

SELFLESS ***CONFIDENCE***

BIBLICAL CHARITY
IN LIGHT OF ETERNAL SECURITY

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The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell,
It goes beyond the highest star
And reaches to the lowest hell;
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,
God gave His son to win:
His erring child He reconciled
And pardoned from his sin.

When years of time shall pass away
And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,
When men, who here refuse to pray,
On rocks and hills and mountains call,
God's love so sure shall still endure,
All measureless and strong:
Redeeming grace to Adam's race-
The saints' and angels' song.

Could we with ink the ocean fill
And were the skies of parchment made,
And were the skies on earth a quill
And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky

O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall for evermore endure-
The saints' and angels' song.

Frederick H. Lehman

Chapter 1

FULFILLING THE LAW

“...For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.”

Romans 13: 8

“What the world needs is love.” That was the message of a popular song in the 1960s. In the ensuing years the world has come no closer to realizing that goal.

What the world needs is what the world continues to reject, by choosing not to accept the Bible’s definition of love. What the world needs is to embrace the Bible’s love story, the doctrine of charity.

There cannot be too much emphasis placed upon the importance of the Bible’s teaching on charity. The word *charity* is used 27 times in the King James English translation of the New Testament, including a statement that charity is the greatest characteristic of the Christian life.¹ Charity is a translation of the Greek word *agape* [ag-ah´-pay], which is also translated *love* in various tenses hundreds of times in the New Testament.

Agape is only one of several words describing love in the Greek language, and pertains to Godly or morally determined commitment, not just personal affection. Human affection for another can be conditioned by the other’s demeanor, but moral commitment never requires a certain standard or reciprocity from anyone. It is this agape love that Jesus Christ referred to as that which fulfills God’s law to man. When asked what was the great commandment of the law, Jesus replied:

“...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Matthew 22:37-40

This statement is reiterated by the apostle Paul in his letter to the church in Rome:

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Loveth worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Romans 13: 8-10

The comprehensive nature of charity in the Christian life was underscored by Paul when he wrote the Corinthians to “Let all your things be done with charity,”² and to Timothy, “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.”³

It is apparent therefore that if one desires to live the Christian life, one must understand and conform to the concept of charity. It is a primary doctrine of the Christian faith.

The Bible does not automatically equate charity with the popular notion of attending to the poor or needy. In fact, the Bible explains that one can give away all one’s goods to feed the poor and still not manifest charity.⁴

However, one need not be a student of Greek to understand the attributes of this agape love. The pages of our English Bible contain ample passages confirming what true charity is and how it works. One such passage is in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians:

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

I Corinthians 13: 4-7

One can readily see the overriding definition of charity that this passage contains: Charity is unselfish and unconditional. Though it is born of confidence it does not boast itself. It is not self-seeking in any way. Unger’s Bible Dictionary describes charity as the “antithesis of selfishness.”⁵ This definition does not leave allowance for a tinge of selfishness. Biblical charity is an absolute.

The Bible's definition of charity can be compared to that of *perfection*. We have a word for it, but the general consensus is that "nobody's perfect." We may use the word in a less objective sense, as when a pitcher throws a "perfect game," but its true meaning is unattainable by human effort. Agape love, as it is defined in the Bible, shares this lofty status.

However, Jesus taught that this "perfect" love was the fulfillment of the law. In doing so, he was repeating to the Jews of that time what had been taught to their ancestors for many years previous: Good standing according to God's law requires total, unselfish devotion to God and fellow man.⁶ Moreover, the breaking of any point of the law is basically selfishness, since one would not lie, steal or cheat on others if one's concern was solely for the others' happiness and welfare. Fulfillment of the law then requires that absolutely nothing should be hoped for in return for service to others.

CAN'T GET THERE FROM HERE

Many Hebrews in Moses' time received the law without much thought, by replying, "All the Lord hath said will we do."⁷ However, some have by God's grace understood the perplexity of His commandments to love: How can one exhibit absolute unselfish devotion to God and man when the purpose for doing so includes the glaringly selfish motive of self-preservation? The primary purpose in serving others would not be to help others so much as to help oneself into God's favor. This would be a selfish, hypocritical pretense; a cheating, unfaithful disservice to those to whom total devotion was supposedly directed; thus a transgression of the law from the very outset.

It is clear that God had revealed to the people a standard of perfection that they could in no way reach by human effort. Other aspects of the law support this conclusion. One need only perform a simple self-analysis, comparing oneself to vast requirements contained in the law's many statutes, to see that none of us can measure up to God's standard of perfection.

When even "the thought of foolishness is sin,"⁸ sin is a transgression of the law,⁹ and only one transgression fails the absolute perfection required by God,¹⁰ it is utter futility to attempt perfection through the law. Since any attempt to do so is a selfish attempt, it automatically disqualifies one from any claim to perfection. One cannot bring oneself to perfect unselfishness by selfish means:

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."

Job 14: 4

God will not even excuse our doing “the best we can,” when the best we can do is condemned selfishness:

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”

Isaiah 64:6¹¹

What then was God’s purpose in giving a law that humanity could not keep? Obviously, the purpose was simply to certify how perfect a person needed to be to dwell with God, and that perfection could not be achieved by selfish effort. Paul explains:

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in [God’s] sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

Romans 3:20

The purpose of the law was simply to *let us know* we are all sinners, guilty of selfishness and incapable of bringing ourselves to perfection. Man’s basic selfish nature as revealed through the law is confirmation of the fall of Adam and Eve. Their rebellion was purposed toward achieving *self-awareness*, and the result of that rebellion was that they became mortally *self-conscious*.¹² Since that time humanity has been plagued with symptoms of self-consciousness, including pride, fear and the often violent attempt to satisfy mortal, selfish desires.

The law can be compared to a mirror that we look at to show us when we have a dirty face. No one in his right mind would take a mirror off the wall and even slightly attempt to wash his face with it. That is not its purpose, and would only make matters dangerously worse. There is a better remedy for cleaning one’s face without the mirror.

If the knowledge of sinful imperfection does not prompt one to find God’s remedy for the condition, the logical consequence is sobering. The person continues to be alienated from God, who absolutely will not compromise His perfection to dwell with imperfection. The prophet Isaiah wrote concerning this condition:

“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”

Isaiah 59: 2

Without communion with the Author of Life, one is lost, groping for meaning and direction. Isaiah's further description is still consistent with a fragmented human race preoccupied with selfishness, which alienates people from God and from each other as well:

“The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their going: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in the desolate places as dead men.”

Isaiah 59:8-10

According to the Bible, the end result of this alienation is death and eternal separation from God in hell,¹³ where one truly will be “alone in a crowd,” suffering the culmination of a selfish existence, preoccupied with the agony of the wretched self.

God, however, has patiently offered a remedy to this tragic condition. It was not God's will that any person should suffer these consequences. God has endowed every person with a free will to choose communion with him or to remain in selfish imperfection. The rebellion was man's choice,¹⁴ and God gave the law to show man what he has become as a result of that rebellion.

God's remedy of love does not preclude His requirement that all who dwell with Him must be righteous. Compromised perfection would not be any better than what we presently experience in this world. However, God's love has provided a perfect solution to our problem.. Despite all of man's selfish rebellion and turmoil, God sent the Fulfillment of the law, His Son Jesus Christ, to live a perfect life and die in our place. Only Jesus could say:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”

Matthew 5:17

Since Jesus did not sin,¹⁵ He was free to receive the death penalty for our sin. He had nothing personally to gain by this gesture of perfect love, but we have our lives to lose if we reject it:

“For he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

**“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;
and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”**

Isaiah 53: 5-6

**“For God so loved the world, that he have his only begotten Son, that whosoever
believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”**

John 3: 16

Chapter 2

CHRIST'S CHARITY

“This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.”

John 15: 12

Jesus Christ is the Creator and Lord of the universe. This declaration is well established within the pages of the Bible, consistently heralded by Biblical writers over hundreds of years. The Word of God portrayed by John is the same Voice that Moses described walking in the garden of Eden.¹

As God's Speaker and Great Communicator, Christ has always been the one Mediator between God and men.² He was the Messenger to the prophets, and is the Voice who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush. The Voice of God converged the universe into existence, binds it by His power and will release it into fiery judgment sometime in the future.³

There is absolutely nothing that Jesus Christ could do for us that would increase his stature one iota. He would be no less prominent in the universe if He had done nothing to bail us out of the deathly consequence of our rebellion.

For this reason, it is consistent with Christ's unselfish agape nature that He would come to our aid. The Voice of God became a man, born of a virgin and donning a body made of clay which He had created. Being perfectly sure of His eternal stature, Christ is the only person who unselfishly fulfilled not only the letter of the law but the agape spirit of it.

Confirming His perfection, Christ then freely offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sin. His death on the cross was the perfect fulfillment of the substitutionary blood atonement statute of Leviticus 17:11. The innocent Lamb of Isaiah 53 was sacrificed so that those guilty of sin could be free from

the prospect of death and hell. The magnitude and determined commitment of God's Voice receiving the punishment for our sins can be found in the prophetic context of Isaiah 50:

“Thus saith the Lord,...I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”

Isaiah 50: 1, 6-7

Christ was determined to offer Himself unconditionally for a people completely unworthy of His concern. It was one who felt most unworthy of all, the apostle Paul, who noted in his epistle to the Romans:

“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God 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: 7-9

God then demonstrated Christ's supremacy over death and hell by raising Him from the grave and accepting the sufficiency of His sacrificial work. The witnessed resurrection endowed Christ's once-timid disciples with reconciliation to God, salvation, and boldness to change the course of world history.⁴

The salvation that was given to those early believers is offered to all mankind. Jesus Christ has completely paid the price for sin. He has provided communion with God and eternal salvation into heaven. All who accept this payment are accounted righteousness through Christ and joint heirship with Him to all that is God's.⁵

Christ's payment for sin is freely given to those who will accept it as such. If it were not free, it could not have been offered in charity. It is against God's charitable nature to expect any payment from us for that which He has freely offered. No amount of self-work, money, church attendance, religious rites or self-righteous piety can pay in whole or in part for God's free gift. If one attempts to pay for that which God has freely offered, one does not receive God's free gift.

The historical culture of the Middle East concerning gifts reflects God's perspective on His gift of salvation. Refusing a gift in oriental culture has been considered an indignant, insulting response.⁶ Refusing God's gift, or attempting to pay for it, is the supreme indignity and pride that will incur God's wrath.

God's attributes are absolutes. His perfection cannot be compromised and His charity is not for sale. If one attempts to earn salvation, all one can earn is death, because God will not accept self-work as payment for salvation:

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 6: 23

Since “the gift of God is eternal life,” then salvation must be an *eternal gift*. *Eternal* is another of God's absolute attributes, and must be defined consistently within God's Word. If our salvation is not eternal, then God would not be eternal. Moreover, if one could lose salvation tomorrow by doing something wrong, then one's salvation today is only temporary and certainly not a gift, instead being earned under certain conditions.

Saved is a word used many times in the Bible to describe the state of believers. We can be assured once again that God is using an absolute term. A distressed swimmer cannot be said to be *saved* until being completely delivered from floundering in the water. The apostle John offers further insight on the completeness of salvation:

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the son of God.”

I John 5: 13

In this verse, the phrase “know that ye have eternal life” was written in present tense to mortal people. If one *knows* in this life that one *has eternal* life, then there is no way that life can be lost anytime in the future. Eternal life does not begin for the believer after physical death, and one does not wait until dying to find out if one *will* have eternal life. That knowledge is gained in this present life, by believing God's promise that Christ's atonement is sufficient for salvation.

It is not sufficient simply to “believe in God.” One must not only believe that God exists, but also believe what God says.⁷ This is not so difficult, since what God says is more credible than information we receive from the world. Most of our knowledge is at best second-hand information for which we have taken someone else’s word. Even first-hand information is subject to miscalculations and failure. For instance, a person generally is confident that he knows his birthday. However, when pressed to prove how he really knows his birthday, he must confess simple belief in the witness of parents, doctors, and hospital records. These records are subject to human error, and some of us may not be whom we think we are.

However, the record of God is not subject to error. The Bible is constantly proving itself true, as many historians, archeologists and scientists attest. Over 300 documented fulfillments of Old Testament prophecy concerning the Messiah occurred in Jesus’s life, death and resurrection. This is an undeniable proof that Jesus is the Messiah. Truly, John was correct when he wrote:

“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

I John 5: 9-12

It is that simple. God says that if you believe in His Son you are saved, so if you believe in His Son you are saved. If you reject His Son or rely even slightly on your own works “just in case,” you are in effect calling God a liar, and placing yourself in peril. It is your choice.

Once you put your faith totally in Christ you are saved. You may have doubts sometime later in life, but God does not have any doubts.⁸ God says He will keep you saved despite your doubts and failures.⁹ This promise provides a peaceful inner assurance, confidence, and victory over sin throughout life. Simply confess to God that:

- You repent of your sinful condition that separates you from God.¹⁰
- You cannot save yourself by your own selfish works.¹¹

- Jesus Christ's blood atonement is your only means of salvation.¹²
- Then confess that you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, and thank God for His gift!

The prayer that assures a person of salvation is not only, "Please, God, save me!" A prayer that assures one of salvation includes an acceptance similar to this: "Thank you, Father. I accept your gift and know that I am saved."

Many go around begging God to save them when He is already extending salvation to them. Imagine the tragic comedy of someone extending a gift to another who, instead of reaching out and receiving the gift, falls on his knees and screams, "Please, give it to me, give it to me!" That person will never know that the gift is his until he actually receives the offer:

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

John 1: 12

In times of doubt, remember that Jesus Christ was offered "once for all....one sacrifice for sins forever."¹³ The completed work of Jesus Christ atoned for all sins – past, present and future – and even "blotted out" God's ordinances that had convicted us of sin.¹⁴ These laws of God that once condemned us to death now have no power over us, since those who have accepted Jesus Christ are even now "resurrected" to a life free from the law of sin and death.¹⁵

"...for where no law is, there is no transgression."

Romans 4:15

Since those in Christ are not under the law, they cannot be found guilty of transgressing that law. Therefore, there is nothing Christians could do that would cause them to lose the salvation that was freely given to them by God. Moreover, Christians have been saved by "the promise" of God, and cannot lose their salvation because God will not and cannot go back on His Word.¹⁶ A Christian's salvation is eternally secure in the hands of God.

"Eternal security" is an integral aspect of the gospel. Only those who realize their salvation cannot be lost are *free* to follow Christ's example and fulfill the charity commandment.¹⁷ Jesus said:

"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you."

John 15: 12

Since Jesus' love for us, displayed by what He did for us, was completely without selfish motivation, we can follow His example only if we also have nothing further to gain in the process. Jesus Christ would not command us without providing us the capability to do so, which He has done through His complete, substitutionary atonement for our sin.

Only when we are confident of our eternal stature can we do a truly "good" deed – as God defines it – for others instead of for ourselves. Any fear or uncertainty of one's eternal destiny negates any act as being truly charitable. John, the noted expert of Christ's love, explains:

“Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us.”

I John 4: 17-19

Chapter 3

VAIN JANGLING

“Now the end of the commandment is charity...from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm.”

I Timothy 1: 5-7

There are a number of Christians believing in eternal security that consider it only a point of minor doctrinal priority. However, to consider it as such ignores the significance of Christ’s exemplary life and his intent for our lives. The doctrine of charity cannot be adequately explained without including eternal security, and vice versa.

“Eternal security [i.e., “once saved, always saved”] is a major doctrinal distinctive. The belief of eternal security is always a major factor in whether one’s works are charitable, and can even separate the truly saved from the unsaved. Despite a certain amount of zeal, compassion and sincerity, the works of those who are not resting on the finished work of Christ are contaminated with selfish motivation.

Perhaps many who believe in eternal security have grown weary of the debate. Many of these “securists” have become somewhat defensive in constantly addressing the “license to sin” argument raised by those who believe one’s salvation can be lost. Armed with seemingly supportive Bible passages, “insecurists” contend that eternal security is a “dangerous doctrine” that if true would allow flagrant abuse of God’s law. If a person can never lose salvation, they say, then that person can do any evil thing desired and get away with it.

The standard securist reply is to cite the doctrine of the chastisement of believers.¹ This is a legitimate but insufficient response. The debate usually settles into trench warfare between the second chapter of James and the fourth chapter or Romans. Securists should assume the offensive in this debate by challenging insecureists to prove how one can do the good works of James 2 without complying with the charity doctrine. God will see to it that all works are tested for charitable intent, rather than superficial appearance:

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Hebrews 4: 12

It is this discerning of intent that will condemn those Christ referred to as workers of iniquity. Not even claiming the Lordship of Christ can camouflage their selfish work:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 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.”

Matthew 7: 21-23

It is clear that when these works are being performed, they are done specifically to be chalked up for reference upon meeting Christ at some future date. When seeking entrance to the kingdom of heaven, these people will have a false security in their record instead of Christ's record, although they will claim that the works were done in Christ's name. A clearly boastful attitude is displayed, revealing the fact that the works were self-serving “bragging rites,” done to glorify the worker rather than to glorify God in the spirit of charity.

Any proud, boastful attitude is evil and “worthy of death” according to the Bible.² One who proudly works to “deserve” salvation is actually condemning oneself. Such an attitude is not that of one who realizes that works cannot earn or keep salvation. Of this Paul wrote:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Ephesians 2: 8-10

As this passage in Ephesians clearly points out, only those who have accepted the work of Christ alone for salvation have the *potential* to do truly good works as God intended. One who depends upon one's works in any way for salvation has not even come *unto* good works.

Insecurists have the mistaken notion that their works are being placed on God's set of scales – “good” works on one side and sins on the other – to determine their eternal destiny. Many securists allow this premise, but simply reply that God demands perfection, and one's sin nature always outweighs one's good works. However, it is even worse than that for insecurists. Even their “good” works are lumped onto the sin pile, since they are self-centered to earn or to keep salvation.

THE SELF-CENTERED WORLD RELIGION

There are really only two major faiths in the world. By far the largest in number consists of those who believe their own works in some way earn or keep their salvation. This faith transcends all religions and even encompasses the vast majority of Christendom. It is a faith in self, and is selfish in practice.

The Mormon, mystery-religionist and Mason all pursue degrees of self-exaltation to godhood, and in reality are no different than the Hindu working through his own *karma*. They may have concern for others, but it is overshadowed by preoccupation with selfish celestial goals.

This “works” religion must also encompass the Moslem striving to comply with the Koran's demands, and the Roman Catholic diligently saying the rosary and doing penance. Add to this the charismatic, who whips himself into a positive-thinking frenzy and attempts to confirm salvation by the “spiritual gifts” he masters. Such hyper-religion may be exciting, but it is known to cause religious “manic-depression,” as those caught up in it gradually realize the futility of chasing perfection by ritual or fleeting emotion.

The world religion characterized by these various sects in effect portrays Jesus not as the charitable Creator of the universe, but as a guru example of how to achieve self-exaltation by works. He is not their savior but a pioneer guide to self-deification.³

Assuming that their religious works are on the “good” side of God’s scales, many within this religion attempt to minimize the severity of sin in order to tip the scales in favor of their works. They may do this by claiming that some sins are less serious than others, so their quest for salvation by works can be slightly less futile. On the contrary, the Bible never suggests a mere slap of the hand for any sin. The Bible equates simple envy with murder as being “worthy of death,” and equal manifestations of the condemned selfish nature.⁴

Religious adherents to Freudian psychology go so far as to deny the reality of sin altogether, so that an absence of sin can mean the absence of guilt. Rejecting freedom from guilt through Christ’s blood, they choose to put their heads in the sand and hope sin will go away. This seems inconsistent with psychologists’ advice to face up to repressed problems in one’s life.

This world religion also encompasses the many “self-awareness” groups that have come into existence. Their self-awareness is nothing more than the old rebellious ambition of Adam and Eve, who wanted to enlighten themselves as gods.⁵ As noted in the previous chapter, their rebellion resulted in a “self-conscious” human race, plagued with pride, fear, and the same guilt that today’s psychologists cannot overcome.

This religious umbrella even covers those of the atheist-humanist mind-set, since all humanism is characterized by the belief that human effort will achieve utopian goals. Humanists’ utopian approach is essentially within the same scope of values as that of theistic insecurists. Both are motivated by fear of failure into self-serving works for achieving their “utopia,” whether it be “world peace” or “heavenly salvation.” Both atheistic humanists and theistic insecurists can find agreement in this statement from the Humanist Manifesto: “No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.”⁶

Indeed, there are atheists who display benevolence toward others, and since they profess no hope for eternal rewards, their efforts may appear charitable. However, their’s is a corporate self-centeredness that believes one should help a neighbor to ensure that the neighbor can return the favor in the future, “for the benefit of humanity.” “What goes around, comes around” is a common belief among atheists as well as Hindus.

Today, an age-old synthesis of humanism, spiritualism and pantheism has proliferated in a New Age “cosmic humanism.” In this view, God and the spirit realm are rationalized into an elemental force. This impersonal force supposedly is the self-generating power of the universe, and can be compelled into certain actions by positive-thinking humans. Atheists can then work toward expanding their horizons into self-deification, as they become masters of the universe through the discovery and utilization of this force.

Elements of this religion have also assumed control of the scientific community, as many now claim as fact the pagan belief of man’s continuing evolution toward a self-made superman. What Darwin proposed was not the achievement of modern scientific research, but a rehash of principle tenets within archaic mythology and Hindu idol worship that have been around for thousands of years.⁷ Paul was familiar with those who advocated this pagan doctrine in his day:

“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.”

Romans 1: 20-25

Evolution is not only unprovable by science, it is inconsistent with laws of physics and probability.⁸ It will always be only theory – indeed a fabrication of blind pagan faith – contrary to reason and a deliberate affront to God.

The fact that science is being sidetracked into this religion is further evidenced by its increased dabbling into ‘psychic phenomena.’ The message spoken through today’s psychic is no different

than that which was spoken through the serpent in the garden of Eden: a demonic enticement to self-exaltation by striving toward one's "cosmic potential," one's own sorcerous mastery of the "force."⁹

Many in this works religion are fundamentally loyal to their respective sects exclusive of all others – some even bitterly oppose one another – but they are naive to the universal nature of their faith. This faith will one day accept the antichrist, who will be the epitome of all their mythological "heroes" as the supreme mentor of pride, self-exaltation and salvation by works.¹⁰ He will, in a pseudo-miraculous manner, achieve "world peace" by neutralizing the superficial religious barriers that separate his followers, albeit this unity of selfishness will be contradictory and short-lived.¹¹

This "every man for himself" religion feigns service to others. Its followers fool themselves into thinking this service is genuine, but its true motives reveal a certain hypocrisy. In its most sincere form, this religion says in effect, **"You must love one another to earn or keep salvation."** This puts the cart before the horse, and makes an aberration of charity. Paul wrote to Timothy concerning those who distort the charity doctrine:

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

I Timothy 1: 5-7

Under this system love becomes not the end result of salvation, but the means to it; not the unselfish agape nature but a self-serving task; a prerequisite to final acceptance by God. Assurance of salvation is impossible, and can only be estimated depending upon how "good" one perceives oneself to be from day to day. Anyone claiming certain salvation is looked upon with extreme disdain.

GENUINE CHARITY

In sharp contrast to this religious charade, securist Christianity says, **"You must know you are saved before you can truly love one another."** The concern for one's own destiny is completely settled first so that one can get down to the business of truly serving others. All that the insecure

strives for has already been given unconditionally to the securist, so that his love and praise for God are out of genuine thanksgiving for being saved, not feigning obeisance. This genuine charity is one of many facets attesting to the validity of securist Christianity apart from all the world's religions.

The philosophical difference between the two world faiths is too sharp to pass off as simply a "minor doctrinal difference." Some securists refuse to draw this distinction between true Christianity and insecure Christendom, but this lack of discernment is no different than passing off differences with the entire world religious system. There are those within Christendom who will attempt to refute this, conjecturing that there is no real schism if one invokes the name of Jesus Christ. This is done by placing an ecumenical slant to passages such as the following in I John:

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God:..."

I John 4: 2-3

However, the interpretation of this passage must be consistent with the context in which it was written, as made clear from this subsequent verse in I John:

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."

I John 5: 1

Jesus is *The* Christ. His name means *The* Savior; *The* Messiah. He is not Jesus "Part-Christ," requiring human effort to finish the job. We do not attach "Part-Christ" as a prefix to our surnames. As foolish as that would be, it is what insecureists in effect are attempting. They profess the name "Jesus Christ," but their beliefs and motivations deny the definition of His name:

"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

Titus 1: 16

These strong words reiterate Jesus' words to the workers of iniquity as recorded in Matthew 7: 21-23. Simply professing the Lordship and name of Jesus is no guarantee that one's works are accepted by God. The same hold true in this quotation from a sermon by Peter:

“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Acts 2: 21

Those who are saved do not merely call on the Lord. It is obvious from Matthew 7 that calling on the Lord is not necessarily an assurance of salvation. The saved call on *the name* of the Lord. What is His name? Jesus Christ, *The Savior*:

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

John 1: 12

The doctrines of eternal security and charity separate many who merely profess the name of Jesus Christ from those who actually believe on His name. “Ye shall know them by their fruits,” said Jesus as also recorded in Matthew 7. He continued with the following example:

“Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

Matthew 7: 16-20

Good works cannot come from selfish intent, just as good fruit cannot come from a corrupt tree. The selfish fruit of the insecure does not measure up to God’s standard. Paul defined God’s standard when he described the “fruit of the Spirit” to the Galatians:

“But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5: 22-23

There can be no pure love when the motive includes a selfish element. In this condition superficial joy and peace cannot eliminate the presence of a restless uncertainty and fear. Longsuffering, gentleness and temperance become mere degrees of enduring the unrest.

Contrary to goodness, the works of the selfish are “works of iniquity.” Faith in self is pride, and meekness is exposed as repressed boasting and false humility. The works of the insecure fail to comply with every standard of the “fruit of the Spirit.”

Many insecureists probably always have embraced their insecure, ceremonial religion and have never accepted the simple gospel of Jesus Christ. However, there are those who have been led astray after they had truly accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. Perhaps a sin or hardship had entered their lives and caused them to wonder or doubt if they ever were saved. They become the easy prey of the hardened insecureist, who insists that their problems are proof that they have lost their salvation or never were saved.

Being immature in their faith, these doubters do not realize that they are still saved but have lost the joy and assurance of salvation rather than salvation itself.¹² Dr. J. Vernon McGee had this comparison of security and assurance:

“First of all, we need to distinguish between one’s ‘Eternal Security’ and his ‘Assurance of Salvation.’ The line of demarcation must be clearly drawn if we are to enter experimentally into the joy of salvation. “Eternal security is an objective fact; assurance of salvation is a subjective experience. Eternal security is not in the realm of experience; therefore it is totally independent of a person’s feelings. Assurance of salvation is truly an experience. It is an inner consciousness and confidence that a right relationship exists between the soul and God. Eternal security rests upon certain objective facts which are established and sure; it depends of God’s faithfulness. “A simple illustration will clarify this point. The Battle of Bunker Hill is a fact in American history. You and I did not experience the Battle of Bunker Hill, and our feelings are, therefore, no guide to the accuracy of history concerning it.”¹³

Abraham was a prime example of one who had received a secure, irrevocable promise from God, but for a time later doubted the objective fact and magnitude of God’s promise. Abraham had initially believed God’s promise that he would be the father of a great nation, and God had “counted it to him for righteousness.” (Genesis 15:4-6) Later, when centenarian Abraham heard that the magnitude of God’s promise included the fact that his heir would be born of barren, ninety-year-old

Sarah, Abraham “fell on his face, and laughed.” (Genesis 17:15-18). Surely, Abraham thought, some human capability was necessary to earn or keep this promise, and that capability was not apparent. It was all, as many say, “just too easy.”

While Abraham was on the ground laughing at God’s promise, he certainly was in a sinful state of doubting and disbelieving God, even though God earlier had accounted him righteous for his initial faith. However, God did not declare that Abraham’s period of disbelief had caused him to “lose” his promise. Neither can this episode be cited as proof that Abraham “had never really believed” God’s promise. Rather, God told Abraham, in no uncertain terms, that He was a God of His Word who would “indeed” faithfully fulfill His promise despite Abraham’s period of disbelief (Genesis 17:19-22).

The account of this episode in Romans 4: 1-25 bears this out. God imputes righteousness – not sin – unto those whose faith is counted for righteousness. In doing this, God “*calleth those things that be not as though they were*” (verse 17), and changes the believer’s sinful record into an imputed record of perfection. In Abraham’s case, God’s imputed record is that Abraham, “being not weak in the faith,....staggered not at the promise” (verse 20, note verses 18-25).

Staggered not? Abraham had fallen on his face in disbelief! Nevertheless, we should not take issue with God’s change in Abraham’s record, because the same offer of imputed, eternal perfection is given to all who first trust Jesus Christ for their salvation.

When Abraham finally realized that there was nothing he could do wrong that would take away God’s promise, he was free to serve God out of thankfulness, praise and genuine charity. When he later was willing to obey God and offer up his promised son Isaac, it was not to earn or keep the promise. It had already been proven to Abraham that God would not fail in keeping His promise. Even if Isaac had died, Abraham now believed that God simply would raise Isaac from the dead *again*, just as God had done figuratively when Isaac was born from “the deadness of Sarah’s womb.” (Compare Hebrews 11:17-19 with Romans 4:19) In this one act demonstrating selfless confidence in God’s irrevocable promise, Abraham, like Christians who realize their eternal security in Christ, had come “unto good works.”¹⁴

Like Abraham, Christians who have lost assurance of salvation need to understand that their

relationship with God is still intact, but that proper fellowship with Him needs to be restored. This is done by either confessing to God the sin that interferes with this fellowship, or acknowledging God's sovereignty over the events of the Christian's life.

Hardship may or may not be the result of unconfessed sin in the life of a Christian. In many cases it simply could be allowed by God to strengthen our character and testimony, and to bring a greater desire and appreciation for the future perfection that God has in store for us. In any event, chastisement is not meant to cause Christians to doubt salvation. Rather, it is meant to reinforce assurance that God loves His children:

“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

“Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; be he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless it afterward yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

Hebrews 12: 5-11

Dr. McGee explained several other reasons why many people lack assurance of God's eternal salvation:

“1. Some are frightened souls who received the Gospel in trembling and in fear. The Gospel was presented partially, and they were not told that they could have any assurance. There is always a serious doubt whether folk like this have ever been

saved. The instability and inconsistency of the lives of many, who live in the atmosphere of uncertainty, do not reveal a thorough-going conversion.... Many who lack assurance are sincere, but they have actually never been born again.

“2. Some depend upon an emotional experience, and they do not have the knowledge of their salvation. The Gospel has not been given to them accurately, and they merely rest upon an emotional upheaval. If the experience was significant, then they fall back upon it to fortify their faith. When the emotional experience wears thin and there is not much to rest upon, then doubts and uncertainty creep in to make the heart disturbed.”¹⁵

These descriptions of lack of assurance reveal how imperative it is to include an explanation of eternal security in any gospel presentation. Lack of salvation assurance comes from not knowing Bible truth. It is a shame upon Christians who knowingly allow these doubts to fester in others by not taking the time to explain adequately the magnitude of the Gospel, or by not making clear the distinction of eternal security in Christ apart from insecure religion. This can result in people either not even being converted, or living lives substandard in Christian quality; characterized by fear and deficient in charity.

Chapter 4

CROWNS AND REWARDS

“Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.”

Philippians 4: 1

Although securist Christians have the *potential* for unselfish works, that does not guarantee that all of a their works are charitable. Most of us probably will be surprised to find that only a slight percentage of our works will be judged as good works by Christ.¹

This is because even though we Christians have the agape Spirit of God working within and through us, we still have the old selfish “outward man,” the carnal mind and body. The conflict between the “outward man” and the “inward man” is referred to in a number of Biblical passages, particularly in Paul’s writing:

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”

II Corinthians 4:16

Paul describes the conflict in more detail in his epistle to the Romans:

“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not: but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good

that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Romans 7: 15-25

Paul is describing a war within him that did not commence until he was saved. Before salvation this conflict does not exist because the only real influence within an unsaved person is the motivation of the self-centered, carnal mind.

It seems a paradox that the arrival of God’s Spirit of peace within the believer would be the event triggering conflict, but it is due to the fact that the carnal mind is not silenced until death or when all believers’ bodies are perfected at their resurrection.² The carnal mind, although defeated, does not want to surrender. Motivated by fear and selfishness, it will engage in a struggle of resistance until it draws its final breath.

Christians may be assured that the carnal mind will ultimately succumb to the Holy Spirit, “whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”³ In the meantime, the Christian determines whether he will yield to the Holy Spirit or the carnal mind, which corrupts the Christian’s works by infusing selfish motives.

The selfish nature of the carnal mind is clearly seen in human history. God said that Adam’s sin cursed the ground and subjected man to death. The Lord had told Adam that he must work to eat.⁴ This has since been a constant reminder of humanity’s selfish fallen nature, since many of our works are now simply for self-survival and safety from exposure or peril. We must see to our own individual survival – both physically and spiritually – before we can begin to help those around us.

Humanists have always believed that man is “basically good,” or at least “morally neutral,” but the traits of society reveal the inherent evil of selfishness. The degree of disparity between rich and

poor reveals the natural hoarding tendencies of many rich, who would pay workers meagerly so that they could accumulate to themselves far beyond that which is a reasonable enjoyment of their labors' fruits. Social scientists debate the comparative advantages and flaws of social-economic systems, but they will not admit that even mortal man's best efforts will not allow him to escape the scourge of his carnal selfishness.

In times of scarcity and hardship, selfishness is a scramble to acquire a limited supply of goods and pleasure at the other person's expense. This selfish hoarding is done to serve as a buffer against fear and worry about destitution and death. Selfishness, fear and death are the constant companions of the doomed carnal mind. Thoreau apparently had the carnal mind in mind when he wrote, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation."⁵

Christians must constantly be on guard against yielding to this defeated, desperate foe, with its accompanying selfish traits. As Paul wrote in this often paraphrased statement: "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."⁶

This selfish nature can reveal itself in other ways. For instance, a Christians's charitable work may be compromised by including the motive of enhancing career goals or reputation, etc. "The pride of life"⁷ has diminished the effectiveness of many Christians.

One of the major detriments to the Christian's good works is the apparent misconception concerning the doctrine of crowns and rewards. Simply put, it teaches that good works will bring a Christian rewards in heaven. This has been widely misconstrued to mean that the more good works a Christian accomplishes during a lifetime, the greater will be that Christian's mansion, possessions and status in heaven. How such an interpretation inconsistent with charity can become significant within Christianity is certainly perplexing. It seems that the old carnal mind has been active once again. Could it really be that once people are saved "unto good works" of charity, that God would then license them to selfishly shoot for the moon in some heavenly sweepstakes?

When Jesus said our treasures are in heaven, He certainly was not referring to such a scramble for celestial status symbols. This motivation certainly does not reflect total devotion to others. Some famous Christian testimonies have been influenced by this thought, which has tarnished the charitable nature of their accomplishments.

All Christians are joint-heirs with Christ to all that the Father has.⁸ There is no “other side of the tracks” in heaven, where some get only the basics. Of course there will be rewards in heaven, but there is no indication that larger mansions are among them.

One of the greatest personal rewards – one that all Christians can expect – is the one that Christians do not work for. It is simply perfection when it is finally experienced. The great evangelist will be just as satisfied with this reward as will be the forgotten, lonely soul who had limited abilities with which to serve God. What better personal reward can there be than this:

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

Revelation 21: 1-4

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

Revelation 22: 1-5

Other rewards of great value can come to the Christian, and it is true that Christians must work harder for these. Paul wrote about just what these rewards would be:

“For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.”

I Corinthians 9: 17-23

In verse 18, Paul addresses the question of what his reward will be. He climaxes his answer in verse 23: “...that I may be partaker thereof with you.” Since charity is unselfish devotion *to others*, does it not seem reasonable and consistent with scripture that *others* will be our reward when we see them in heaven? Paul was not referring to gaining more heavenly mansions, but gaining more souls. That is why Paul repeated this theme in several other epistles:

“Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.”

Philippians 4: 1

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.”

I Thessalonians 2: 19-20

“As also ye have acknowledge us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our’s in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

II Corinthians 1: 14

It will certainly be a rewarding experience in heaven to see those whom we had influenced in some way to accept the gospel, or upon whom our lives had a positive effect; either directly or through our financial support of ministries, and to know that our works pleased God. It will be rewarding to see our family and friends in heaven, and those they in turn led to the Lord, multiplied perhaps many times over. Likewise, we will lose a certain amount of the joy we could have had if some are not present in heaven due to our failure to witness to them.

In heaven, we will have the satisfaction of knowing which of our works have come through their fiery trial. The extent of our joy will be in direct correlation to our crown of rejoicing, but not our crown of gold. There is no scriptural basis to the speculation that God will bestow greater heavenly status symbols upon those with a “greatest works” record. Even if it were so, those who were motivated by such selfish thought would be the first disqualified from consideration.

Some Christians do not even think they must wait for heaven to receive lucrative rewards, but believe they are to receive such rewards while still on earth. They claim that the blessings promised to givers in the Bible⁹ should never be limited to intangibles, such as simple joy and satisfaction from giving, or knowledge of the positive, multiple effect of one’s action. Not following Paul’s admonition to give “as God hath prospered,”¹⁰ they advise people to give as God *will* prosper. With a pitch competitive with that of any financial planner, they assert that enough “giving” will earn a far greater return in monetary value than the initial “gift.” This idea, like the “work for mansions” belief, has developed from superficial reading of several Bible passages, such as this in Malachi:

“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsom land, saith the LORD of hosts.”

Malachi 3: 8-12

When this passage is placed in its context as applying to the nation of Israel, it contrasts with what should be the motivation for the Christian. Israel's relationship with God had always been as one requiring prodding with signs and incentives. The people of Israel had constantly asked for physical signs from God to convince them to act in compliance with His will.¹¹ Israel was promised prosperity in the land for obeying God's laws. That is not the promise to the Christian church. We have a greater promise: the unconditional promise of eternal life motivating us to charity.

Christians wishing the results of tithing in the manner of Malachi 3 can comply with the charity standards only if they acknowledge that all their possessions are God's and that they are merely stewards of what God has allowed them to use. Regretfully many tithers show by their actions that they believe only one-tenth is God's and the rest is theirs to do with what they wish.

Christians are "bought with a price."¹² Everything that a Christian has is God's and should be used according to God's standards. This applies not only to the money and possessions offered to the church but also to that used for basic needs and entertainment.

Scriptural tithing is not giving to God a tenth of what one owns. Tithing is releasing to God a tenth of what has been put one's care that God owns. With this understanding, any "return on investment" similar to that in Malachi would not be selfishly oriented but would be the result of one's desire to have a responsible role in allocating God's resources.

The selfish desire for tangible rewards as motivation for service has an overwhelming influence in world culture. The Christian church has absorbed some of this influence, perhaps unknowingly, and has allowed it to become a part of many church programs.

In an effort to boost church attendance and interest, token awards have been introduced within church programs as incentives to participation. It seems innocent enough, particularly when dealing with very young children. Indeed, it seems to parallel the Bible's chronology of instruction. Israel was instructed to go beyond preoccupation with rewards and punishments. This instruction was culminated when God made charity abundantly clear through Christ.

Rewards and punishments have always been a prime motivator in elementary instruction. The extensive use of rewards and punishments proves that even the very young are guilty of manifesting the inherited selfish nature long before they can begin to understand the concept.

It is not the intention here to question the sincere efforts of church workers who employ this method. They are certainly blessed with a special gift and calling.

These questions should be raised, however: When should attendance banners and awards be discontinued and students be taught clearly that participation in church activities is solely and unconditionally to serve God? When should students be taught clearly that inviting a friend to church activities should be only for the friend's sake without also winning some award or banner? When should it be clearly taught and exhibited that memorizing scripture requires no other incentive than a desire for Godly living and evangelism? When even adult Sunday school classes have little contests to reward the class that brings in the most visitors, and even entice attendance with door prizes, how can this exemplify true charity to children?

Such a method of motivation can invite a "what's in it for me" attitude that requires correction sooner or later. If not, children taught by this method may very well grow up to perpetuate the "work for heavenly mansions" notion. Christians teachers should take every opportunity to wean young Christians from this concept of tangible rewards for Christian service.. The church should not promote a continued reinforcement of the old selfish nature.

This text does not pretend to have any certain answers or alternate methods to employ. These decisions should be left to those qualified within their respective ministries. However, since the concept of games without tangible prizes is so foreign to our culture, one suggestion would be to better separate game time from subjects of Christian service that merit more serious attention.

Even so, the world's incentive for competition need not be that of Christians. The world's motivation can be described in one word: *pride*. In reality, pride or proud should never be a part of a Christian's vocabulary in describing his attitude. Unfortunately it pops up in the most unassuming manner. We say, "we're so proud of our new church facility," or "We're proud of our child's accomplishments in the Christian school."

We ought to be pleased, thankful, rejoicing, satisfied, and confident, but never proud. "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul."¹³ This a Biblical attitude devoid of pride, but still allowing a positive expression of satisfaction.

Pride is *never* well spoken of in the Bible.¹⁴ It has assumed major emphasis in world culture and

religion, but that is because humans are naturally self-centered. It is the natural tendency of man to compete for bragging rights and to proclaim supremacy. Even though Christians are besieged in our culture with such things as “Community Pride Week” and the “we’re proud of our team” syndrome, that does not mean Christians should acquiesce to pride in competition. There are better motives for Christians attempting to succeed in competition.

One of the more obvious examples of how one can reflect the proper Christian attitude is in athletics. Sport is indeed a microcosm of life. The competition is not subtle as in many of life’s other challenges. Preparation and subjection to training, pain, success, failure, determination, disappointment, good fortune and bad breaks all are acutely climaxed within several hours of performance. This is as true for the Christian as for the non-Christian, except that the Christian can exalt Christ regardless of the outcome.

For the Christian, athletic performance should be a worship service, a celebration of life, and a righteous “dance”¹⁵ that gives back to God an exhibition of those skills that God has given and allowed to be refined. The performance is also a testimony to spectators and other performers, as the Christian displays his skill, including his developed character. His character is utilized to accept and overcome handicaps, bad breaks, failure and disappointment, as well as in the manner of handling good fortune and victory. A good display of ability and character does not always result in victory on the scoreboard, but does ensure a blessing to those for whom the performance is being given.

A Christian’s celebration should not be limited to his own performance, but should also include that of his team and even the opposition as well. The Christian should celebrate the entire contest and his role in it. This implies not kicking the dirt in disgust when the opposing shortstop makes a great stop of a “sure hit,” but actually applauding one’s opponent while appreciating that he contributed his best to his opponent’s opportunity to display his skills. Doing one’s best to encourage and “push” the opponent to do his best ensures a good, fun and lively contest, as both competitors are more likely to perform at their potential.

This approach is also a tremendous witnessing tool when exhibited before the many who are not used to such conduct during competition, although it may have an unintended result of actually rattling an opponent. Such an instance involving this concept was revealed some years ago in a rather

humorous manner by Brian Bosworth, the blustery former Oklahoma Sooner All-American linebacker who also played in the National Football League.

Bosworth once was asked after several years in the pros if there had ever been a running back that he dreaded to tackle. Without hesitation he responded that it was Doug DuBose, whom he had played against during his college days when DuBose played for Nebraska. However, Bosworth's dread of DuBose was not because DuBose was a more punishing running back than others, but simply because of DuBose's attitude on the football field.

Bosworth prepared for games by directing sheer hatred and insults toward his opponents. DuBose, however, troubled him because every time Bosworth would clobber him, DuBose would pop up and exclaim, "Great tackle, Brian!"

"Shut up, Doug!" Bosworth would respond in anger. In an age of "trash talk" and insults, DuBose was disrupting Bosworth's game plan.

DuBose's approach should not be so novel, but it has been entirely neglected in the "win at any cost" world of sports today. Contestants look foolish when in pride they insult their opponents and exalt their own invincibility, when the contest is being decided by only a few points or a strange bounce of the ball. This condition has even prompted some Christian programs to shy away from athletic competition altogether, when in reality they should boldly participate and proclaim this fresh, renewed way to compete.

When Paul admonished Christians to do all things through charity, he did not exclude athletics or other competitions. Charity is unselfish giving, whether it be helping those in need or giving a performance. Charity is born of confidence in one's ability to do one's best with the resources that one has.

The motivation should not be to get awards from the contest but to give one's best to the contest. Only with this attitude can one's complete potential be developed over that which is required simply to defeat an opponent. This is true whether the competition be in athletics, academics, one's career, or the many other challenges of life.

Chapter 5

THE PIERCING SWORD

“...and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

I Corinthians 13: 3

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Hebrews 4: 12

The Christian church owes a great deal of gratitude to the reformers and martyrs who centuries ago spared not their lives to provide the religious liberty and scholarship that has since ensued.

Armed with only threads of scriptural truth, they withstood the persecution of those truly intolerant, who have been assured greater damnation for prohibiting others to enter God’s salvation after not entering in themselves.¹

It would do us well to consider the testimonies of some of these martyrs and reformers. As much as we may wish, we do not have the authority to proclaim that heaven automatically received every one of them. We cannot even be certain if our closest Christian friend has actually received the salvation he professes. That is between that person and God alone, and all we can ascertain is one’s profession and consistent testimony. Therefore, we certainly cannot play God by attempting to determine what eternal destiny awaited all the martyrs of antiquity.

In the study of charity, however, certain aspects of their testimonies can be discerned for doctrinal consistency, providing that an accurate historical description of their motivations can be assumed. This assumption allows that, in times of doubt or great distress, one's conversations, actions or motivations could possibly be contrary to actual beliefs. Moreover, intentions could be consciously or subconsciously slanted by the prejudices of the historians. With these things in mind, a glimpse at the motives of some of the martyrs is possible.

Fox's Book of Martyrs gives graphic details of many martyr's sufferings, and gives insight on the thoughts of some of them as they faced death. Here is one such account:

Maximillian Hostialick was famed for his learning, piety and humanity. When he first came on the scaffold, he seemed exceedingly terrified at the approach of death. The officer taking notice of his agitation, Hostialick said, 'Ah! Sir, now the sins of my youth crowd upon my mind, but I hope God will enlighten me, lest I sleep the sleep of death and lest mine enemies say we have prevailed.' Soon after he said, 'I hope my repentance is sincere, and will be accepted, in which case the blood of Christ will wash me from my crimes.'

He then told the officer he should repeat the Song of Simeon; at the conclusion of which the executioner might do his duty. He accordingly, said, 'Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,' at which words his head was struck off at one blow.²

Of course, no mortal Christian should be critical of this man's apparent fear of the block, since we do not know how we would react in his situation. May we face death so steadfastly if such circumstances befall us.

In faith, the soul of the Christian is confident of its eternal destiny, but our carnal minds have varying degrees of withstanding pain and fear of death. The cursed, mortal body simply does not want to die, and certainly wishes to avoid a long, tortuous execution. The Christian may not mind – indeed, may welcome – the prospect of dying in testimony for Christ, but our present bodies are not so cooperative. We must recognize the possibility of this reaction, and, as Solomon admonished, “Be not afraid of sudden fear.”³

Dr. J. Vernon McGee once alluded to this dichotomy between soul and body in describing his bout with cancer. In his worst days many would say, "I'm praying that God will end your suffering and take you home to heaven."

"Don't you do that," he would retort. This renowned pastor, despite confidence in his eternal destiny, was not fond of the thought of dying. It is human nature, and very few can subdue it.

However, it seems Hostialick's fear may also have been due to the uncertainty of his soul's destination. This is possible from his statement, "I hope my repentance is sincere, and will be accepted, in which case the blood of Christ will wash me from my crimes."

The fictitious example has already been given of the person who, when offered a gift, falls on his knees and screams, "Please give it to me, give it to me!" Drawing it out further, perhaps he would turn to someone beside him and whisper, "I hope that is a sincere enough plea."

It certainly would be sincere, but inadequate to assure acceptance of the gift. The person could sincerely plead all day and still not be any closer to knowing the gift is his as he would by simply accepting it. In the case of the martyr, acceptance of God's salvation would have been better reflected in a statement such as, "I know my repentance was sincere, and was accepted. The blood of Christ has washed me from my crimes."

One cannot help speculating that since Hostialick was uncertain of the adequacy of his repentance, perhaps he attempted to include his martyrdom as part of his repentance. If that were the case, his martyrdom was not for the cause of Christ so much as for the cause of the martyr.

For the securist, martyrdom would be the supreme charitable work of denying self for the cause of Christ. For the insecure, martyrdom would be the supreme attempt to justify oneself before God. The events may look the same to the human eye, but the Word of God, as a sword more piercing than any that killed the martyrs, is a divider and discernor of "the thoughts and intents of the heart."⁴

Fear of losing salvation for failure to "endure to the end" was the apparent motivation of many martyrs when facing torture and death. At least that was the idea implied by the Protestant historians of that time. Fox as well as Van Brought, the Baptist author of a voluminous record of martyrs, include numerous accounts of the persecuted facing a choice between physical suffering and death, or spiritual annihilation. Fox's writing concerning one Anthony Ricetti reflects this perception:

The lord of Venice likewise sent him word, that if he would embrace the Roman Catholic religion, they would not only give him his life, but redeem a considerable estate which he had mortgaged, and freely present him with it. This however, he absolutely refused to comply with, sending word to the nobles that he valued his soul beyond all other considerations; and being told that a fellow-prisoner, named Francis Sega, had recanted, he answered, 'If he has forsaken God, I pity him; but I shall continue steadfast in my duty.' Finding all endeavors to persuade him to renounce his faith ineffectual, he was executed according to his sentence, dying cheerfully, and recommending his soul fervently to the Almighty.⁵

It appears that this man's primary concern was to have an ongoing part in his soul's salvation, before his desire to further the cause of Christ. Refusing the offer of the persecutors appeared noble, but the motivation to refuse was not without selfishness.

An indication that Van Braght was in agreement with this "perseverance" doctrine is found in the following excerpt from the Anabaptist Confession of Faith, which he quoted, "hoping that it will be productive of some profit or good,"⁶ and apparently meeting his approval:

In this true faith we cannot stand still, but with humble fasting, praying, and supplicating in the Spirit, we must plead for help, assistance, and new strength in all divine virtues, unto the end, in order that God may strengthen and preserve us in the same. Where this is neglected men may fall from the faith; the good Spirit may be taken away, and their names blotted out of the Book of Life, and written again in the earth.⁷

This Anabaptist Confession of Faith minimizes the absolute saving power of Christ. In this regard its adherents essentially failed to distinguish themselves from those they were suffering under, who themselves were in constant fear of "excommunication" and uncertain of salvation.

The Apostle John quoted Jesus as saying that "no man" is able to pluck God's children out of His hands.⁸ This again must be interpreted as an absolute. No person, not even one attempting to wiggle out himself, is able to do so. God may have to squeeze hard enough for it to hurt,⁹ but He will hold on to those who sought and received His salvation, and they "shall never perish."¹⁰

It is God's faith in His ability to keep this promise that assures our salvation, not the mortal Christian's wavering faithfulness.¹¹ One deludes himself if he thinks he can be an exception to "any other creature" as one who can separate himself from the love of God once he is saved:

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

Romans 8: 38-39

It can only be surmised whether or not all of those martyrs attributed with the perseverance motive were actually so minded, since the historians' point of view could have been written into their accounts. It can only serve as a reminder that since "perfect love casteth out fear," one cannot be motivated to charitable action from fear of the consequence of doing otherwise. On this subject Paul made reference:

"...though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

I Corinthians 13: 3

Just as some attempt to play down the differences between securists and insecureists today, a number of church leaders are quite ambiguous when describing the virtues of past martyrs and reformers. They have been reluctant to disassociate doctrinally from those historical reformers who showed no recorded signs of believing in eternal security. This reluctance is perhaps even greater concerning past insecureists than those present, since there were not a great many known securists in the early reform movement or the preceding period known as the Dark Ages.

The lack of securists from that significant portion of church history is said to raise a credibility problem, if one accepts the premise that continual, documented succession of church doctrine is required for a church to meet the qualification that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."¹² Reaction to this possibility prompts many securists to grasp at straws, claiming as champions of our faith those who only remotely characterized true Christianity. This is not necessary, as Henry C. Vedder explained in the following text on Baptist history:

The church that [Christ] said he would build on the rock, to which he guaranteed victory against the gates of hades itself, is not a visible body – that is the great falsehood of Rome – but the assembly of those in all the ages who truly love God and keep the commandments of Christ. Of these there has been an unbroken succession – there is no other. Through the continuous presence of this church and not along any chain of visible churches, the truth has descended to our days. Christ’s promise would not be broken though at some period of history we should find his visible churches apparently overcome by Satan, and suppressed; though no trace of them should be left in literature; though no organized bodies of Christians holding the faith in apostolic simplicity could be found anywhere in the world. The truth would still be, as he had promised, witnessed somewhere, somehow, by somebody. The church does not cease to be because it is driven into the wilderness.

...Our theory of the church as deduced from the Scriptures requires no outward and visible succession from the apostles. If every church of Christ were to-day to become apostate, it would be possible and right for any true believers to organize to-morrow another church on the apostolic model of faith and practice, and that church would have the only apostolic succession worth having – a succession of faith in the Lord Christ and obedience to him. Baptists have not the slightest interest therefore in wresting the facts of history from their true significance; our reliance is on the New Testament, and not on antiquity; on present conformance to Christ’s teachings, not on an ecclesiastical pedigree, for the validity of our church organization, our ordinances, and our ministry.¹³

The content of scripture consistently proclaims charitable securist doctrine. Securists need not be concerned about the breaks in documented succession, which were caused by persecution and attempted extermination. The fact that the gates of hell shall not prevail indicates that Satan would certainly try his best to do so.

The securist faith is directly linked to the doctrine of the apostolic church and the “cloud of witnesses” which has prevailed in Christ’s presence since His resurrection.¹⁴ Christians should be

secure enough in that faith that they do not need to grasp at the straws of antiquity. As much as believer's baptism by immersion, as practiced by the historical Anabaptists and others, is an important doctrine, what people believe concerning salvation is even more so, as well as their practice of charity. Vedder described where a search for missing links in church doctrine will eventually lead:

*A succession of the true faith may indeed be traced, in faint lines at times, but never entirely disappearing; but a succession of churches, substantially like those of our own faith and order in doctrine and polity – that is a will-o'-the-wisp, likely to lead the student into a morass of errors, a quagmire of unscholarly perversions of fact. The special feature of this history [text] is that it attempts frankly to recognize facts, instead of trying to maintain a thesis or minister to denominational vanity.*¹⁵

In reality, Christians should not even allow themselves to be branded with the term "Protestant." This label gives undue acquiescence to that religion which is predated by our faith and rendered in error by scripture. Ours is not a "nay" but a "yea" gospel.¹⁶ As much as our freedoms were benefitted by the efforts of Protestant reformers, that does not mean we should equate ourselves with the Protestant stereotype.

Chapter 6

SEPARATE ISSUES

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

II Timothy 3: 5

Given the irreconcilable differences between securist Christianity and insecure religionists, why do some securists remain unseparated from ecumenical and evangelical endeavors with insecure organizations?

A primary reason could be intimidation, due to the tremendous number of people that embrace some sort of works-for-salvation doctrine within Christendom. Can that many people really be in error? It appears quite presumptive to believe that one's faith, comprising only a small fraction of Christendom, let alone world religion, is the valid faith for salvation and Christian living.

However, a comparative analysis of the tenets and characteristics of all religions confirms the uniqueness of belief in the simple, finished gospel of Jesus Christ. The late Dr. M.R. DeHaan had this comment on the comparison of Christianity to the many religions of the world:

*Christianity is not a religion; it is a life. Religion consists in a set of formalistic rules and ceremonial observances. Of this type of ritualistic systems the number is constantly increasing, but Christianity stands by itself. The genius of Christianity is that it alone has a living Author and Head; for the Author of our salvation is Christ Jesus, the glorified man now seated at the right hand of God. No one else dares claim this distinction. Not even the fanatical devotees of the many religions in the world can say that their author and founder is alive.*¹

The uniqueness of this Christian “life” should result in a sober realization among Christians of the good fortune that is ours. Doctrinal separation does not mean the end of communication and interaction with others. It does mean that we should communicate the uncompromising gospel *to* them instead of entering into ecumenical endeavors *with* them. It should be the Christian’s desire to preach the gospel compassionately to all those multitudes entrapped in their own religious pride.

The grace of God is accepted only by a few mainly because “accepting charity” does not appeal to a great many people. Human nature dictates that a person will brag about the good deal he got at an auction, as long as he paid more than nothing for an item. Few people will unashamedly proclaim to the world their acceptance of charity. Many would be offended that the giver would consider them each a “welfare case.”

This is the pride of which religions are made. People want to pride themselves in the contribution they make toward their own salvation. The sad truth is that their contribution will not bring the satisfaction they seek. It can only bring further uncertainty and futility.

Jesus said, “Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction,” but “narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it.”² The way of destruction is so broad because not only are the blatantly rebellious on it, but also the vast majority of the religious. The Bible says that only a small “remnant” of Israel will be saved, and it is evident that such is also the case with gentiles.³ Therefore, the mere quotation of numbers should not intimidate the Christian from proclaiming the truth of securist Christianity.

Another reason securists hesitate to doctrinally separate from insecureists is that many insecureists are, in our human estimation, essentially nice, well-meaning, zealous people. Many make a public profession of their faith that few securists have matched. However, their tragedy, as the Bible describes it, is “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.”⁴ Insecureists may believe that God has the power to heal their temporal bodies, but apparently not enough to save completely their eternal souls.

Many insecureists do not realize that their effort to earn or keep salvation is such an offense to God. It is just the way they have been taught, and in their effort to please God they are putting themselves in danger. They need to be warned that, though sincere, they are sincerely in error.

Some securists minimize their differences with insecureists because they do not wish to appear offensive or argumentative by splitting hairs over what is considered a minor doctrinal difference. This is of course a desirable trait when considering beliefs of *relatively* minor importance. One should not accuse a brother in Christ of being a heretic for simply taking issue with the frequency of the communion services.

However, it has been clearly shown that eternal security is not a minor doctrine. The position one takes on eternal security determines, at the very least, whether one has the *potential* to do “good,” truly charitable works, and it may determine whether that person has even been saved. There are no aspects of a Christian’s life and testimony that carry more importance.

Perhaps the most tragic reason for minimizing eternal security’s importance is the attitude of some evangelists and preachers reluctant to risk alienating some followers. In perhaps a sincere desire to reach as many people as possible with a knowledge of Jesus Christ, these evangelists feel compelled to expand their financial base to support such a ministry. In doing this they appeal to whoever has a zeal for evangelistic ministries, including many sincere insecureists.

Although they achieve the media impact they sought, these evangelists fail to explain adequately the difference between grace and works, and minimize the need to accept the finished gospel. This behavior may be consciously or subconsciously due to the evangelists’ fear of offending their new supporters.

The result is the watered-down gospel evangelism which is so prevalent today. The evangelists speak of the “grace of God” in an esoteric manner so that those listening can hear what they want to hear. Of course, many insecureists speak of the grace of God, but define it as the initial opportunity to begin working for, or to keep salvation.

These evangelists reason that more people hear of Jesus in this way, so the method is acceptable. This is “end justifies the means” evangelism which, contrary to its purpose, confuses more people than it helps, and is in reality deceitful. Insecureists should be the object of compassionate evangelism and instruction to bring them to a knowledge and assurance of their salvation, and to bring them to charity. Those beset with fear and uncertainty should not be evangelical co-workers and financial supporters with securists in preaching the gospel of peace.

All who reject the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, including many (not all) insecure within Christendom, will spend eternity in hell, separated from God. This belief is offensive to many religionists, who brand it as an example of bigotry and intolerance.

Their's is a knee-jerk reaction without basis, for securist Christians do not make this distinction out of a superior, bigoted attitude, but proclaim God's charitable offer of salvation from hell to all people. When a Christian speaks out, distinguishing his salvation from the insecure position of the unsaved, he does not do so to exalt himself in any way. Whether or not the unsaved are aware of it, the Christian simply has a morally determined commitment toward them to warn them of danger. A Christian doesn't mind being described as annoying, or consumed with emotional zeal, but objects to being called a bigot, since there are absolutely no grounds for it.

For example, suppose two people are out in a forest. One is in a secure position with a good view of his surroundings, and is also aware of the other's position. He sees that the other is wandering toward a steep cliff concealed by foliage, is in imminent danger, and is not even aware of it.

The first person would not be any less secure if he simply kept quiet and didn't warn the other of the danger. Nevertheless, he urgently lets the facts be known. He maintains his concern despite the reaction of the other, who responds, "You delusional bigot, what makes you think you are in a better position than I am?"

Actually, a bigot would be inclined not to offer a warning. He would show his hatred in a desire to keep the other distanced from him. A bigot may even say, "Don't worry, your position is just as good as mine," when he is convinced that is really not the case. The Christian, however, would be quick to respond, "Come this way. It is safer and has a much better view."

Christians echo God's desire to warn people of their peril, then recognize people's right to decide their eternal destiny of their own free will. American Christians were instrumental in forming their country's concepts of religious and civil liberties, which historically were many times synonymous.⁵ These liberties respect the rights of people to decide their own beliefs and destiny, but maintain another's right to say that people are making the wrong decision. Doctrinal separation is not bigoted intolerance but the free expression of Bible discernment. Simply stating that unbelievers will go to hell is not the same as attempting on God's behalf to send them there.

One who disagrees with another's religious beliefs cannot really feel threatened by that which he believes is untrue. The securist does not feel threatened by the Roman Catholic who merely expresses his belief that those who disobey the Roman Catholic church will spend hard time in purgatory. That is because the securist does not believe in the authority of the Roman Catholic church, or its dogma of purgatory, etc. The hardened atheist must surely have the same attitude regarding the Christian's assertion that there is a hell. Therefore, anyone who would seek to censure a person's right to express such a belief is the truly intolerant bigot, and is the true enemy of liberty.

Granted, one's anger may be justified toward those religions that extort by keeping salvation from hell uncertain and conditioned upon continual payment of money or service. However, such anger is not a sufficient reason to deny religious freedom. Likewise, dislike of the concept of hell is not a sufficient reason to deny its existence, or to attempt to deny others the freedom to preach about it. Most people abhor the notion of an existence so futile as to allow a Hitler to share an eternal void equal to that of all his victims.

Although Christians respect one's right to reject the securist doctrine, we know the truth of which we speak. The truth and reason of the Christian message is evident in the heart and mind of every human being on earth. The condemned symptoms of self-consciousness – pride, fear, insecurity, selfishness, etc. – cry out to those who would listen with an open mind. The gospel of Christ is the only cure for the human dilemma; it is the only true source of peace, security and charity.

The humanist would decry anyone's claim to knowing the truth. Humanists insist on a world where one may seek truth, but never dare claim he found it; where truth is always a subjective opinion, never an objective fact. This would allow one big societal mishmash where the only truth is the opinion of those in power. This is their plan for human survival, but it is inadequate for the task.

“Nothing is more certain in modern society,” said one prominent figure representing the humanist viewpoint, “than the principle that there are no absolutes.”⁶ This is pure folly. Is his statement completely certain? If so, then there is absolute truth; if not then there is absolute truth.

Herein lies an exceptional rule: Some rules have no exceptions. They are true regardless of human ignorance of them.

When universal laws are discovered, new truth is not formed – old truth is finally realized. What was believed before was only ignorance, or rebellious refusal to acknowledge fact.

Humanists, in their pride, refuse to accept this principle. When the truth is hard to come by or causes friction, they simply claim that everyone is right, or “has his own truth.” This is a band-aid approach to human survival that will do nothing to eliminate man’s festering destructiveness. Those who support this approach certainly have a right to their opinion, but their opinion does not entitle them to be right.

Despite the humanist folly, the words of John Milton still ring true: “Let [Truth] and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?”⁷

When the current debate runs its course, the world will find the source of truth right where it had refused to look – in the Word of God. Jesus Christ (to whom one with humanist inclinations once asked, “What is truth?”⁸) is the way, the truth and the life.⁹ On this principle there will be no compromise:

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

Acts 4: 12

Christians will not abandon this truth for the sake of “peace” with a charade. Our peace is in Christ and Christ alone, not in compromising His absolutes. Those outside Christ do not have peace, and their choice to remain in that condition inevitably divides mankind.¹⁰ Jesus said:

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

John 16: 33

Chapter 7

LINE UPON LINE

“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:”

Isaiah 28: 9-10

The study of eternal security is considered by many as an “advanced” Bible doctrine. Perhaps this is their belief because much effort must first be taken to “unlearn” improper interpretations of certain scripture passages. It bears repeating that eternal security is a basic, simple aspect of the gospel that must be learned before one potentially can live a charitable Christian life. However, when one has for years been taught interpretations of scripture that are out of context and contrary to eternal security, the securist teacher must spend twice as much time: first, refuting insecure interpretations with sound biblical precepts, then explaining the true interpretation of the passages in their context. The writer of Hebrews faced a similar task in dealing with religious Jews in his day:

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

Hebrews 5: 12-14

This chapter will also be devoted to that purpose. It is undertaken with confidence that every passage cited by insecureists as proof of their position says no such thing as they contend. In most cases the context reveals the very opposite – that salvation is an eternal gift and cannot be lost once it has been received. In all cases the weight of Bible teaching on charity cannot be contradicted.

JAMES 2: 14-26

¹⁴What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? ¹⁷Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

¹⁸Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. ¹⁹Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. ²⁰But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? ²²Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? ²³And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. ²⁴Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

²⁵Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? ²⁶For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Perhaps no other portion of scripture is quoted so often by insecureists as this one to support their contention that works are necessary for salvation. Since it is a relatively long passage, digesting its meaning can best be accomplished by first looking at several key verses. The phrase most quoted by insecureists is in verses 17, 20 and 26: “faith without works is dead.”

However, this faith must be consistent with the faith elsewhere taught in the Bible. It must be, as Galatians 5:6 explains, the *faith* which *worketh by love*. This love is, of course, unselfish charity, which is what God intended Christians to be saved unto. This charity cannot be present if the intent of the work is self-preservation. It must be emphasized that faith without *good* works is dead. Therefore, faith with only selfish works done to save the worker is dead also. Its only result is pride, fear, or uncertainty, but certainly not the living “fruit of the spirit.”

Now the *faith* is dead without works. Nowhere does it say that the person or the soul dies, which is what insecurists believe and interpret as losing salvation. What characterizes a dead faith? Any scientist will testify that a prime qualification of any living thing is the ability of cellular replication and reproduction. A crystal can grow, but it is not alive. Solutions can move with chemical reaction, but they are not alive. A mop can take in substance, but it is not alive. Moreover, plants and one-celled animals do not have “conscious” advanced thought processes, but their life is defined by their ability to reproduce and sustain the species and/or the cellular structure.

Therefore, it seems reasonable that a “living” faith must at least have the ability to reproduce. When a faith is “dead” it is incapable of bringing forth fruit, as was (before the miracle birth of Isaac) “the deadness of Sarah’s womb,”¹ even though Sarah herself was very much alive.

Those who do not act upon faith in Christ through exemplary living and witnessing to others have no evidence of the “fruit of the Spirit” in their life. The Holy Spirit is not only hindered from increasing their faith, but also from reproducing that faith in the lives of others. Another person cannot be led to Christ or motivated to Christian living through the witness of a dead faith. The capacity to reproduce is dead; it is worthless and good for nothing.

The key phrase in verse 18 is: “Yea, a *man* may say.” The only way a man can show another man his faith is through his works, and even then the other man cannot totally ascertain the first man’s *motivation* for his works. The context therefore dictates that verse 21 speaks of Abraham’s works justifying him *before men*, not before God. Paul confirmed this in his epistle to the Romans:

“For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.”

Romans 4: 2

God does not need to see our works to determine our faith because He already knows even the intent of our work² – and the object of our faith. It is clear from the Bible that Abraham’s work was not done to earn or to keep his good standing with God. Abraham had already received God’s unconditional promise that his seed would prosper through the lineage of Isaac, and he had been around long enough to know that God keeps His promises. Abraham therefore knew that God’s promise concerning Isaac was certain and irrevocable, as the author of Hebrews points out:

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that received the promise offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said that in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”

Hebrews 11: 17-19

Abraham had already received Isaac as it were “from the deadness of Sarah’s womb.” Abraham had fallen on his face laughing when God first promised him Isaac through Sarah,³ but the promise was still in effect even during Abraham’s period of disbelief – even during the time when Abraham was on the ground laughing. Once Abraham realized this, he came around to believing God once again.

After Isaac’s birth, Abraham became even more convinced of God’s ability to keep His unconditional promises, as improbable as they may seem at first. Abraham’s faith had *produced* within him even more faith. It was this greater confidence in God that motivated Abraham when faced with offering Isaac. He simply knew that whatever it took, God would bless his seed through Isaac’s lineage, even if it meant Isaac would have to be raised from the dead *again*.

Contrary to insecureists’ misinterpretation of James 2, there is a great truth of eternal security and charity in this chapter’s summary of Abraham. His initial belief and accounted righteousness required that all of his subsequent imperfection and disbelief – laughing at God – would need to be taken “off the record.” This God did, as, according to Romans 4: 1-8, He imputed *only righteousness* – *not sin* – to Abraham’s account. It was an example of God’s grace, mercy and charity that He “calleth those things which be not as though they were.”⁴ The fourth chapter of Romans continues with a description of God’s new and revised account of Abraham’s testimony:

“And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.”

Romans 4: 19-21

Once Abraham realized God’s promise was certain, Abraham was *free* to do a truly selfless act in thanksgiving and confidence of God’s gift. In this act Abraham verified before men his imputed perfection by performing one perfect work, which would refute any claim that he really was not perfect even though God had said he was. Abraham “followed after”⁵ that perfection which had already been unconditionally endowed to him, and that endowment was the means by which he did so. Abraham had come *unto* good works, and thus James could conclude:

“And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”

James 2: 23

REVELATION 22: 18-19

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto the plagues that are written in this book: 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 which are written in this book.”

The primary reference here is to tampering with the content of the Book of Revelation, but it is consistent with God’s warning concerning the entire Bible and its message of grace. Anyone insisting on adding to the gospel by including one’s own works, or taking away from it by attempting to minimize the deity of Christ and His ability to completely save will definitely lose his part in the book of life.

All people have a “part” in salvation. Christ is “the propitiation [full payment] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”⁶ The gospel message is an invitation for all people to “take part” in the salvation that has been bought for them by Christ, “Who gave himself a ransom for all...”⁷ If one does not “take part” one naturally loses one’s part. The text does not imply losing salvation, but losing a share in the eternal salvation that one could have had. The fact that such a person loses his part to salvation is an indication that only a person with a hardened heart against God’s grace would dare add to or take from the revealed Word of God and the gospel of Christ.

GALATIANS 5: 4

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.”

This verse consistently echoes the message of Revelation 22: 18-19. Anyone working to earn or keep salvation through God’s law is adding his own selfish effort to the pure gospel. Falling from grace is synonymous with losing one’s part. By contaminating the gospel with selfish work the person disqualifies himself from the grace of salvation. The person does not fall from salvation because he never had it. He falls from the opportunity to ever be saved.

It is truly amazing that in emotional zeal the religious insecurest cites many passages such as this that actually refute his belief. It is a supreme example of “tunnel reading,” by lifting the phrase “ye are fallen from grace” right out of the context of the very sentence in which it was written.

Moreover, the entire epistle to the Galatians is a complete 180 degrees from where insecurests attempt to take this one verse. Paul’s entire message to the Galatians is clearly aimed at chastising the Galatians for attempting to keep salvation through God’s law. Paul by this time had begun to wonder whether many of the Galatians had ever really accepted the gospel of Christ in the first place.⁸ Paul reasoned with them, as recorded in chapter 3:

“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

Galatians 3: 2

The preceding verse in Galatians essentially sums up the entire debate with insecureists over their efforts to keep themselves saved by their own behavior. Emotional zeal can cloud one's sense of reason.

HEBREWS 6: 4-6

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and are 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.”

Here is yet another example of a passage cited by insecureists that actually disproves their belief. Insecureists interpret the term “fall away” to mean that is possible for a person once saved to lose salvation. However, the text says it is impossible “to renew again” those who fall away.

Insecureists constantly speak of those among them who backslide out of salvation but repent and get saved again. However, with this passage they contradict their own interpretation. If this passage in Hebrews means saved people can lose their salvation, then it also means there is no hope of getting salvation back once it is lost.

Some insecureist churches have had a tremendous membership growth over the past several decades. That growth could not be sustained if there were more people leaving membership than becoming members. However, if insecureists actually practiced their interpretation of this passage, they would have no choice but to see many of their current members out the door.

In our search for a more reasonable interpretation, we should remind ourselves that a great many pitfalls in misinterpreting scripture are caused by reading the wrong subjects into the context. If one would turn to the beginning of the King James version of the book of Hebrews, one would read this inscription: “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews.” Although not a part of inspired scripture, this title was written to reflect logically the context of the epistle.

The Bible defines three distinct groups of people in the world: the Jews, the Gentiles, and the church of God.⁹ It is clear that Hebrews was not addressed to the entire church in general, but to the

specific group of Hebrews from the immediate generation after Christ, who had professed belief that Jesus was the Messiah. The Jewish author was concerned that some of these professing Hebrews had not really accepted Jesus as the complete fulfillment of their now obsolete Judaic rituals.

In this sense the epistle to the Hebrews is similar to the epistle to the Galatians, albeit Hebrews was addressed directly to the type of legalizing Jews who were attempting to influence the Galatian church. These Hebrews needed to be reminded of the consequence of not accepting eternal security through Christ due to fear or uncertainty. That was the purpose of the epistle to the Hebrews.

Instead of claiming the authority of Christ's church as in other New Testament epistles, the Jewish author of Hebrews claimed the authority of the Jewish Old Testament and directed his message to Jews. All Christians can be blessed with an understanding of this inspired epistle only when this context is realized, and when they refrain from automatically reading themselves into all of the pronouns in Hebrews.

The theme of Hebrews draws a parallel between the spiritual condition of this epistle's Jewish readers and the historical account of their ancestors' exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land. Even today the Jewish people, except a small remnant, are still wandering in a spiritual wilderness. They had been set apart by God from the world¹⁰ (typified by Egypt), but they reject entrance into God's rest in the "Promised Land" personified in the true Promised Messiah, Jesus Christ

The message of Hebrews, therefore, is not for Christians to persevere "to the end" of their lives after once entering the Promise of salvation, as insecure claim. Rather, the epistle to the Hebrews reasoned with all Jews to come to the end of their spiritual exodus *by entering* the Promise in the first place – by finally believing in Jesus as the only means of their salvation, and "entering into" His rest and eternal security. Those who come to the point of salvation but then refuse will eventually die in their own spiritual wilderness. They will "fall away" from entrance into God's rest and lose their "part" to the Promise.

Some today believe that the Hebrews mentioned in chapter 6 must all be saved, because they believe only Christians have been enlightened, tasters of the heavenly gift, partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasters of God's word and power.¹¹ However, the Jewish people have historically been uniquely blessed with the revelation of God.¹² The magnitude of God's revelation at the time of the

Exodus from Egypt was exceeded at the time of Jesus Christ, when the Messiah who was promised to generations was finally revealed to Israel with signs and miracles. It was the unbelieving Jews of Christ's generation, as well as those of the Exodus, that were referred to in Hebrews 6: 4-6.

The terms used to describe these people in verses 4 and 5 have been the unmerited cause of confusion for many readers if they read all saved Christians into the context. Although all Christians are enlightened, not all enlightened have been Christians.¹³ The term "enlighten" simply means to sample and experience. The Jewish people certainly sampled the power of God when they experienced the great miracles of Christ, just as their ancestors had experienced God's direct manifestations during the Exodus from Egypt and throughout the nation's history.

The phrase "partakers of the Holy Ghost" has been perhaps the most misunderstood, since many readers take it to mean the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Christians. However, the Jewish people were partakers of the Holy Ghost when they exclusively partook of the miracles of Christ.¹⁴ The scribes and Pharisees attributed Christ's miracles to the work of Satan, but Jesus rebuked them by saying they were blaspheming the work of the Holy Ghost.¹⁵ Those who did so would not be forgiven, He said. This is because after all they had witnessed, with all of its scriptural consistency with the Promise, they had rejected it. They had hardened their hearts, and nothing more could be done to convince them. It was impossible, just as it was when the unbelieving Israelites experienced God's miracles in the Exodus, came to the point of entering the Promised Land, and refused to enter because of fear and uncertainty.¹⁶

The message of Hebrews 6, then, is that if those to whom the Promise was revealed would not repent and believe after all they experienced, they never would. Instead of accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for their sins, they would "fall away" out of fear and uncertainty into insisting upon retainment of Mosaic law and rituals. Those old sacrifices had been prophetic of Christ's atonement, but at His crucifixion the prophetic rituals became obsolete, symbolized by the rending of the temple veil.¹⁷ Any further insistence upon retaining those rituals would become a mockery of Christ, "seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Such people are portrayed in Hebrews 6: 7-8 as thorns and briers, partakers of God's blessing from heaven for a time, but whose end is eternal condemnation.

This primary interpretation of Hebrews also implies that anyone, Jew or Gentile, who has refused to accept the finished gospel of Christ after having it revealed to him is in danger of “falling away.” This passage is consistent with the message of Galatians 5: 4 and Revelation 22: 18-19. The religious insecure who hardens his heart to the pure grace of salvation by claiming it is “too simple” is not guaranteed repeated opportunities to accept the gospel. He too will wander into his own spiritual wilderness, led by his own self-righteous zeal.

HEBREWS 3: 6 – 4: 1

⁶But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. ⁷Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, ⁸Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: ⁹When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. ¹⁰Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. ¹¹So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) ¹²Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; ¹⁵While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. ¹⁶For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. ¹⁷But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? ¹⁹So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. ¹Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.¹

This passage leads the context of Hebrews into the theme evident in chapter 6: Jesus Christ is “the end” of the spiritual exodus for the Hebrews. Verse 6 is commonly cited by insecureists who misinterpret “the end” as the end of a believer’s life on earth. However, Bible context makes it clear that “the end” is Jesus Christ, the real “Promised Land” of the Jewish exodus from this world:

“...considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever.”

Hebrews 13: 7-8

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth.”

Romans 10: 4

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty.”

Revelation 1:8

Key verses in Hebrews chapter 3 are 12, 18 and 19. Those who beheld the “Promised Land” were denied entrance for only one reason: unbelief. Certainly, works are not a requirement to dwell in God’s promise of rest:

“For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”

Hebrews 4:10

“For we which have believed do enter into his rest...”

Hebrews 4: 3

The Christian does not enter into God’s promise of salvation after this mortal life. A Christian enters God’s promise at the moment of belief. Belief and acceptance of God’s salvation is the only work that can transform a desperate, self-centered life into one that rests upon God’s promise and completely gives credit to God for His work of salvation.

Some insecureists concede that Christians are not saved or kept saved by works, but they contend that Christians can lose salvation by later “changing their minds” back to a state of unbelief.

They contend that belief and unbelief are not matters of work but of one's faith. However, the Bible clearly teaches that belief is a work:

“Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

John 6: 28-29

Belief in Jesus Christ is the only work that assures salvation, because it is belief in the work of God, not of man. Unbelief dishonors God's law as a sin so egregious that it alone denies the unbeliever entry into God's salvation.

Even so, once a person has already entered into God's salvation, *no sin* – not even subsequent periods of unbelief – can separate that person from God's salvation. This is because the law – and all transgressions of it – are “blotted out” when God considers a person's record once that person has been saved.:

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;"

Colossians 2: 13-14

“For where *no law* is, there is *no transgression*.” [emphasis added]

Romans 4: 15

Where *no transgression* is, there can be *no condemnation*. Thus:

“He that believeth on him *is not condemned*: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” [emphasis added]

John 3: 18

Not only is the believer not condemned for any sin at the present time, but will not be condemned for any sin in the future, including periods of doubt and unbelief:

“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.” [emphasis added]

John 5: 24

Once again, the Bible’s portrayal of Abraham bears this out. The story of Abraham’s laughter at God’s promise is not a cute anecdote, but an account of Abraham’s egregious sin of unbelief. Shortly afterward, Sarah laughed at God’s promise as well, but then realized the seriousness of her transgression to the point that she denied she had done it.¹ Even so, the Romans 4 citation of Abraham’s record omitted any reference to the laughter incident. Abraham, the believer, was not condemned.

HEBREWS 10: 26-31

“²⁶For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, ²⁷But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. ²⁸He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: ²⁹Of 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 the Spirit of grace? ³⁰For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. ³¹It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

This passage must be understood within the context of this chapter, particularly with verses 10 through 18. This entire chapter speaks of the completeness of Christ’s one-time sacrifice, in contrast to the yearly sacrifices of the inadequate Mosaic system that never could take away sins. The pronoun “we,” again, refers to “we Hebrews.” Those Hebrews professing belief in Christ, but who insisted upon retaining the Mosaic rituals, were willfully mocking and despising Christ’s completed atonement.

The admonishment to the Hebrews included a warning that any who insisted upon retaining the Mosaic system placed themselves in an empty, futile and dangerous position. This is because Christ's one-time, complete atonement rendered the old Mosaic system of sacrifices obsolete. There simply are no more sacrifices, either of Christ Himself or within the Mosaic rituals. Therefore, any who sought righteousness through the Mosaic system ended up in mockery of Jesus Christ. They had left themselves open to judgment without any provision.

As in Hebrews chapter 6, several phrases in this passage are misunderstood by some who believe they refer to people once saved who lose salvation. First, all sin is willful, but in context this phrase in verse 26 refers to the deliberate, rebellious return to the Mosaic law after having been shown that Christ is the fulfillment of that law. Notice that it refers to any who receive the *knowledge* of the truth. It does not refer to any who had truly *believed* the truth. Once again, under an insecure view, none of them would make it to salvation, because one willful sin (which is any sin) would leave a person without Christ's sacrificial provision, and headed for fiery judgement. God has not placed us upon such a tightrope, nor does he motivate us to Christian living by such agonizing fear:

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

II Timothy 1: 7

Another descriptive term in this passage that can be misunderstood is the phrase *he was sanctified*. The pronoun *he* in this passage refers to “the Son of God,” Jesus Christ. This pronoun does not refer to the one who has trodden under foot the Son of God, but refers to the Son of God Himself, who certainly was sanctified as the offering for our salvation.

Even if the pronoun *he* referred to the one who has trodden, it could not contradict the context of the entire Bible to mean that the person had ever been saved. The word *sanctify* simply means to be set apart for God's purpose. It is not always synonymous with a description of a saved believer. In I Corinthians 7, it specifically refers to unbelievers:

“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.”

I Corinthians 7: 14

The Hebrews, as God's chosen people, had certainly been set apart for God's purpose. Those to whom this epistle was addressed had been set apart as Hebrews who had been identified with professing Jesus Christ, even though there were those among them whose profession was merely external. The gospel had been given "to the Jew first,"²⁰ because of their unique relationship with God. According to Paul, the Jews had an "advantage....because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."²¹ Their unique knowledge of God's oracles should have been enough to provide them with a unique understanding that those oracles were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

The entire book of Hebrews, when it is read in context and understood for whom it was written, is a powerful confirmation of eternal security, when one enters into God's rest, and ceases from his own works.

I JOHN 2: 3-4

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

This passage is very simple to understand when read, once again, within the context of the epistle, specifically with this verse in the following chapter:

"And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."

Nothing further should need to be explained. The commandments mentioned in the second chapter are not the Ten Commandments, or any other set of religious ordinances. They are simply the two pillars of the New Testament: belief in Jesus Christ and selfless charity, which can only be fulfilled after one has placed belief for salvation entirely upon Christ's atonement.

EZEKIEL 33: 12-13

"Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in

the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth. When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.”

Once again, this is a passage cited by insecureists that actually is a condemnation of salvation by works. Insecureists, like those of unbelieving Israel as described by Paul, are the ones who trust to their *own* righteousness,¹ which will not deliver them in the day of their transgression. Secureists, however, trust in *Christ's* righteousness – not their own – for their eternal salvation:

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Romans 3: 24-28

"In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell in safety: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS"

Jeremiah 23: 6

REVELATION 3: 5

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

Yet again this is a verse that insecureists try to use in support of their belief, which actually says just the opposite. This is a great verse of eternal security, and simply states the fact that God will not take away a person's salvation once that person has been saved.

Insecurists attempt to weave some human effort into the word “overcometh,” as if one’s final destiny is in doubt until one passes through some obstacle course of human works. However, the word that John penned in Revelation he also used in I John, which makes the meaning very clear:

“For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”

I John 3: 5

Christians overcome the world by accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior, not by performing any self-work whatsoever. Just as Noah didn’t have to do any swimming to overcome the flood waters once God shut him in the ark, so it is with those in Christ. He has done the work; we rest in Him.

[To be continued]

NOTES

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3. Luke 13: 22-24; Romans 9: 27; 11: 5; Joel 2: 32
4. II Timothy 3: 5
5. Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History of the Baptists* (Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Baptist Publication Society, 1952) pp. 211-213; 290-291
6. Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1976) p. 217
7. John Milton, *Areopagitica* (1644)
8. John 18: 37-38
9. John 14: 6
10. Matthew 10: 34-37

NOTES

Chapter 7: LINE UPON LINE

1. Romans 4: 19
2. I Kings 8: 39
3. Genesis 17: 15-18
4. Romans 4: 17
5. Philippians 3:12
6. I John 2: 2
7. I Timothy 2: 6
8. Galatians 4: 9-21
9. I Corinthians 10: 32
10. Compare Genesis 2: 23 with Genesis 12: 1-3; Jeremiah 6: 2; 3: 12-14; Revelation chapter 12; Exodus 12: 40-42
11. Robert Gromacki, *Is Salvation Forever?* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1981) pp. 152-153
12. Romans 3: 1-2; Matthew 10: 5-8; 15: 24
13. John 1: 6-9
14. Matthew 10: 5-8; Matthew 15: 24
15. Matthew 12: 22-31
16. Numbers chapters 13 and 14
17. Matthew 27: 50-51
18. Colossians 2: 13-14; 20-23
19. Genesis 18: 12-15
20. Romans 1: 16
21. Romans 3: 1-2
22. Hebrews 4: 10
23. Romans 10: 1-4

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