

was not genuine. He quickly replied that he was sure some of his friends, now following the world and living in sin, had once been born again. Taking another step, we asked whether he believed that if a man were once saved he might backslide, live in sin and die unrepentant, and be assured of heaven because of his former relationship with the Lord. Again he found himself unable to give unreserved support to the theory. That left but one prop, that if a man were once saved, he might go into sin, but sometime before death he would be reconciled. So many examples within the scripture and the range of personal experience denied this suggestion that it was quickly disposed of. And yet, that same good brother, somewhat shaken, finds it difficult to think clearly on the subject.

If we are to embrace Calvinism at all, we must follow it through to its inevitable conclusion, fearful as that is, viz., if one is genuinely saved, he may backslide, live in open rebellion to the will of God, and die unrepentant, but because of the supposed establishment of a fixed relationship at the incident of conversion, he must surely enter heaven at last. While some who find it impossible to go this far in their thinking cling to one of the other theories, the larger group of teachers and adherents of this doctrine have been forced to this extreme position.

Here are a few quotations from prominent supporters of Calvinism which indicate their belief in this idea:

"The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is eternal. Sonship is a relationship which cannot be broken. Your child may lie, steal, run away from home, and do everything to break a parent's heart, but he is still your son. The child of God may be wayward, rebellious, and prodigal, but he is still a son."

"The experience of Peter proves that a man may be truly converted and backslide. There is no question about Peter's conversion before the great denial. He backslid and actually denied Christ openly and with cursing, but he lied and he knew he lied when he did so. Inwardly he was a true believer."

"God does no longer stand displeased though a believer do sin often. There is no sin that ever believers commit that can possibly do them hurt." A very prominent Calvinist of our days says: "Stated simply, the fact of justification means that the moment a person is born again, forgiveness has been provided for all the sins he ever has committed, or for all the sins he ever shall commit in the course of his life. God has offered pardon in advance for any sins which might be committed by the believer." The same preacher, making reference to Annanias and Sapphira, King Saul, and other biblical characters who came under divine judgment of God, said: "I have no doubt that Annanias and Sapphira, as well as the Old Testament characters of whom I have spoken, were saved people. When death came to them from the hand of God, they went directly to heaven. Judas fell from his high office, but not from grace. Being elect, 'his own place,' referred to in Acts 1:25, was heaven, and to heaven he went."

A prominent preacher-evangelist of America puts it this way: "How ashamed and heart-sick will many a child of God be when Jesus comes, unexpectedly, and the Christian is found in sin. Some may be found in the theaters, some in taverns, and some in business that will horribly embarrass them before Christ. Many a Lot, vexing his righteous soul, will be in the midst of some wicked Sodom

when Jesus comes. Many a Peter will be warming himself by the devil's fire and denying his Lord. Many a David, after God's own heart in other matters, may be with some Bathsheba when Jesus comes. So we may expect the roofs of picture-houses to need repair, broken by the raptured but shamed Christians at the Rapture when Jesus comes for His own."

Here's another sample of this teaching, from the pen of one of its well known supporters: "When a child of God today comes up to the light, and he wilfully turns his face against it, there is no more sacrifice for sins... You say, 'Then such an one is going to hell.' Oh, not at all. Do you know what God will do with you if you turn back? He will take you home to heaven, He will save you unto eternal life."

Some years ago, a young minister who had been out in the evangelistic field doing very effective work, murdered his wife when in a fit of anger. He was sent to jail, convicted, and sentenced to death. While awaiting the day of execution, he was visited by teachers and friends who had been associated with him in Bible School. They spoke to him concerning his spiritual state, and he replied: "Gentlemen, if what you told me in Bible School is true, I have nothing to fear. I am saved now as before. Everything is all right with me."

Such are the fearful conclusions we are forced to reach if we accept the "eternal security" fallacy. To believe that if one is genuinely born again, he may backslide, curse God (as did Peter), be found in adultery at the moment of Christ's appearing, "with some Bathsheba," turn his face against light, commit any or every sin in the catalogue of iniquitous infamy, and yet be "saved and safe."

With the truth concerning this doctrine "naked and open" before us, let us ask ourselves the question, "Is it scriptural? Does the Word of God, rightly interpreted, confirm these statements?" Does that Book, written by holy men of old, support the idea that when Jesus comes to redeem His church He will gather them from theater, beer-parlor, dance hall, and house of prostitution?

The idea seems unreasonable and revolting to the judgment of those who as God with holiness, Christianity with decency, the bride of Christ with virtue and chastity. What does the Bible teach? What IS the truth?

### "TEMPERED TRUTHS"

Rev. F. A. Dunlop

"Where there is no vision the people perish."

In my last article I spoke of the Scripture revealing God the Father as the "Determining God." His wisdom and might shaping, moving, fashioning, according to His will, all things that pertain unto His eternal purpose. By the same Scriptures we have a vision of God the Son, God, the Son, as the "Redeeming God." In the Incarnation, the Son seems ever to be associated with the work of Redemption. He is "the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the World." The Scriptures present the Son from first to last, an "Offering," a "Sacrifice," a "Price," a "Ransom." Job testified, "I know that my Redeemer lives." Abraham found Him in "the lamb caught in a thicket—and offered him up instead." Moses beheld Him, a "Sin Offering," on Israel's altars, Isaiah, as "The Sin Bearer," John the Baptist, as "The Lamb of God," Peter, as "A Lamb without blemish,

and without spot," and Paul as the "Redeemer," the "Justifier," the "Saviour of all who believe."

Paul saw every act of God, The Father, The "Determining God," dependent on God the Son, the "Redeeming God." In the first chapter of Romans he witnesses to his faith in the Gospel. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," is his testimony. Then he proceeds to give us several reasons why he is not ashamed. First, because, "It is the power of God unto Salvation." The Gospel is the whole Might of God directed toward one great end, namely, the Salvation of man. Secondly, The Gospel, and the Gospel is Redemption through Christ) provides God, the "Determining God," unchallenged rights to act as He has. Paul further says, "For therein is the righteousness, or 'rightness' (see Strong's Concordance) of God revealed from faith to faith." God the Son, the "Redeeming God," by His sacrifice for sin, has given God the Father, the "Determining God," a right to Create. A right to create even though He knew that man endowed with free-will could exercise that will against Him. The Gospel is a universal grace accepted or rejected according as a man wills. Hence the responsibility of man's weal or woe rests with himself. God's right to create, is substantiated by the Power and all-inclusiveness of the Gospel. Then God's right to convert is upheld by the Gospel. God could not convert the sinner, just because He might will to do so. Before the Sacrifice of Calvary, huge barriers stood in the way. A moral order had been disrupted by sin. Sin always strikes deep at the heart of things. And the heart of things is God. If one member of a family injures another member of the family that act goes farther than the injured member. It challenges the order of the whole family life. It reaches to the Head of the family. That is precisely what sin does. Cain, in a fit of jealousy, slew his brother. When God spoke to him about it he tried to dodge, but God said, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me out of the ground." God, the Father, could not be indifferent. Law must be maintained. A balance of justice must be kept. Guilt must be punished, and the punishment must be commensurate with the crime. God had declared sin punishable by death. Hence, God could not convert to life everlasting a sinner until the penalty for sin had been executed. The "Redeeming God" bore this penalty on the Cross, making it possible for "God to be just, and the Justifier of all who believe on Him." And lastly, the "Redeeming God," gives the "Determining God" a right to condemn. That God will condemn, even to eternal destruction, the Scriptures plainly declare. But the "Condemned" will witness to the justice of their condemnation. Surely man can be held responsible for the light he has. Beyond this point God will not go, nor exact. "This is the condemnation, that Light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light." God will condemn, but His condemnation will fall upon intelligent, responsible men, who act in their dealings with God as they do not in any other relationship in life. God offers them the best that man can know, and God can give, namely, forgiveness here and Heaven hereafter, and men brush Him aside and go their way. This will last but for a day. But when the White Throne Judgment is set, the "Redeeming God" will uphold the justice of the "Determining God," when "These shall go away into everlasting darkness."