

Assured Security In Christ

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." *2 Timothy 1:12*.

IN the style of these Apostolic words there is a positiveness most refreshing in this age of doubt. In certain circles of society it is rare nowadays to meet with anybody who believes anything. It is the philosophical, the right, the fashionable thing, nowadays, to doubt everything which is generally received. Indeed, those who have any creed whatever are by the liberal school set down as old-fashioned dogmatists, persons of shallow minds, deficient in intellect, and far behind their age. The great men, the men of thought, the men of high culture and refined taste consider it wisdom to cast suspicion upon Revelation, and sneer at all definiteness of belief.

"Ifs" and "buts," and "perhaps" are the supreme delight of this period. What wonder if men find everything uncertain—when they refuse to bow their intellects to the declarations of the God of Truth? Note then, with admiration, the refreshing and even startling positiveness of the Apostle—"I know," says he. And that is not enough—"I am persuaded." He speaks like one who cannot tolerate a doubt. There is no question about whether he has believed or not. "I know Whom I have believed." There is no question as to whether he was right in so believing. "I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him." There is no suspicion as to the future. He is as positive for years to come as he is for this present moment. "He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day."

Now there is a positiveness which is very disgusting—when it is nothing but the fruit of ignorance and is unattended with anything like thoughtfulness. But in the Apostle's case, his confidence is founded not on ignorance, but on knowledge. "I know," says he. There are certain things which he has clearly ascertained, which he knows to be fact. And his confidence is grounded on these ascertained Truths of God. His confidence, moreover, was not the fruit of thoughtlessness, for he adds, "I am persuaded." As though he had reasoned the matter out and had been persuaded into it—had meditated long upon it, and turned it over—and the force of Truth had quite convinced him, so that he stood persuaded.

Where positiveness is the result of knowledge and of meditation, it becomes sublime, as it was in the Apostle's case. And being sublime it becomes influential. In this case it certainly must have been influential over the heart of Timothy, and over the minds of the tens of thousands who have, during these nineteen centuries, perused this Epistle. It encourages

the timid when they see others preserved. It confirms the wavering when they see others steadfast. The great Apostle's words, ringing out with trumpet tone this morning, "I know, and I am persuaded," cannot but help to cheer many of us in our difficulties and anxieties. May the Holy Spirit cause us not only to admire the faith of Paul, but to imitate it, and to attain to the same confidence!

Some speak confidently because they are not confident. How often have we observed that brag and bluster are only the outward manifestations of inward trembling? They are but concealments adopted to cover cowardice! As the schoolboy, passing through the Churchyard, whistles to keep his courage up, so some people talk very positively because they are not positive. They make a pompous parade of faith because they desire to sustain the presumption which, as being their only comfort, is exceedingly dear to them.

Now in the Apostle's case, every syllable he speaks has beneath it a most real weight of confidence which the strongest expressions could not exaggerate. Sitting there in the dungeon, a prisoner for Christ, abhorred by his countrymen, despised by the learned, and ridiculed by the rude, Paul confronted the whole world with a holy boldness which knew no quailing. A boldness resulting from the deep conviction of his spirit. You may take these words and put what emphasis you can upon each one of them, for they are the truthful utterance of a thoroughly earnest and brave spirit. May we enjoy

such a confidence ourselves, and then we need not hesitate to declare it—for our testimony will glorify God and bring consolation to others.

This morning for our instruction, as the Holy Spirit may help us, we shall first consider the matter in question, that which Paul had committed to Christ. Secondly, the fact beyond all question, namely, that Christ was able to keep him. Thirdly, the assurance of that fact, or how the Apostle was able to say, "I know and am persuaded." And fourthly, the influence of that assurance when it rules in the heart.

I. First, then, dear Friends, let us speak for a few minutes upon THE MATTER IN QUESTION.

1. That matter was, first of all, the Apostle's deposit of all his interests and concerns into the hands of God in Christ. Some have said that what Paul here speaks of was his ministry. But there are many reasons for concluding that this is a mistake. A great array of expositors, at the head of whom we would mention Calvin, think that the sole treasure which Paul deposited in the hands of God was his eternal salvation. We do not doubt that this was the grandest portion of the priceless deposit—but we also think that as the connection does not limit the sense, it cannot be restricted or confined to any one thing. It seems to us that all the Apostle's temporal and eternal interests were, by an act of faith, committed into the hands of God in Christ Jesus.

To the Lord's gracious keeping the Apostle committed his body. He had suffered much in that frail tabernacle— shipwrecks, perils, hunger, cold, nakedness, imprisonments, beatings

with rods and stoning had all spent their fury upon him. He expected before long that his mortal frame would become the prey of Nero's cruelty. None could tell what would then happen to him—whether he should be burned alive to light up Nero's gardens, be torn to pieces by wild beasts to make a Roman holiday—or become the victim of the headsman's sword. But in whatever way he might be called to offer up himself a sacrifice to God, he committed his body to the keeping of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life.

He was persuaded that in the day of the Lord's appearing he would rise again, his body having suffered no loss through torture or dismemberment. He looked for a joyful resurrection and asked no better embalming for his corpse than the power of Christ would ensure it.

He gave over to Christ at that hour his character and reputation. A Christian minister must expect to lose his reputation among men. He must be willing to suffer every reproach for Christ's sake. But he may rest assured that he will never lose his real honor if it is risked for the Truth's sake and placed in the Redeemer's hands. The day shall declare the excellence of the upright, for it will reveal all that was hidden and bring to light that which was concealed. There will be a resurrection of characters as well as persons. Every reputation that has been obscured by clouds of reproach for Christ's sake shall be rendered glorious when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let the wicked say what they will of me, said the Apostle, I commit my character to the Judge of the quick and the dead.

So also his whole lifework he delivered into the hands of God. Men said, no doubt, that Paul had made a great mistake. In the eyes of the worldly wise he must have seemed altogether mad. What eminence awaited him had he become a rabbi! He might have lived respected and honored among his countrymen as a Pharisee. Or if he had preferred to follow the Grecian philosophies, a man with such strength of mind might have rivaled Socrates or Plato! But instead, he chose to unite himself with a band of men commonly reputed to be ignorant fanatics who turned the world upside down. Ah, well, says Paul, I leave the reward and fruit of my life entirely with my Lord, for He will at last justify my choice of service beneath the banner of His Son. And then the assembled universe shall know that I was no mistaken zealot for a senseless cause.

So did the Apostle resign to the hands of God in Christ his soul, whatever its jeopardy from surrounding temptations. However great the corruptions that were within it, and the dangers that were without, he felt safe in the great Surety's hands. He made over to the Divine Trustee all his mental powers, faculties, passions, instincts, desires and ambitions. He gave his whole nature up to the Christ of God to preserve it in holiness through the whole of life. And right well did his life-course justify his faith.

He gave that soul up to be kept in the hour of death, then to be strengthened, sustained, consoled, upheld, and guided through the tracks unknown—up through the mysterious

and unseen—to the Throne of God, even the Father. He resigned his spirit to Christ, that it might be presented without spot or wrinkle or any such thing in the Last Great Day. He did, in fact, make a full deposit of all that he was, and all that he had, and all that concerned him, into the keep-

ing of God in Christ, to find in his God a faithful Guardian, a sure Defender and a safe Keeper. This was the matter, then, about which the Apostle was concerned.

2. But next to this, the matter in question concerned the Lord's ability to make good this guardianship. The Apostle did not doubt that Christ had accepted the office of Keeper of that which he had committed to Him. The question was never about Christ's faithfulness to that trust. The Apostle does not even say that he was confident that Jesus would be faithful. He felt that assertion to be superfluous. There was no question about Christ's willingness to keep the soul committed to Him—such a statement Paul felt it unnecessary to make. But the question with many was concerning the power of the once crucified Redeemer to keep that which was committed to Him.

Oh, said the Apostle, I know and am persuaded that He is able to do that. Mark, my dear Friends, that the question is not about the Apostle's power to keep himself. That question he does not raise. Many of you have been troubled as to whether you are able to endure temptation. You need not debate the subject. It is clear that apart from Christ you are quite unable to persevere to the end. Answer that question with a decided negative at once, and never raise it again. The enquiry was not whether the Apostle would be found meritorious in his own righteousness in the Day of Judgment, for he had long ago cast that righteousness aside.

He does not raise that point. The grand question is this, "Is Jesus able to keep me?" Stand to that, my Brethren, and your doubts and fears will soon come to an end. Concerning your own power or merit, write, "despair," straightway upon its forehead. Let the creature be regarded as utterly dead and corrupt, and then lean on that arm, the sinews of which shall never shrink. And cast your full weight upon that Omnipotence which bears up the pillars of the universe. There is the point—keep to it, and you will not lose your joy. You have committed yourself to Christ. The great question now is not about what you can do, but about what Jesus is able to do. And rest assured that He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him.

3. The Apostle further carries our thoughts on to a certain set period—the keeping of the soul unto what he calls "that day." I suppose he calls it, "that day," because it was the day most ardently expected and commonly spoken of by Christians. It was so usual a topic of conversation to speak of Christ's coming and of the results of it, that the Apostle does not say, "the advent," he simply says, "that day." That day with which Believers are more familiar than with any other day beside. That day, the day of death if you will, when the soul appears

before its God. The Day of Judgment, if you please—that day when the books shall be opened and the record shall be read.

That day, the winding up of all, the sealing of destiny, the manifestation of the eternal fate of each one of us. That day for which all other days were made. Christ Jesus is able to keep us against that day. That is to say, He is able to place us, then, at the right hand of God, to set our feet upon the Rock when others sink into the pit that is bottomless. To crown us when others shall be accursed. To bring us to eternal joy when sinners shall be cast into Hell.

Here was the matter of consideration—can the Great Shepherd of souls preserve His flock? Ah, Brethren, if you have never searched into that question, I should not wonder but what you will! When you are very low and weak, and heart and flesh are failing. When sickness brings you to the borders of the grave and you gaze into eternity, the enquiry will come to any thoughtful man—Is this confidence of mine in the Christ of God warranted? Will He be able in this last article, when my spirit shivers in its unclothing, will He be able to help me now?

And in the more dreadful hour, when the trumpet peal shall awake the dead, shall I, indeed, find the Great Sin Bearer able to stand for me? Having no merit of my own, will His merit suffice? From ten thousand sins will His blood, alone, cleanse me? Nothing can ever equal this matter in importance. It is one of most pressing urgency of consideration.

II. It is a happy circumstance that we can turn from it to our second point, to dwell for a while upon THE FACT BEYOND ALL QUESTION, namely, that God in Christ is able to keep that which we have committed to Him.

The Apostle's confidence was that Christ was an able Guardian. So he meant, first, that Jesus is able to keep the soul from falling into damning sin. I suppose this is one of the greatest fears that has ever troubled the true Believer. Have you ever prayed that you might rather die than turn aside from Christ? I know I have, and I have sung bitterly in my soul that verse—

"Ah, Lord! With such a heart as mine,

Unless You hold me fast, I feel I must, I shall decline, And turn from You at last."

Now, troubled Christian, remember that your Lord is able to keep you under every possible form of temptation. "Ah," you say, "the Apostle Paul had not the trials I have. I think he had. But if he had not, Jesus had. And Christ has ability to keep you under them. Do I hear one say, "I am the only one of my household that has been called by Grace, and they all oppose me. I am a lonely one in my father's house"? Now, Paul was precisely in your condition. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and he was regarded by his people with the most extreme hate because he had come out from among them to follow the Crucified One.

Yet Paul felt that God was able to keep him, and you may depend upon it—though father and mother forsake, and brothers and sisters scoff—He whom you trust will keep

you also firm in the faith. "Ah," says another, "but you do not know what it is to strive with the prejudices of an education hostile to the faith of Jesus. When I seek to grow in Grace, the things I learned in my childhood force themselves upon me and hinder me." And was not the Apostle in this case? As touching the Law he had been a Pharisee, educated in the strictest sect, brought up in traditions that were opposed to the faith of Christ. And yet the Lord kept him faithful even to the end.

None of his old prejudices were able so much as to make him obscure the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ. God is able to keep you, also, despite your previous prejudices. "Ah," says one, "but I am the subject of many skeptical thoughts. I often suffer from doubts of the most subtle order." Do you think that the Apostle never knew this trial? He was no stranger to the Greek philosophy, which consisted of a bundle of questions and skepticisms. He must have experienced those temptations which are common to thoughtful minds. And yet he said, "I know that He is able to keep me." Believe me, then, the Lord Jesus is equally able to keep you.

"Yes," says another, "but I have so many temptations in the world. If I were not a Christian, I should prosper much better. I have openings now before me by which I might soon obtain a competence, and perhaps wealth, if I were not checked by conscience." Do you forget that the Apostle was in like case? What might he not have had? A man of his condition in life—his birth and parentage being altogether advantageous—a man of his powers of mind and of his great energy! He might have seized upon any attractive position. But those things which were gain for him, he counted loss for Christ's sake. And he was willing to be less than nothing, because the power of Divine Grace kept him true to his profession.

But you tell me you are very poor, and that poverty is a severe trial. Brothers and Sisters, you are not so poor as Paul. I suppose a few needles for his tent-making, an old cloak, and a few parchments made up all his wealth. A man without a home, a man without a single foot of land to call his own, was this Apostle. But poverty and want could not subdue him—Christ was able to keep him even then. "Ah," you say, "but he had not my strong passions and corruptions." Most surely he had them all, for we hear him cry, "I find, then, a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man: but I see another Law in my members, warring against the Law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the Law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

He was tempted as you are, yet he knew that Christ was able to keep him. O trembling Christian, never doubt this soul-cheering fact—that your loving Savior is able to keep you. But the Apostle did not merely trust Christ thus to keep him from sin—he relied upon the same arm to preserve him from despair. He was always battling with the world. There were times when he had no helper. The Brethren often proved false, and those that were true

were frequently timid. He was left in the world like a solitary sheep surrounded with wolves. But Paul was not faint-hearted. He had his fears, for he was mortal—he rose superior to them, for he was Divinely sustained. What a front he always maintains! Nero may rise before him—a horrible monster for a man even to dream of—but Paul's courage does not give way.

A Jewish mob may surround him, they may drag him out of the city—but Paul's mind is calm and composed. He may be laid in the stocks after having been scourged, but his heart finds congenial utterance in a song rather than a groan. He is always brave, always unconquerable, confident of victory. He believed that God would keep him, and he was kept. And you, my Brothers and Sisters, though your life may be a very severe conflict and you sometimes think you will give it up in despair—you never shall relinquish the sacred conflict. He that has borne you onward to this day will bear you through, and will make you more than conqueror, for He is able to keep you from fainting and despair.

Doubtless, the Apostle meant, too, that Christ was able to keep him from the power of death. Beloved, this is great comfort to us who so soon shall die. To the Apostle, death was a very present thing. "I die daily," said he. Yet was he well

assured that death would be gain rather than loss to him, for he was certain that Christ would so order all things that death should be but like an angel to admit him into everlasting life. Be certain of this, too, for He who is the Resurrection and the Life will not desert you. Do not, my Brothers and Sisters, fall under bondage through fear of death, for the living Savior is able to keep you, and He will.

Do not, I pray, look too much at the pains, groans, and dying strife. Look rather to that kind Friend, who, having endured the agonies of death before you, can sympathize with your sufferings, and who, as He ever lives, can render you available assistance. Cast this care on Him, and fear no more to die than you fear to go to your bed when night comes.

The Apostle is also certain that Christ is able to preserve his soul in another world. Little is revealed in Scripture by way of detailed description of that other world. Imagination may be indulged, but little can be proved. The spirit returns to God who gave it, this we know. And in the instant after death the righteous soul is in Paradise with Christ. This, too, is clear. Yet whether we know the details or not, we are assured that the soul is safe with Christ. Whatever danger from evil spirits may await us on our journey from this planet up to the dwelling place of God. Whatever there may be of conflict in the last moment, Jesus is able to keep that which we have committed to Him.

If I had to keep myself, I might, indeed, tremble with alarm at the prospect of the unknown region. But He that is the Lord of death and of Hell, and has the keys of Heaven, can surely keep my soul on that dread voyage across a trackless sea. It is all well. It must be well with the righteous—even in the land of death—for our Lord's dominion reaches even there—and being in His dominions we are safe. Paul believed, lastly, that Christ was able

to preserve his body. Remember my statement that Paul committed all that he had, and was, to God in Christ?

We must not despise this body. It is the germ of the body in which we are to dwell forever. It shall be raised from corruption into incorruption, but it is the same body. Developed from weakness into power, from dishonor into glory, it never loses its identity. The marvel of the resurrection will not fail of accomplishment. It may seem an impossibility that the body which has rotted in the tomb, and, perhaps been scattered in dust over the face of the soil—which has been absorbed by vegetables, which has been digested by animals, which has passed through countless circles of change—should be raised again. Yet impossible as it seems, the Lord Jesus Christ will perform it.

It must be as easy to construct a second time as to create out of nothing at the first. Look at creation and see that nothing is impossible with God. Think of the Word, without whom was not anything made that was made, and straightway you will talk no longer of difficulties. With man it may be impossible, but with God all things are possible. In your entirety, my Brethren, in the integrity of your manhood, spirit, soul, and body—all that is essential to your nature, to its happiness, to its perfection. Every part of you and every power of you—you having placed all in the hands of Christ—shall be kept until that day, when in His image you shall stand, and prove in your own persons the power which in your faith you do, this day, devoutly trust.

III. We shall, in the third place, pass on to notice THE ASSURANCE OF THAT FACT, or how the Apostle Paul attained to it.

"I cannot talk like that," says one. "I cannot say, 'I know, and I am persuaded,' I am very thankful that I can say, I hope, I trust, I think." Dear Friends, in order to help you to advance, we will notice how the Apostle Paul attained to such assurance. One main help to him was the habit, as seen in this text, of always making faith the most prominent point of consideration. Faith is twice mentioned in the few lines before us. "I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him." Paul knew what faith was, namely, a committal of his precious things into the custody of Christ.

He does not say, "I have served Christ." No. He does not say, "I am growing like Christ, therefore I am persuaded I shall be kept." No. He makes most prominent in his thought the fact that he believed, and so had committed himself to Christ. I would to God, dear Friends, that you who are subject to doubts and fears, instead of raking about in your hearts to find evidences and marks of growth in Grace and likeness to Christ, and so on, would first make an investigation concerning a point which is far more vital—namely this—have you believed?

Dear anxious Heart, begin your search on this point. Do you commit yourself to Christ? If you do, what though marks should be few and evidences for awhile should be obscure, he that believes on Him has everlasting life. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. The evidences will come, the marks will be cleared in due time. But all the marks and

evidences between here and Heaven are not worth a single farthing to a soul when it comes to actual conflict with death and Hell.

Then it must be simple faith that wins the day. Those other things are good enough in brighter times. But if it is a question whether you are safe or not, you must come to this, "I have rested with all my heart on Him that came into the world to save sinners, and though I am the very chief of sinners, I believe He is able to save me." You will get to assurance if you keep clear about your faith.

The next help to assurance, as I gather from the text, is this. The Apostle maintained most clearly his view of a personal Christ. Observe how three times he mentioned his Lord. "I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him." He does not say, "I know the doctrines I believe." Surely he did, but this was not the main point. He does not say, "I am certain about the form of sound Words which I hold." He was certain enough about that, but it was not his foundation. No mere doctrines can ever be the stay of the soul. What can a dogma do? What can a creed do?

Brethren, these are like medicines—you need a hand to give them to you. You want the physician to administer them to you—otherwise you may die with all these precious medicines close at hand. We want a person to trust. There is no Christianity to my mind so vital, so influential, so true, so real, as the Christianity which deals with the Person of the living Redeemer. I know Him, I know He is God, I know that He is mine. I trust not merely in His teaching, but in Him. Not on His laws, rules, or teachings am I depending so much as on Himself, as a Person. Dear Brothers and Sisters, is that what you are doing now?

Have you put your soul into the keeping of that blessed Man who is also God? He who sits at the right hand of the Father? Can you come in faith to His feet and kiss the prints of the nails? Can you look up into His dear face and say, "Ah, Son of God, I rely upon the power of Your arms, on the preciousness of Your blood, on the love of Your heart, on the prevalence of Your plea, on the certainty of Your promises, on the immutability of Your Character. I rest on You, and on You alone"? You will get assurance readily enough, now. But if you begin to fritter away your realization of the Person of Christ and live merely on dogmas and doctrines, you will be far removed from real assurance.

Brothers and Sisters, the Apostle attained this full assurance through growing knowledge. He did not say, "I am persuaded that Christ will save me, apart from anything I know about Him." But he begins by saying, "I know." Let no Christian among us neglect the means provided for obtaining a fuller knowledge of the Gospel of Christ. I would that this age produced more thoughtful and studious Christians. I am afraid that apart from what many of you gather from the sermon, or from the reading of the Scriptures in public, you do not learn much from the Word of God, or from those innumerable instructive books which godly men have bequeathed to us.

Men are studious in various schools and colleges in order to obtain knowledge of the classics and mathematics. But should we not be even more diligent that we may know Christ? That we may study Him, and all about Him—and no longer be children, but in knowledge may be men? Many of the fears of Christians would be driven away if they knew more. Ignorance is not bliss in Christianity, but misery. Knowledge sanctified and attended by the Presence of the Holy Spirit is as wings by which we may rise out of the mists and darkness into the light of full assurance. The knowledge of Christ is the most excellent of sciences. Seek to be masters of it, and you are on the road to full assurance.

Once, again, the Apostle, it appears from the text, gained his assurance from close consideration as well as from knowledge. "I know and am persuaded." As I have already said, persuasion is the result of argument. The Apostle had turned this matter over in his mind. He had meditated on the pros and cons. He had carefully weighed each difficulty, and he felt the preponderating force of Truth swept every difficulty out of the way. O Christian, if you made your mind more familiar with Divine Truth, you would, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, have much more assurance! I believe it is the doctrine which we have least studied in the Word which gives us the most trouble in our minds. Search it out and look.

The divisions among Christians, nowadays, are not so much the result of real differences of opinion as of want of accurate thought. I believe we are getting closer and closer in our theology, and that on the whole, at least among the Nonconforming Churches of England, very much the same theology is preached by all evangelical ministers. But some are not careful of their terms and words, and use them incorrectly. And so they seem to preach wrong doctrines when in their

hearts they mean rightly enough. May we come to be more thoughtful, each of us, for a thousand benefits would flow from there.

Thinking of the Deity of Christ, considering of the veracity of the Divine promises, meditating upon the foundations of the Everlasting Covenant, revolving in our minds what Christ has done for us—we should come at last, by the Spirit's teaching—to be fully persuaded of the power of Christ to keep the sacred charge which we have given to Him. Doubts and fears would vanish like clouds before the wind. How many Christians are like the miser who never feels sure about the safety of his money, even though he has locked up the iron safe and secured the room in which he keeps it—and locked up the house—and bolted and barred every door?

In the dead of night he thinks he hears a footstep, and tremblingly he goes down to inspect his strong-room. Having searched the room and tested all the iron bars in the windows, and discovered no thief, he fears that the robber may have come and gone, and stolen his precious charge. So he opens the door of his iron safe. He looks and pries, he finds his bag of gold all safe, and those deeds, those bonds—they are safe, too. He puts them away, shuts the door, locks it, bolts and bars the room in which is the safe and all its contents. But even

as he goes to bed he fancies that a thief has just now broken in! So he scarcely ever enjoys sound, refreshing sleep.

The safety of the Christian's treasure is of quite another sort. His soul is not under bolt and bar, or under lock and key of his own securing. He has transferred his all to the King eternal, immortal, invisible—the only wise God, our Savior—and such is his security that he enjoys the sleep of the Beloved, calmly resting, for all is well. If Jesus could fail us, we might wear sackcloth forever! But while He is Immutable in His love and Omnipotent in his power, we may put on the garments of praise. Believing as we do that eternal love neither can, nor will desert a soul that reposes in its might, we triumph in heart and find glory begun below.

IV. Now to close. What is THE INFLUENCE OF THIS ASSURANCE when it penetrates the mind? As time fails me, I shall but say that, as in the Apostle's case, it enables us to bear all the disgrace which we may incur in serving the Lord. They said Paul was a fool. "Well," replied the Apostle, "I am not ashamed, for I know Whom I have believed. I am willing to be thought a fool." The ungodly may laugh at us now, but their laughs will soon be over, and he will laugh that wins forever.

Feel perfectly confident that all is safe and you can let the world grin at you till its face aches. What does it matter what mortals think? What difference does it make what the whole universe thinks if our souls are beloved of God? You will, my dear Friends, as you live in full assurance of God's love, grow quite indifferent to the opinions of the carnal. You will go about your heavenly service with an eye only to your Master's will—and the judgment of such as cavil and carp will seem to you to be too inconsiderable to be worth a thought.

If you doubt and fear, you will be hard put to it. But if you are serenely confident that He is able to keep you, you will dare the thickest of the fray—fearless because your armor is of God. Assurance will give you a serenity within which will qualify you for doing much service. A man who is always worrying about his own soul's salvation can have little energy with which to serve his Lord. But when the soul knows the meaning of Christ's words, "It is finished," it turns all its strength into the channels of service out of love to such a blessed Savior.

O you that doubt, and therefore fret and care, and ask the question, "Do I love the Lord or not? Am I His or am I not?"—how I wish this suspense were over with you! O you who fear daily, lest, after all, you will be castaways—you lose your strength for serving your God! When you are sure that He is able to keep what you have committed to Him, then your whole manhood, excited by gratitude, spends itself and is spent in your Master's cause. God make you men to the fullness of vigor by giving you a fullness of assurance.

Those who are unsaved in this place may well envy those who are. That which attracted me to Christ—I have not heard of others brought in this way, but this brought me to Christ mainly—was the doctrine of the safety of the saints. I fell in love with the Gospel through

that Truth. What, I thought, are those who trust in Jesus safe? Shall they never perish and shall none pluck them out of Christ's hands? Everybody esteems safety. One would not insure his life where he thought there was a doubt as to the safety of the insurance. Feeling that there was perfect safety if I gave myself up to the Redeemer, I did so. And I entertain no regrets to this day that I committed my soul to Him.

Young people, you cannot do better than early in life entrust your future with the Lord Jesus. Many children at home appear to be very excellent. Many lads, before they leave their father's house, are amiable and commendable in

character. But this is a rough world—and it soon spoils the Graces that have been nurtured in the conservatory of the home. Good boys very often turn out very bad men. And girls who were so lovely and pure at home have been known to become very wicked women.

O children, your characters will be safe if you trust them with Jesus! I do not say you will be rich if you trust Christ, nor that you will prosper after the manner of men. But I do say that you shall be happy in the best sense of that word, and that your holiness shall be preserved through trusting yourself with Jesus. I pray that you may be led to desire this, especially any of you who are leaving your father's house, or are setting up in business on your own account. Commit yourselves to God!

This first Sunday of a new year. What time more suitable for beginning aright? O may the Holy Spirit softly whisper in your ears reasons that shall persuade you to give yourselves to Christ! I say again, my testimony is that you cannot do a wiser or a better thing. Oh, the happiness my soul has known in resting on my Lord! I wish you knew it. I would not cease to be a Christian if I might be made a king or an angel. No character can be to me so suitable or so happy as that of a humble dependant upon the faithful love of my redeeming Lord.

O come and trust Him, dear young Friends! You older ones—do you need that I should speak to you, when you are getting so near your grave? You are now out of Christ—how soon may you be in Hell? You younger ones, I say, embrace this flying hour and let this be the day of which you shall sing in after years —

"It is done! The great transaction's done!

I am my Lord's, and He is mine—

He drew me, and by His Grace I followed on,

Charmed to confess the voice Divine.

High Heaven, that heard the solemn vow,

That vow renewed shall daily hear—

Till in life's latest hour I bow,

And bless in death a bond so dear."