

## Studies on Saving Faith

### Part 4 – Chapter 15

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## Part 4

### Chapter 15 – ITS SUBJECTS

Under this head we propose briefly to consider the character of those persons to whom the privilege of Christian assurance rightfully belongs. Here again there are two extremes to be guarded against. On the one hand is that class who have been deceived by the slogan "believe you are saved, and you are saved," which is best met by pointing out that genuine assurance is never any greater than is our evidence of the same. On the other hand are those who are fearful that such evidence is unattainable while the body of sin indwells them. To such we would ask, Is it impossible to ascertain whether or not the health of your body is sound? Are there not certain symptoms and signs which are a clear index? If I were doubtful, and feared that some fatal disease was beginning to grip me, I would seek a physician. Were he merely to look at me and then lightly say, Your health is good, I would leave him and seek another more competent. I would request a thorough overhauling: the taking of my blood-pressure, the sounding of my heart, the testing of my other vital organs. So it should be with the soul.

In seeking to determine from God's Word who are entitled to Christian assurance, let us ask and answer a number of questions. Who are they with whom the great God dwells? "with him also that is of (not an haughty and boastful, but) a contrite and humble spirit" (Isaiah 57:15);

"to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word" (Isaiah 66:2)

—do you? Or do you joke over or argue about its sacred contents? Whom does God really forgive? They who "repent" and are "converted" (Acts 3:19), that is, they who turn their backs upon the world and sinful practices, and yield to Him; those in whose hearts God puts His "laws" and writes them in their minds, in consequence of which they love, meditate upon, and keep His commandments: note how Hebrews 10:16 precedes 10:17!

Who is the man whom Christ likened unto one who built his house upon the rock? Not merely him who "believes," but "whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them" (Matthew 7:24). Who are truly born again? "Everyone that doeth righteousness" (1 John 2:29); they who "love the brethren" with such a love as is described in 1 John 3:17, 18. To whom does God experimentally reveal the eternal purpose of His grace?

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant" (Psalm 25:14).

"To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God (Psalm 50:23).

What are the identifying marks of a saving faith? One which "purifies their hearts" (Acts 15:9), "worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6), "overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4): only thus may I know that my faith is a living and spiritual one.

The birth of the Spirit can only be known from its effects (John 3:8). Thus, it is by comparing what God, in His Word, has promised to do in His elect with what His Spirit has, or has not, wrought in my heart, that I can ascertain whether assurance of salvation be my legitimate portion. This is "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Corinthians 2:13). Wondrous things has God prepared "for them that love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9); how important then for me to make sure that I love Him. Many suppose that because they have (or had) a dread of eternal punishment, that therefore they love God. Not so: true love for God is neither begotten by fears of Hell nor hopes of Heaven: if I do not love God for what He is in Himself, then I do not love Him at all! And if I love Him, my desire, my purpose, my aim will be to please Him in all things. Much might be added to this section of our subject, but we trust that sufficient has been said to enable exercised and honest souls to learn how to identify those whom Scripture teaches are entitled to the assurance of salvation.

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