if God would but love me, if I might but know myself to be his!” For the enchanting part of it was, that if I were so he would keep me to the end. That made me so in love with the gospel, that boy as I was, knowing nothing savingly about the gospel, it made me love the thought of being saved, because, if saved, God would never turn me out of doors. That made the gospel very precious to me in my childhood; so that when the Holy Spirit showed me my guilt and led me to seek a Saviour, that doctrine was like a bright star to my spirit. I always looked forward to that. I thought, “Well, if I can once look to Christ, and cast myself on him, then he will grant me grace that I shall to the end endure.” And oh! that doctrine is so precious to me now, that I do think if anybody could possibly convince me that final perseverance is not a truth of the Bible, I should never preach again, for I feel I should have nothing worth preaching. If you could once make me believe that the regeneration of God might fail of its effect, and that the love of God might be separated from his own chosen people, you might keep that Bible to yourself; between its cover there is nothing that I love, nothing that I wish for, no gospel that is suitable for me. I count it to be a gospel beneath the dignity of God, and beneath the dignity of even fallen manhood, unless it be everlasting, “ordered in all things and sure.”

And now poor trembling sinner, thou that knowest thy sins, believe on Christ this morning, and thou art saved, and saved for ever. Do but this moment look to him that died upon the tree, and, my brother, my sister, give me thine hand, and let us weep for joy that thou believest, and let our joy accumulate when we remember that the pillars of the heavens may totter, the solid foundations of the earth may reel, the countenance of the heavens may be astonished, the sun may be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, but nought shall pluck thee from the strength of Israel’s hands. Thou art, thou shalt be infallibly secure. Come, O Holy Spirit, bless these words; for Jesus sake. Amen.