

Paul's Persuasion

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately expounds Paul's unwavering conviction that nothing in existence can separate believers from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Scripture: Romans 8:38-39, John 3:16, John 4:14

Topics: "God's Love", "Perseverance of the Saints", "Union with Christ"

Description

In this compelling sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound conviction of the Apostle Paul that nothing can separate believers from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Drawing from Scripture, reason, and personal experience, Spurgeon encourages Christians to embrace this unshakable truth. He highlights the mutual love binding God and believers and offers practical hope in the face of death, persecution, and spiritual opposition. This message remains a powerful assurance of God's enduring love and faithfulness.

Transcript

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come nor height, nor depth nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38,39.

A CHRISTIAN Brother was asked, one day, "To what persuasion do you belong?" He parried the question at first, for he did not think that it was very important for him to answer it. So the enquirer asked him again, "But what is your persuasion?" "Well," he said, "if you must know my persuasion, this is it, 'I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'" I also am of that persuasion. Somebody says, "That is Calvinistic doctrine." If you like to call it so, you may, but I would rather that you made the mistake of the good old Christian woman who did not know much about these things and who said that she herself was "a high Calvinist" She liked "high Calvary" preaching and so do I. And it is "high Calvary" doctrine that I find in this passage. He who hung on high Calvary was such a lover of the souls of men that from that glorious fact I am brought to this blessed persuasion, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Paul was fully persuaded of this great Truth of God. Did he not learn it by Revelation? I doubt not that God at first supernaturally revealed it to him, but yet, in order that he might be still more sure of it, God was

pleased to reveal it to him again and again, till his trembling heart was more and more completely persuaded of it. It may have seemed to him, as it does to some of us, to be almost too good to be true and, therefore, the Holy Spirit so shed abroad this Truth in the Apostle's mind that he yielded to it and said, "I am persuaded." He may have thought, with a great many in the present day, that it was necessary to caution Believers against falling from Grace, and to be a little dubious about their final perseverance in the ways of God, but, if he ever had such fears, he gave them up and said, "I am—yes, I am persuaded that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Beside that, I suppose that the Apostle was persuaded through reasoning with himself from other grand Truths of God. He said to himself, "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." He argued that if the death of Christ reconciled God's enemies to Himself, the life of Christ will certainly preserve safely those who are the friends of God! That was good argument, was it not?

I have no doubt that Paul also argued with himself from the nature of the work of Grace which is the implantation of a living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever. Christ spoke of it as the putting of a well into us and He said, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And as Paul thought of the nature of this new life, he felt persuaded that it would not die—he was convinced that he would never be separated from the love of God!

Moreover, I doubt not that Paul remembered the doctrine of the Union of Believers with Christ, and he said to himself, "Shall Christ lose the members of His body? Shall a foot or an arm be lopped off from Him? Shall an eye of Christ be put out in darkness?" And he could not think that it could be so! As he turned the matter over mentally, he said, "If they are, indeed, one with Christ, I am persuaded that nothing can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, if I could extend the time for this service to 24 hours, I might give you all the arguments, or the most of the arguments, which support the blessed Truth of the non-separation of Believers from the love of Christ. As for my own convictions, I can never doubt it! I am fully persuaded concerning it. This Truth seems to me to have struck its roots into all the other Truths of Scripture and to have twisted itself among the granite rocks which are the very foundation of our hope! I, too, am persuaded by a thousand arguments, and persuaded beyond all question, that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Yet more, I fancy that Paul had been persuaded of this Truth by his own experience. He had endured persecution, imprisonment, famine, shipwreck. He had suffered from scorn and scandal, pain of body and depression of spirit. "A night and a day," he said, "I have been in the deep." And I will guarantee you that many a night and many a day he had been in spiritual' deeps, yet he had survived them all and he could testify to the faithfulness of his God and say at the end, as the issue of his sufferings, "I am persuaded that nothing in creation is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Thus he was persuaded of this Truth of God by Revelation, by argument and by experience. And I should like you to notice that he was not only persuaded that none of the powers he mentions will separate us from the love of Christ, but that they cannot. He puts it thus—they are not able to separate us. Yet these are the strongest forces imaginable—death, life, angels, principalities, powers, the dreary present and the darker future. Paul summons all our foes and sets them in battle array against us! And when he has added up the total of all their legions, he says that he is persuaded that they shall not be able—shall not be able,

mark you—to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

In this discourse I am only going to handle the topic of Paul's persuasion. Paul says, "I am persuaded," and it is implied that, first, HE IS PERSUADED OF THE LOVE OF GOD. He could not be persuaded that nothing could separate us from a thing which did not exist! And so he is persuaded, first of all, of the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Come, my Brothers and Sisters, are you persuaded of the love of God? Are you intelligently persuaded not only that God is Love, but that God loves you? Are you fully persuaded of the love of God—the love of the Father who chose us because He would choose us for nothing but His love? The love of Jesus, the Son of God, who bowed Himself from His Glory that He might redeem us from our shame? The love of the Holy Spirit who has quickened us and who comes to dwell in us that we may, by-and-by, dwell with Him? Are you persuaded of this love of God to you? Happy man, happy woman, who can truly say, "I am persuaded that God loves me. I have thought it over, I have fully considered it, I have-thoroughly weighed it and I have come to this conclusion, that the love of God is shed abroad in my heart."

Then, next, it is the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. That is, His great love in giving His dear Son to die for us. I am not going to expatiate upon this wondrous theme. The thoughts are too great to need to be spun out, or you can do that in your private meditations. Is it not a wonderful thing that God loved me, and loved you, (let us individualize it)—that God so loved you that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life? He gave His Son for you! And for me. It is as though one bartered a diamond to buy a common pebble from the brook, or gave away an empire to purchase some foul thing not worthy of being picked off a dunghill! Yet we are persuaded that He did it, and that the love of God is most clearly to be seen in the fact that He gave His Son Jesus Christ to die instead of us.

And, once more, we are persuaded of the love of God to all who are in Christ. We believe in Christ and so we come to be in Christ by our believing. And now we are persuaded that to as many as receive Christ, to them gives He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name and, therefore, all who believe in Jesus are beloved of the Lord, not because of anything good in them, but for Jesus Christ's sake. He loves Christ so much that He loves us notwithstanding our unloveliness, because Jesus Christ has covered us with His robe of righteousness and He has said, "My Father, consider them as lost in Me, hidden in Me, made one with Me." And the Father says, "Yes, My beloved Son, I will love them. Jesus, I will love them for Your sake."

So we are persuaded of these three things. First, that God loves us. Next, that God has shown His love to us by the gift of His Son Jesus Christ. And then, that His Divine Love comes streaming down to us because we are in Christ and are loved for His sake. I want you, dear Friends, to get this persuasion into you. If you are not so persuaded, here is honey, but you do not taste it! Here is light, but you do not see it! Here is Heaven, but you do not enter the pearly gate. Beloved, if you would be saved, you must be persuaded of this Truth of God—and when you are persuaded of it, you will know the joy of it.

II. That leads me to pass on to the second thing of which Paul was persuaded. It does not appear on the surface of the text, but if you look a minute you will see that PAUL WAS PERSUADED THAT HE AND ALL THE SAINTS ARE JOINED TO GOD BY LOVE. Otherwise he could not have said, "I am persuaded that things present and things to come shall not be able to separate us." We must be joined together, or else the Apostle would not talk of separation! There is a picture for you to contemplate—God and ourselves

joined together by the bonds of love in Christ Jesus. God loves Christ and we love Christ, so we have a meeting place—we love the same blessed Person—and that brings us to love one another.

There are two things that join God and a Believer together. The first is God's love to the Believer. And the second is the Believer's love to God. It is as when two dear friends lovingly embrace with their arms around each other's neck—there is a double link binding them together. Or, to come nearer the truth, it is as when a mother puts her arms around the neck of her little child and her child puts its tiny arms about the mother's neck—that is how we and God are joined together.

Are you persuaded that it is so with you, dear Friends? Can you, each one, say, as you sit in your pew tonight, "God loves me, and that love joins Him to me" And, "I love God, and that love joins me to Him"? I believe that the Apostle was persuaded that these two blessed links existed between Him and the great God, and He was persuaded that neither of those two links would ever be broken. God could not withdraw from Paul, His embrace of love, and Paul felt that, by Divine Grace, he could not withdraw his embrace of love from his God. But he must have been, first of all, persuaded that both those embraces were there. Are you, my dear Hearer, persuaded that it is so with you? Are your arms about the neck of the great Father? Are the great Father's loving arms about your neck? Be persuaded of that Truth and you are, indeed, happy men and happy women! What more could you wish to say than to be able truthfully to say that?

III. Now, to come to what is evidently in the text, and to dwell upon it for a little while, Paul, being thus persuaded that there was a love of God and that there was a union through love between the soul and its God, now says that **HE IS PERSUADED THAT NOTHING CAN EVER BREAK THOSE BONDS.**

He begins by mentioning some of the things that are supposed to separate. And the first is, death. It sends a shiver through some when we begin to speak of death and the bravest man who ever lived may well tremble at the thought that he must soon meet the king of terrors. But, Brothers and Sisters, if Christ loves us and we love Christ, we may well be persuaded that death will not break the union which exists between us! I have lately seen one or two of our friends almost in the very article of death. I think that they cannot long survive, but I have come out from their bedchamber greatly cheered by their holy peacefulness and joy! I can see that death does not break the Believer's peace—it seems, rather, to strengthen it! I can see that there is no better place than the brink of Jordan, after all.

I have seen the Brothers and the Sisters, too, sit with their feet in the narrow stream, and they have been singing all the while! Death has not abated a single note of their song! No, more. I have known some of them who are like the fabled swan which is said never to sing till it dies. Some of them who were rather heavy and sad of spirit in their days of health, have grown joyous and glad as they have neared the eternal Kingdom. There is nothing about death that the Believer should construe into a fear that it will separate him from the love of Christ. Christ loved you when He died—He will love you when you die! It was after death—remember that—it was after death that His heart poured out the tribute of blood and water by which we have the double cure! See, then, how He loves us in death and after death! There is nothing about death that should make Christ cease to love us—our bodies will be under His protection and guardian care and our souls shall be with Christ, which is "far better" than being anywhere else. Do not, therefore, fear death!

In the days when this Epistle was written, the saints had to die very cruel deaths by fire, by the cross, by wild beasts in the amphitheatre. They were sawn in two. They wandered about in sheep skins and goat

skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. Yet they never feared death. It is very amazing how the Church of Christ always seems to brighten up at the idea of death by martyrdom. The grandest, most heroic days in Christendom were the days of the Pagan persecutions, when, to be a Christian meant to be doomed to die! In English history, the days of Mary, when the saints at Smithfield bore witness for Christ at the stake, were grand days! And in Madagascar—did you ever read a more thrilling story than the record of the bravery of those Christian men and women who suffered the tyrant's cruelty? And at the present moment, in Central Africa, where Bishop Hannington has been put to death, we hear that there is an edict for the killing of Christians, yet hundreds of black men came forward to confess that they are followers of Christ. It is a wonderful thing. We do not ask for these persecutions, but they might do us great good if they came. Certainly, this wondrous ship of Christ's Church, when she plows her way through waves of blood, makes swifter headway to the heavenly haven than she does in times of calm. So, beloved Friends, there is nothing in death to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

The Apostle says next, "nor life." I must confess that I am more afraid of life than of death. "Oh," says one, "but dying is such hard work." Do you think so? Why, dying is the end of work—it is living that is hard work! I am not so much afraid of dying as I am of sinning—that is ten times worse than death. And what if some of us should live very many years? "There's the respect that makes calamity of so long a life," that there is so much longer time for temptation and trial. If one might have his choice, one might be content to have a short warfare and to enter upon the crown at once. But we may be permitted to live on to extreme old age—do you dread it? There is nothing about old age to separate you from the love of Christ! He has made and He will bear—even to hoar hairs will He carry you—therefore, be not afraid. The ills of life are many, the trials of life are many, the temptations of life are more. O life, life, life here below, you are, after all, little better than a lingering death! The true life is hereafter. "Yet," says Paul, "I am persuaded that life cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus." He means that if we were tempted by the love of life to deny Christ, we would be strengthened so that we would not deny Him even to save our lives, for His people have been brave enough in this respect in all times. Paul counted not his life dear to him that he might win Christ and be found in Him. Therefore he says that he is persuaded that neither death nor life shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Then he mentions angels, principalities and powers. Well, the good angels cannot separate us from the love of God—we are sure that they would not wish to do so! And whatever spiritual creatures may frequent the earth, they can not separate us from the love of Christ. Does the Apostle mean devils—fallen angels that would overthrow us, some of them as "principalities" by their dignity, others of them as, "powers" by their subtle, crafty force—does he refer to devils? I think he does and this, then, is our comfort, that if we have to meet the arch-fiend, himself, foot to foot in terrible duel—and we may, for men of God have had so to meet him, and he that does battle with the adversary will gain nothing by it but sweat of blood and aching heart, even if he shall win the victory, so that we may well pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One"—still we have this comfort, that even though he may rejoice over us for a moment and may cast us down, he cannot separate us from the love of Christ! He may open many of our veins and make us bleed even to utter weakness, but the life-vein he can never touch!

There is a secret something about the Christian of which Satan wishes to spoil, but which is entirely out of his reach, so the saint sings, "I am persuaded that neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers can separate me from the love of Christ. You may come on, battalions of the adversary, with all your terrible might sweeping hypocrites and deceivers before you like chaff before the wind, but as many as are linked to Christ by His eternal love shall stand firm against you, like the solid rocks against the billows of the sea."

Therefore, be confident, dear Brothers and Sisters, that these spiritual beings, these unseen forces, these strange and mysterious powers which you cannot fully understand can, none of them, separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus your Lord!

Having summarily disposed of all of them, Paul adds, "nor things present." I like this thought. He is persuaded that things present cannot separate us from Christ. I wonder what the things present are with you, my dear Hearers. One of you says, "Well, it is an empty pocket with me." Others will say, "It is a family of children who have no bread." Some may say, "It is the prospect of bankruptcy." Another will say, "Ah, it is an insidious disease that will soon carry me to my grave!" A mother will say, "It is rebellious children who are breaking my heart." Well, whatever it may be—and the woes of the present are very many—there is nothing that can separate us from the love of Christ!

I was feeling very heavy, I scarcely knew why, when I caught at this text. And it seemed to come in so pleasantly for me when my spirits were down. "Things present." Even a depressed and desponding state of mind, whatever the cause of it is—whether weariness of brain or heaviness of heart—cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus!

Then, what can it do? Why, sometimes it can drive us to Christ—let us pray that it may! But anyhow, things present cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Then the Apostle says, "nor things to come." Well, I wonder what is "to come." O Friends, I sometimes feel a strange trembling when I stand upon this platform to speak to you because the words that I utter are often so remarkably fulfilled of God as really to amaze me! Two Sunday nights ago, when I stood here to preach about the long-suffering of God being salvation, [Sermon No. 1997, Volume 33: God's Long-suffering—An Appeal to the Conscience] I spoke, in the middle of the sermon, as if personally addressing someone who was present, who had lately been ill with fever, and who had come to the Tabernacle, still weak and scarcely recovered. There was a young man here who exactly answered to the description I gave, and who wrote home to his mother something like this (I have the letter)—"I went to Spurgeon's Tabernacle on Sunday night and I heard such a sermon! I never felt anything like it before. He looked at me and picked me out as if I was the only man there, and described me exactly."

Then he gave the words I used and continued, "It was a true description of myself. If the sermon is printed, pray get me a copy that I may read it when I come home, for I felt the power of it and I prayed, then and there, that God would bring me to my mother's God and save me." That was on the Sunday, mark you. On the Wednesday he was at Graves-end—there was a collision and he and five others were drowned. The mother received that letter about an hour before she heard the news that her son was dead—and the parents wrote to tell me what a balm it was to their spirits that God's Providence should bring their boy in here just before he was to meet his God.

So, you see, I cannot help wondering what the "things to come" will be for you who are here. With some—who can tell?—as the Lord lives, there may be but a step between you and death. And if you have no Christ, and have never tasted of His love, you are running awful risks even in going one step further. You have walked on, and on, and on, and there has up to now always been something beneath your feet—but the next step may precipitate you into the abyss! Therefore, seek the Lord now before it be too late! As for the child of God, he knows no more about his immediate future than you do, but he knows this—that there is nothing in the future that can separate Him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! Therefore, let the future bring with it what it may, all will be well with him.

Now the Apostle adds two more expressions, "nor height, nor depth." There are some people who dwell in the heights. I am rather pleased to meet with dear friends who never have any doubts or fears, but are always full of joy and ecstasy, and who go on to tell us that they have left all these things behind and have risen to the heights of bliss. But what I do not like is when they look down from those awful heights upon us poor Christians and say that they cannot believe in us because we are anxious, because we practice self-examination, because we have to struggle against sin! They do not struggle—they have risen beyond all struggling—they rub their hands and sing of everlasting victory. Well, my dear Brother—you up there on the topmost bough—you will not frighten me with all your heights though I cannot get up there—and I could not stay there if I could get up so high! This one thing I know, I am sure that there is nothing in those heights that can separate me from the love of Christ! I will stick to that. Whatever revelations there may be to the enthusiastic, whatever raptures and ecstasies and extreme delights any may have, they cannot separate me from Christ! I am glad that you have them, Brother, may you always keep them. And if I cannot have them, I shall sit down in my struggles and temptations and still say that there is nothing in the heights—in high doctrine or in high living—that can separate me from the love of Christ!

I am a little more acquainted with the depths and I meet with many Christian people who are very familiar with those depths. I could indicate some dear friends here who I hope are not in the depths right now, but I have seen them there. You were very low down, Brother—we had to stoop to call to you—the waters of God's waves and billows seemed to have gone over you. You have been down to the depths and I have been there with you. But there is nothing in the depths that can separate us from the love of Christ! Jonah went down to the depths of the sea, but he came up with this testimony, that there was nothing there to separate us from the love of God! No,; though you should be weary of your life, though you should never have a ray of light by the month together, there is nothing there to separate you from the love of Christ! You may go down, down, down, till you seem to have got beyond the reach of help from mortal man, but there are cords and bands which bind you to Christ that even these depths can never break, come what may.

The Apostle ends the list by saying, "nor any other creature." It may be read, "Nor any other created thing, nor anything that ever is to be created," nothing shall ever separate us from the love of Christ. Oh, what a sweet persuasion is this! Let us go forward into the future, however dark it is, with this confidence that at least one thing we know—the love of Christ will hold us fast and, by His Grace, we will hold fast to Him. We are married to Him and we shall never be divorced. We are joined to Him by a living, loving, lasting union that never shall be broken!

IV. I have done when I have called your attention to one more thing. Did you notice how the text begins? It begins with the word "for." "For I am persuaded." What does that mean? That shows that this is used as an argument drawn from something mentioned before. What is that? "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us, for I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life," and so on. It seems, then, dear Friends, that PAUL'S PERSUASION HELPED TO BRING HIM TO VICTORY.

He was persuaded that Christ would not leave him and that he would not be allowed to leave Christ—and this stirred him up to deeds of daring. Oh, where there is real cause for fighting, there cannot be victory without striving! Paul was so persuaded that Christ would never leave him, that he became a fighter, and he went in with all his might against the world, the flesh and the devil. Some say that this doctrine would send us to sleep—it never does—it wakes us up! The doctrine that I am quite sure to gain the victory makes me fight. If I did not know that I should win it, I might think that I would let discretion be the better part of my valor, but, being assured that Christ will be with me all through, I feel incited to war against all

that is evil that I may overcome it in His strength!

Yes, and the Apostle seems to hint that this persuasion that Christ would not leave him made him aspire to a very great victory. Men do not reach what they do not aspire to—and Paul says, "We are more than conquerors." Therefore, he aspired to be a complete and perfect conqueror. And this persuasion helped him to gain his aspiration. By God's Grace, the man who trusts in Christ's eternal love and believes in the Immutability of the Divine Purpose and, therefore, is persuaded that he can never be separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus—he is the man to win a glorious victory by his faith in his great God! Therefore, let us be encouraged to go on and fight against everything that is evil, especially in ourselves, and tread down all the powers of darkness since nothing can stand against us while Christ is for us! And for us He must be forever and ever.

I wish that all here present had a share in my blessed text. It is an intense regret to me that I cannot present it to some of you. You do not know the love of Christ. Oh, that you would come and learn it! May the sweet Spirit lead you to Jesus, cause you to look to Him upon the Cross and trust in Him! Then you will have something worth hearing, for you will have a love that never changes—a love that shall never be separated from you nor you from it! God bless you, for Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: HEBREWS 6.

In the previous chapter Paul was writing to some who ought to have been teachers, but who still needed to be taught the first principles of the Gospel. They were such babes in Grace that they needed the milk of the Word—the very simplest elements of Gospel Truth—and not the strong meat of solid doctrine. The Apostle, however, desires that the Hebrew Believers should understand the more sublime doctrines of the Gospel and so be like men of full age who can eat strong meat. In this chapter he exhorts them to seek to attain to this standard.

Verse 1. Therefore leaving the principles—The rudiments, the elementary Truths of God— 1. Of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection.—Let us go from the school to the university. Let us have done with our first spelling books and advance into the higher classics of the Kingdom.

1. Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. Let us make sure that the foundation is laid, but let us not have continually to lay it again. Let us go on believing and repenting, as we have done, but let us not have to begin believing and begin repenting—let us go on to something beyond that stage of experience.

2. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. Let us take these things for granted and never dispute about them anymore, but go on to still higher matters.

3. And this will we do, if God permits. We must keep on going forward. There is no such thing in the Christian life as standing still—and we dare not turn back.

4-6. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away—Note that Paul does not say, "If they shall fall," but, "If they shall fall AWAY"—if the religion which they have professed shall cease to have any power over them—then it shall be impossible—

6. To renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. If all the processes of Grace fail in the case of any professors, what is to be done with them? If the Grace of God does not enable them to overcome the world—if the blood of Christ does not purge them from sin, what more can be done? Upon this supposition, God's utmost has been tried and has failed. Mark that Paul does not say that all this could ever happen, but that, IF it could, the person concerned would be like a piece of ground which brought forth nothing but thorns and briers.

7, 8. For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it, and brings forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God: but that which bears thorns and briers is rejected, and is near to cursing; whose end is to be burned. If, after having plowed this ground and sown it and, after it has been watered by the dew and rain of Heaven, no good harvest ever comes of it, every wise man would leave off tilling it. He would say, "My labor is all thrown away on such a plot of ground as this, nothing more can be done with it, for after having done my utmost nothing but weeds is produced, so now it must be left to itself." You see, my dear Hearers, if it were possible for the work of Grace in your souls to be of no avail, nothing more could be done for you. You have had God's utmost effort expended upon your behalf and there remains no other method of salvation for you. I believe that there have been some professors, such as Judas and Simon Magus, who have come very near to this condition—and others who are said, after a certain sort, to have believed, to have received the Holy Spirit in miraculous gifts and to have been specially enlightened so as to have been able to teach others—but the work of Grace did not affect their hearts, it did not renew their natures, it did not transform their spirits—and so it was impossible to renew them to repentance. Now notice what Paul says—

9. But, Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. Harsh as the Apostle's words may seem, they are not meant for you who are really Believers in Christ and in whom the Holy Spirit has worked a complete change of heart and life. Paul is not speaking of such as you.

10. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you have showed toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints and do minister. If you have proven by your works that the Grace of God is within you, God will not forget you. He will not leave you, He will not cast you away. You know the contrast in the speech between different persons concerning this doctrine. One will wickedly say, "If I am a child of God, I may live as I like." That is damnable doctrine! Another will say, "If I am a child of God, I shall not want to live as I like, but as God likes, and I shall be led by the Grace of God into the path of holiness! And through Divine Grace I shall persevere in that way of holiness right to the end." That is quite another doctrine and it is the true teaching of the Word of God.

11. And we desire that everyone of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end. Keep it up! Be as earnest, today, as you were 20 years ago, when you were baptized and joined the Church—"Show the same diligence to the end." Still, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

12-15. That you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, you and I also are patiently to endure, to hold on even to the end, and God's sure promise will never fail us!

16-18. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise the Immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 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. I t seems a great change in this chapter from the sad tone at the beginning to the joyous note at the end, but, indeed, there is no contradiction between the two. Paul is but giving us two sides of the Truth of God—both equally true—the one necessary for our warning, the other admirable for our consolation. God will not leave you, my Brethren! He has pledged Himself by Covenant to you and He has given an oath that His

Covenant shall stand. Therefore, be of good courage, and press forward in the Divine Life, for your work of faith and labor of love are not in vain in the Lord! So let us "lay hold upon the hope set before us"—

19. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil Sailors throw their anchors downwards—we throw ours upwards! Their anchor goes within the veil of the waters into the deeps of the sea—ours goes within the veil of Glory, into the heights of Heaven where Jesus sits at the right hand of God— "within the veil."—

20. Where the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

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