

REMINDER

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Dr. H. A. Ironside

Eternal Security of the Believer

by Dr. Harry A. Ironside

Note: This brief work consists of a message delivered in the D. L. Moody Memorial Church on a Lord's Day morning and the substance of two Friday meetings when questions were submitted and then answered from the platform. Careful editing might have eliminated everything that looks like repetition. But inasmuch as it is by constant re-affirmation that truth is lodged in the mind and heart, I have not pruned the answers as much as I otherwise might have. Let me say that my object was not controversy nor the besting of an opponent, but rather the edification and enlightenment of the people of God, so that the knowledge of the truth might deliver from legality and give true liberty. - H. A. Ironside, April 24, 1934

Objections To The Doctrine Of The Eternal Security -

There will be certain passages coming up in the minds of different ones, and they will say, "***What he has said may sound logical enough, but what about this Scripture and that?***" Let me say, there is no possible Scripture that will come to your mind that the present speaker has not considered carefully over and over again. I have not time in one address to go into all these, but I can assure you that having examined them all with the greatest degree of care, I have never been able to find one that can set aside this: "***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.***" If you have a clear, definite, positive Scripture, do not allow some passage that is perplexing, that is difficult to interpret, that seems somewhat ambiguous, to keep you from believing the positive statement, "***He that believeth hath everlasting life.***" It is because I have a salvation like this to offer to men, it is because God has sent me to proclaim a salvation like this to sinners, that I have confidence in inviting people to come to Jesus, for I know if they get in living touch with my Savior He will make them His forever.

I recently received from a gentleman a tract entitled "***All about the Eternal Security Doctrine.***" He is afraid that this doctrine may have a tendency to make people careless about their lives. I can sympathize with him in that for this reason: I was a Christian worker in an organization that believed in what is commonly called the Arminian view; that is, when a person gets converted he has a good start for heaven, and then it is up to him to keep on going. As my old instructor used to say, "Getting to heaven is like riding a bicycle: if I stop, I will fall off." I believed that thoroughly, so thoroughly that when people spoke to me about being eternally saved I used to say, "That is a doctrine of the evil one; that would mislead people and lead folks to become careless," until I had a rather rude awakening.

I found our halls were thronged by people who were getting converted over and over again every few weeks. It seemed as though that old hymn, "Ye Must Be Born Again," should really be sung, "***Ye must Be Born Again and Again and Again.***" That puzzled me, for I never read of anything like it in the Bible. Then I found that the falling away doctrine had a tendency to make people very careless indeed. Let me give you a concrete example -

A young man in whom I was quite interested had been addicted to a certain sin in his unconverted days. After he professed conversion he turned from that particular sin, but he confessed to me privately that he had gone out in the darkness of the night, when no one knew where he was, and had fallen into the same sin many times. "How can you do it?" I asked him. "Well," he said, "I always make up my mind that I will commit the sin and then get converted again when I come home." I saw from that how dangerous was the doctrine of being saved today and lost tomorrow. The last time I saw that young man, he said to me, "It's no use; this sin has such a grip on me that I cannot stand it." "Don't yield," I said. "Let me call in several of the others and let us pray with you." So four or five of us knelt and prayed very earnestly, but he rose again and clenched his fists, for he was in great agony, and said, "It's no use.

(continued inside)

I am going out to sin, but I am coming back to get converted afterwards.” I never saw him again, and I do not know what became of him. That, you see, was one effect of this doctrine that a person loses his salvation when he sins but can come back again and get converted any time he desires. Certainly the Word of God teaches nothing like that. You can see that the Arminian view can be used to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. It is possible for the other view to be misused also. But I want you to see that the misuse of any doctrine does not in itself prove the teaching is wrong. We need definite Scripture upon which to base our faith. If people have no conscience toward God, they can misuse any doctrine in the Bible.

But what we want to get at is this: *Are the objections brought against the doctrine of eternal security really tenable?*

❑ **Question 1 – Man: A Free Moral Agent?**

“Is not man an absolutely free moral agent?” as one objector insists. He says, “We can quote no Scripture on unconditional eternal security, because there is none.”

I do not know what he means, but of course there is no eternal security that is not based on personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But this writer goes on to say, “When a man is saved, he is on God’s altar to live or die, for service or sacrifice, and neither the devil nor demons can pull him off so long as he chooses by God’s grace to keep himself in that place.”

The fact of the matter is that man is not an “absolutely free moral agent.” In his unsaved state he is the slave of sin “led by the devil captive at his will.” When regenerated he is the servant of Christ, delighting in holiness and indwelt by the Spirit of the loving God. I was not saved by placing my all on the altar. I was saved when I trusted Christ who gave Himself as the offering for my sin. I am not keeping saved by my surrendered life. I am “kept by the power of God.” The same grace that saved is the grace that keeps.

I do not simply “choose” to keep myself in the place where I am secure. God has chosen me, and I say amen to His choice. But if it were possible for me to choose to abandon Christ, would I not perish? Yet the Word tells me that Christ’s sheep shall never perish. Let us look again at the words of the Lord Jesus in *John 10:27-29*: “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 man pluck them out of My Father’s hand.”

I wish you would look at verse 27. Who is a sheep of Christ? He is one who hears His voice and follows Him. If a man says, “I am a Christian,” but does not hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and does not follow Him, that man is a hypocrite; he is not a Christian. Jesus says, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

Notice the expression, “I know them.” I pointed out in my former address that in Matthew 7:22-23, the Lord Jesus says, “Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out

devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.”

Observe that, according to Scripture, He never says to any soul in the day of judgment, “I used to know you, but I do not know you now.” He says, “I never knew you.” That ought to clear up the whole question.

He says of His sheep, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them.” Therefore, if one has ever been a sheep of Christ, the Lord Jesus knows him. Now if by some strange metamorphosis that sheep of Christ were changed into a goat, one of the devil’s goats, and appeared at the day of judgment among the goats, Jesus could not say to that goat, “I never knew you.” He would have to say, “I used to know you but I do not know you now.” But He says, “I never knew you,” because He gives His sheep eternal life.

What is eternal life? One asks, “If the spiritual life of Adam were conditional, how could the life of a believer be secure? Adam must have been eternal in nature.” This shows how little well-meaning people distinguish between the life that God gave to Adam by creation and the life that He gives to us by regeneration. Adam’s life was simply natural life and he forfeited that when he sinned, but God gives to believers eternal life, and that can never be forfeited. It would not be eternal life if it could. So He says, “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” He puts no conditions around that promise, “They shall never perish.” The word “perish” is in the middle voice, so that if rendered literally in English, you would have to make two words of it, because we do not have a middle voice. The words “perish” and “destroy” are the same in Greek. “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never destroy themselves.”

Sheep so easily destroy themselves. I was going over the desert when out among the Indians, and as we passed a bridge over a deep chasm, we heard the pitiable bleating of a lamb. We went to the edge of the bridge and saw the lamb about fifty feet down on a little ledge. It was a sheer descent of nearly two hundred feet to the creek below that. We looked to see whether there was any possible way to get down there, and we could not find any. That lamb had been eating and had come to the edge and had looked down. There was that little ledge all green, and so down he went and ate all the green that was there before he found that he could not get back. We tried to lasso him, but were not expert enough to do that. We looked up, and already there were three great buzzards flying around, just waiting for the time when the little animal would give up. That lamb was destroying himself. Jesus says, “My sheep will never destroy themselves. I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish” (in the middle voice, “never perish themselves”). Why not? Because they have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them.

The Word of God says, “Being confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Jesus first says, “I give unto them

eternal life,” and then, **“They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.”**

Some may say, *“Well, I know a devil cannot pluck me out, no angel would want to, and man could not, but I might pluck myself out.”*

Then you would perish, would you not? And He says **“They shall never perish,” before** He tells you, **“neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.”**

Is man an absolutely free moral agent? He was when God created him, but is he now? Is the sinner a free moral agent? What does Scripture say?

“Ye are led by the devil captive at his will.” What? A man led by the devil captive at his will is a free agent? **“Know ye not, that he to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his slaves ye are?” (Romans 6:16).** Man is a slave to sin and Satan; he is **not** free. But now the Gospel comes to the man, and he does have the power of **decision**, and when he decides for Christ he gets eternal life with all that that implies - and that life is the same life that is in the blessed Son of God. It is communicated to him, and now he is led captive in the chains of love to the Saviour’s feet, and he does not want to be a free agent. He is glad to be a bondman, as Paul puts it, of Jesus Christ.

❑ Question 2 – Matthew 24:13

What about Matthew 24:13? “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” Weymouth says, “He who stands firm unto the end.”

The writer of this question recognizes that primarily this refers to the Great Tribulation, but it is a principle that I believe every preacher of the Word should insist on. There is no use in people professing conversion, going forward, raising their hands, going to an inquiry room, joining the church, getting baptized, taking communion, teaching a Sunday school class, doing missionary work, giving their money for Christ’s work, and going on like this for years, and then by-and-by drifting away, turning from it all, denying the Lord that bought them, refusing absolutely the authority of Jesus Christ, and yet professing to be saved. It is endurance that **proves** the reality of a work of grace within the soul. That is the difference between one who is merely reformed by the teaching of Christianity and one who has been born again. You see this very clearly when you contrast Peter and Judas.

Peter slipped and sinned grievously, but in spite of it all he endured to the end. Jesus said, **“I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not,”** and though his outward life for a brief period was not what it should be, **his faith remained**, and Jesus restored him, and he went on to the end of his life until crucified for his Saviour. Judas was one of the chosen, he was with the apostolic band but **never was** regenerated, and so when he sinned and sold his Lord, he turned away an apostate and died a suicidal death. Jesus said of him long before, **“Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” Not** - “One of you is in danger of becoming a devil,” **but** - **“One of you is a devil.”** And we are

told: **“Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place” (Acts 1:25).**

Peter was a backslider, Judas was an apostate, and there is a great difference between the two. If a man says, “I am saved,” let him prove it by going on. That is why I say we should not be afraid of the doctrine of the Eternal Security of the Believer. Some say, *“But I knew a man who was a wonderful Christian, and now he has given it all up and says he is still saved.”* He is only deceiving himself. The next time you see him you tell him that the Bible says, **“He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”** There is no use your carrying on a profession if your life does not prove it to be real. Men can misuse any doctrine.

❑ Question 3 – John 8:31-

What about the Scripture found in John 8:31? **“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed.”** Is not the condition for permanent discipleship “if ye continue in My word?”

Certainly. Every man who knows the truth of Eternal Security believes it. There is no use for a person to profess to be a disciple of Jesus if he does not continue. It is this that proves there is a genuine work of the Spirit of God in his soul.

❑ Question 4 – John 6:66 -

What about **John 6:66? “From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.”**

That has happened down through the centuries. Jesus distinguishes between a disciple and **“a disciple indeed,”** or between one who is only a disciple and one who is a true believer.

The Greek word translated “disciple” means “a pupil” or “a learner.” There were many who up to a certain point **learned** of Jesus, and they were learning more and more every day as they listened to Him. But when He declared, **“Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life” (John 6:54),** they said, *“That is too much for us; we are not going on with this man,”* and they went back.

It was not a question there of whether people were born again and lost, but whether they who had been numbered among the learners would go on learning and let Him be their teacher, or whether they would refuse further instruction and turn back. We are not told that even those who turned back ever again returned.

- more next week

LISTEN TO -



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NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Shirley White
 Cradle Roll 2: Bertha Segebarth
 6:30 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: LeAnna White
 Cradle Roll 2: Janet Bridges
 Wed. Evening Service ---- Cradle Roll 1: Kayla Avey
 Cradle Roll 2: Charity Crawford

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of August 7, 2011

Sunday School ----- 18
 Sunday Morning Service ----- 35
 Sunday Evening Service ----- 27
 Wed. Eve., 08/10/11 Service ----- 28

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

Week of August 7, 2010

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 818.00
 Insurance Fund ----- \$ 2.00
Total Received for Week of 08/07/11: \$ 820.00

**Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed
 to operate the church EACH WEEK,
 as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00**

INSURANCE FUND REPORT FOR AUGUST:

Monthly Requirement ----- \$ 273.08
 Amount Received during August thusfar ----- \$ 2.00
Amount still needed by Sept. 5, 2011: - \$ 271.08



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. *Admit that you are a sinner.*
2. *Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.*
3. *Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.*
4. *You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).*
5. *By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.*

Please Remember To Be Faithful to Give!



As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go *up*. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start *today* - OK? Thank you.

Church Directory

Todd W. White ----- Pastor
 Mickie Shatwell ----- Pianist
 Dickie Eberle ----- Greeter, Custodian
 Larry Mathews, Caryn Quinnelly, Todd W. White ----- S.S. Teachers
 Larry & Mary Byars, Brian & Charity Crawford,
 Dwayne English, Lou & Vicki Martin ----- Outreach
 Flowers ----- Hannah and Shirley White