

# EDITORIAL

## Blessed Assurance (1)

Mike Willis

3579 Ruthridge Court  
Dayton, Ohio 45432



The June 25th issue of the *Midtown Church of Christ Bulletin* (1701 Oakhurst-Scenic Dr., Fort Worth, Texas) related the results of a survey which was taken in one of their ladies' classes. Here is a quotation from that article:

There were about 40 ladies present in the class room. The subject for the day was "Blessed Assurance." The class began with a survey. The single question on the survey was, "If you died today, do you think you would go to Heaven?" The results were surprising, baffling and disappointing.

About 60% of the ladies answered that they did not think they would go to Heaven should they die that day! About 20% said they would! And the remaining 20% said they could not be sure.

I am afraid that whether we like to admit it or not, this survey reflects the thinking of a goodly portion of us. We are hesitant to affirm with confidence that we are saved. Sometimes, we even portray to others a definite uncertainty about whether or not we are saved. Hence, we lack the "blessed assurance" of knowing that should Jesus come today or should we die this night that we would definitely be saved.

Some have latched on to this certain problem among us and have given a false confidence based on the false doctrine of the imputation of the perfect obedience of Christ to the believer's life. According to this theory, the Lord clothes the believer in the robes of the perfect obedience of Christ so that rather than the child of God being viewed as one who is constantly going in and out of a right relationship with God because of the sins which he commits, the Lord sees only the perfect obedience of Christ. The perfect obedience of Christ, according to this theory, is imputed to the believer to cover his sins of ignorance and the weaknesses of the flesh. This is, indeed, a comforting idea but it is not a biblical one. There are no passages which teach that the perfect obedience of Christ is imputed to anybody!

Yet, we must testify that those who have written about the perfect obedience of Christ being imputed to the believer have zeroed in on a definite problem among us—the uncertainty of salvation which many among us feel. The Bible does have somewhat to say on the fact that we can be saved and we can know that we are saved. Christians ought not to breathe doubt regarding their spiritual relationship to God. If any person has confidence that he is saved, it should be the Christian. So, let us consider how a man can know that he is saved and have the blessed assurance of salvation when he dies.

## Assurance Rests On God's Promises

Man's assurance of salvation rests upon God's promises. God has promised to extend His grace to save the man who responds to the gospel of Jesus Christ and meets the conditions laid down in that gospel. For example, God has promised to save the believer in Christ; Jesus said, "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" (Jn. 3:16). The believer in Christ can know that he is saved because of the reliability of the promises of God. God, by His very nature, is a God who cannot lie (Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18).

Man is robbed of any genuine assurance of salvation whenever he is told that he can know that he is saved on any other basis than a reliance upon the promises of God. For example, the man who believes that he is saved as a result of some kind of experience has no genuine assurance of salvation. Regarding this, Campbell wrote,

Ask such what they know concerning the pardon of their sins, and they generally refer to that idea, feeling, or impression, as proof that they were pardoned. From this, in retrospection, often spring all their confidence and their present joys. Their knowledge of remission is their recollection of such an idea, feeling, or impression. According to its vividness, or faintness, are their present comforts and hopes. If, at any time, their recollections should fail, or the original idea or impression become less vivid, doubts and fears arise; clouds overspread their heaven, gloomy feelings, and religious chills and fevers, disturb their tranquility. But, if the impression, that at a certain time they were truly converted, increase by new experiences, called by them the witness of the Spirit, the first idea, feeling, or impression, augmented by more recent ideas, feelings, and impressions of a similar character, produces a glow intense and a joy unutterable. Still, however, the fons et principium, the fountain and origin of all their hopes and joys, is an impression that they were at a certain time pardoned; and mark what follows, that they were at that time pardoned is an inference drawn from what passed in their minds. Their feelings were the premises, and their pardon is the conclusion (*The Millennial Harbinger*, Vol. I, p. 498).

This man's assurance of salvation is only with him so long as his experiences are renewed and remembered. Should he ever forget his experiences, his assurance of salvation would be gone. Assurance does not rest upon human experiences but upon the promises of God.

Others among us rest their assurance of salvation and assure others of salvation on the basis of some hypothetical case imagined by someone. For example, we are told that we can be sure that we are saved because if a man were driving down the road 60 m.p.h. in a 55 m.p.h. zone and had a wreck and was killed that he would be saved. Who knows what his condition would be? Hypothetical cases such as these prove nothing. Similar hypothetical cases offer just as much comfort and solace for the unbaptized and unbelievers as this one does for the believer. What is presented as a means of giving a man assurance robs one of the real confidence that one can have of his salvation. It persuades a man that he can be saved while yet in his sins, contrary to everything that God has promised us. Hence, the man who is yet in his sins is told, by such a case as this, not to worry about his salvation because God will overlook his weaknesses of the flesh. Brethren, if you think that this doctrine does not encourage a man to continue in his sins, consider the effect it

# TRUTH magazine

Vol. XXII

November 9, 1978

No. 44

EDITOR: Mike Willis

## STAFF WRITERS

Donald P. Ames	Ron Halbrook
O. C. Birdwell	Irvin Himmel
Bill Cavender	Daniel H. King
Roy Cogdill	John McCort
Karl Diestelkamp	Earl Robertson
Johnie Edwards	Keith Sharp
Larry Hafley	Jimmy Tuten
Steve Wolfgang	

Subscription Rate: \$7.50 Per Year

Single Copies—\$ .35 Each

Foreign Subscriptions—\$9.00

## Bulk Rates

10 Subscriptions	\$5.00 Monthly
20 Subscriptions	\$10.00 Monthly

TRUTH MAGAZINE is published by Cogdill Foundation, and is mailed every Thursday, except the first week in July and the last week of December. Second class postage paid at Berne, Indiana 46711.

MANUSCRIPTS should be sent to Mike Willis, 3579 Ruthridge Court, Dayton, Ohio 45432.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, renewals, book orders, and other correspondence should be sent to Cogdill Foundation, Box 403, Marion, Indiana 46952.

POSTMASTER: send change of address (Form 3579) to Box 403, Marion, Indiana 46952.



## THIS WEEK'S COVER

This week's cover features the Northwest slopes of Frosty Peak above Izembek Bay in Anchorage, Alaska. The tundra type vegetation here is at the upper limits of the area used by geese for browse in the fall.

Photo courtesy of Wilderness Studies, Anchorage, Alaska.



has produced on those who are preaching it. How long has it been since you read a word from Leroy Garrett, Carl Ketcherside, Edward Fudge, Arnold Hardin, R. L. Kilpatrick, etc. which was directed to encourage those involved in the sins of worship with instrumental music, church supported recreation, sponsoring church arrangements, premillennialism, etc. to leave their sins in order to be saved? You have not read it because they have not written it. The effect of resting salvation upon hypothetical cases is that it keeps a man from relying upon the promises of God to find out what he must do to be saved.

## A Bible Example of Uncertainty and Assurance

The parable of the talents displays an example of the men with blessed assurance of acceptability before God and one with uncertainty regarding his acceptability before God. Let us consider this as a means of determining how we can have the assurance that we are pleasing to God at any moment in time.

The five-talent and two-talent men are our examples of men who had an assurance that they were pleasing to God. The Lord had given to His servants several talents based on the individual ability of each with the instructions to use the talents to increase what God had given to him. When the Lord returned, each of these men came before the Lord with confidence and said, "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents (and two talents, respectively—mw): behold, I have gained beside them five talents more" (Mt. 25:20). Of course, the Lord pronounced the blessing over these two faithful servants.

The one-talent man is our example of a man uncertain about his condition before his Lord. When he came before the Lord, he said, "Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou has not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine" (Mt. 25:25). Notice this man's mental anguish: "I was afraid." Here is the man who is unsure about his spiritual relationship to God. In Luke's parallel account, the Lord said, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee." This indicates that the Lord was not the kind of God which the servant said that He was, but that He was going to use his concept of Him to judge him. If God was the kind of God as he imagined, the servant should have been all that much more concerned with working to please Him. Hence, this man was rejected by God because he had not done what God said.

## Conclusion

The conclusion of this is apparent. A man can have the blessed assurance that he is in a saved relationship with God only so long as that man is busy obeying the commandments of God. Our response to the Lord's commandments is the condition (not grounds) for our receiving God's grace. Only so long as I have met the conditions can I rest assured that I shall receive God's grace—namely salvation. My assurance of salvation exists because God has promised salvation to those who meet His conditions and He cannot lie. Therefore, having met the conditions, I know I am saved.

There is no ambiguity in what conditions man must meet to receive God's grace. Sin from which man must abstain, is clearly spelled out for us and revealed in the Bible. The commandments which man must obey in order to receive God's grace are clearly revealed in God's word. Why, therefore, should a man be uncertain about his salvation? Is he uncertain because God has not clearly told us what to do to be saved? Is man unsure of salvation because he does not know what sin is? Is man uncertain about salvation because he is worried about God not showing us grace? The answer to none of these questions can be affirmative.

Man is uncertain about salvation because he is not busy obeying the commandments of God. This was the man uncertain about his salvation in the parable of the talents. The man who is studying God's word, praying regularly, worshipping properly, manifesting the fruits of the Spirit in his life, etc. is not worried about whether or not he will be saved. Those who I have found to be worried about their salvation are those who do not pray, do not study their Bibles, are not concerned about the lost of the world, and otherwise manifest a lack of spirituality. Those who are working to give such people the assurance of salvation are not doing them any favors. These people need to become convicted of their sins so that they will repent and be obedient to the Lord. Then, as they respond to His commandments, they can have the assurance of salvation.

*An Exhaustive Reference Work—Serving as a bridge between Biblical History and Theological Knowledge*

### **The New Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible**



*Merrill C. Tenney, Editor*

Representing the best in current evangelical scholarship, this Encyclopedia of the Bible is a completely authoritative, fully illustrated, five volume work that contributes significantly to an understanding of Scripture.

7,500 alphabetically arranged articles.

Thousands of photographs, charts, maps.

Each volume approximately 1,000 pages, and a full color insert.

Greek and Hebrew words wherever they underlie the terms covered in the articles.

Size 6 7/8" x 9 1/2"

### **Special Sale**

*An Excellent Gift for the Bible Student*

Regularly	\$79.95
SALE	\$56.00
	(plus postage)

## *Bible Basics*

**Earl Robertson**

Route 4

Tompkinsville, Kentucky 42167



## **Churches Do Drift!**

Christ built His church (Psa. 127:1; Matt. 16:18). There was divine aim or purpose for the church (1 Tim. 3:15). The church of Christ is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23). Christ is the only head of His church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22). Whatsoever, therefore, the church might do it must have authority from the head to act. Christ has a work for it to perform and that work it must do.

The work of ministry and edification are the works perfected saints perform (Eph. 4:12). Claptrap and gimmicks are carnal and are engaged by the worldly minded. Human efforts utilizing cheap gimmicks supported by churches is a "drift" from the divine way, and the apostates responsible will inevitably face the Lord for their presumption.

In late 1942, Brother N. B. Hardeman, then President of Freed-Hardeman College, preached a series of sermons in the War Memorial Building in Nashville, Tennessee. Discussing the "Mission and Work of The Church," he said, "Again, I say to you, with caution and thought, that it is not the work of the church to furnish entertainment for the members. And yet many churches have drifted into such an effort. They enlarge their basements, put in all kinds of gymnastic apparatus, and make every sort of an appeal to the young people of the congregation. I have never read anything in the Bible that indicated to me that such was a part of the work of the church. I am wholly ignorant of any Scripture that even points in that direction. Furthermore, it is not the work of the church to try to adjust labor troubles, or to supervise our social conditions."

Hardeman spoke the truth thirty-five years ago! It is the truth today! But the efforts then were nothing as compared to what is today being done by the churches. Some churches feign to have respect for the teaching of Hardeman, but have no ethical principles that inhibits their actions in the very things he condemned as being without divine authority. Why can't churches of Christ be satisfied to do the work today that churches of Christ did in the first century? Take your stand upon New Testament authority.

## **Renew Promptly**



# EDITORIAL

## Blessed Assurance (2)

**Mike Willis**

3579 Ruthridge Court  
Dayton, Ohio 45432



Every man should have the knowledge of salvation and the blessed assurance that should he die he would go to be at home with God. Yet, how does one know when and if he is saved? This has been a question asked by many through the years. Indeed, this has been a question frequently answered by the preachers who restored New Testament Christianity in this country. They preached on this subject repeatedly, although they titled their lesson differently. Rather than entitling their lesson "How Can We Know That We Are Saved?" they called their lessons "The Evidence of Pardon." Yet, they grappled with the idea of how one can know that he is saved.

### Feelings Are No Evidence of Salvation

Many people rest their assurance of salvation squarely upon their own personal sensations despite the fact that the Bible repeatedly warns that personal feelings are not absolutely trustworthy. Sometimes people feel a certain way about a matter as a result of testimony that is unreliable. They experience all of the feelings which one would experience if the testimony was reliable. For example, when Absalom plotted the death of Amnon, he invited all of his brothers to a sheepshearing feast in Baal-hazor. While Amnon was there, Absalom's servants killed him. The word came back to David that Absalom had murdered all of the king's sons. "Then the king arose, and tore his garments, and lay on the earth" (2 Sam. 13:31). David felt the same way as he would have felt had the testimony which he had heard been true. Judging from his personal feelings, all of his children except Absalom were dead. Yet, his feelings were not based on reliable evidence; they were based on false testimony.

That the same thing might happen with reference to personal salvation is abundantly clear from the case of Saul of Tarsus. Saul had a clear conscience until the time that Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus. Speaking of the time when he persecuted Christians, Saul said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). He lived in all good conscience (Acts 23:1) during the time that he was a persecutor, blasphemer, and injurious person (1 Tim. 1:13). Despite the fact that he thought that he was in a saved relationship with God, he was lost and doomed to hell. No man better illustrates the truth of the proverb "there is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12; 16:25) than

does Saul of Tarsus. His personal feelings produced no salvation.

Feelings are simply a result of testimony; they say nothing about the truthfulness of that testimony. A man may certainly experience all of the emotions which come with salvation without experiencing salvation. Someone may give him the false testimony regarding what he must do to be saved (such as "worship Buddha") resulting in that man feeling saved (indeed, experiencing all of the emotions which come with true salvation) without him ever being saved. Hence, the fact that one has experienced certain feelings is no guarantee of salvation. Believing that one is saved does not save that person.

### Salvation Through God's Pardon

We must remember that salvation from sins occurs when God forgives us of sins. Forgiveness of sins occurs in the mind of God. God is the one who was sinned against; He is the one who has the right to grant pardon and forgiveness. What goes on in my mind with reference to me feeling forgiven does not say one thing about whether or not I have been forgiven! Let me illustrate this point. Suppose that a man sat on death row in prison for having committed some crime. Pardon could be granted to that man by the governor; the governor has the legislated power to pardon a criminal. However, in order for that man to be pardoned, the governor would have to grant the pardon. After finding out about that pardon, the man would normally rejoice. Later, he would be released. However, let us reverse this situation as is often done in conversion. Let us suppose that this man sitting on death row tried to convince the guards to release him because he felt that he was pardoned, although no communication from the governor to that effect had been issued. Would the guards release him? Absolutely not! The pardon must be granted before the man can be released.

With reference to salvation, God must grant the forgiveness of sins (the pardon) before the feelings which a man has have any meaning at all. Yet, how does one receive the word of pardon from the Lord? Obviously, God does not issue a formal decree sent down from heaven to an individual to let him know that he has been forgiven. Yet, our knowledge of salvation must come through God's statement of salvation. That is done through the written word of God, the Bible.

In the Bible, God has promised salvation to man conditionally. When man meets those conditions, God has promised to save him. When we learn what those conditions are and meet them, we can know that we are saved because God has promised to save the man who meets them and He cannot lie. Hence, our assurance of salvation rests squarely upon the promises of God.

### Divine Conditions For Salvation

In order to be saved, man must have his sins forgiven through the blood of Christ which manifests God's grace. Obviously, man cannot save himself. Hence, to be saved he must comply with the conditions laid down by God to receive His proffered grace. In order to be saved, man must obey the gospel. It is dangerous for a man not to obey the gospel, Peter wrote, "For the time is come that

# RUTH magazine

XII November 16, 1978 No. 45

EDITOR: Mike Willis

## STAFF WRITERS

Donald P. Ames	Ron Halbrook
O. C. Birdwell	Irvin Himmel
Bill Cavender	Daniel H. King
Roy Cogdill	John McCort
Karl Diestelkamp	Earl Robertson
Johnie Edwards	Keith Sharp
Larry Hafley	Jimmy Tuten
Steve Wolfgang	

Subscription Rate: \$7.50 Per Year  
Single Copies—\$ .35 Each  
Foreign Subscriptions—\$9.00

## Bulk Rates

10 Subscriptions	\$5.00 Monthly
20 Subscriptions	\$10.00 Monthly

TRUTH MAGAZINE is published by Cogdill Foundation, and is mailed every Thursday, except the first week in July and the last week of December. Second class postage paid at Berne, Indiana 46711.

MANUSCRIPTS should be sent to Mike Willis, 3579 Ruthridge Court, Dayton, Ohio 45432.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, renewals, book orders, and other correspondence should be sent to Cogdill Foundation, Box 403, Marion, Indiana 46952.

POSTMASTER: send change of address (Form 3579) to Box 403, Marion, Indiana 46952.



## THIS WEEK'S COVER

This week's cover features the building in which the church in Ocala, Florida meets. The work was established in the late sixties. They have a very active program of work in progress as the article on page 5 details.



judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. 4:17-18). Damnation will be given to those who do not obey the gospel (2 Thess. 1:7). In contrast, our obedience to the truth purifies our soul (1 Pet. 1:22) as we meet the conditions for receiving God's grace.

Specifically, the conditions for receiving salvation are as follows: (1) Believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:15-16). In order for a man to be saved, he must believe the glorious gospel—the good news of salvation by grace through faith in Christ. (2) Repent of sins. The conditions for salvation include the repentance of sins. Paul told the Athenians, "And the time of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). (3) Confession of faith. In order to be saved, a man must confess his faith in Jesus. Paul wrote, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10). (4) Be baptized. As another condition for receiving God's grace, Jesus has required that a man be baptized (immersed) in water. In response to the Jews on Pentecost who asked what they had to do to be saved, Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

These are the divine conditions for receiving the forgiveness of sins. Through these acts of obedience, elsewhere called "the obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5; 16:26), one meets the *conditions* for receiving forgiveness of sins. Let it be clearly understood that one cannot earn his salvation through these means. Rather, these are simply the conditions for receiving the free gift of God's grace.

## Knowledge of Salvation

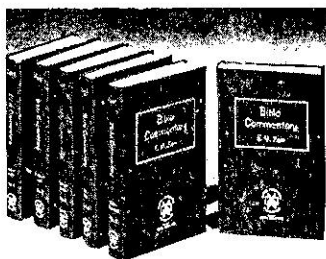
I can know that I am saved when I meet these divine conditions for receiving God's grace. God has promised salvation to those who so respond to His offer of grace. I know that I have the salvation which He has offered when I have responded in this fashion to His grace. My assurance of salvation rests squarely upon the promises of God; His divine veracity is at stake in my salvation.

On the other side, I can have no assurance of salvation so long as there is one part of God's conditions for receiving His grace with which I have not complied. If I have not repented of my sins, I cannot have an assurance of salvation; if I have not confessed faith in Jesus, I cannot have an assurance of salvation; if I have not been immersed in water, I cannot have an assurance of salvation. The man who promises salvation to a man who has not met

the conditions laid down by God for salvation promises more than God has promised. The only assurance which the man who had not met these conditions can have of salvation is only so much as mere man can give. There is no divine assurance of salvation to any one who does not meet the conditions for salvation.

The only genuine assurance of salvation which a man can have is that which comes through God's holy word. Only when I learn the conditions laid down for salvation as revealed in that word and comply with them can I know that I am saved. There is no assurance of salvation through any other means.

### An Excellent Gift Idea For the Holidays



### *Bible Commentary*

by E. M. Zerr

So far as is known to us, this is the only commentary ever written by one member of the church on the entire Bible. Brother Zerr worked seven years exclusively on this commentary.

Vol. 1	(Genesis to Ruth)	\$6.95
Vol. 2	(1 Samuel to Job)	\$6.95
Vol. 3	(Psalms to Isaiah)	\$6.95
Vol. 4	(Jeremiah to Malachi)	\$6.95
Vol. 5	(Matthew to Romans)	\$6.95
Vol. 6	(1 Corinthians to Revelation)	\$6.95

**Per Set: \$39.00**

The writing of this commentary consumed more than seven years of full-time labor. Some brethren whom I consider to be superior exegetes of the Word have highly recommended Zerr's *Bible Commentary* and have praised the splendid and incisive way in which he has handled even those "hard to be understood" sections of God's Word.

Through *Bible Commentary*, Brother E. M. Zerr, though dead since 1960, will continue to do what he liked best to do—conduct "Bible Readings" for many years to come.

Our recommendation regarding E. M. Zerr's six volume commentary can be paraphrased from the words of a well-known television commercial: "Try it; you'll like it!"

—Cecil Willis

## Ocala, Florida

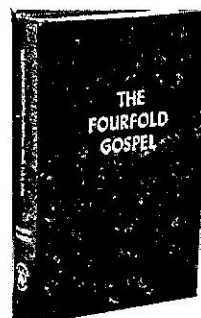
**Church of Christ**, 3900 South Pine (Highways 27 - 301-441), Ocala, Florida 32670.

**History:** The church began in May of 1968, meeting for about ten months in three different store buildings. Property was purchased in the fall of '68 and the building began in November and was completed in March of '69. By using the talents and efforts of the members in the plans and the construction, a considerable savings was made possible. (The cost was \$7.75 per square foot). The building was financed with bonds with much assistance from brother J. C. Shacklett in this program. The bonds are to be completely retired in July of this year, four years ahead of schedule.

**Work:** The attendance has been averaging from 50 to 60 at the morning services and the contribution about \$375 each week. The work has been self-sustaining from the beginning. A bulletin is published every other week in an effort to interest outsiders in the truth. Regular support is being sent to Johnson Bakpar in Nigeria. Help was sent to a brother in the Philippines for about five years. Some assistance has been given to travel funds to several brethren going into foreign lands. Steve Hudgins has been with the church from the beginning. A number of brethren have assisted in gospel meetings including Harry Pickup, Sr., Leslie Diestelkamp, Bobby Thompson, Franklin Puckett, Roy Foutz, Wallace Little, Grover Stevens, Ed Walker, Jim Needham, Jack Frost, Jerry Eubanks, John Gentry and James Yopp. Services are: Bible study at 10 AM and worship at 11 AM and 6 PM. Midweek Bible study at 7:30 Wednesdays.

### *The Fourfold Gospel*

by J. W. McGarvey



**Price \$8.95**

769 pages

This popular harmony of the gospel published by one of the best biblical scholars in the Lord's church has long been a favorite of Christians. Though it has presently been available in a paperback edition, we think that we can make the same book available in hardback at such a reasonable price that it is foolish to purchase the paperback edition.

The harmony of the gospels is arranged to form a complete chronological life of Christ. It is divided into title sections and subdivisions with comments interjected into the text.



# EDITORIAL

## Blessed Assurance (3)

**Mike Willis**

3579 Ruthridge Court  
Dayton, Ohio 45432



Thus far, I have tried to show that one can have a certain knowledge that he is saved and will live eternally with God. In so doing, I have directed people to the promises of God as the evidence of salvation. Now, I would like to discuss the matters revealed in God's word which give us reason to have confidence that we can and will be saved. The reason that I have confidence that I will be saved include the following:

### The Nature of God

God is described in the Bible as "longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression" (Num. 14:18). The psalmist praised God as follows: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Psa. 103:1-12).

The testimony of the Scriptures is clear: God wants men to be saved. He wants to forgive us of our sins. He desires that no one go to Hell. Peter wrote, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Ezekiel revealed, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (33:11). Hence, I have confidence in my salvation because of the nature of the God I serve. Though this is no license for sin, the knowledge that God is wanting me to be saved certainly encourages me to live in hope of salvation.

### The Provisions of God

Another reason that I have confidence that I am going to be saved eternally is what God has done to effect my salvation. When I look at the work that God has done to

save me, I marvel at the extent to which He will go to save me. I must not forget that God's plan for saving man was conceived before the world began (Eph. 3:11). The accomplishment of this plan has involved God's work throughout the ages. From the selection of Abraham until the death of Jesus on the cross, God was working to accomplish His scheme for saving man. The prophets were raised up by God to predict the coming of the Christ. Finally, the Christ came.

I cannot do otherwise than stand amazed that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (Jn. 3:16). "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). As I learn of the suffering which Jesus endured to effect the salvation of man, I am impressed with how much God desires my salvation. I can never conceive of God looking down from heaven with some sort of glee when He catches me in sin so long as I remember the death of Christ as the living monument of God's desire that I be saved! Consequently, I have confidence that I shall be saved because of God's great love toward me as manifested in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for the salvation from my sins.

As another provision which God has made to bring about my salvation, I rejoice that I have the Bible as an infallible guide to direct me to heaven. The word of God contains all that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3-4); it furnishes me completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It is the incorruptible seed which endures forever designed to bring about the new birth (1 Pet. 1:23-25; 1 Cor. 4:15). God inspired men to write this infallible book as a guide for me to use in reaching heaven. As I meditate on the pages written by God, I am reminded of how much God wants me to be saved and am encouraged thereby.

➤ God has also planned the church as something to help me to make it to heaven. Our congregational assemblies are designed to edify me (1 Cor. 14:26). My brothers and sisters in Christ have a responsibility before God to restore me to the fellowship of my God in the event that I might become "caught up" in a transgression (Gal. 6:1). They are to provoke me unto love and good works (Heb. 10:24). Indeed, one of the purposes of the church is for Christians to encourage each other to worship and serve our great God. The mutual concern which we have for each other as provided by God in His great wisdom is another provision which God has made that I might be saved. I rejoice in my salvation as I think of this as another of God's provisions to help me be saved.

No doubt, there are other provisions which impress you which I have neglected to mention in this section which manifest God's love for us and His desire that we be saved. Yet, I am more confident that I shall be saved when I remember these things which God has done to lead me to salvation and keep me in the light.

### The Commandments of God

Another matter which impresses me about God's desire for me to be saved is the nature of the commandments which God has given for conditions for me to meet in order

# TRUTH magazine

Vol. XXII

November 23, 1978

No. 46

EDITOR: Mike Willis

## STAFF WRITERS

Donald P. Ames	Ron Halbrook
O. C. Birdwell	Irvin Himmel
Bill Cavender	Daniel H. King
Roy Cogdill	John McCort
Karl Diestelkamp	Earl Robertson
Johnie Edwards	Keith Sharp
Larry Hafley	Jimmy Tuten
	Steve Wolfgang

Subscription Rate: \$7.50 Per Year

Single Copies—\$ .35 Each

Foreign Subscriptions—\$9.00

## Bulk Rates

10 Subscriptions

\$5.00 Monthly

20 Subscriptions

\$10.00 Monthly

TRUTH MAGAZINE is published by Cogdill Foundation, and is mailed every Thursday, except the first week in July and the last week of December. Second class postage paid at Berne, Indiana 46711.

MANUSCRIPTS should be sent to Mike Willis, 3579 Rutledge Court, Dayton, Ohio 45432.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, renewals, book orders, and other correspondence should be sent to Cogdill Foundation, Box 403, Marion, Indiana 46952.

POSTMASTER: send change of address (Form 3579) to Box 403, Marion, Indiana 46952.



## THIS WEEK'S COVER

This week's cover features the interior of Alabama's Governor's Mansion, reflecting the beauty and charm of the Old South. The divided stairway, richly carpeted in red, is a perfect setting for the grandfather's clock, delicate wall sconces and the beautiful crystal chandelier. The tens of thousands of visitors that are welcomed to the mansion each year are impressed with the elegance of a typical ante-bellum home and the hospitality of the people of Alabama.

Photo courtesy of State of Alabama, Bureau of Publicity and Information.

to be saved. God has not given us any commandment which is impossible for man to obey. Consider, for example, what man's sad plight would be in the event that God had required that a person donate one million dollars to the church in order to be saved. Not many of us would have the hope of salvation had he made such a requirement essential to salvation. The requirements which God has given as conditions for salvation are such that any man who so desires to be saved can meet them. God has not given any impossible commandments.

Consider what man must do to be saved. God has, first of all, provided the atonement whereby sinners can be saved. Hence, God does not demand sinless perfection of one who cannot live perfectly. Secondly, God requires that man believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, repent of his sins, confess faith in Christ, and be buried with Christ in baptism in order to have his sins washed away. Which of these conditions for salvation is impossible for a man to do? Has God demanded of man that which he cannot do in order for him to be saved?

Consider man's condition for maintaining the salvation which God gives to him. Has God, in any verse in the Bible, ever required that man live a sinlessly perfect life after baptism in order to be saved? If so, I would like to read where that is given as a requirement for salvation. In that event, none of us have any hope for salvation. What God has required is for the Christian to repent of his sins and confess them to God when he turns from God's holy commandment to walk in the ways of the world (1 Jn. 1:9). Jesus Christ remains as the Advocate before the Father pleading the case of the Christian.

There is no single commandment which God has given which is impossible for man to obey. Is it impossible for a man not to commit murder? Is it impossible for a man not to commit adultery? Is it impossible for a man not to take the Lord's name in vain? Is it impossible for a man not to lie? Surely we can see that God has not demanded the impossible of His creatures. Furthermore, He has made provisions for man through the shed blood of Jesus Christ for man to be forgiven when he does sin. Hence, I have confidence that I can be saved based on the nature of the commandments which God has given to man.

## Those Who Are Considered Worthies Before Me

Another thing which gives me confidence that I am going to be saved is a study of those before me who have been considered faithful to the Lord. These men were just like me—imperfect men who sought to please their Lord. Sometimes we have a tendency to place some of the men of faith mentioned in the Bible on a pedestal so high that they are in a special category between angels and men. This prohibits us being able to identify with them and makes their example less meaningful to us so far as us striving to imitate it. Let us consider the biblical record given about some of these men.

1. Elijah. This prophet of old was so pleasing to God that rather than allowing him to die as the rest of us do, God sent down a chariot of fire and took Elijah in a whirlwind directly into heaven (2 Kgs. 2:11). Yet, James reminds us that Elijah "was a man subject to like passions as we are" (5:17). Sometimes take the time to study



Elijah's reaction to Jezebel's threat on his life as recorded in 1 Kgs. 19. He became so despondent that he went a day's journey into the wilderness, sat under a juniper tree, and said to God, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life" (19:4). Yes, Elijah of old faced the same problems which I face, had the same up's and down's as I have, and sought to please God through them all. God accepted him.

2. David. The second king of Israel is described as a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). Yet, David was not a perfect man by any means. He was the same man who lusted after Bathsheba, committed adultery with her, and then plotted and executed the death of Uriah to cover up his sordid deed. God accepted David despite the horrible deeds which he did. (Lest I be misunderstood, let me remind you that God did not accept David while he was involved in these sins. Rather, He forgave David when he repented.) Yes, David was a man just like me. He had human failings just like I have. If such a man could be described as a man after God's own heart, there is hope for me.

3. Peter. The apostle Peter, you will recall, had similar moral faults to each of us. He was the one who denied his Lord three times in one night. In his denial of Jesus, he even denied Him with an oath and cursed (Mt. 26:69-75). Later, Paul had to rebuke Peter to his face because of hypocrisy at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14). Peter was a man just like me. Yet, who has a question in his mind as to whether or not this man was saved?

4. Paul. This great apostle has inspired many of us to live godly lives. Yet, on the occasion when the men of Lystra sought to offer worship to Paul and Barnabas, the apostle said, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you . . ." (Acts 14:15). Indeed, Paul testified that he buffeted his body and brought it into subjection in order to keep himself from being a cast away (1 Cor. 9:27). Any man among us can identify with his inner struggle against sin as depicted in Rom. 7. Yet, who doubts whether or not this great man was saved?

As I consider these men, I am made more confident of my own salvation. I do not mean to imply in this that I am as good as Elijah, David, Peter or Paul. I simply am reminded that these men were saved by God's grace despite the fact that they had moral faults. God, in His wonderful grace, forgave these men when by faith they repented of their sins and sought His forgiveness. If I live in the same manner as they did, I too shall be saved by grace through faith.

#### God's Care For Me

Another reason that I have confidence that I shall be saved is God's provisions for me to stay saved. Though God will not protect me from sin or close His eyes to my sins, He has promised the following: "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 to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). Notice the divine promises given to the Christian in this verse: (1) God will not allow any temptation to come upon me but such as is common to man. This verse reminds me

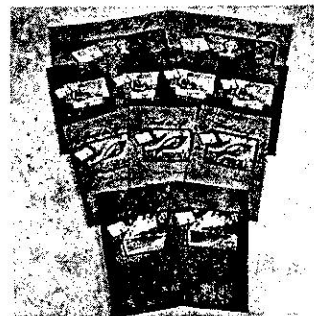
that someone else has faced the very same temptation which I have faced and endured it successfully. I should not, therefore, think for a moment that my situation is somehow unique and, for that reason, that God will overlook my sin in it. No, my temptation is just like that which other men before me have faced. (2) God will not allow me to be tempted above my ability to bear. God knows just exactly what my tolerance for temptation is at any given moment in time. My ability to endure temptation is greater at this point in my life than it was when I was first baptized. Yet, God knows my ability to endure temptation at any given moment and will not allow me to be tempted above my ability to endure. Hence, there will never be a situation confront me in which I can legitimately say, "I just can not stand it any longer." God is faithful to His promise and will not allow that situation to occur. He personally watches over me to prevent any such temptation to come to me. (3) God will provide a way of escape for every temptation which comes to me. There will always be a way out of any temptation which comes to be. Satan is never able to back me up in such a corner that the only way that I can turn is to sin. God has promised me that this will never happen and my personal experience confirms this. Though I have sinned against God since becoming a Christian, I have not done so because of any deficiency in God's grace. God has always made a way of escape for me, although I have not always chosen to use it.

#### Conclusion

These precious promises to me, however, assure me that I can be saved, if I want to be. I can live acceptably before God. I can live the life of the righteous and die and go to heaven. I can manifest that assurance that I am saved through God's grace. There is no reason for me to lack confidence in my salvation, unless I have rebelliously chosen to turn my back on God. Short of that, I have every reason to rest assured that I shall be saved by grace through faith.

### Truth in Life

#### Bible Class Literature



Published by

The Cogdill Foundation

Box 403, Marion, Indiana 46952

Write us about FREE tracts when you order  
our Bible Class Literature.