

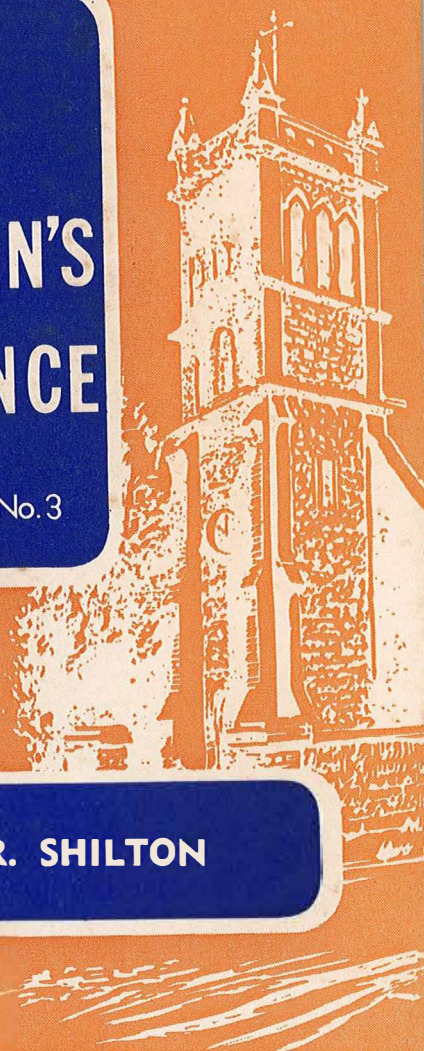
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THE CHRISTIAN'S ASSURANCE

Trinity Booklet No. 3

LANCE R. SHILTON



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THE CHRISTIAN'S ASSURANCE

5DN Broadcast Address

by the Reverend

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Trinity Booklet No. 3.

THE CHRISTIAN'S ASSURANCE

When a person places his personal faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord, he should immediately experience assurance. This comes not because he thinks that he is now self sufficient, or that he is better than anyone else, or that he has become perfect overnight, but simply because he trusts Christ.

Jesus said "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 into life." (John 5. 24). Nothing could be plainer than that. There is no uncertainty about that plain statement of truth. John also emphasized it when he wrote, "As many as received Him," (that is, Christ), "to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name". (John 1. 12).

This God-given assurance does not come because of good reputation, fine education, plenty of money, or religious observances; it comes because:

- (a) you admit your need and you repent of your sins.
- (b) you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to take away

- your sins.
(c) you have come to Him accepting Him as your Saviour.

The Bible describes this experience in various ways:

Being Born Again

Jesus said "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God". (John 3. 3).

Being Converted

Jesus said "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18. 3).

Being Saved

Jesus said "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost." (Matthew 18. 11).

They are not my words, or my ideas, or my interpretations, they are the words of the Son of God Himself.

If therefore you have fulfilled the

conditions of personal belief you may have absolute assurance right now.

I. THE ASSURANCE 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."

1 John 5. 13.

Often I speak to people who show all the evidence of having repented and having believed and yet lack assurance of their conversion.

Some think it is presumption to claim assurance. To say, "I know that I am saved", "I know that I have eternal life" is to them like presuming upon the grace of God. One can understand their reluctance to give any suggestion that they think themselves to be good enough or that they have in any way earned the right to God's grace.

Like the hymn writer we must say,

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling."

Of course we cannot trust in ourselves, or our own effort, but when we trust in Christ, we take Him at His word when He said "He that heareth my Word, and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life."

Faith not Doubts

Some allow this assurance to be undermined by doubts. The fact that they have been saved by the grace of God seems to them to be too good to be true. They try to reason out their position, but find that it goes far beyond their reasoning. We can never fully understand why He should love us, but He does and when we turn to Him with thankful hearts we find that He restores our faith - not in ourselves, but in Him. More than 300 times the word "faith" is mentioned in the New Testament with reference to man's salvation and many more times it is implied.

Facts not Feelings.

Some have their assurance shaken by their feelings. Certainly there is feeling in saving faith, but we are not saved by feeling. When our whole

personality is touched by the love of Christ certainly our feelings will be different. But for the most part our feelings are so fickle as we know from day to day. Of course our feelings must of necessity enter into this very deep experience of our hearts, but we are not saved by feelings but through our faith. It is not the cleansing of the conscience that saves you and the feeling of relief it brings. It is faith in Christ that saves and that cleansed conscience is the result of having come into the right relationship with God.

II. THE ASSURANCE OF VICTORY

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

1 Corinthians 10.13.

When you have made your decision for Christ, Satan will make an even greater effort to woo you away from your love

for Christ. He will remind you of some sin which has gripped you throughout the past years of your life. He will point to something of which you are keenly aware and say, "You are weak, you will not be able to stand against that particular temptation. Perhaps you will be able to stand against others, but not that one."

The Devil is a mighty person who opposes God and tempts God's people. Even though he was beaten at the Cross by Christ he still has power to influence man for evil. The Bible calls him "the wicked one", "a murderer", "a liar", "an adversary who seeks to devour".

Do not be alarmed, Satan cannot rob you of your salvation, but he will try to rob you of your assurance of victory. He will do everything in his power to sow seeds of doubt in your mind as to whether your conversion is real or not.

You say, "How can I overcome him? What can I do? Is there any escape?" God is faithful. He will not allow you to be tempted above that you are able to bear. He will make a way of escape.

Temptation by the devil is not a sign that your life is not right with God. On the contrary we find Jesus Himself was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Temptation is not sin. Satan can only tempt. He can never compel you to yield to the temptation. The Bible calls on you to "Submit yourself to God" first of all, and then you are in a position to "resist the devil and he will flee from you."

Whether your temptation then comes direct from the Devil, or through the world and its attractions, or through the flesh and its wrong desires, the assurance of victory can be yours. It belongs to you as a child of God. Believe it and you will see that what is impossible with man is possible with God.

III. THE ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 1. 9.

Although victory is rightfully yours as a Christian, you are likely to be conscious of failure at some point. Sin will suddenly crop up and immediately your enemy will be on the job to say "Now you have done it. You are supposed to be a Christian. If you were you would not do things like that."

But God has graciously made provision in His Word for the failure of His children. Listen again to 1 John 1, verse 9. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

This does not mean that a person who is assured of forgiveness can go on sinning knowing that he will always be forgiven. This thought would be furtherest from the mind of a truly converted person. This would not occur to him for a moment.

Charles Finney had something very pertinent to say on this question. He said, "One of the ways in which people give false comfort to distressed sinners is by asking them 'What have you done? You are not so bad.'" When the truth is that they have been a great deal

worse than they think. No sinner ever had an idea that their sins were greater than they are. No sinner ever had an idea of how great a sinner he is. God has, in His mercy, spared all His creatures on earth that worst of sights, a naked human heart."

Finney went on to say, "An anxious sinner is often willing to do anything else but the very thing which God requires him to do. He is willing to go to the ends of the earth, or to pay his money, or to endure suffering, or anything but full and instantaneous submission to God. Now, if you will compromise the matter with him and tell him of something else which he may do and yet evade that point he will be much comforted - but falsely."

The assurance of forgiveness is given to the one who is conscious of sin, even the sin of a Christian who has fallen back into the old ways. The only condition is that you should confess your sins to God. He is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse.

My Christian friend I wonder are you wanting that assurance of forgiveness for some of your failures as a Christ-

ian. Then on the authority of God's Word and not on the words of man, you may come to Jesus, because He says, "He that cometh I will in no wise cast out."

IV. ASSURANCE OF POWER

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory."

Philippians 4. 19.

How true this is in the experience of the Christian, that he should know that assurance of provision for his need. It may be need because of sickness. He knows that God is able to give the power to meet that need. It may be in time of sadness. Again the Christian finds that God's grace is sufficient. It may be the need for fellowship in time of loneliness. Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always." It may be the need for equipment in Christian service. As we look at the Scriptures in Ephesians 6 we are told that the whole armour of God is available, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. St. Paul reminds us to take the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God.

Furthermore he says, "Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit". Our communication with God through prayer is that which will provide power for us in every emergency. But more than that still Jesus Christ Himself reminded us of the provision He made to all those who will trust in Him. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto me." (Acts 1. 8).

Tell the Holy Spirit how weak, helpless, unstable and unreliable you are. Stand aside and let him take over in all your choices and decisions, let Him be the one who will strengthen you at every moment.

Let us continue from where we began, and listen again to the words of Jesus Christ, who said:

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

"Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

"The Son of Man is come to save that

which was lost."

Then because of your personal faith
in Christ and on the authority of His
word, there will flood into your heart -

The Assurance of Salvation.
The Assurance of Victory.
The Assurance of Forgiveness.
The Assurance of Power.

With all Christians, in all places,
at all times, who from this personal
faith in the Redeemer have found their
assurance, you will be able to rejoice
with the hymn-writer in the truth of
these words:

"Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine,
O what a foretaste of Glory Divine,
Heir of Salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His spirit, washed in His
blood.

This is my story, This is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day
long."

* * * * *

A PRAYER

Give me grace, O God, to
trust in Thy full provision,
and know that Thou canst
give me the assurance I need
in my own heart and that Thy
love and power are sufficient
to meet me in my deepest
need. For Christ's sake.

Amen.

* * * * *

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