

# Divine Assurance

by H.J. Vine

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of divine assurance in the life of a believer, highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching and assuring the heart to abide in Christ and to know the truth.*

**Scripture:** John 6:53, John 17:3, 1 John 2:12-13, 1 John 2:20, 1 John 4:21, 1 John 5:12, 1 John 5:21

**Topics:** "Assurance Of Salvation", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

H.J. Vine preaches about the divine assurance imparted by the Word of God to believers in Jesus Christ, emphasizing that even the youngest in faith can have the assurance of eternal life and forgiveness of sins through Christ's sacrifice. The sermon highlights the different stages of spiritual growth within the family of God - babes, young men, and fathers - and the vital possessions and prosperity enjoyed by true believers through the Unction received from Christ. It stresses the importance of abiding in the Son and the Father, knowing the truth, and keeping away from idols to prosper in divine love and eternal life.

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## Transcript

It is the way of the word of God to impart divine assurance to the hearts of those who believe on God's beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The knowledge of the Father has been relegated by some to those who are considered very advanced in the truth; and eternal life has been put away by them also, to a dim and doubtful distance.

This, however, thanks be to God, is not the way of the Spirit of Truth. He labours to bring home to the hearts of the youngest, even, the assurance of these very things. It is to the babes in Christ He says, "Ye have known the Father." And again, "Let that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you: if what ye have heard from the beginning abides in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise which He has promised us life eternal" (1 John 2:13, 24, 25, N.Tr.).

### The Father's Family

Those who form that family of God are distinguished as babes, young men, and fathers in Christ. The youngest belongs to it as much as the oldest; and the oldest no more belongs to it than the youngest, though he has matured in the blessedness which belongs to it, just as the babe in Christ will do when rightly nourished.

Now although all are begotten of God, and consequently have a nature which does not sin, nevertheless it is said to them all, "Your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake" (1 John 2:12). We are set in an unchanging and eternal relationship with the Father; and we are to behold what love He has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God; nevertheless we are set in that favoured family, as having our many sins forgiven, for the precious Name's sake of Him who glorified the Father upon the cross, where He put those very sins away for ever. It is upon this high ground, "for His Names' sake," the assurance of eternal forgiveness is given to the whole family of faith--babes, young men, and fathers.

The knowledge of Jesus--of Him that is from the beginning--marks the fathers. Strength and the word of God marks the young men; but they need a word of warning as to the world. The knowledge of the Father marks the babes. They need to be put on their guard as to antichrists, and as to those who lead souls astray, but along with this it is most striking and instructive to notice the language the Holy Spirit uses to give divine assurance to these babes in Christ, in verses 18-27 of 1 John 2. He speaks of the Unction they have received--the Holy Spirit; consequently they "know all things"; they "know the truth"; and "need not that any man teach them." This is said exclusively to the babes, so that they may be stable when others go out (v. 19), who thus manifest that they are not truly of this favoured family. "They are not all of us" should read, "none are of us." Such are apostate from the faith.

To be assured in a divine way, in the presence of such evil doings and apostasy of many, imparts cheer and comfort to the real. It produces praise and thanksgiving in their hearts, and holiness in their lives. This is not so with mere professors, nor with those who boast of development and advanced light, such as are indicated in 1 and 2 John. They do not welcome divine assurance, for they lack the nature which appreciates it. The young in the faith have that nature, but they are sensitive, and need the strength and stability which the truth gives. We are therefore to keep in the way of the Spirit, and not to turn aside from that way. The religious reasoner says, such expressions as are quoted above will flatter and puff up the young believer; but pride belongs to the old nature, and the Holy Spirit who thus speaks knows that such is not the result produced, but the very opposite where the divine nature is. All the Father's family have that nature, and pride is painful to it, whereas praise is pleasant and it glorifies Him whose love we know.

#### Their Vital Possessions

We have already said that the sins of all in the Father's family are all forgiven for the precious Name's sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; also that they know the Father.

The vital possessions of true believers are many, but these are enjoyed because of the Unction, twice referred to in these verses (vv. 20 and 27), as received by them from our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy One, who is altogether apart from the sin of the world.

They are conscious, nevertheless, that sin is still in them, that in the flesh good does not dwell; but they are not occupied with that, for the known love of the Father is their present portion. Not that there may not be failure. I speak of what is normal. In the power of the Unction the love of the Father, known through the Son, is all the more wonderful to them, because it is theirs in spite of that sin--that sin which divine love put away at the cross, so that they might be righteously set in relationship with the Father, and enjoying the love and life and intimacies of that unchanging relationship. Thus they "continue in the Son and in the Father," realizing that wonderful possession of eternal life, as it is at once said (v. 25), "This is the promise which He has promised us, life eternal."

Antichrists may deny the possession of this, for "he is the antichrist who denies the Father and the Son" (v. 22): they may still appear to make much of one Father of all, but "whoever denies the Son has not the Father either" (v. 23): they may go out, i.e. give up the truth, but they only manifest that they are not of the true family of God: the babe, then, is encouraged and exhorted to abide where divine love has set him, to abide in the Father and the Son. The Unction, the Holy Spirit, the vital possession received from the Holy One, teaches and assures the heart to abide "in Him." It is because of this Unction it can be said to the babes, "Ye know all things." It is not that their apprehension and understanding of divine things is yet fully developed. They still need to be renewed into full knowledge; but by the Unction received from Christ all things are known. They possess Him, and thus it is added, "Ye know the truth". All this is vital because of the Spirit received.

It would be well if we kept this in view in ministering the word; we should then be preserved from the error of those who "speak as of the world" (1 John 4:5, N.Tr.). Those who are of the truth hear the truth when it is ministered with unction. Those who go out, those who do not confess the Son, are to be left alone. They have not the Father. "He that confesses the Son has the Father also" (v. 23): he knows the Father: he has the Father: he has eternal life: and all this because he "has the Son" (5:12). These vital possessions are abiding, enduring, and eternal. We are assured divinely concerning them, and having the Unction from Christ we can enjoy them, and thus be preserved from that which would lead astray.

It is said, "ye need not that any man teach you" (v. 27). "The same Anointing teacheth you of all things." This, again, shows that the mere knowledge of the natural man without the Spirit is quite unnecessary in that of which we speak. We have the Unction, and He teaches the family of faith. He never fails. May we not grieve Him. The illumination for the sanctuary inside was provided by the oil from the beaten olive, not by the natural luminary. That has its place. The Spirit is all-sufficient for that spoken of here. Twice they are divinely assured of this in these verses.

At the very beginning they had heard of Christ the Son; they had received Him, and the Spirit had sealed them. They were to let that abide in them which they had heard from the beginning, and not be carried away with boastings about new light; they should then abide in the Son and in the Father. This is eternal life. In having the Son they had life eternal, as we have said; they also had the Father, for the Father is known in the Son. Here, then, their hearts could rejoice and be glad. The Father is known to them in the Son, and He is "the true God and eternal life" (5:20). It is Himself who is known and loved because He first loved them. The high privileges of eternal life have been opened to them; the exalted intimacies of it, too, for "this is the eternal life, that they should know Thee [the Father], the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

### Vital Prosperity

As we abide in the Son and in the Father there will be progress and prosperity with us in those things that are vital and eternal.

It should be pointed out that this began when we appropriated the death of Christ. Unless the soul has felt its need, "unless ye shall have eaten the flesh of the Son of Man, and drunk His blood, ye have no life in yourselves" (John 6:53, N.Tr.). That abides true, no matter what profession of religion there may be. There can be no progress in what is vital unless there has been this start. If the death of Christ is the food of our faith; if that death whereby He left a dead sinful world behind Him, and expressed also His love to us in that death, if that is appropriated by us, then we read, "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood

dwelleth in Me and I in Him" (v. 56). It is here we realize vital prosperity.

The heart deepens in intimacy with the One who is Himself eternal life. It asks not now so much, What is eternal life? for it knows Him who is eternal life. It wastes not its precious moments in vainly seeking for it; for the faith of the believer dwells in Him who is the expression of it--the Word of life. The wonderful manifestation of that life is known in Him, and is to be our study and delight; whilst we may know also that "we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life." It is evident that the Father would have us to be happy in the highest company: to be feeding on the finest fare: and to be enjoying the privileges of eternal life now in His presence.

Mephibosheth, who spoke of himself as "a dead dog," was graciously set in the privileges and intimacies of the life of the royal court: from Lo-debar he was brought to the palace life; and there in the company of King David he ate at the same table as one of the King's sons. The nations around, and the people of Israel too, greatly benefited by the good administration of the kingdom under David: his servants and ministers and courtiers prospered in the enjoyment of greater nearness still to the kind-hearted king: but Mephibosheth was honoured by a position nearer to David than them all. As one of the royal family, as one of the king's sons, he enjoyed the company of David and the princely life of the royal court in the closest favour. The nations will benefit presently by the reign of the true David, our Lord Jesus Christ; His servants will share in His glorious administration; but like Mephibosheth, the family of which we have spoken will dwell in the Father's house, with the Son, as His brethren for ever. Israel will have eternal life on earth, as we are twice told in the Old Testament, even as the favoured ministers at David's court would enjoy court life there; but with Mephibosheth, though it was the same court life, yet he knew it in a deeper sense than they, because he was there as one of the royal family, as one of the king's sons. It is just so with ourselves now. We were brought to realize that we were "dead" sinners; but the voice of the Son of God reached us, and made us "live." We passed out of death into life. It is ours now to dwell in the love and life into which we are brought, and prosper spiritually.

Our prosperity will evidence itself in lowliness, obedience, and love. We shall dwell in the love of God and keep His commandments. These commandments are not grievous to those who are begotten of Him. We shall avoid all occasion of stumbling others. Practical love shows the life which is ours: there is love to God and love one to another. His commandment is, "that he that loves God love his brother also" (4:21). "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren" (3:14). Instead of independency, or mere religious officialism, there will be spiritual growth and the manifestation of divine love and life. Whilst the assembly as such is not mentioned in 1 John, yet the love and life which belong to it are; and dwelling there, our hearts will know and value the highest privileges of the assembly. Nothing is lost, but everything enhanced rather, because enjoyed in vital energy instead of cold formality.

The final word in the first epistle of John is most significant: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

This is said just after that wonderful verse which tells us that the Son is the true God and Eternal Life, and which also says that He has given us even now a capability to know Him. He is to be the all-absorbing object of our hearts, the subject of our meditations, and the theme of our song.

"Be Thou the Object bright and fair

To fill and satisfy the heart;

Our hope to meet Thee in the air,

And nevermore from Thee to part."

The Holy Spirit strengthens us in the inward man that Christ might dwell in our hearts through faith. It is always the way of divine love, having given divine assurance to our hearts, to lead us on in the knowledge of the beloved Son of God, in whom divine love has been made known; and thus, being rooted vitally ourselves in that love, and founded in it, too, as to our character, we may prosper in what is vital, abiding and eternal, for the glory of God.

The young tree evidences its sapling life and energy, with its spring and freshness, in a different way to the older tree, with its stability, strength, and abundance; but both prosper in the same rich soil, under the same heavenly and atmospheric influences. It is thus with the healthy babe in Christ and the father in the faith; both evidence the same life, but in different degrees. All vital prosperity is in divine love and in the knowledge of the blessed Son of God our Lord Jesus Christ. Let this be understood, then the closing exhortation will be greatly valued.

"Keep Yourselves from Idols"

If we are set by grace in the love and life which are ours in Him; if our hearts are divinely assured as to this; if we understand that our possessions, our progress, and our prosperity are there, then we may truly say with another, "All that is outside this is an idol." This is a day of ideals and ambitions. They dispute in the mind and heart the place which belongs to the Son of God. There are moral, material, social, and religious idols or ideals. For many the last, in the form of an ideal assembly, is the most dangerous. The assembly of Christ is being builded by Him, vitally, upon the Father's revelation of Himself as the Christ, the Son of the living God, not upon the revelation of the assembly. The abiding and prevailing constitution and being of His assembly are of Himself and not herself. The bride eyes the features of her Beloved. He fills her thoughts. He is the Spring and Fountain of assembly life and love. The Spirit glorifies Him.

"In His blest face all glories shine,

And there we gaze on love divine."

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