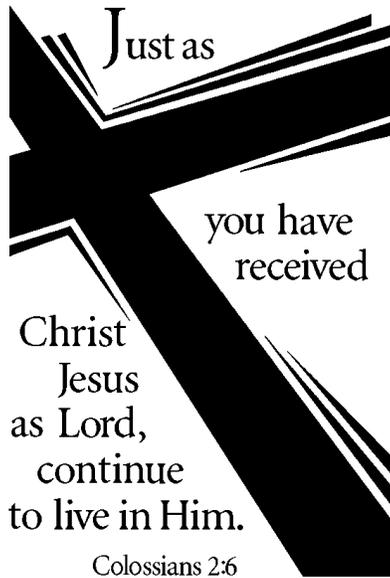


For HIS Glory
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Pray for your enemies.

JULY, 2017

In this little issue...and, Lord willing, every issue, our *only* purpose is to honor Jesus Christ.

A WEE BIT ON PREDESTINATION

By Charles H. Spurgeon

“Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it: unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He gives His Beloved sleep.

Psalm 127:1, 2.

Dear friends, it is quite true that God saves His people. “Salvation is of the Lord” from first to last, but no man is saved apart from his own believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. That faith is God’s gift, but it is man’s *act*. The Holy Spirit does not believe for us—what should He believe? No man is saved apart from repentance—and repentance is a work of the Spirit of God. But the Spirit of God does not repent—what has He to repent of? It is the man, himself, who must repent and believe. “If you believe not, you shall die in your sins.” “Unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish.” Do not, therefore, any of you, sit still and dream about the predestination of God! Divine predestination is most blessedly true—it is the joy of my spirit—but do not turn it into a pillow for your idle head, and fancy that blessings will come to you when you are not looking for them. “Faith comes by hearing.” Therefore hear most attentively and reverently the Word of God—and drink it in. And “salvation comes by faith.” Therefore, what you hear of God’s Word, believe and accept simply and with a child-like faith—and so you shall be saved. Do not, I pray you—any of you—fall into the idea that it matters not where you are, or what you do, or how inattentive you are, or how careless you are about the things of God. It does matter! All these things are *sins*—sins for which you shall be called to account!

Oh, that the Spirit of God may lead you to adopt quite another line of conduct! Search the Scriptures, says our Lord, “for in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me.” May you often be found upon your knees, for the Lord hears them that cry unto Him! May you be found confessing your sins, for, “whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy”! May you be found believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, for there is no soul lost that casts itself at the foot of Christ’s cross! Do not, then, misread the text as though, either in common things or in the loftiest matter, we were to do nothing and leave everything to God.—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software—Sermon #2559, Volume 44—*Co-Workers with God*—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>

GOD PRESERVES HIS SAINTS THROUGH MEANS

By A.W. Pink

John Owens said in his exposition of Hebrews 3:14, "Our persistency in our subsistence in Christ is the emergence and effect of our acting grace unto that purpose. Diligence and endeavors in this matter are like Paul's mariners when he was shipwrecked at Melita. The preservation of their lives depended absolutely on the faithfulness and power of God, yet when the mariners began to flee out of the ship, Paul tells the centurion that unless his men stayed therein they could not be saved."

But why need he think of the shipmen when God took upon Himself the preservation of them all? He knew full well that He would preserve them—but that He would do so in and by the use of *means*. If we are in Christ, God has given us the lives of our souls, and has taken upon Himself, in His covenant, the preservation of them. But yet we may say, with reference unto the means that He has appointed, "When storms and trials arise, *unless* we use our own diligent endeavors, we cannot be saved."

If it is asked, Did the purpose of God that Paul and his companions should all reach land safely depend upon the uncertain will and actions of men? The answer is No, as a cause from which the purpose of God received its strength and support. But Yes, as a means, appointed by Him, to secure the end He had ordained, for God has decreed the subordinate agencies by which the end shall be accomplished as truly as He has decreed the end itself!!

In His Word, God has revealed a conjunction of means and ends, and there is a necessity lying upon men to use the means and not to expect the end without them. It is at our peril that we tear asunder what God has joined together and disrupt the order He has appointed. The same God who bids us believe His promises, forbids us to tempt His providences (Matt 4:7).

Even though the means may appear to us to have no adequate connection with the end, seeing God has enjoined them, we must use the same. Naaman must wash in the Jordan if he would be cleansed of his leprosy (2 Kings 5:10) and Hezekiah must take a lump of figs and lay it on his boil if he is to be recovered (2 Kings 20:4-7).

They are greatly mistaken who suppose that since the preservation of believers is guaranteed in the covenant of grace that this renders all means and motives, exhortations

and threats useless and senseless. Not so! The doctrine of the everlasting security of the saint does not mean that God will preserve him whether or not he perseveres, but rather that He has promised to give him all needed grace for him to continue in the path of holiness. This supposes that believers will be under such advantages, and have suitable aids with them in order to this and that; that they shall have motives constantly set before them which induce and persuade unto obedience and personal piety, and to guard them against the contrary. Hence the propriety and usefulness of the ordinances of the gospel, the instructions and precepts, the promises and incentives which are furnished us to perseverance—without which the purpose of God that we should persevere could not be effected in a way suited to our moral nature!

Christians are, indeed, "kept by the power of God" (1 Peter 1:5), yet it needs to be pointed out that they are not preserved mechanically, as a child is kept in the nursery from falling into the fire by a tall metal fender or guard, or as the unwilling horse is held in by bit and bridle—but spiritually so by the workings of divine grace in them, and by means of motives and inducements from without which call forth that grace into exercise and action! We quite miss the force of that declaration unless we complete the verse—"Who are kept by the power of God *through faith*, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." It is not, "for," or, "because of faith," but, "*through faith*," yet not without it, for faith is the hand which, from a sense of utter insufficiency and helplessness, clings to God and grasps His strength—not always firmly, but often feebly—not always consciously, but instinctively. Though the saint is "kept by the power of God" yet he, himself, has to fight every step of the way! If we read of "this *grace* wherein we stand" (Rom 5:2), we are also told, "for by *faith* you stand" (2 Cor 1:24).

To sum up. The doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints, in the pursuit and practice of holiness as it is set forth in God's Word, provides no shelter for either laziness or licentiousness—it supplies no encouragement for us to take our regeneration and glorification for granted, but bids us "give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). Exhortations and threats are not made unto us as those already assured of final perseverance, but as those who are called to the use of means for the establishment of our souls in the ways of obedience, being annexed to those ways of grace and peace which God calls His saints unto. Perseverance consists in a continual exercise of spiritual graces in the saints. Exhortations are the divinely-appointed means for stirring those graces into action and for a further increase of them. Therefore those preachers who do not press upon the Lord's people the discharge of their duties, and are remiss in warning and admonishing them, fail grievously at one of the most vital points in the charge committed to them!