

5-1-1961

A Comparative Study of the Wesleyan-Arminian and Calvinistic Doctrines of the Perseverance of the Saints As Set Forth By Selected Representatives

M. Edward Hegle

Recommended Citation

Hegle, M. Edward, "A Comparative Study of the Wesleyan-Arminian and Calvinistic Doctrines of the Perseverance of the Saints As Set Forth By Selected Representatives" (1961). *Western Evangelical Seminary Theses*. 144.
https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/wes_theses/144

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Western Evangelical Seminary at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Western Evangelical Seminary Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolf@georgefox.edu.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE WESLEYAN-ARMINIAN AND CALVINISTIC
DOCTRINES OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS AS
SET FORTH BY SELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the
Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

by
M. Edward Hegle

May 1961

APPROVAL SHEET

MAJOR PROFESSOR Eldon F.uhrman

CO-OPERATIVE READER Bern M. Warren

PROFESSOR OF THESIS FORM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM	1
The prompting of Research	2
The Statement of the Problem	2
The Justification of the Problem	2
The Limitations of the Problem	3
The Basic Assumptions	3
The Method of Procedure	4
II. THE WESLEYAN-ARMINIAN DOCTRINE OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS	5
The View of Thomas N. Ralston	6
The View of Daniel Steele	23
Abuse of figurative language	24
A soul born of God can never be unborn	24
A sheep can never become a goat	26
Positive argument	30
The View of Harry E. Jessop	36
Sin defined	37
Temptation as related to sin	38
Human limitation as related to sin	39
Positive argument.	40
Summary	47
III. CALVINISTIC DOCTRINE OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS . . .	50
The View of Charles Hodge	51

CHAPTER

PAGE

Delivered from law	52
Principle of eternal life	52
Sons of God	53
The purpose of God	53
The gratuitousness of God's love	54
Immutability of God's love	56
The View of Lewis Sperry Chafer	56
Passages thought to teach insecurity	58
Passages dispensationally misapplied	58
False teachers of the last days	59
Moral reformation	59
Christian profession proven by its fruits	60
Christians are warned	61
Professors are warned	62
Jews are warned	62
Gentiles are warned	63
Two general warnings are issued	63
Christians may lose their rewards, walk in the dark, or be chastened	64
Questions of doubt	67
What if a believer's faith should fail	67
What if a Christian dies with unconfessed sins	68
Does not the doctrine of security license people to sin	68
Cannot we rebel and be released from Christ if we so	

CHAPTER	PAGE
choose	69
Why failure of so many converts	70
Positive argument	71
The covenant of God	78
The power of God	78
The love of God	79
The prayer of the Son of God	79
The efficacious substitutionary death of the Son of God	79
The resurrection of the Son of God	80
The intercession and shepherdhood of the Son of God .	81
The advocacy of the Son of God	81
The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit	81
Spirit's indwelling.	82
Baptism with the Spirit	82
The Spirit's sealing	83
The View of Louis Berkhof	83
The doctrine of the perseverance of saints in history .	84
Statement of doctrine of perseverance	85
Proof of the doctrine	87
The doctrine of election	88
The doctrine of the covenant of redemption	88
The efficacy of the merits and intercession of Christ	88
The mystical union with Christ	89
The work of the Holy Spirit in the heart	89

CHAPTER	PAGE
The assurance of salvation	90
Objections to doctrine of perseverance	90
The doctrine of perseverance is inconsistent with hu-	
man freedom	90
The doctrine of perseverance leads to indolence, li-	
cense, and even immorality	91
The doctrine of perseverance is contrary to Scripture	
of three general classes	91
Conclusion	92
Summary	93
IV. AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND OF DIFFERENCES IN THE WESLEYAN-ARMIN-	
IAN AND THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINES OF PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS	96
Underlying Principle	97
Calvinism	97
Wesleyan-Arminianism	98
Calvinistic premise	99
Wesleyan-Arminian premise	100
Area of Sin	100
Definition of sin	100
Agreement	100
Differences	101
Doctrine of sin as related to perseverance	101
Calvinism	101
Wesleyan-Arminianism	101
Area of Grace	101

CHAPTER	PAGE
Definition of grace	101
Agreement	101
Differences	101
Doctrine of grace as related to perseverance	102
Calvinism	102
Wesleyan-Arminianism	102
Area of Justification	102
Definition of justification	102
Agreement	102
Differences	102
Doctrine of justification as related to perseverance . .	103
Calvinism	103
Wesleyan-Arminianism	103
Area of Faith	103
Definition of faith	103
Agreement	103
Differences	103
Doctrine of faith as related to perseverance	103
Calvinism	103
Wesleyan-Arminianism	104
Area of Will	104
Definition of will	104
Agreement	104
Differences	104
Doctrine of will as related to perseverance	104

CHAPTER	PAGE
Calvinism	104
Wesleyan-Arminianism	105
Area of Righteousness	105
Definition of righteousness	105
Agreement	105
Differences	105
Doctrine of righteousness as related to perseverance . .	105
Calvinism	105
Wesleyan-Arminianism	105
Summary	105
V. CONCLUSION	107
Basic Weakness of Calvinism	108
Basic Strength of Calvinism	108
Basic Weakness of Wesleyan-Arminianism	109
Basic Strength of Wesleyan-Arminianism	109
BIBLIOGRAPHY	110

CHAPTER ONE

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

CHAPTER I

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

The Christian doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is an important teaching in the field of Christian theology. Perseverance is persistence in a state of grace until it is succeeded by a state of glory. Bible believing Christians in the evangelical churches have not been in complete agreement in their views of this important Christian tenet.

I. THE PROMPTING OF RESEARCH

As one who has anticipated serving in the pastorate of the Evangelical United Brethren Church the writer was aware of his need to be able to guide the people in his parish to an intelligent understanding of this tenet and lead them in relating this doctrine to practical personal life. The writer's interest in this Christian teaching was thus aroused stimulating research in this area.

II. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem was to present the Wesleyan-Arminian and the Calvinistic doctrines of the perseverance of the saints as presented by a limited number of representative theologians, with a view to determining their areas of agreement and their differences.

III. THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

The process of salvation must be moral and provide the basis for

the answer to the question, "Is it possible for a person once regenerated to be eternally and finally lost forever?" To this question the Wesleyan-Arminians answer "yes" while the Calvinists answer "no." These answers are diametrically opposite, therefore both cannot be entirely true. Thus research in this area was justified.

IV. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE PROBLEM

In presenting the Wesleyan-Arminian doctrine of the perseverance of the saints the writer found that for practical reasons it was necessary to limit the scope of the material to only a segment of that written on the subject. That the composite view might be somewhat contemporary and yet sufficiently established to be somewhat complete he therefore chose to limit the material to that recorded within the last century and a half. He further limited this to include only that presented by three authors as representative of the Wesleyan-Arminian doctrine. In setting forth the Calvinistic doctrine of the perseverance of the saints the writer likewise limited the scope of material to that of three representative Calvinistic writers who have written within the last century and a half. It was not the writer's purpose to trace the Wesleyan-Arminian and Calvinistic schools of thought back in time and development to their doctrine of free grace. He left this as a suggestion to future study and research in this area of theology.

V. THE BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

The basic assumption has been that the Bible is the inerrant, infallible word of God and therefore a true standard for judging

doctrinal teaching. It was also assumed that there were differences in the theological beliefs of Wesleyan-Arminian and Calvinistic doctrines of the perseverance of the saints and that both of these systems of thought made use of the Bible in support of their position. Therefore it has been assumed that the discrepancies were not due to the Bible itself, but to differences in the interpretation of the Bible. Also it was assumed that the reader is acquainted with or if he feels it is necessary to do so, will acquaint himself with the Wesleyan-Arminian and Calvinistic affinity of the various mentioned church denominations.

VI. THE METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The writer proceeded first by finding three representative theologians of the Wesleyan-Arminian persuasion and three representative theologians of the Calvinistic persuasion who had written enough on the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints as to be included in this study. Those chosen had lived and written during the last one hundred and fifty years. After settling upon six theologians to be the representatives in this study, the next step has been to endeavor to collect all available material authored by these men on the subject, condensing and arranging the material of each author into a concise presentation of his reasoning. The products of this study on the presentation of the Wesleyan-Arminian doctrine were grouped into chapter two and those of the Calvinistic study were grouped into chapter three. In chapter four an endeavor was made to point out the areas of agreement and the differences in both sides of interpretation. Having arrived at some conclusions as a result of this study these have been stated in chapter five along with

brief reasoning as to why these conclusions were reached.

CHAPTER TWO

THE WESLEYAN-ARMINIAN DOCTRINE OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

CHAPTER II

THE WESLEYAN-ARMINIAN DOCTRINE OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

The Arminian school of thought originated in a movement headed by James Harmensen or Hermanszoon, more commonly known as James Arminius, who was professor of theology at the University of Leyden in Holland from 1603 to 1609. The best form of his teaching was endorsed by the Wesleys and became the basic doctrine of the Methodist churches and later denominations standing in this tradition.¹

In this chapter the writer attempted to present the Wesleyan-Arminian position concerning the perseverance of the saints, as stated by three of its representative theologians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Thomas N. Ralston, Daniel Steele, and Harry E. Jessop. Then an attempt was made to summarize the doctrine as stated by these men.

I. THE VIEW OF THOMAS N. RALSTON

The first of these writers, Thomas Neeley Ralston, born in 1806 in Bourbon County, Kentucky, was educated at Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky. He was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church from 1827-1845 and after 1845 of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. He was an editor of the Methodist Monthly. He received a Doctor of Divinity degree from Wesleyan University, Florence, Kentucky, in 1857. From

¹Harry E. Jessop, That Burning Question of Final Perseverance (Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, 1942), p. 16.

1843-1847 he was president of the Methodist female collegiate high school in Lexington, Kentucky.¹ He was held in honor by the Methodist Episcopal Church as a recognized theologian and thus served in the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition of the church.

Before Ralston defined his position on perseverance of the saints he explained what he meant by the term saints.

By the saints, I understand those who are holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself; those who are endued with the faith that purified the heart - that produces a good conscience; those who are grafted into the good olive-tree, the spiritual invisible church; those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, 'I am the vine, ye are the branches;' those who so effectually know Christ, as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world; those who see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of the witness and the fruits of the Spirit; those who live by faith in the Son of God; those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant.²

Those to whom all or any of these characters belong, Ralston considered to be saints.³

Ralston's method of treating the subject of the perseverance of the saints was to expound the above statement part by part and to show that from every point of this composite perspective the evidence was the same, namely, that a saint can fall totally so as to perish everlastingly.

The possibility that a saint may fall into sin, Ralston felt, was

¹Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1888), V, p. 164.

²Thomas N. Ralston, Elements of Divinity (Nashville: A. H. Redford, 1874), p. 444.

³Ibid.

generally granted. So he asked the question, "can any of the saints so fall from God as to perish everlastingly?"¹ Ralston's basic premise was that a saint could fall totally and he endeavored to prove this in the discussion of the characteristics of saints, used in his definition, as these were related to Scripture pertinent to answering the above inquiry.²

In answer to his own question Ralston declared that one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself might nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly. This he affirmed on the basis of what he found in the verse and context of Ezekiel 18:24: "For thus saith the Lord, When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die."³ He held that this was to be understood as eternal death and quoted the twenty-sixth verse of that same chapter, inserting his own comments as follows:

"When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; (here is temporal death;) for his iniquity that he hath done he shall die (here is death eternal)."⁴ Ralston felt that the whole scope of the seventeenth chapter appears further to prove that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (verse 4). He quoted Ezekiel 23:13 and inserted a comment which meant that the righteous one

¹Ibid, p. 444.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 445.

⁴Ibid., p. 445.

that trusts in the promise that he shall live as absolute and unconditional and proceeds to commit sin, shall surely die for it. Upon quoting verse 18, he asserted that one who is holy and righteous in the judgment of God himself may yet so fall as to perish everlastingly. Ralston saw no inconsistency between the prophet's declaration of the judgment of God against the man who falls from righteousness, as applying generally, and the covenant spoken of in the 89th Psalm, which he felt applied to David and his seed only, for this was also conditional as understood by Ralston from the context as stated in verses 38 and 39. Ralston also affirmed that there is no contradiction between the passages in Ezekiel and the one in the 31st chapter of Jeremiah which he quoted with interjected comment as follows:

At the same time, saith the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. Thus saith the Lord, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I caused him to rest. The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, (saith the prophet, speaking in the person of Israel,) saying, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel. Jeremiah 31:1-4.¹

Ralston observed that the fallacy common to most writers is that they perpetually beg the question by applying to particular persons assertions, or prophecies, which relate only to the church in general or to the Jewish Church or nation as distinguished from all other people. To anyone's contention that it was particularly revealed to him that God loved him with an everlasting love, Ralston answered that this proved only that that one in particular shall persevere and did not effect the

¹Ibid., p. 446.

general question, whether others shall or shall not.¹

In addition, he insisted, one who is endued with the faith that purifies the heart and produces a good conscience may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly, for such is affirmed in I Timothy and the Gospel of John. "War a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck" (I Timothy 1:18,19).² Ralston asserted that the faith that these men once had was of such a nature that it purified their hearts and produced a good conscience. These could not have put away faith and a good conscience if they had not once had them. Also that they "made shipwreck" of faith, he felt, implied total loss, as he believed a vessel once wrecked could not be recovered. Ralston based his statement, that one of these, Alexander, was irrecoverably lost, on the passage from II Timothy 4:14, which he quoted as follows: "Alexander (he says) did me much evil: the Lord shall reward him according to his works."³ On the basis of the above argument he reaffirmed that one who is endued with the faith that purifies the heart and produces a good conscience, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.⁴

In reconciling this with the words of our Lord, "He that believeth shall be saved," Ralston said that those who argue that "he that believes" at this moment "shall" certainly and inevitably "be saved"

¹Ibid., p. 446.

²Ibid., p. 447.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

would of necessity, to be consistent, have to take the position on the other part of the sentence that "he" who does "not believe" at this moment "shall" certainly and inevitably "be damned." That this is fallible is readily seen, therefore Ralston contended that the pronounced end result was dependent upon the person's continuance in the present state as defined and he implied that this might be changed.¹

In referring to Christ's words in John 3:36, "He that believeth hath everlasting life," and "He that believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 3:24),² Ralston commented that the love of God is everlasting life, in substance the life of heaven. Everyone that believes loves God, and therefore "hath everlasting life." Therefore everyone that believes "is passed from death," that is spiritual death, "unto life." If he endures in the faith unto the end he "shall not come into condemnation," according to our Lord's own words "he that endureth unto the end shall be saved"; and, "Verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." (John 8:51).³ John 3:36 and 3:24, Ralston insisted, must be understood in the light of the use of the present tense verbs and be harmonized with the above quoted passage from John 8:51.⁴

That those grafted into the good olive tree, the spiritual invis-

¹Ibid., p. 447.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

ible church, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly was affirmed on the basis of the following verses:

Some of the branches are broken off, and thou are grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree. Be not highminded, but fear; if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee. Behold the goodness and severity of God! On them which fell, severity; but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou shall be cut off (Romans 11:17, 20-22).¹

Ralston made four observations concerning the above passage: first, that the persons spoken of were actually grafted into the olive tree; second, the fact that this olive tree is the invisible church consisting of holy believers is supported by verse sixteen of this text which is quoted as follows: "If the first-fruit be holy, the lump is holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches," and further supported by verses 19 and 20 which state that "Because of unbelief, they were broken off, and thou standest by faith";² third, that these believers were still liable to be cut off from the invisible church into which they were then grafted; and fourth, that those who were so cut off were ever grafted in again is not even intimated here. God's gifts and calling being without repentence, as mentioned in verse 29, he felt, referred to the Jewish nation only and had to do with their blessings and privileges as a nation. This, he felt, did not make God to appear changeable for he always loveth "righteousness and hateth iniquity," therefore he pardons all that repent and believe the Gospel and also "rewardeth every man according to his works."³

¹Ibid., p. 448.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Some may say "but are not all the promises yea and amen?" to which Ralston replied that the promise is sure when the condition expressed or implied is performed. He acknowledged, however, that there is room for dispute as to whether there is any condition, either expressed or implied, in the words of St. Paul: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, 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).¹ But what Ralston believed was that the reference cited directly above proves only that the apostle was at this time fully persuaded of his own individual perseverance. That there are individuals today who have the same persuasion, he did not question but insisted that this does not prove that every believer shall persevere or is fully persuaded that he shall.²

That there are those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," that may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly Ralston asserted on the authority of our blessed Lord himself:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away. I am the vine, ye are the branches. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned (John 15:1-6).³

Ralston made six observations concerning this passage: one, the individuals spoken of were in Christ and thus branches of the true vine; two,

¹Ibid., p. 449.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 450.

some of these branches abide not in Christ, but these the Father takes away; three, the branches which abide not are cast forth, that is cast out from Christ and his Church; four, after being cast forth they are withered and unfit for grafting, hence never grafted in again; five, they are cast into the fire; and six, the end result is they are burned. This, Ralston felt, was the strongest declaration that could be uttered that even those who are now branches in the true vine may yet so fall as to perish everlastingly.¹

In explaining the harmony of the above with the passage "This is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing,"² Ralston pointed to the expression in the next verse, "every one that believeth on him" as synonymous with "all that he hath given me" and contended that the promise that such he "will raise up at the last day" to reign with him was conditional upon their believing unto the end. Ralston held that the promise to live forever in the following verse, "I am the living bread; if any man eat of this bread, (by faith,) he shall live forever" (John 6:51),³ is true if one continues to eat of the living bread by faith. In the preceding passage the condition is only implied, he said, whereas in the following it is plainly expressed, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27-29).⁴ They are my sheep that hear my voice

¹Ibid., p. 450.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

and follow me in holiness, was the interpretation that he gave, and quoted "if ye do those things, ye shall never fall" or "none shall pluck you out of my hand."¹

In referring to the passage in John 8:1, "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end," Ralston believed "his own" to mean the apostles to whom he manifested his love unto the end of his life and does not necessarily mean that he loved them unconditionally unto the end of their lives.²

That all those whom the Father hath given him must infallibly persevere to the end, Ralston stated has been inferred and greatly stressed from the text, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one" (John 17:11).³ This he refuted on the basis of the next verse, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition,"⁴ in which our Lord himself declared that one of those whom the Father had given him did not persevere unto the end, but was finally lost. The phrase, "those whom thou gavest me," signifies here, and in most other places too, Ralston thought, the twelve apostles and them only, and therefore did not apply to believers in general.⁵

Ralston also contended that those who so effectually knew Christ

¹Ibid., p. 450.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 451.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 450-451.

as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of this world may yet fall back into those pollutions and perish everlastingly. He cited the apostle Peter's words, with injected comment, in support of his contention:

If, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, (the only possible way of escaping them,) they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them (II Peter 2:20,21).¹

Ralston asserted that the knowledge of the way of righteousness was an inward, experimental knowledge. He cited as evidence the phrase, "escaped the pollutions of the world," which is parallel with the phrase in verse four of the preceding chapter, "having escaped the corruption which is in the world." The latter phrase evidences salvation which is subsequently ascribed to "the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue."² Ralston observed that these spoken of lost the way of righteousness and of Christ which they knew experimentally and fell back into the same pollutions they had escaped and were again "entangled therein and overcome." This, he insisted, is perfectly consistent with St. Peter's words in I Peter 1:5, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."³ It is the power of God only, and not our own, by which all are kept one day or one hour.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 451.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 452.

⁴Ibid., p. 451-452.

That those who see "the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and also of the witness, and the fruits of the Spirit may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly, he also affirmed. He supported his view by quoting the following passage from the writer to the Hebrews:

It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Hebrews 6:4,6).¹

Ralston's assertion that the phrase, "were once enlightened," is used by the apostle to apply to believers only was based on the following passage in Ephesians:

The God of our Lord Jesus Christ give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward that believe (Ephesians 1:17-19).²

He also quoted in support of this assertion II Corinthians 4:6, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."³ In support of his statement that unbelievers are utter strangers to such enlightening he summoned the fourth verse of this sixth chapter, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ

¹Ibid., p. 452.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

should shine unto them."¹ That the words stating that they "had tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost" are to be understood as denoting believers, he insisted, on the basis of St. Peter's words: "Be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).² He also cited the Lord's commission to St. Paul, "I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified" (Acts 26:18).³ He further asserted that the "sanctified" spoken of above are made partakers of the Holy Ghost and His sanctifying influences. He believed that the phrase, "tasted of the heavenly gift," was a paraphrase of Psalms 34:8, "Taste and see that the Lord is good."⁴ Noting that some would say that the apostle makes only a supposition, Ralston here answered that the apostle makes no supposition at all as there is no "if" in the original. The words in Hebrews 6 are, "Ἀδύνατον τοὺς ἅπασι φωτισθέντας καὶ παραπεσόντας,"⁵ that is, in plain English, "It is impossible to renew again unto repentance those who were once enlightened and have fallen away."⁶ He anticipated that the opposition would argue that one must bid farewell to all

¹Ibid., p. 452.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 453.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

comfort if this is so. Ralston answered by explaining that his comfort stood not on any opinion, either that a believer can or cannot fall away, nor on the remembrance of any thing wrought in him yesterday, but on his present knowledge of God in Christ, reconciling him to God, on his now beholding "the light of the glory of God in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ," and the fact that God's Spirit doth bear witness with his spirit that he is now a child of God. Ralston went on to say that he took comfort only in that he saw Jesus at the right hand of God, that he personally for himself and not for another, had a hope full of immortality, and that he felt the love of God shed abroad in his heart, crucified to the world, and world crucified to him. He rejoiced in the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity by the grace of God, he had his conversation in the world. A more solid joy, a more blissful comfort, he testified, cannot be found on this side of heaven. Any comfort short of this will not bear one to heaven.¹

In support of his belief that those who live by faith may fall from God and perish everlastingly, Ralston referred to the following verse in the book of Hebrews, "The just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in Him" (Hebrews 10:38).² The drawing back here spoken of is termed in the next verse as "drawing back into perdition," and is further proof that there are those who draw back into perdition, for Ralston argued, no man can draw back from faith who never came to it. This he felt was more clearly seen if one

¹Ibid., p. 453-454.

²Ibid., p. 454.

understands the Greek which states it more positively, "ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ῥησεται καὶ ἐὰν ὑποστείληται."¹

To the anticipated objection that God says to everyone that lives by faith, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," Ralston answered that this is true provided the faith life is evidenced by one being "content with such things as ye have," and one letting his "conversation be without covetousness." These conditions are stated in the unquoted portion of the sentence partially quoted in the objection above. He further contended that this promise not to leave and forsake relates only to temporal things.²

The statement that those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant may yet so fall from God as to perish everlastingly, Ralston based on the following passage in Hebrews:

If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing? (Hebrews 10:26-29).³

His comments on this reference were brief but pungent. He pointed out that it is undeniably plain that the person mentioned in these verses was once sanctified by the blood of the covenant, and afterwards by known willful sin, trod under foot the Son of God. He therefore incurred a

¹Ibid., p. 454.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 455.

severer punishment than death, namely, death everlastingly.¹

Anticipating further and more pointed inquiry, such as, can a child of God go to hell?, can a man be a child of God today and tomorrow a child of the devil?, and if God is once our Father is he not always our Father? Ralston answered first of all by saying that a child of God, while he continues a true believer, "for he that believeth is born of God," cannot go to hell. Secondly, a believer may make shipwreck of faith and go to hell, and certainly will go to hell if he continues in unbelief, as he is no longer a child of God. Thirdly, a man that believes now, therefore, may be an unbeliever sometime hence, possibly tomorrow, and if so, though a child of God today, may be a child of the devil tomorrow. Finally, the devil is the father of them that believe not, whether they once believed or not, but God is the Father of them that believe as long as they do believe.²

Ralston summed it all up in the following words:

If the Scriptures are true, those who are holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself; those who are endued with the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience; those who are grafted into the good olive-tree, the spiritual invisible church; those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, 'I am the vine, ye are the branches'; those who so effectually know Christ as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world; those who see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of the witness and of the fruits of the Spirit, those who live by faith in the Son of God; those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly. Therefore let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.³

¹Ibid., p. 455.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 456.

II. THE VIEW OF DANIEL STEELE

Another of these representative writers, Daniel Steele, was born in 1824, at Windham, New York, and was educated at Wesleyan University, receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1848. From 1850 to 1862 he pastored in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was professor at Genesee College, Lima, New York, from 1862 to 1871. He served as president at Syracuse University from 1884 to 1893, after which he became professor at the School of Theology at Boston University.¹ Thus Steele was also a recognized theologian of the Methodist Episcopal Church, serving within its Wesleyan-Arminian tradition.

Steele began his examination of the perseverance of the saints by discussing two Scriptures in John, "He that heareth my words hath everlasting life" (John 5:24, and "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47).² That Jesus spoke of everlasting life as a present possession, Steele posited from reading the Greek, in which the condition expressed in the present tense of the verb heareth and believeth is seen immediately. The new life born of faith becomes everlasting if these conditions are fulfilled, but if this faith lapses at any time during our period of probation, the life expires immediately, according to Steele. He contended that it is no more a contradiction that everlasting life once began can be lost, than the fact of the Jews' forfeiture

¹The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1909), XI, p. 74.

²Daniel Steele, A Substitute for Holiness (Chicago: The Christian Witness Company, 1899), p. 132.

of the land which God gave to them for an "everlasting possession" (Genesis 17:8), nor the seed of Phineas losing "the everlasting priesthood," nor the Israelites breaking "the everlasting covenant" (Isaiah 24:5), and finding out Jehovah's "breach of promise" (Numbers 14:34). Therefore the words "hath everlasting life" were never designed as a non-forfeitable insurance policy, giving an unconditional and unalienable right to the rewards of Heaven. Rather, they were intended to express the spiritual life already implanted which is to become everlasting if the conditions are fulfilled throughout our probation.¹

Abuse of Figurative Language

A soul born of God can never be unborn. Steele believed that one main cause of religious error is the abuse of figurative language. Some seize upon the "new birth," the "being born again," a child of God, or a son of God, and press these phrases into a proof of an unchangeable acceptance with God, however grossly sinful the once regenerate person may afterward become. Steele quoted John Fletcher who pointed out the fallacy in this reasoning:

According to the oriental style, a follower of wisdom is called a 'son of wisdom,' and, one that deviates from her path 'a son of folly'; a wicked man is called 'a son of Belial, a child of the wicked one, and a child of the devil.' But when he turns from wicked works, by faith, he becomes a child of God.²

Thus the passing from the ways of Satan to the ways of God was naturally called conversion and a new birth. Some men, accused Steele, carnalize

¹Ibid., p. 132-133.

²John Fletcher quoted by Daniel Steele in A Substitute for Holiness, p. 134.

the expressions new birth, a child of God, and son of God, asserting that if men who once walked in God's ways turn back, even into adultery, murder, or incest, they are still God's dear people and pleasant children, in the Gospel sense of the word. They ask, "Can a man be a child of God today, and a child of the devil tomorrow?" and "Can he be born this week and unborn the next?"¹ With these questions, Steele derided, they think they have overthrown the necessity of holiness, as presented in the Bible, much the same as honest Nicodemus supposed he had demolished the "must" of regeneration and stopped our Lord's mouth by asking, "Can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?"²

The question would be easily answered, said Steele, if, setting aside the oriental mode of speech, it was simply asked if one who has ceased to do evil and learned to do well today, might cease to do well and learn to do evil tomorrow. To this he directly replied by saying that if the dying thief, the Philippian jailor, the multitudes of Jews in one day went from the "sons of folly" to the "sons of wisdom" there is no absurdity in saying that they could measure the same way back again in one day, and draw back in "the horrid womb of sin" as easily as Satan drew back into rebellion, Adam into disobedience, David into adultery, Solomon into idolatry, Judas into treason, and Ananias and Sapphira into covetousness. When Peter had shown himself a blessed son of heavenly wisdom by confessing Jesus was the Christ, he didn't even wait until the next day to become a son of folly by following the "wisdom which is

¹Steele, A Substitute for Holiness, p. 134.

²Ibid., p. 134-135.

earthly, sensual, and devilish," thus becoming the recipient of Jesus rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan."¹

A Sheep can never become a goat. Another abuse of figures of speech is the citing of the phrase used to describe the judgment when the human race will stand separate - the sheep and the goats - to prove that, since a sheep can never become a goat because of the law of the invariability of species, likewise, one called by Christ a sheep can never become a goat. This logic will not stand, Steele argued, for "can a goat ever, by any power divine, become a sheep? Can a sinner ever become a saint if it is impossible for a saint ever to become an incorrigible sinner?"² Yet, he attested, many build their hope of heaven upon this mistake and live in open sin, reasoning somewhat as follows:

Once I heard the shepherd's voice and followed Him and received His ear-mark, therefore I was one of His sheep, and now though I follow the voice of a stranger and am led into all manner of sins, I am undoubtedly a sheep, for it was never heard that a sheep becomes a goat.³

These persons fail to observe that our Lord calls those who hear His voice "sheep" and those who follow the voice of the tempter "goats".⁴ Steele reminded his readers that John the Baptist and Jesus referred to the Jews as a "brood of vipers and serpents." Then afterwards as Jesus stood looking over Jerusalem, He compared these same Jews to a brood of

¹Ibid., p. 134-135.

²Ibid., p. 136.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 137.

a hen. Steele asked if this meant that the vipers had become chickens? To give affirmation to such reasoning, as quoted above, Steele declared, is to take an unadulterated antinomian position. In support of his declaration Steele quoted as representative of the antinomian position the following words of Tobias Crisp:

Though a believer does sin, yet he is not to be reckoned as a sinner; his sins are reckoned to be taken away from him. God reckons not his sin to be his; he reckons it Christ's, therefore he cannot reckon it to be his. Christ does justify a person before he believes; we do not believe that we may be justified, but because we are justified. The elect are justified from eternity, at Christ's death...¹

Steele stated that "modern writers" taught essentially the same doctrines as those taught by Tobias Crisp but were not so willing to face the logical conclusions which Crisp expressed in the following words:

Let this Antinomian principle be forever rooted out of the minds of men, that our working is derogatory to Christ's work. 'He gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a peculiar people, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.'²

In pointing out the absurdity of the contention that by the first act of faith an individual is eternally incorporated into the glorified person of Christ and thereafter no condemnation may be incurred regardless of the sin committed, Steele quoted Fletcher as saying:

People, it seems, may now be 'in Christ,' without being 'new creatures,' and 'new creatures' without casting 'old things' away. They may be God's children without God's image; and 'born of the Spirit' without 'the fruit of the Spirit.'³

¹Tobias Crisp as quoted by Daniel Steele in A Substitute for Holiness, p. 138-139.

²Ibid., p. 142.

³Fletcher quoted by Daniel Steele in A Substitute for Holiness, p. 152.

In quoting Romans 8:1 as proof of their position, Steele said that those who hold to this piece of rank Antinomianism fail to note the qualifying clause found also in the fourth verse of the same chapter denoting those to whom it is applicable, namely those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Having failed to note this they say that "the standing is never to be judged by the state, but the state by the standing."¹ Thus they fail to distinguish between the sum total of Christ's merits known as His mediatorial righteousness, and His own personal righteousness, which is not transferable, Steele affirmed, for character is personal and unimputable.²

In examining the words, "in Christ," used by some to prove an actual incorporation into His person, Steele noted that they are used only by Paul, except in I Peter 3:16 and 5:14. The words, "in the Lord," are peculiar to Paul also, being found elsewhere only in Revelation 14:13. Since Paul always avoids the purely personal name, never saying "in Jesus," but always adds one of his titular names, Christ or Lord, Steele argued that the phrases "in Christ" and "in the Lord" must mean some intimate relation to His official work. Paul uses the phrase "in Christ" while Luke and Peter use the term Christian, a term which Paul never uses. In examining a favorite text of the imputationists found in I Corinthians 1:2 quoted as follows: "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus,"³ Steele endorsed Meyers exegetical comment which follows: "In

¹Steele, A Substitute for Holiness, p. 153.

²Ibid., p. 153-154.

³Ibid., p. 155.

Christ - namely, in His redemptive work, of which Christians have become, and continue to be, partakers, by means of justifying faith (Ephesians 1:4; Hebrews 10:10)."¹ Steele further posited that the general meaning of the words, "in the Lord," is discipleship to the Lord Jesus, and he cited Romans 16:2 and I Corinthians 7:39 in support of his position. The idiom "in Christ" or "in the Lord" Steele believed was probably an amplification of Christ's words, "If ye abide in me," found in His parable of the true vine recorded in John 15:1-7. That inseparable and eternal incorporation into His Person is not meant here, Steele declared, was evident from the words "every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away." Those taken away are later said to have withered (the natural consequence of being severed from the source of life) and to have been cast into the fire and burned, Steele noted. He thus concluded that this taking away was pictured as an eternal cutting off based on one's real character, for, in this case, the one in question was fruitless.²

Steele averred that it was just as reasonable to interpret "the whole world lieth in the evil one"³ I John 5:19, to mean that the whole world was in itself inherently saintly, but by imputation was wicked in the evil one, as it was to state that the best estate of believers on earth is to be inherently impure, while by imputation they are spotless

¹Meyer as quoted by Daniel Steele in A Substitute for Holiness, p. 155.

²Steele, A Substitute for Holiness, p. 154-159.

³Ibid., p. 160.

in Christ.¹

Positive Argument

Steele gave additional insight into his positive view of that which he attempted to refute above in the following words:

When Christ is spoken of as our sanctification it is meant, not that He enters into the hearts of believers and cleanses them, but that He provides the purifying medium, His own shed blood, and the sanctifying agent, the Holy Spirit. The Son's work is external, the Spirit's work is internal; or in philosophic terms, the work of one is objective, that of the other is subjective; the one sanctifies provisionally and the other effectually.²

In support of the above assertion, Steele referred to I Corinthians 1:2 as stating the provisional sanctification in Christ, which I Corinthians 3:1 infers is not actual, for Paul cannot speak unto them as spiritual. In further support he noted that the seeming contradiction between the statement that "Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all men," and His sentence of a part of them to eternal punishment in the last day, disappears when it is considered that Christ is the conditional Saviour of all men but the real Saviour of believers only.³

It is found in I Corinthians 1:30 that Christ "is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."⁴ This He is to every one who does by faith appropriate Him and become wise by believing divine revelation, i.e., the truth personified in Christ. Such

¹Ibid., p. 160.

²Daniel Steele, The Gospel of the Comforter (Boston: The Christian Witness Company, 1897), p. 118.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 119.

a one is justified through faith in Him, sanctified through the reception of the Spirit in His office as Sanctifier, redeemed soul and body, and reunited and glorified through preserving faith in Him who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.¹

Calmness and comfort must have come to 276 storm driven souls on the coast of Melita when Paul stood forth and uttered the cheering message from God, "there shall be no loss of life among you."² Steele stated that to some this would seem to be an unforfeitable life insurance policy representing the Calvinistic assurance of faith, unconditional because it is grounded on the decree of election and the assumed perseverance of the saints. But these words of Paul, he reminded his readers, had an important addition to them. When the sailors were stealing the life boat to make good their own escape, Paul stood up and said to the military custodian, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."³ The Wesleyan-Arminian conception of the assurance of eternal salvation is thus illustrated as being conditional. It rests upon the small word if; hence if the Christian perseveringly believes, he will be saved. Otherwise he will be cut off.⁴

It is essential to the life of faith to maintain a good conscience toward God from day to day. The believer must aim at and be

¹Ibid., p. 119-120.

²Ibid., p. 140.

³Ibid., p. 141

⁴Ibid., p. 140-141.

satisfied with nothing less than this for it is within his reach, Steele asserted, for even the Old Testament saints had the witness that they pleased God. By a good conscience Steele meant an unaccusing conscience, not the assurance that one is exempt from errors in practice arising from misjudgment, but the consciousness that one's intentions and aims are unselfish and holy. That true spirituality can exist without being accompanied by scrupulous conscientiousness, the purpose to do right at any cost, Steele maintained is impossible. If believers live as they should, they will find as the Christian life progresses, the testimony of conscience is the activity of the Spirit of God, on the plane of nature, as Creator and preserver (Hebrews 9:9; 10:22; and II Corinthians 1:12). In regeneration and sanctification the Spirit works on the plane of grace, as the reconstructor aiming to restore what sin has defiled.¹

Steele discussed several Scriptures in further defining the position he took on the perseverance of the saints. First he quoted the words of the apostle John: "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God" (I John 3:9),² and noted that in the Greek the verb "begotten" is in the perfect tense, denoting the continuance of sonship, while the verb "sin" is in the present tense, denoting not a single act, but a series of acts, or a habit of sinning. One cannot be a sinner and a saint at the same time, for such a contradiction is of an impossible

¹Ibid., p. 170-171.

²Daniel Steele, Steele's Answers (Chicago: The Christian Witness Company, 1912), p. 19.

character. In support of his assertion Steele cited the following statement, with interjected comment, from the second chapter of I John: "If any (Christian) man sin (Aorist denoting a single act) we have an advocate."¹ He interpreted this to mean that if any believer contrary to the tenor of his life under the pressure of some sudden temptation commits sin, he is not to give up in despair, or "drop his oars, and go over the Niagara of damnation," but he should remember that he has a Friend at Court through whom he may find forgiveness. If he does not seek Him and find forgiveness but enters on a career of sinning, he is no longer a son of God, but a child of the devil, as is declared in I John 3:10 and is on his way to the place where Judas is.²

In explaining I John 5:18, Steele used the text from Wescott and Hort which he said was the most accurate. With his interjected comments it reads as follows: "We know that whosoever has been begotten of God is not sinning, but he who was begotten of (Aorist) God (the only begotten Son) keepeth him."³ The safeguard of the believer against sinning is the promised presence of Christ, "Lo, I am with you always,"⁴ and thus he is "kept by the power of God through faith."⁵ But sin comes in if faith lapses. The Christian needs the shield of faith every moment for he is within bowshot of the devil as long as he is on probation. A

¹Ibid., p. 19.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 20.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

fanatical perversion of evangelical perfection is taught if this is denied, Steele insisted.¹

Paul has said "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:9).² Some would say that all who live on the earth are in the flesh; therefore it is not possible to please God while living. Steele answered this by saying that the word flesh has two meanings, a good and a bad. In the text quoted above it means the domination of evil inclinations. No man who is thus dominated can please God. But when the evil propensities are controlled by the regenerating Holy Spirit, God is pleased. Every man in the world may please God by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. The flesh as defined above may not only be controlled but also be crucified.³

When asked if the regenerated child could live without sin, Steele replied that according to I John 3:9,10, sin is the boundary line between the children of the devil and the children of God. There is grace enough to keep every child from ever stepping over the boundary between known right and known wrong.⁴ If sin dwells in a man, he is not born of God, but is a child of the devil, according to this verse in I John.⁵

"If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is

¹Ibid., p. 20.

²Ibid., p. 52.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 67.

⁵Ibid., p. 76.

not in us" (I John 1:8).¹ Steele asserted that here John is speaking of the Gnostics, who believed that only their bodies were defiled by sin and that their souls were perfectly pure and in no need of the blood of Christ and the new birth. The strongest expression that John uses of such a transgression of the law as entails guilt is the phrase "to have sin." If all Christians are guilty, the profession of justification by anyone on the earth is a sad mistake, and Paul's declaration "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" is a falsehood.²

Some people teach that a person once saved cannot be lost, using as their chief proof text John 10:28, "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."³ All of God's promises of spiritual blessings are conditioned, whether expressed or implied, stated Steele. In this instance the implied condition is hinted to the Greek reader by the use of the present tense in the context, denoting continuance. Such persevering believers have eternal life, and the spiritual life continues as long as obedient faith continues, but when this faith lapses, the life, which could have been everlasting, also lapses. Steele maintained that this is taught also in the parable of the vine in John 15:1-7.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 98.

²Ibid., p. 98-99.

³Ibid., p. 100.

⁴Ibid., p. 100-101.

Finally, Steele felt, the strongest Scripture proof that a person who has been truly converted may be finally and eternally lost, was the same as that referred to in the previous paragraph, John 15:1-7. A person who is a branch in Christ may become fruitless and withered and cast forth as a branch, and gathered and cast into the fire and burned. He asserted that if this figurative language is not a solemn, deliberate and graphic declaration of the possible perdition of a soul once regenerated and savingly united with Christ then this idea cannot be expressed in human language. These words should lead every professor of Christ to ask himself daily these questions, "Am I bringing forth such fruit as Jesus Christ is looking for, (1) the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and (2) the fruit of saved souls (John 4:36)?"¹ If not, then Steele would say he is in danger of being cast forth as a withered branch, which implies separation from the vine, and of being gathered and cast into perdition just as a fruitless branch is cut off and cast into the fire and burned.²

III. VIEW OF HARRY E. JESSOP

The third of these writers, Harry E. Jessop, was born in 1884 in England. He was educated at British Baptist Union in England from 1910 to 1914, and subsequently at Chicago Evangelistic Institute. He received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Asbury College. He has held

¹Ibid., p. 197.

²Ibid.

various pastorates in England and pastored North West Tabernacle and the Austin Church of the Nazarene in Chicago. A member of the Church of the Nazarene, he is a recognized theologian, his books being used as college textbooks in the field of theology (at least at Olivet Nazarene College). As visiting lecturer he taught at Cliff College and Immanuel Missionary College in England as well as in Bethany Peniel College and Eastern Nazarene College in the United States. He was Dean of Chicago Evangelistic Institute from 1935-1945, after which he served as president until 1951. Though the name, status, and location of the institution has been changed to Vennard College at University Park, Iowa, he has continued to teach there until the present.¹

Jessop said that common sense teaches that if there is to be perseverance of the saints there must of necessity be saints and those saints must persevere. In speaking of this matter he stated "We do not teach and believe that subtle and dangerous doctrine of continued salvation for those who lapse again into deliberate sin and therefore being no longer saints cease to persevere."² From the above it is seen that Jessop believed that for one to be a saint he must cease sinning.³ He proceeded by defining saintliness and sin as foundational to his subsequent discussion of perseverance.

Sin Defined

¹Personal correspondence from Fern L. Todd, Comptroller, Vennard College, University Park, Iowa, to the author, dated December 16, 1960.

²Harry E. Jessop, That Burning Question of Final Perseverance, p. 9.

Temptation as related to sin. Since "we have this treasure in earthen vessels," we are always subject to temptation, Jessop asserted. This fact has baffled some, for in their thinking they have not been able to distinguish between the two vitally different facts of temptation and sin. In the conflict hour, therefore, they slump and allow Satan to rob them of their confidence.¹

Two simple facts, he felt, would help one to find solid ground here. The first is that while in the mortal state, temptation is ever the lot of the holiest souls, but sin may forever cease. His contention that it is not a sin to be tempted is proved from the following events in Scripture. (1) From Genesis three we learn that our first parents were tempted in their original innocence, but that no condemnation came to them until they yielded to the tempter's snare. (2) In Genesis thirty-nine we read how Joseph was tempted in Egypt, yet stood the test and was able to come out of the conflict with a soul as pure as when he went in. (3) Our Lord himself was tempted in the wilderness (the account is recorded in Matthew 4:1-11), besides the perpetual harassment from His subtle foe, yet (we see from Hebrews 7:26) for thirty-three years He kept His soul free from sin.²

The other important fact is that there is a place where temptation ends and sin, with all its dreadful condemnation, begins. When temptation or evil suggestion to the mind is cherished or tolerated it becomes

¹Harry E. Jessop, Foundations of Doctrine (Chicago: Chicago Evangelistic Institute, c1938), p. 120.

²Ibid., p. 120-121.

sin. Sin consists in yielding to temptation, but as long as the soul maintains its integrity, temptation finds no sympathy and no sin is committed and the soul remains unharmed, no matter how protracted or severe the trial may prove.¹ The distinction between sin and temptation he clarified in the following statements: (1) Sin must have the consent of the will and brings divine condemnation, but temptation comes with divine permission, unsolicited and undesired; (2) Temptation may have definite beneficial results, for each victorious conflict leaves the soul stronger; (3) No one can deliberately sin without being eternally the worse for it, for sin is always injurious and the wound, though healed, leaves the individual weaker for the experience; and (4) Each victory in moral conflict will help the person some other time to win and not to fall into sin during the time of temptation.²

Human limitation as related to sin. Jessop contended that one must also distinguish between sin and infirmity. He pointed out that the confusion began with Augustine, and following him, Calvin and the later Calvinistic schools of thought. They all crudely confound the carnal nature within the believer with the essential human nature and fail to distinguish between things which vitally differ. Out of this teaching, the modern "must sin" theory has evolved. It insists that, constituted as an individual is since the fall of man, sin is inevitable, but through one's believing, though persistently sinning, Calvary covers

¹Ibid., p. 121.

²Ibid., p. 123.

it all. But Jessop insisted that until one learns to distinguish between the infirmities of our humanity and the sins resulting from carnality, he fails to comprehend one of the most vital distinctions in the spiritual life.¹

To the objection that if carnality were really destroyed one would never be able to sin again, Jessop answered that, unfortunately, it is not so. Man, sinful or holy, is a free moral agent, and as such is on probation so long as this life shall last. Man need not sin after sanctification, for provision is made that he should not. However, according to I John 2:1,2, provision is made lest he should sin again.²

Positive Argument

To say that those who oppose the doctrine of the unconditional security of those who have once believed in Christ unto salvation, teach a doctrine of alternations, i.e., being in Christ one day and out of Christ the next, Jessop refuted as being untrue.³ He used a number of Scripture texts to prove that a man can know Christ and then backslide and be lost. The first Scriptures he cited in support of his belief are found in Ezekiel:

But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die

¹Ibid., p. 125

²Ibid., p. 204

³Jessop, That Burning Question of Final Perseverance, p. 53.

(Ezekiel 18:24). When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby (Ezekiel 33:18).¹

Jessop stated that these two Scriptures need no comment. He was aware of the Calvinistic dispensational interpretation but insisted that these verses are a vital warning to every age. The righteousness pronounced in these verses was sufficient to save one from death only while it was maintained.² In support of this he quoted the following verse: "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matthew 5:13).³ He commented that this was spoken by our Lord to His own disciples, but not to the multitudes. Jessop contended that these men had something to lose, and were in evident danger of losing it.⁴ He cited the following passage in support of his contention. "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).⁵ He felt that the truth of this passage was apparent in the light of general Scripture, and to say that one will be saved through Christ's fitness though he himself may not be fit is to pervert the meaning.⁶ In further support he quoted Christ's words as recorded by

¹Ibid., p. 37.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

the apostle John:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned (John 15:1-6).¹

"Every branch in me" can represent none other than a true believer, he said. These branches are "taken away" if they fail to bear fruit. Jessop also believed that the phrase "in Christ" which Paul uses to denote present salvation finds its origin in this passage, and thus the taking away is not from earth to heaven, but from the saved to the unsaved.²

In supporting this position he began by quoting the following verse:

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).³ Jessop affirmed that no person **could** fall from any position which he had not previously occupied. If fallen from it, he could not still be in it. A fall from a ten-story building, he suggested, would be sufficient proof to anyone that this is true.⁴ In further support of his contention he cited the following passage: "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold

¹Ibid., p. 38.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 38-39.

the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:14).¹ Although He has promised to keep us, Jessop stated, it is evident that our hold also has something to do with it.² Additional proof for his belief was drawn from the following passage:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Hebrews 6:4-6).³

Jessop thought that, whatever more the writer may be intending to teach, he is conscious of the possibility of spiritual backsliding and of final apostasy. He contended that the people spoken of here have been enlightened, have been partakers of the Holy Ghost, and also have known something of the powers of the world to come; thus to suggest that they are not born of the Spirit is to juggle the words and to trifle with things most sacred.⁴ In further support of this position he cited two additional passages:

For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto

¹Ibid., p. 39.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

the Spirit of Grace? (Hebrews 10:26-29).¹

The above passage he felt needed no comment but was self explanatory as evidence that the writer was conscious of the possibility of spiritual backsliding and final apostasy.² "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:38,39).³ This drawing back spoken of in the above verse, Jessop declared, is from the life of faith to one of perdition. That there are those who draw back into perdition, Jessop saw implied in the statement "we are not of them who draw back," and further that the writer was determined not to be among them.⁴

That one may claim a divinely kept life only if certain conditions be met, Jessop posited on the basis of the following Scripture:

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make

¹Ibid., p. 39-40.

²Ibid., p. 40.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fail [fall]: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:3-11).¹

He commented that "if ye do these things ye shall never fall" implies, at least, that the fact of falling is within the range of possibility.²

That those who "have escaped the pollutions of the world" in the following passage is due to a knowledge of saving grace is affirmed by Jessop. Thus the following warning applies to Christians:

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb. The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire (II Peter 2:20-22).³

He further affirmed that these people were in danger of becoming entangled again and experiencing a worse condition than the one they knew before being saved.⁴

Every soul is on probation, asserted Jessop, as long as that soul remains this side of heaven. He insisted further that the same will which said the first word of yieldedness must keep yielded, all the time until physical death or the rapture takes place, if that individual is

¹Ibid., p. 40-41.

²Ibid., p. 41.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 41-42.

to be finally saved.¹

In summarizing, Jessop stated that the Wesleyan-Arminians believe that when dying on Calvary's Cross, the Son of God made an atonement which was full and sufficient, also that this atonement is unrestricted in its reach, comprehending an entire world. The Word of God, he asserted, plainly teaches that the benefits of the atonement are necessarily conditioned, first, as to its reception which necessitates repentance, and restitution when needed, then an act of faith in which the seeker must cast himself in contrition on God and trust Him to cancel past sins, making him a child of God; second, as to its retention which necessitates an active progressive and obedient faith and the abhorrence and shunning of sin. He declared that salvation, through an act of faith, is initiated and made real in the soul, but it is maintained within the soul by a life of faith. This faith life is manifested by faithfulness and obedience to the Holy Spirit who leads into the deeper experience of entire cleansing and spiritual fulness, and into realizing that "the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."² One must keep himself in the love of God while trusting Him to keep him from falling. One expects to be held fast but is conscious that like the clasp of two hands the hold must be reciprocal. No man can pluck them out of His hand, yet His domain is that of free men, said Jessop. Men prove that He is able to keep them from falling from day to day, and anticipate a blameless presentation in His presence

¹Ibid., p. 46.

²Ibid., p. 56.

when He comes again for His own.¹

IV. SUMMARY

In summarizing the Wesleyan-Arminian position the writer noted the approach of each of the men quoted and then attempted to summarize his positive statement on the subject of the perseverance of the saints.

Ralston began his treatment of the subject of the perseverance of the saints by stating that he could do no better than to give the treatise of John Wesley. Thus his handling of the subject was essentially that of Wesley himself, which was short and meant to be read by people generally and not for the theologian alone to master. The first step was to define the term saint. Then he dealt with each descriptive element proving from Scripture his claim that a saint, as he had defined one at least, could so fall away from God as to perish everlastingly. In summing up his argument, Ralston stated that one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself may so fall from God as to perish everlastingly. Those who have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, the witness of the Spirit, and the fruits of the Spirit may so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

Steele began to state his view on the subject of the perseverance of the saints by drawing proof from the Scripture that the term "everlasting life" was conditional, based upon a present continuing activity of the believer and as such was a quality of life which if maintained became of endless duration. He went on to deal with abusive use of fig-

¹Ibid., p. 54-56.

urative language pointing out what he felt were the fallacies in reasoning and endeavoring to show that the position they were taking was basically that of Antinomianism. Steele affirmed that character is personal and unimputed and therefore the personal righteousness of Christ did not become that of others except as they will His will and walk in His ways. That this righteousness of God might be theirs is based upon Christ's mediatorial righteousness which fulfilled the demand of the Mosasic law, but the law of obedience unto God through obeying His Son still stands. The fact that a person has the new life continually is dependent upon his continual hearing of the words of God and continual believing in Jesus Christ, Steele explained. If this obedient active faith lapses at any time during probation the new life expires immediately. Those who have grace should put forth the utmost power of grace, laboring after the salvation Christ has purchased for them. If the Christian continually and obediently believes, he will be saved. The maintenance of good conscience toward God from day to day is essential to the life of faith, for there is grace enough to keep every child of God from stepping over the boundary between the known right and known wrong. Therefore, Steele concluded, that the person who begins to walk by faith and then turns from the commands of Christ is in danger of eternal burning except he repent and do the first works. However, even the fullness of the Spirit, Steele asserted, does not prevent errors in judgment and fallacies of logic.

Jessop declared that Wesleyan-Arminians do not teach continued salvation for those who lapse again into deliberate sin and therefore, being no longer saints, cease to persevere. Sin consists in yielding

to temptation. Man is a free moral agent, on probation so long as physical life shall last. Temptation is ever the lot of the holiest of souls while in this mortal state, but sin may cease forever. Salvation through an act of faith, is initiated and made real in the soul. By faithfulness and obedience to the Holy Spirit the provision is made that man should not sin. Salvation is thus maintained and one is lead into the experience of heart cleansing and spiritual fulness.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINE OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

CHAPTER III

THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINE OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

The Calvinistic tradition, while perpetuating the name of John Calvin, goes farther back than Calvin for its origin, and has for its real founder the monk Augustine, who became the bishop of Hippo in North Africa and served from A.D. 395-430 in that position.¹

In this chapter the writer attempted to present the Calvinistic position concerning the perseverance of the saints as recorded by three representative theologians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Charles Hodge, Lewis Sperry Chafer, and Louis Berkhof. Then an attempt was made to summarize the doctrine as stated by these three men.

I. THE VIEW OF CHARLES HODGE

The first of these three representative theologians, Charles Hodge, was born in 1797 at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was a Presbyterian and a Calvinist and was a recognized theologian in those circles. He taught fifty years as professor of theology and two of his children succeeded him on the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary. Properly to estimate his influence it must be remembered that 3,000 ministers of the Gospel passed under his instruction. Dr. Hodge's voluminous literary life is suggestive of the great influence he exerted. He achieved distinction as a teacher, exegete, preacher, controversialist, ecclesi-

¹Harry E. Jessop, That Burning Question of Final Perseverance (Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, c1942), p. 16.

astic, and systematic theologian. His life was spent in defending the Reformed theology as set forth in the Westminster symbols.¹

Charles Hodge used the entire eighth chapter of Romans to prove the certain salvation of all who believe, or in other words, that there is "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).² He maintained that once they are saved they can never perish or be so separated from Christ as to come into condemnation.³ Hodge proceeded to point out six arguments he believed Paul used to support his position.

Delivered from law. The apostle's first argument, according to Hodge, to prove that once one is a child of God he can never perish, is that believers are delivered from law by the sacrifice Christ made on the cross. That the believer is not under law which condemns and therefore cannot be condemned is based on Romans 6:14, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace."⁴ Christ fully satisfied the law's demands and is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. Everyone who believes in Christ is made righteous in the sight of the law.⁵

Principle of eternal life. The second argument that Paul gives, according to Hodge, is that they already have within them the principle

¹The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1909), V, p. 306.

²Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1940), III, p. 110.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p.

⁵Ibid., p. 110-111.

of eternal life, this principle being the Spirit of God. "To be carnally minded is death, to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6)¹ points out that sin is death and holiness is life. To say that those in whom the Spirit of life dwells, could die, is a contradiction, and therefore, although the body dies, the soul lives. "And if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken even your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11).² The life of the soul is secured by the Spirit's indwelling and also the ultimate and glorious life of the body.³

Sons of God. The third argument which Hodge saw in Paul's letter for the believer's security is that they are the sons of God. They are the sons of God because they are led by the Spirit of God. They are special objects of His love and partakers of His nature and therefore entitled to the inheritance which He gives. "If sons then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17).⁴ If sons, they shall be entirely saved, thus excluding the possibility of perishing.⁵

The purpose of God. Hodge went on to say that the fourth argument that Paul gives is from the purpose of God. The ones that God predestined

¹Ibid., p. 111.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

to be conformed to the image of His Son, He also calls to the exercise of faith and repentance. Those that He thus calls He justifies and provides for them and imputes to them a righteousness which satisfies the demands of the law, and therefore entitles them in Christ, and for His sake, to eternal life. These same individuals He glorifies. If men obtained eternal life through their own strength or cooperation with the grace of God, which some might not exercise, then continuance in a state of grace might depend on themselves. If faith and repentance are gifts, the result of God's effectual vocation, the bestowing of those gifts on a person reveals God's purpose to save him. It is evidence that He will infallibly carry out His purpose of them being "conformed to the image of His Son, i.e., to be like Him in character, destiny and glory."¹ Out of his hands, no one can fluck them.²

The gratuitousness of God's love. The love of God is the fifth argument, Hodge asserted, that Paul uses. The apostle argues that because of the greatness, the freeness, and the immutability of the love of God its object can never be lost. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things" (Romans 8:32).³ He that gave His own Son, will give us faith to receive and constancy to persevere unto the end. God's love to his people is so great that it cannot fail of its object. This gracious love is not founded on the attractiveness of its object. "But God

¹Ibid., p.

²Ibid., p. 111-112.

³Ibid., p. 112.

commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Romans 5:8,9).¹

Hodge thought that God's love may be compared to the love of a parent to a child. A mother does not love her child because it is lovely, but this love leads her to do all she can to render it attractive and to keep it so. In like manner the love of God adorns His children with the grace of His Spirit, and arrays them in the beauty of Holiness. It is a mistake for anyone to suppose that God loves us for our goodness and that His love is dependent on our self-sustained attractiveness. However, one should look to the Father and His love for the source of all goodness and the ground of the assurance that He will not allow Satan or one's own evil heart to destroy the likeness of Himself which he has impressed upon our souls. He loved His own and will love them to the end, and Christ prays for them that their faith may not fail.²

Hodge affirmed that Paul not only argues to prove the certainty of the salvation of those that believe but also their certain perseverance in holiness. Salvation in sin is a contradiction of terms. Perseverance in holiness is secured partly by the inward secret influence of the Spirit and partly by all the means adapted to secure that end, namely, instructions, admonitions, exhortation, warnings, the means of grace and dispensations of his providence. He through love determined on the end and the means for its accomplishment.³

¹Ibid., p. 112.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 112-113.

Immutability of God's love. In Paul's sixth argument Hodge said that in the same way that God's love is infinitely great and altogether gratuitous, it is also immutable therefore the believers shall be saved without fail. Hence the conclusion:

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).¹

In concluding his argument, Hodge claimed that Paul did not base the perseverance of the saints on the indestructible nature of faith, or on the imperishable nature of the principle of grace in the heart, or on the constancy of the believers will, but solely on what is not of ourselves but of God, to the work of Christ, to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and to the primal source of all, the infinite, mysterious, and immutable love of God. We do not keep ourselves but are "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation" (I Peter 1:5).²

II. THE VIEW OF LEWIS SPERRY CHAFER

Another writer, Lewis Sperry Chafer born at Rock Creek, Ohio, in 1871, was educated at New Lyme (Ohio) Academy and Oberlin College. He was the founder of Dallas (Texas) Theological Seminary and taught there after its founding in 1924. He was a Presbyterian.³

¹Ibid., p. 113.

²Ibid.

³Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (New York: American Book Stratford Press, Inc.), I, p. 225.

Chafer in committing himself to the negative view in the answer to the question, "Can a person once saved be lost again?" began by observing that there can be no middle position, for one could not really be secure if he was insecure as to his eternal keeping by the slightest degree. The subject of security, Chafer affirmed, was different from the question of assurance. Eternal security, he felt, was a doctrine of Scripture, a divine revelation of an abiding fact which existed whether it was believed or not, while assurance was only a personal confidence in a present salvation. The belief or disbelief in security, he stated, was a personal matter depending much on the extent of personal Bible study and heart response to the whole revelation of God. Freedom from the distractions of mere human reason, he felt, was not guaranteed just because one was enrolled under a "Calvinistic" creed, nor would one not eventually learn to rest upon every revelation and promise of God just because he was enrolled under an Arminian creed. The one group in answering the question above affirmatively, he contended, return constantly to the conclusions of human reason while the opposition are guided by revelation alone. He stated that the conditions, character and results of salvation, which began with God in another sphere, are altogether in harmony with the eternal being of God, rather than with the vain imaginations of fallen men.¹

Chafer proceeded by dealing first with passages thought by some to teach that salvation was insecure, then with the questions of doubt that have been raised, and finally he stated positively his understanding of

¹Lewis Sperry Chafer, Salvation (Chicago: Moody Press, 1944), p. 96-97.

the principles of grace as they relate to perseverance.

Passages Thought to Teach Insecurity

The passages in question, which numbered about twenty-five, Chafer treated under classified groupings, but they were not always treated individually. What was true in one passage within a group he felt would be found to be true, in the main, of the others. Only through misinterpretation, he contended, have these passages been given the character of doubt as to the keeping power of God and been made to contradict an absolute security promised in a much larger body of Scripture.¹

Passages dispensationally misapplied. In further defense of his position Chafer asserted that passages are often dispensationally misapplied. As an example he cited the following: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13, Mark 11:13, Matthew 10:22).² This passage occurs in the midst of the Olivet discourse, which Chafer said was addressed to Israel only, for they alone are hated of all nations (verse 9), therefore it cannot and does not apply to any saint of this dispensation. Ezekiel 33:7,8 was true under the law, but, Chafer contended, is not true under grace. Matthew 18:23-25 (Matthew 25:30; 20:1-16) is of "servants" in God's vineyard, Israel, as distinguished from the present teaching of the Gospel in the "field" which is the world. Under the law, forgiveness was "as ye forgive" (Matthew 6:14,15), but under grace it is first divinely bestowed and then

¹Ibid., p. 98.

²Ibid., p. 99.

becomes an incentive in the believer's heart to forgive others (Ephesians 4:32).¹

False Teachers of the last days. Chafer reminded his readers that there are many false teachers of the last days who will lead people astray. He cited the following Scripture verses as evidence and then proceeded to give his version of their true meaning:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies and hyprocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron (I Timothy 4:1,2).²

Chafer felt the reference here is not to personal faith, but "the faith that was once delivered to the saints," Jude 3.³ These false teachers are never said to be saved, and Jude writes of them as "they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit."⁴

Moral reformation. Again Chafer declared that some Scriptures teach mere moral reformation, not spiritual regeneration. Such Scriptures should never be employed to teach the possibility of a Christian falling eternally. The following passage shows what Chafer meant:

When the unclean spirit is gone out of man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there:

¹Ibid., p. 99-100.

²Ibid., p. 100.

³Ibid., p. 101.

⁴Ibid.

and the last state of that man is worse than the first (Luke 11:24-26).¹

Such a situation, Chafer contended, could never describe a Christian who is indwelt by the Spirit and by Christ from the moment he is saved.²

Christian profession proven by its fruits. Chafer insisted that true Christian profession is proven by its fruits. In the following passage he showed how this related to his ideas on perseverance. "In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (I John 3:10).³ Chafer noted that the fundamental divine requirement for being a child of God is stated in John 6:28,29. An important distinction is to be made between enduring to be saved and enduring because one is saved, and that the latter test was the one consistently presented in the Bible, he believed was exemplified in this Scripture, "If ye continue in my words, then ye are my disciples indeed" (John 8:31).⁴ Proof that one is saved is found in the fact that there are new desires and powers in the new creation, rather than being found in sinless perfection. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things (mentioned in verses 6-8) ye shall never fall (stumble)" (II Peter 1:10).⁵

¹Ibid., p. 101.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 102.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

Peter exhorts the saints to make full proof, or to give real evidence of their election by the presence of certain virtues in their lives which he has just mentioned in the proceeding verses.¹

"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:6).² This difficult passage may be best understood in its probably relation to professors, but not possessors, Chafer said. This, like James 2:14-16, is a matter of justification before men by works which testify to the fact of the presence or absence of the new life.³

In setting forth his position Chafer's next step was to deal with warnings that are given to various groups in the Scriptures.

Christians are warned. "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died" (Romans 14:15).⁴ Chafer stated that the effect of this sin is defined in I Corinthians 8:11,12, "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ."⁵ The effect of such a sin, therefore, is most serious; but that a true child of God will "never perish," and will "never die," Chafer believed was supported in such Scriptures as John 10:28, and 11:26.⁶

¹Ibid., p. 102.

²Ibid., p. 103.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 103-104.

⁶Ibid.

Professors are warned. Matthew 25:1-13 tells of the ten virgins. Five had no oil, which Chafer interpreted to be the symbol of the divine life, though they had every outward appearance. They heard the judgment "I know ye not," and this could not be said of the least child of God. So this warning is not understood by Chafer to have any bearing on the Christian's security.¹

Jews are warned. Chafer thought that two well-known passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews apply to Jews but not to Christians. They are as follows: "If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:26).² The Jewish sacrifices were no longer a cure for sins, therefore, unless they accepted Christ, they had hope only for coming judgment.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame (Hebrews 6:4-6).³

Chafer acknowledged that much was said here as having been divinely accomplished in certain individuals, but he insisted that it was not a sufficient description of the true child of God; who is light; who is already a citizen of heaven; who has been sealed by the Holy Spirit; who has been regenerated by the washing of the word; and who has been recreated by the power of God. That the passage in chapter six is not for

¹Ibid., p. 104.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Christians is most evident, he thought, from the closing verses of the context, especially verse nine, "but, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."¹

Gentiles are warned. "For if God spared not the branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee" (Romans 11:21).² Chafer's comment was that this is a warning to Gentiles as contrasted to Israel and not to saved individuals.³

Two general warnings are issued. However, Chafer did not understand that these changed his thesis. The first of these two warnings he quoted from Revelations 22:19 as follows: "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book."⁴ Chafer said I Corinthians 10:13 and John 10:29 assure us that no child of God would be permitted to do this or to come under this judgment. The other warning is found in I Corinthians 3:17, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy (corrupt); for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."⁵ That this was another general warning which could never be the fate of the child of the

¹Ibid., p. 104-105.

²Ibid., p. 105.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

Father was based upon John 17:11.¹

Christians may lose their reward, walk in the dark, or be chastened. Though rewards may be forfeited or lost this cannot be said of salvation. Chafer illustrated what this means in two controversial passages of the New Testament. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (disapproved)" (I Corinthians 9:27).² The context is only of rewards to the believer for faithful service and does not have to do with salvation which is never "approved" but always bestowed. "If any (Christians) man's works shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (I Corinthians 3:15).³ According to Chafer the work of God must stand, therefore, the child of God will himself be saved, though all his works are burned.⁴

Chafer felt that the following passage in which he interjected his interpretations was irrefutable proof of his position:

And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your own minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death (this is the work of God in salvation) to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight (depends, not on His salvation, but); if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard (Colossians 1:21-23).⁵

¹Ibid., p. 105-106.

²Ibid., p. 106.

³Ibid., p. 108.

⁴Ibid., p. 106-108.

⁵Ibid., p. 108.

Chafer allowed that Christian fellowship may be lost through sin and quoted the following Scripture as evidence: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (I John 1:6).¹ The cure for the Christians sin, which results in loss of fellowship but not loss of salvation, is not a second regeneration and justification by faith but merely confession as spoken of in verse 9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."² David after his great sin, did not pray that his salvation might be restored, but prayed "Restore unto me the joys of my salvation," and that, after he had made full confession.³

In support of his belief that Christians may be chastened for sinning without being condemned or losing their salvation reference was made to I Corinthians 11:29-32 quoted below:

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (judgment) unto himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world.⁴

In considering this passage of Scripture, Chafer contended that the sinning child may first judge himself by confessing his sins, otherwise he must be judged of the Father, whose judgment of one once saved is always

¹Ibid., p. 108.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 108-109.

⁴Ibid., p. 109.

chastisement and never condemnation with the world.¹

Chafer also grouped the following Scriptures among those evidencing chastisement of Christians who sin. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away" (John 15:2).² That this was referring to true branches, Chafer allowed, and the chastisement which befell these was that of being "lifted out of its place," and taken home to be with the Lord. Chafer also felt this was the type of chastisement that was the lot of the widows spoken of in I Timothy 5:12, "Having damnation because they have cast off their first faith."³ Having damnation, or "having judgment" as Chafer quoted it, he identified as chastisement for the child of God.⁴

That Christians may fall from grace was conceded by Chafer who cited the following Scripture in support of his view:

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath set us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. Galatians 5:1-4.⁵

Falling from grace it will be seen in the above passage, stated Chafer, was not caused by sinning. It was simply departing from the liberty wherewith Christ had set us free, and returning to the yoke of bondage of

¹Ibid., p. 110.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 110-111.

the law from which the death of Christ had delivered us. Chafer contended that the enjoyment of the priceless liberty in grace would be all that would be lost and asserted that God would not withdraw grace or cancel any aspect of salvation.¹

From the foregoing it may be concluded that Chafer believed that there is no Scripture when rightly divided and related to the whole testimony of God, that teaches that a Christian may be lost. Chafer asserted that there is no such example in the Bible, of all the parables and incidents, that can be made to teach the loss of salvation. If it were possible to lose it, there is no promise or hint in the Bible that it could be regained, for the Bible reveals nothing positive concerning repetition of regeneration.²

Questions of Doubt

Chafer said that there are at least five general questions of doubt that are often raised and which should be considered before turning to the positive revelation regarding eternal security.

What if a believer's faith should fail? To this question he answered that faith is not meritorious. We are not saved because we possess the saving virtue of faith. We are saved through faith and because of the grace of God. "Saving faith is an act: not an attitude."³ Its work

¹Ibid., p. 110-111.

²Ibid., p. 111.

³Ibid., p. 112.

is accomplished when its object has been gained.¹

What if a Christian dies with unconfessed sins? To this Chafer answered that it is quite impossible that any believer knows, remembers, or has confessed every sin. Confession after all, is but telling Christ and this could be done better in His presence than otherwise. It is impossible that any would see His face if whole confession, or sinless perfection should be made the condition of entering that blessed Presence. This question, according to Chafer, issues from an insufficient understanding of the finished work of Christ, who died that sin might not keep us from God.²

Does not the doctrine of security license people to sin? Chafer's answer to this question was that according to the Bible, God's superlative appeal for true Christian living is to know one's own eternal position in Christ Jesus. To the question "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"³ the unregenerate would answer yes, for that would be the voice of the fallen nature; but the regenerate will answer, "God forbid." To claim that teaching the doctrine of security will license people to sin, is to ignore the fact of the new nature which indwells each child of God, and the new dispositions and tendencies flowing out of that new life. It is to ignore the imparted energy of God, for it is "God which

¹Ibid., p. 112.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure,"¹ as well as to challenge every revelation concerning God's plan of dealing with His child. Experimentally, declared Chafer, no truly born-again person has been known to live on a lower plane after he has been saved than the plane on which he lived before he was saved, and very few have been known to take advantage of grace, but mere conversion or reformation, which stops short of regeneration, may result in a return to a worse state (Luke 11:24-26). To hold over people the super human obligation of self-keeping in Christ, is but to discourage them utterly in the purpose of true Christian living and incline them to discount the very standards of God. Chafer stated that the puritans believed in security, yet were so named because of their great carefulness in life and piety.²

Cannot we rebel and be released from Christ if we so choose? Chafer answered this inquiry by stating that the human will never acts alone; whether saved persons, Philippians 2:13, or unsaved persons, Ephesians 2:2; and furthermore, God has undertaken to keep his own from all such sin. In proof of this Chafer cited the following Scripture references:

And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom (II Timothy 4:18). There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it (I Corinthians 10:13). I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish (John 10:28). Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last

¹Ibid., p. 113.

²Ibid., p. 112-113.

time (I Peter 1:5).¹

Having really tasted the riches of His infinite grace and then preferring to be lost again would be, to Chafer, the clearest evidence of insanity. He asserted that men may be assured that God keeps any child of His who is so unfortunate as to lose his reason, and if such a one were to ask to be unsaved, even if this were possible, that one would be kept by the power of God through the dark night of insanity. For this exercise of power and grace on his behalf, he will give the Father unceasing thanks throughout the ages to come.²

Why the failure of so many converts? Chafer answered this question by saying that no one can really judge another; but it is evident that converts who fail are either misguided professors "who went out from us because they were not of us" (I John 2:19),³ or they are saved and perhaps so poorly taught, or so neglected in shepherd care, that they are utterly confused and are "walking in darkness" (I John 1:6). Conversion, as understood by Chafer, is but a human act of turning about which can be done many times so that even a believer may be converted. Being born-again is a different experience entirely, with no repetition whatever, nor occasion for repetition. There are some modern revival converts who have heard nothing but appeals for reformation and a general exhortation to be identified with religion, who can hardly be expected to

¹Ibid., p. 114.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 114-115.

come under the same precious keeping of God, as those who have come to God by Jesus Christ, and who have intelligently rested in the saving grace of God as revealed in His Son.¹

Positive Argument

At this point Chafer began to state his positive teaching concerning the Christian's unconditional security. That the believer is not only saved by grace but is said to stand in grace, expressing the thought of enduring, continuing, or abiding unchanged, he posited on the basis of the following passages of Scripture which he quoted: "We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Romans 5:2), and "This is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (I Peter 5:12).² Human ability can no more maintain a right standing before God than it can attain such a standing in the first place. The keeping ministry of God in grace is but the realization of that which is purposed, programmed, and wholly provided for in his saving ministry in grace. Those who are saved here in every case have, according to Chafer, been kept from the moment they were saved; not because they remained good, but because of the fact that unmerited favor is provided for every one who is saved by grace.³

The fact and force of divine grace as related to the keeping power of God was given a three-fold classification by Chafer for specific consideration, first, as it was included in every consideration of the prin-

¹Ibid., p. 114-115.

²Lewis Sperry Chafer, Grace (Chicago: Moody Press, 1943), p.

³Ibid., p. 55-57.

ciples of grace; second, as it is implied in every revelation wherein is presented the truth that grace reaches into the coming ages for its consummation; and third, as it is seen in the manifold provision and safe-guards which He had made to that end.¹

The keeping power of God through grace, Chafer contended, was included in every consideration of the principles of grace. To have accepted the true grace principles in salvation is to be committed to those self-same principles, which in turn, form the basis of the keeping power of God through grace.²

This basis is three-fold. First, Chafer stated, there must be the disposal of every condemnation which divine righteousness could impose because of sin. Since the keeping power of God is related only to the believer, he felt the question which confronted us then was this: Are the sins which Christian commit after they are saved divinely judged and disposed of in the cross equally with the sins of the unsaved? This he affirmed on the basis of I John 2:2, "And he is the propitiation for our (Christians) sins; and not ours only, but also the sins of the whole world," and I John 1:7, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us (Christians) from all sin."³ In his thinking the supposition that God does not deal judicially with the Christian's sins until they are committed is erroneous. According to Chafer, every sin that unsaved or saved individuals have committed or ever would commit was dealt with in perfect

¹Ibid., p. 57.

²Ibid., p. 58.

³Ibid., p. 59.

divine judgment by Christ at the cross, therefore since then God never condemns either saint or sinner because of sin. The unsaved are not condemned primarily because of their sins, he affirmed, but because they do not believe on Christ who bore their sins. (John 3:18). His contention that the Christian, having accepted Christ, could never be condemned for lack of saving faith was based on the following Scriptures, which he quoted:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that hath sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24). There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1, R.V.). He that believeth on him is not condemned (John 3:18).¹

Chafer believed that the above Scriptures proved that the Cross of Christ is the foundation of the Christian's eternal security and standing in grace, but adds that God does undertake to safeguard the Christian from every practice of sin and as a righteous Father chastens where there is need.²

In introducing the question, "Does sin unsave the Christian?", Chafer contended that one in answering affirmatively would be forced to take the position that, at a given time, he was either sinlessly perfect or a lost soul. The true reply to this question, he stated, was to be found in the Scriptures and in human experience.³

¹Ibid., p. 60-61.

²Ibid., p. 61.

³Ibid.

Chafer asserted that revelation directly states that Christians sin. The Epistles of the New Testament while plainly declaring that Christians do sin, he affirmed, as plainly declare that Christians are not condemned. This seeming moral inconsistency is adjusted, in his thinking at least, by that higher morality made possible through the death of Christ.¹

Human experience, Chafer thought, indisputably testifies to the fact that Christians do remain saved in spite of their evident imperfections and sin. That Christians have remained so for any duration of time, long or short, he felt, was final proof that there was divine provision for their keeping which could in no sense have been supposed that they were standing in their own goodness or perfection. To him it was also final proof that they are neither lost when they sin nor sinless when they remain saved. The power of God has been made righteously free to act through the shed blood of Christ in effecting the Christian's keeping. The blood overcomes sin but sin does not overcome the blood. Thus in Chafer's thinking the Father was unconditionally free to extend grace to keep His child through the blood that has been shed.²

Second, Chafer said, there must be a disposal of every human obligation. That every human work has been set aside and salvation was now offered only as a gift of God, Chafer stated, was evident from the Scriptures. There could be no peace of heart if Christians paid their way or

¹Ibid., p. 61

²Ibid., p. 63.

by their own good lives and service made it imperative for God to keep them saved. Chafer felt that one could never be assured that he had accomplished all his Christian duty or complied with all the demands found in the holy ideal of God. To attempt to repay God for the riches of His grace would be to place a sordid value on the priceless treasure of heaven's glory. He will keep by grace alone, and not on a basis of exchange whereby Christian faithfulness would be made the purchasing medium.¹

Thirdly, Chafer affirmed that there must be a disposal of every human merit. Through divine decree every human merit has been set aside in order that pure grace might reign unchallenged and uncomplicated. Salvation is based on the loving goodness of God and not on the supposed worthiness of the sinner, and in like manner God is free to continue to exercise grace toward the Christian. Chafer summed up this section by saying that God's abiding purpose was guaranteed by His unconditional covenant of eternal blessings.²

Chafer asserted that the keeping power of God through grace was implied in every revelation wherein was presented the truth that grace reaches unto the coming age for its consummation. Sin has been dealt with through the cross of Christ and all human merit and obligation, as related to salvation, has been set aside by God's decree, thus He is righteously free to preserve His child forever. He will continue the

¹Ibid., p. 63.

²Ibid., p. 63-64.

exercise of His grace in saving the sinner and transforming him into the image of Christ until the divine objective is consummated and the believer is lifted up to the highest glory. God has perfectly delivered himself from every limitation so that His ways are absolutely gracious and His purpose and power are irresistible. Not being limited to the moment when the sinner accepts the saving grace that is in Christ Jesus, the covenant promises of salvation reach on from the first moment of faith, and guarantee every step of the way to the last moment of fruition. That even the word salvation in its largest Biblical meaning covers all that is past, present, and future, in the out-working of grace of God for the one who believes, Chafer based on the two Scriptures quoted below:

He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6). For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).¹

He declared that in the great promises of grace there is no measurement as to time and no human condition imposed, other than believing, and cited the following Scripture as proof:

But as many as received him, to them gave he power (right) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name (John 1:12). He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life (John 3:36). Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24). And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out (John 6:37). For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (Romans 1:16). That he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Romans 3:26). For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Romans 10:4).²

¹Ibid., p. 65.

²Ibid.

The unalterable and unconditional covenant of God in grace, Chafer felt, is sufficiently stated in the above Scriptures, warranting no further comment.

Chafer, in answering the question concerning whether a person once saved can ever be lost again, stated that the fear of eternal perdition destroys the believer's peace and even to suppose that one once saved might be lost again limits the saving grace of God as it is in Christ. The claim that one who is once saved might be lost again is usually based on a form of rationalism which, although emphasizing certain passages of Scripture, does not consider sufficiently the testimony of all the Word of God. Church creeds have taken opposite sides concerning this question, but Chafer observed that belief or disbelief in the security of all who are saved was more personal than creedal. The body of New Testament Scriptures, he said, declare the believer to be secure even though there are upwards to twenty-five Scriptures cited as evidence by those who maintain that the believer is insecure. An individual cannot be secure and insecure at the same time, therefore, one body of Scripture must of necessity conform to the other.¹

To Chafer the question resolved itself to one issue - did Christ do enough on the cross to make it possible for God righteously to keep one saved as well as righteously to save at all? This question strikes at the very heart of the revelation regarding the cross, therefore its importance cannot be overestimated. The solution of the question involves the foundation of personal rest and peace, and must also properly

¹Lewis Sperry Chafer, Major Bible Themes (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Ass'n, 1937), p. 187.

relate Christian service. Chafer felt that no one could rest while in terror of eternal damnation, nor be normal in service if he was confronted with the superhuman task of self-keeping in the realm of the new creation.¹ To know man's perfect standing in Christ does not lead to laxity in daily life, but rather it is the strongest possible incentive to holy living that the human heart can know. Chafer declared that carelessness of life has never resulted from believing this revelation.²

According to Chafer the positive doctrine of security rests upon the truth which declares twelve unchangeable facts of divine grace and its accomplishments. The climax of his whole argument for the unconditional perseverance of the saints was reached during his discussion of these facts.

The Covenant of God. The direct, unqualified promises of security (John 5:24; 6:37; 10:28) form an unconditional covenant in which God declared what he is going to do, which was according to Chafer an expression of His unchangeable will. The eternal purpose is revealed and its realization is assured through divine grace in Romans 8:29,30, and this apart from human work and merit.³

The power of God. The Scriptures assert that God, being free from every limitation, is able to keep all who are saved through Christ. Chafer cited the following Scriptures to support his view: John 10:29, Ro-

¹Chafer, Salvation, p. 97.

²Ibid., p. 74.

³Chafer, Major Bible Themes, p. 189.

mans 4:21; 8:31; 38, 39; 14:4; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 3:21; II Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25; and Jude 24.¹

The love of God. Chafer declared that God's love for his own is a motive which can never fail. That love is declared in Romans 5:8-11, to exceed even His love for sinners because of which He gave His Son to die (John 3:36). God loves men much more when they are redeemed, justified, and reconciled to him than when they are sinners and He sent His Son to die for them. Such knowledge-surpassing love for those redeemed at such limitless cost is sufficient assurance that they could never be plucked out of His hand until He has exhausted every resource of His infinite power.²

The prayer of the Son of God. Christ prayed that those whom the Father had given should be kept (John 17:9-12,15,20). We may believe that this prayer which had its beginning on earth is continued in heaven (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; Luke 22:31,32). From the above, Chafer concluded that no prayer of the Son of God could ever be unanswered, and in this fact there is abundant assurance of security.³

The efficacious substitutionary death of the Son of God. The sufficient answer to the condemning power of sin is the death of Christ (Romans 8:34). The claim that the saved one might be lost again, Chafer

¹Ibid., p. 189.

²Ibid., p. 189-190.

³Ibid., p. 190.

understood to proceed on the supposition that Christ has not borne all the sins the believer will commit, and that having saved a soul, God might be disappointed and surprised by unexpected, subsequent sin. On the contrary, he stated, God being omniscient, foreknows every sin that will darken the life of His child and God has been propitiated by the sufficient sacrificial blood of Christ that was shed (I John 2:2). Because that blood avails for the sins of both the saved and the unsaved, God continues saving the meritless and keeps them forever, not for their sakes only, but to satisfy His own love and manifest His own grace (Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:7-10). Since salvation and safe-keeping depend only on the sacrifice and merit of the Son of God, all condemnation is forever removed. Chafer listed the following verses in support of the proceeding statement: John 3:18; 5:24; Romans 8:1, R.V.; I Corinthians 11:31,32.¹

The resurrection of the Son of God. Chafer declared that two vital facts connected with the resurrection of Christ make certain the eternal security of the believer. The first of these is the gift of God, eternal life (John 3:16; 10:28; and Romans 6:23), the resurrection life of Christ (Colossians 2:12; 3:1), which is as eternal and incapable of dissolution or death. The second fact is that, by union with the resurrected Christ through baptism with the Spirit and the impartation of His eternal life, the child of God is made a part of the New Creation and stands in the federal headship of the Last Adam. Chafer said there is no fall possible for the weakest one who is "in Him," the Last Adam,

¹Ibid., p. 190-191.

since Christ cannot fall.¹

The intercession and shepherdhood of the Son of God. Christ's present ministry in glory has to do only with the eternal security of the saved on earth. As Intercessor, Christ, knowing the weakness, ignorance, and immaturity of the believers, not only prays for them at every point of their need (Luke 22:31,32; John 17:9,15,20; Romans 8:34), but on the grounds of His unchanging priesthood and sufficiency, guarantees that they will be kept saved forever (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 5:10; John 14:19), Chafer asserted.²

The advocacy of the Son of God. Sin is always sinful in the sight of God for God is infinitely holy, therefore the Christian's sins, concerning which there is guilt, merits eternal condemnation, and judgment would be executed were it not that, as Advocate, Christ pleads the only ground upon which the cure for sin can be effected (I John 2:2), the saving value of His own blood, before the throne of God (I John 2:1; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24), when the Christian is sinning, not after he has sinned. Thus there is no period of insecurity, Chafer affirmed.³

The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. The believer is made a child of God (John 1:13; 3:3-6; Titus 3:4-6; I Peter 1:23; II Peter 1:4; I John 3:9), and heir of God and a joint heir with Christ (Romans

¹Ibid., p. 191.

²Ibid., p. 191-192.

³Ibid., p. 192.

8:16,17) by the regenerating work of the Spirit. Having thus been born of the Spirit, he has partaken of the divine nature and that nature, Chafer contended, is never said to be removed or disannulled. Chafer said that there is no Scripture that teaches that regeneration ever needs to be repeated.¹

Spirit's indwelling. That the Spirit indwells every believer Chafer based on John 7:37-39; Romans 5:5; 8:9; I Corinthians 2:12; 6:19; I John 3:24 and that he never leaves him, Chafer believed, was sufficiently grounded upon John 14:16. He may be grieved by unconfessed sin (Ephesians 4:30) or quenched in the sense that He is resisted (I Thessalonians 5:19), but the divine Presence, in the heart, he asserted, is never removed. Chafer thereby concluded that the child of God continues as such forever.²

Baptism with the Spirit. In baptism, through the ministry of the Spirit, the believer is joined to that body of which Christ is the head (I Corinthians 12:13; 6:17; Galatians 3:27) and he is therefore said to be in Christ. In that union, old things - as to position and relationship which might be the ground of condemnation - are passed away and the new ones are of God (II Corinthians 5:17,18), thus he is as secure as Christ, Chafer reasoned, for he has been accepted forever "in the beloved."³

¹Ibid., p. 192.

²Ibid., p. 193.

³Ibid.

The Spirit's sealing. Chafer declared all true Christians are sealed with the Spirit unto the day of redemption and referred to Ephesians 4:30; II Corinthians 1:22; and Ephesians 1:13 which he said should read "having believed ye were sealed." This sealing of God is for God's own purpose and glory. Since it is unto the day of redemption this ministry of the Spirit also guarantees the eternal security of all who are saved.¹

From this extensive body of truth, it was concluded by Chafer that God's purpose, which is preserving His own, can never be defeated since He has met every possible hindrance. Sin has been borne by a Substitute, who pleads the efficacy of His blood before God in order that the believer might be kept. The believer's will is held in divine control (Philippians 2:13) and every testing is tempered by the infinite grace and wisdom of God (I Corinthians 10:13). While Chafer has treated salvation and safe-keeping as separate divine undertakings, he said that the Bible recognized no distinction between the two. There is no salvation purposed, offered or undertaken under grace which is not infinitely perfect and that does not abide forever.²

III. THE VIEW OF LOUIS BERKHOF

The last of the three Calvinistic representatives, Louis Berkhof born in Emmen, Netherlands in 1873, belonged to the Christian Reformed Church. Educated at Calvin College and Seminary, Princeton, and the

¹Ibid., p. 193.

²Ibid., p. 194.

Divinity School of the University of Chicago, he pastored at Allendale, Michigan, and Oakdale Park Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. He taught at Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1906 to 1944 and was the president from 1931 to 1944.¹

The Doctrine of the Perseverance of Saints in History

Berkhof began by noting briefly the form given the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints historically. He stated that the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is to the effect that they whom God has regenerated and effectually called to a state of grace, can neither totally or finally fall away from that state, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved. The doctrine as first explicitly taught by Augustine, Berkhof felt was not consistent, for Augustine held that the elect could not so fall as to be finally lost, but considered it possible that some who were endowed with new life and true faith could fall from grace completely and at last suffer eternal damnation. Berkhof claimed that the Semi-Pelagianism of the Church of Rome included the doctrine of free will, denying the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints and making their perseverance dependent on the uncertain obedience of man. The Lutheran Church makes the doctrine contingent on man's continued activity of faith and assumes that true believers can fall completely from grace.²

¹Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (New York: American Book Stratford Press, Inc., c1955), I, p. 128.

²L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1949, p. 545.

Berkhof insisted that it is only in the Calvinistic Churches that the doctrine is given the place to which it was rightfully restored by the Reformers, and maintained as affording absolute assurance. The Canon of Dort declares:

But God, who is rich in mercy, according to His unchangeable purpose of election, does not wholly withdraw the Holy Spirit from His own people even in their grievous falls; nor suffers them to proceed so far as to lose the grace of adoption and forfeit the state of justification, or to commit the sin unto death or against the Holy Spirit; nor does He permit them to be totally deserted, and to plunge themselves into everlasting destruction.¹

Berkhof went on to say that the Arminians, rejecting this view, made the perseverance of the saints dependent on their will to believe and their good works. Although the Wesleyan-Arminians held to this position, Arminius himself avoided this extreme. In giving a negative answer to the question, whether or not a Christian can completely fall from the state of grace and be finally lost, the Reformed or Calvinistic Churches stand practically alone.²

Statement of Doctrine of Perseverance

Since the term "perseverance of the saints" is liable to be misunderstood, Berkhof insisted that the doctrine of perseverance of saints requires careful statement. First, it should be noted that the doctrine is not merely to the effect that the elect will certainly be saved in the end, though Augustine had given it that form, but teaches specifically that they who have once been regenerated and effectually called by God to

¹"The Canon of Dort", V, Article 6, quoted in L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1949), p. 545.

²Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p. 545.

a state of grace, can never completely fall from that state and thus fail to attain to eternal salvation, though they may sometimes be overcome by evil and fall into sin. The life of regeneration and the habits that develop out of it in the way of sanctification can never entirely disappear. But this perseverance is not to be regarded as an inherent property of the believer or as a continuous activity of man by means of which he perseveres in the way of salvation.¹ The following quote shows what Berkhof meant here:

When Strong speaks of it as 'the voluntary continuance, on the part of the Christian, in faith and well-doing,' and as 'the human side or aspect of that spiritual process which as viewed from the divine side we call sanctification,' - This is certainly liable to create the impression that perseverance depends on man.²

The theologians of the Reformed Churches do not consider the perseverance of the saints as being, primarily, a disposition or an activity of the believer, though they believe that man co-operates in it just as he does in sanctification. They stress the fact that the believer, if left to himself, would fall away. Strictly speaking, it is not man but God who perseveres, for Berkhof defined perseverance as that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer by which the work of divine grace that is begun in the heart, is continued and brought to completion. He said that it is because God never forsakes His work that believers continue to stand to the end.³

¹Ibid., p. 546.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Proof of the Doctrine

The following statements of Scripture are used by Berkhof to prove the doctrine of perseverance:

In John 10:27-29 we read: 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My father who hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.' Paul says in Romans 11:29: 'For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of.'¹

Berkhof interpreted this to mean that the grace of God revealed in His calling is never withdrawn as though God turned from His original purpose prompting His calling. This he felt is specifically true here of Israel, but also felt it can be applied generally.²

The Apostle comforts the believing Philippians with the words: 'Being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ' Philippians 1:6.³

Berkhof believed this was written by Paul to comfort believing Philippians.

In II Thessalonians 3:3 he says: 'But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and guard you from the evil one.' In II Timothy 1:12 he sounds a note of rejoicing: 'For I know Him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day.' And in 4:18 of the same Epistle he glories in the fact that the Lord will deliver him from every evil work and will save him unto His heavenly kingdom.⁴

Having established the Scriptural grounds for eternal perseverance, to his own satisfaction, Berkhof attempted to prove the doctrine of per-

¹Ibid., p. 546.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 547.

⁴Ibid.

severance inferentially from several other doctrines.

The Doctrine of Election. He said that election does not mean that if they do their duty some will be favored with certain external privileges and may be saved, but election means that they who belong to the number of the elect shall finally be saved and can never fall short of perfect salvation. It is an election unto a definite end - salvation. God, in working it out, endows believers with such influences of the Holy Spirit as to lead them, not only to accept Christ, but to persevere and to be saved to the uttermost.¹

The Doctrine of the Covenant of Redemption. In this connection Berkhof stated that God gave His people to His Son, in the covenant of redemption, as the reward for His obedience and suffering. This reward was not left contingent on any uncertain faithfulness of man, but was fixed from eternity. It is impossible that they who are reckoned as being in Christ, and as forming a part of His reward, can be separated from Him (Romans 8:38,39), and that they who have entered the covenant as a communion of life should fall out, for God does not go back on His promises.²

The efficacy of the merits and intercession of Christ. Berkhof understood the saving work of Christ to mean that Christ in His atoning work, paid the price to purchase the sinner's pardon and acceptance. The

¹Ibid., p. 547.

²Ibid.

perfect ground for the justification of the sinner is constituted by His righteousness, and it is impossible that one who is justified by the payment of such a perfect and efficacious price should again fall under condemnation. Christ also makes constant intercession for those who are given Him of the Father and His intercessory prayer for His people is always efficacious (John 11:42; Hebrews 7:25).¹

The mystical union with Christ. They who by faith are united to Christ, become partakers of His Spirit, and thus become one body with Him, pulsating with the life of the Spirit. They share in the life of Christ and because He lives, they live. That they should again be removed from the body, thus frustrating the divine ideal, is impossible. Since the union originated in a permanent and unchangeable cause, the free and eternal love of God, it is permanent. Such was Berkhof's view at this point.²

The work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Here Berkhof quoted Dabney who said:

It is a low and unworthy estimate of the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and of His work in the heart, to suppose that He will begin the work now, and presently desert it; that the vital spark of the heavenly birth is an ignis fatuus, burning for a short season, and then expiring in utter darkness; that the spiritual life communicated in the new birth, is a sort of spasmodic or galvanic vitality, giving the outward appearance of life in the dead soul and then dying.³

¹Ibid., p. 547.

²Ibid.

³Dabney, Systematic and Polemical Theology, p. 699, quoted in Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p. 547.

John 3:36; 5:24; and 6:54 were cited to support the fact that the believer in this life is already in possession of salvation and eternal life, which Berkhof believed would be everlasting.¹

The assurance of salvation. That believers can in this life attain to the assurance of salvation, Berkhof thought, is quite evident from Scriptures like Hebrews 3:14; 6:11; 10:22; and II Peter 1:10. If it were possible for believers to fall from grace at any moment, this would seem to be entirely out of the question. Only those who stand in the firm conviction that God will perfect the work which he has begun, can enjoy the assurance of salvation.²

Objections to the Doctrine of Perseverance

In the next step in his development of the doctrine of final perseverance Berkhof endeavored to meet three major objections to the doctrine of perseverance.

The Doctrine of Perseverance is inconsistent with human freedom. His answer was that this objection proceeds on the false assumption that real freedom consists in the liberty of indifference, or the power of contrary choice in moral and spiritual matters. True liberty, Berkhof asserted, is self determination in the direction of holiness. Man is never more free than when moving consciously in the direction of God. Through the grace of God the Christian stands in that liberty.³

¹Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p. 548.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

The Doctrine of Perseverance leads to indolence, license, and even immorality. The idea that a false security results, Berkhof contended is a mistaken notion. Although the Bible tells us that we are kept by the grace of God, it does not encourage the idea that God keeps us without constant watchfulness, diligence, and prayer on our part. It is hard to see how a doctrine can be an incentive for sin, when the doctrine assures the believer of a perseverance in holiness. It seemed to Berkhof that the certainty of success in the active striving for sanctification would be the best possible stimulus to our greater exertion.¹

The Doctrine of Perseverance is contrary to Scripture of three general classes. First are the warnings against apostasy which would seem quite uncalled for if the believer could not fall away. Berkhof answered by saying that the warnings found in such passages as Matthew 24:12; Colossians 1:23; Hebrews 2:1; 3:14; 6:11; and I John 2:6, prompt self-examination and are instrumental in keeping believers in the way of perseverance as they regard the whole matter from the side of man. They prove that the use of means is necessary to prevent those addressed from committing apostasy, not that they will apostatize. For an illustration of this principle he suggested comparing Acts 27:22-25 with verse 31 of the same chapter. Second, are the exhortations, urging believers to continue in the way of sanctification, which would appear to be unnecessary if there is no doubt about it that they will continue to the end. Berkhof answered that these are found in connection with such warnings as

¹Ibid., p. 548.

those referred to under the first group of objections, and they serve the same purpose. They prove only that God used moral means for the accomplishment of moral ends, and not that any of the believers will not persevere. Third are Scripture records said to be cases of apostasy such as I Timothy 1:19,20; II Timothy 2:17,18; 4:10; II Peter 2:1,2; and also Hebrews 6:4-6. To these cases Berkhof replied by saying that unless it be shown first that the persons indicated in these passages had true faith in Christ, and not a mere temporal faith, which is not rooted in regeneration, these instances do not prove the contention that real believers, in possession of true saving faith, can fall from grace. There are persons, the Bible teaches us, who profess the true faith, and yet are not of faith, as found in such references as Romans 9:6; I John 2:9; Revelation 3:1.¹ "John says of some of them, 'They went out from us,' and adds by way of explanation, 'But they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us.' I John 2:19."²

Conclusion

Berkhof concluded his argument by saying that salvation of man is made dependent on the human will rather than on the grace of God if the doctrine of perseverance is denied. Of course, this consideration will have no effect on those who share the Pelagian conception of salvation as autosoteric, he observed, but certainly ought to cause those to pause who glory in being saved by grace. The idea is that, after man is brought to

¹Ibid., p. 548-549.

²Ibid., p. 549.

a state of grace by the operation of the Holy Spirit alone, or by the joint operation of the Holy Spirit and the will of man, it rests solely with man, as he sees fit, to continue in faith or to forsake the faith. This makes it impossible for man to attain the blessed assurance of faith.¹ It is of the utmost importance, consequently, to maintain the doctrine of perseverance, for, as Berkhof noted in quoting Hovey: "It may be a source of great comfort and power--an incentive to gratitude, a motive to self-sacrifice, and a pillar of fire in the hour of danger."²

IV. SUMMARY

Chafer declared that "saving faith is an act: not an attitude."³ Other than believing, there are no human conditions imposed in the great promises of grace. No believer knows, remembers or has confessed every sin. To hold over people the superhuman task of self-keeping in Christ is to discourage them in Christian living and incline them to discount God's standards. Very few have been known to take advantage of grace because of the new nature which indwells each child of God. The human will never acts alone. Preferring to be lost after tasting the riches of grace is the clearest evidence of insanity and God would secure that person's soul in saving grace through the period of insanity. Converts who fail are either misguided professors who are not possessors or are poorly taught confused individuals who are saved, but are walking in

¹Ibid., p. 549.

²Hovey as quoted in Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p. 549.

³Chafer, Salvation, p. 112.

darkness. Saved people have been kept, not because they remained good, but because of grace. Every sin humanity had committed or ever would commit, was perfectly dealt with in judgment at the cross. Revelation states that Christians sin, but their sin is dealt with in that higher morality made possible through the death of Christ. Christians may lose their rewards but not salvation. Falling from grace is not caused by sinning but by returning to the bondage of the law. Eternal security is a doctrine of Scripture while assurance is only the personal confidence of a present salvation. To know man's present standing in Christ is the strongest possible incentive to holy living. The doctrine of security rests upon twelve facts of divine grace: God's covenant, power and love, Christ's prayer, death, resurrection, intercession, and advocacy, and the Spirit's regenerating work, indwelling, baptism, and sealing. God's purpose is to preserve His own and it can never be defeated. The believer's will is held in divine control. There is no salvation under grace which does not abide forever.

Once a person has been regenerated he can never completely fall away although he may fall into sin, for, as Berkhof has said earlier, perseverance is that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit by which the work of divine grace, begun in the heart of the believer, is continued and brought to completion. They who belong to the number of the elect shall finally be saved. In the covenant of redemption, God gave His people to His Son. This reward was fixed from eternity and was not conditioned upon man's faithfulness. Because of the payment of the perfect price of justification it is impossible that one should again fall under condemnation. That one should be removed from the body of Christ, and

frustrate the divine ideal, is impossible. The Holy Spirit will not desert the work that He has begun in the heart. Assurance of salvation would be impossible if it were possible to fall from grace at any moment. Man is most free when consciously moving in the direction of God. Certainty of success in striving for sanctification is the best possible stimulus to ever greater exertion. God uses moral means for the accomplishment of moral ends. Only those who profess faith and are not of faith can fall. Denial of the doctrine of perseverance makes salvation dependent on the human will rather than the grace of God. Hodge understood the perseverance of the saints to rest solely on what is not of ourselves but of God, the primal source being the love of God.

CHAPTER IV

AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND OF DIFFERENCES IN THE
WESLEYAN-ARMINIAN AND THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINES OF PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS

CHAPTER IV

AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND OF DIFFERENCES IN THE WESLEYAN-ARMINIAN AND THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINES OF PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS

An attempt has been made in this chapter to compare the Wesleyan-Arminian and the Calvinistic doctrines, first pointing out their underlying principles and the areas of agreement and then the differences in both schools of thought.

I. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE

There is a difference in principle involved underlying and running through the two systems of thought.

Calvinism

The Calvinists stress a certain interpretation of the grace of God which, in their understanding, is unmerited favor. Grace thus excludes any ground or rational basis for salvation other than the unfathomable love of God, in their understanding. God's expression of His love took concrete form in the substitutionary death of His Son to whom God promised to give the redeemed as a reward. The Calvinists believe that the quantity of that reward was known and fixed before the plan of salvation was put into effect. This number of persons given to God's Son as the redeemed are known to the Calvinists, as the elect. Because God has promised His Son the number of the elect, He is obligated to bestow upon them the gift of faith. Because the gift is for the purpose of saving the man who has been promised to the Son of God as reward for His freely and faithfully performing His part in the plan of redemption, this faith

cannot fail because God cannot fail. Therefore once one of the elect has exercised the gift of faith in believing on Jesus as Saviour, he shall continue with the number of the redeemed. Once one is identified as one of the elect through the evident exercise of faith that brings regeneration, he cannot be lost again from the number of the saved that make up Christ's reward, for God is as good as His word.

Since Adam's fall, all men are condemned, sold under sin, guilty, and deserving damnation, thus God would be just in damning all men. God has, however, chosen to save some as a reward for the faithful obedience and free participation of His Son in bearing the guilt of sin on Calvary and thus buying back or ransoming the elect from a **deserving** hell. How the number of the elect was determined or on what basis or what rational process was used in arriving at this number or why God did not determine to include all in the number of the elect has not been explained by the Calvinists. Yet, in their thinking, people probably have no right to ask these questions, but should only rejoice in the fact that God is merciful to some, and should pray for mercy that they might find themselves included in this number of the elect.

Wesleyan-Arminianism

On the other hand the Wesleyan-Arminians also stress grace as unmerited favor. Since all sinners, and this includes everyone, deserve to be condemned for lack of righteousness, the fact that God instituted a plan of redemption is unmerited favor. God's love is evidenced in the gift of His Son who made atonement for all sin provisionally and conquered sin personally. This is the ground of salvation. That salvation

may become an actuality is conditioned upon the exercise of faith. The ground of faith is bestowed when a person recognizes his sinful need and God's gracious ability to meet that need in Christ. What his response is determines his relationship to God. If he submits to the will of God in recognizing Jesus as His Saviour personally and desires to honor Him with the remainder of his life, regeneration takes place and the new life begins. If the response is continued rebellion and unyieldedness, faith does not lay hold on the provision and one remains in his sins. One who has subordinated his will to the will of God, if he would be finally saved, must keep his will surrendered in the faith that God's way is best for him continually, until Jesus comes or physical death releases a man's spirit to be with those of kindred mind. Thus the reward which God gave His Son was defined in terms of quality and those who fulfilled the conditions specified for salvation were promised as the reward. As long as one's faith is active and vital he is persevering in salvation. While exercising faith in God man cannot fall from salvation. The power of contrary choice makes salvation moral. The ground of perseverance is God's provision and final perseverance is man's responsibility as he must choose whether or not to exercise the means of grace.

Calvinistic Premise

The premise of the Calvinistic doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is found in their doctrine of divine grace, which basically is that God as divine Sovereign can bestow unmerited favor in saving whom He wills with no other limitations, for faith, the condition of salvation, is in itself a gift of God. Thus the perseverance of the saints, as the Calvinists understand it, is primarily an activity of God in continual

bestowing unmerited favor in bringing to bear upon the individual means that shall eventuate in his being glorified with Christ and finally saved. This view is essentially fatalistic and as such makes the plan of salvation amoral.

Wesleyan-Arminian Premise

The premise of the Wesleyan-Arminian doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is found in their concept of the doctrine of grace which gives place for human responsibility in the basis for the personal application of God's provision for salvation. That it is unmerited favor that the divine Sovereign has provided a plan for man's salvation is granted. This is grace. The basis of application must be in moral harmony also with the attributes of God other than His love, which in both doctrines is seen as the reservoir from which grace emanates. Salvation is applied to the individual who exercises his gracious ability made possible through God's provision in Christ. The consciousness that God has a provision whereby one may become righteous is made known to every man. First, gracious ability is given as each individual asks for forgiveness with confidence that Christ can forgive. God's power over sin and to become righteous is applied only as individuals comply to the law of receptivity, namely, obedience to Christ's commands.

II. AREA OF SIN

Definition of Sin

Agreement. The Wesleyan-Arminians and the Calvinists agree that sin has both a positive and a negative aspect - transgression of law or

want of conformity to law.

Differences. Calvinists understand sin to be any transgression of or want of conformity to the law of God while the Wesleyan-Arminians believe this law must be known before transgression or want of conformity to it becomes sin.

Doctrine of Sin as Related to Perseverance

Calvinism. Sin is present in its negative aspect in the Christian as an unknown lack of conformity to the law of God or the image of Christ but is positively absent as a willful transgression of God's law or rebellion against the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Wesleyan-Arminianism. Sin as known transgression or known want of conformity to the law of God is totally absent in the Christian. Any unknown transgression or lack of conformity to the law of God is error due to ignorance, which when it becomes known demands repentance and henceforth correct action.

III. AREA OF GRACE

Definition of Grace

Agreement. The Wesleyan-Arminians and the Calvinists agree that grace is unmerited favor. God's greatest manifestation of grace was seen in the death of His Son as the sufficient ransom ~~price~~ for sin.

Differences. Grace as seen by Calvinists includes the effectual working of God in saving the elect. Grace as seen by Wesleyan-Arminians

includes gracious ability extended to man through faith in God's provision of the death of His Son.

Doctrine of Grace as Related to Perseverance

Calvinism. Unmerited favor is bestowed upon the elect in the form of saving faith. Once one of the elect has believed, God's unmerited favor in the form of His keeping power is continually operative until he is saved finally.

Wesleyan-Arminianism. Unmerited favor is God's inclusion in His provision for the illumination and witness of the Holy Spirit in making known the means whereby one may be kept free from sin.

IV. AREA OF JUSTIFICATION

Definition of Justification

Agreement. The Wesleyan-Arminians and the Calvinists agree that justification is the judicial act which makes man's salvation legally possible through removed condemnation.

Differences. The Calvinists hold that the only ground of justification is the finished work of Christ on behalf of the elect, thus only the elect are justified. The Wesleyan-Arminians see justification as God's act of removing guilt for past sins rendering one legally righteous. This act was provisionally accomplished for all men by the giving of His Son as the ransom price for sin and becomes personally applied to the individual upon his expression of faith in God's provision.

Doctrine of Justification as Related to Perseverance

Calvinism. Once one has been justified he can never be condemned but can only be chastised or forfeit his rewards.

Wesleyan-Arminianism. Justification is maintained only if there is a continual faithfulness and obedience to the Holy Spirit. Whenever there is willful disobedience or willful lack of conformity to the law of God sin with guilt and condemnation is instituted and one is no longer just in the sight of God.

V. AREA OF FAITH

Definition of Faith

Agreement. Wesleyan-Arminians and the Calvinists agree that faith is a necessary ingredient for the beginning of the new life in an individual.

Differences. Calvinists say faith is a gift bestowed upon an individual by an act of God which issues in being born again. The Wesleyan-Arminians say faith is the ability to trust in and the exercise of trust toward God or ability to believe and believing the evidence presented of God's providing the basis for man's salvation.

Doctrine of Faith as Related to Perseverance

Calvinism. Faith is the grace that is bestowed continually upon the elect once it is initiated by God, thus an attitude given through the continual activity of God.

Wesleyan-Arminianism. Faith is continual trust in God that finds its expression in obedience to His known will, thus a disposition or an attitude of man willfully expressed on the basis of evidence known.

VI. AREA OF WILL

Definition of Will

Agreement. The Wesleyan-Arminians and the Calvinists agree that will is the faculty of self determination.

Differences. The Calvinists say the unregenerate man's will is held in bondage by Satan and the regenerate man's will is liberated from this bondage and held in divine control whereby man is enabled to move in the direction of holiness. Human will never acts alone. Freedom of the will as understood by the Calvinists is the liberty to pursue holiness and not the power of contrary choice. The Wesleyan-Arminians teach that as long as a person is in this life whether sinful or holy, he is a free moral agent on probation with power of contrary choice. Freedom of the will in the unregenerate man is power to choose in moral matters and to respond when illumined in spiritual matters. The will of the regenerate man is still free to obey or rebel against the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Doctrine of Will as Related to Perseverance

Calvinism. The believer's will is held in divine control once freed from the domain of Satan by the bestowal of the gift of faith. For true liberty is self determination in the direction of holiness until

conformed to the image of Christ and death releases man's spirit to be in the presence of the Lord.

Wesleyan-Arminianism. Once one has exercised faith unto regeneration he still has the power of contrary choice and may fall into sin and condemnation if he chooses not to exercise the means of grace provided until man's final choice is ratified by death.

VII. AREA OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Definition of Righteousness

Agreement. The Wesleyan-Arminians and the Calvinists agree that righteousness must be initiated in the individual before a sinner becomes a saint.

Differences. To the Calvinists belief in Christ is counted to a man as righteousness. To the Wesleyan-Arminians obedience in faith is counted to a man as righteousness.

Doctrine of Righteousness as Related to Perseverance

Calvinism. Righteousness once initiated is continuous through the gracious activity of God.

Wesleyan-Arminianism. Righteousness continues as long as faith expresses itself in obedience to the revealed will of God.

VIII. SUMMARY

Perseverance as understood by the Calvinists is primarily an

activity of God in leading the believer in the exercise of the means of grace provided for growth in holiness. Perseverance as understood by the Wesleyan-Arminians is primarily an activity of the will of the believer which is surrendered in obedience to the leading of the Spirit in exercising the means of grace God has provided. In both systems of thought it is understood that perseverance issues in being conformed to the image of Christ.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Having presented the Wesleyan-Arminian and the Calvinistic doctrines of the perseverance of the saints and compared the underlying principles and the definition of terms as related to the understanding of the perseverance of the saints the writer has come to some conclusions which are stated in this chapter.

Basic Weakness of Calvinism

The premise of Calvinism being the doctrine of divine sovereignty in decreeing specific individuals to be predestined to be saved while those excluded of necessity are predestined to be damned excludes any rational basis of moral justice as foundational or basic in determining this choice. An arbitrary bestowal of divine favor upon only part of the race on the basis of love only is not in harmony with God's essential characteristic of holiness as balanced by divine justice. Justice demands equality of opportunity or favor, other factors being equal. If the race fell in Adam then all the individuals are in like position. God's universal appeal in the Scripture to man's will is insincere if man's will is held in divine control.

Basic Strength of Calvinism

If granted its basic premise and definition of terms Calvinism is logically sound. Its system of thought is simple. It appeals to man in revealing God's unmerited favor. All glory is given to God for man's salvation. Calvinism is awe inspiring in the emphasis of the power of

God.

Basic Weakness of Wesleyan-Arminianism

The definition of faith is partial rather than all embracing or all inclusive in its expression of trust toward God. Faith is explicit as well as implicit. Wesleyan-Arminians fail to state whether or not error is pleasing or displeasing to God.

Basic Strength of Wesleyan-Arminianism

The system makes man a responsible being. Provisionally the plan of redemption that God made for man is all inclusive yet exclusive on the basis of degree of involvement of moral principles. The determining factor upon which salvation is actuated is in the individual. Faith must be actual and active to be operative and warrant the response of God in blessing man. Wesleyan-Arminianism is awe inspiring in the emphasis of God's longsuffering, merciful kindness and justice shown through His provision.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Calvinistic Books

Berkhof, Louis. Systematic Theology. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1949.

Chafer, Lewis Sperry. Grace. Chicago: Moody Press, 1943.

_____. Major Bible Themes. Chicago: The Bible Institute Colpartage Ass'n, 1937.

_____. Salvation. Chicago: Moody Press, 1935.

Hodge, Charles. Systematic Theology. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1940, 3 volumes.

2. Wesleyan-Arminian Books

Jessop, Harry E. Foundations of Doctrine. Chicago: Chicago Evangelistic Institute, c1938.

_____. That Burning Question of Final Perseverance. Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, c1942.

Ralston, Thomas N. Elements of Divinity. Nashville: A. H. Redford, 1874.

Steele, Daniel. A Substitute for Holiness. Chicago: The Christian Witness Company, c1887.

_____. Gospel of the Comforter. Boston: The Christian Witness Company, 1897.

_____. Steele's Answers. Chicago: The Christian Witness Company, 1912.

B. SECONDARY SOURCES

Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography, V, 164. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1888.

Bible, American Standard Version, 1901. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons.

Bible, King James Version, 1611. Cleveland: The World Publishing Company.

The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, XI, 74, V,
306. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1909.

Personal Correspondance from Fern L. Todd, Comptrollor, Vennard College,
University Park, Iowa, to the author. December 16, 1960.

Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, I, 128,225. New
York: American Book-Stratford Press, Inc., 1955.