

ONCE IN GRACE, ALWAYS IN GRACE

by Evangelist Ed Bousman

One of the most popular doctrines in the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ today is called "Once in grace, always in grace." I heard one time of a man who went to the barbershop to get a shave. About a month later he noticed that he was still clean-shaven. He went back to the barber and asked him why his beard never grew back. The barber told him, I believe once shaved always shaved. It is true of course that you can ransack the tract rack of any of these Churches and not find any mention of it, and it is not recognized as one of the distinctive doctrines. But the evidence that most people in the Church of Christ and Christian Churches believe it is because we practice it. The idea that if you have been baptized and your name is on the roll book of the church, you've got it made no matter what you do from then on. One elder in a Church told me once that he was talking to a man who told him that since he was a Christian he was not required to ever attend a Church service again because he was saved and never could be lost. The same man told me that a certain woman told him that she was saved and since she was saved she could become a prostitute if she wanted to and it would not have any effect on her salvation. At the funeral of any member of the Church of Christ, or Christian Church the preacher had better preach the corpse to the front row of heaven, with a crown on his head, and a harp in his hand. The deceased may have been a drunkard or anything worse, but if his name was on the Church roll book, he's got it made. No one will admit this, but that is the way it is. Not very many people in the Church of Christ or Christian Church have the perception of one woman I know about. Her husband had died and she asked her preacher to preach the funeral. Now the preacher did not know the deceased, but he did learn that at one time he had been baptized and was a member of the Church of Christ. So at the funeral he tried to hold out all the hope he could and pretty well got him through the pearly gates. As the assembly was passing by the corpse on their way out, the widow told the preacher in a voice loud enough to be heard by everybody, O preacher, you were mistaken; my husband died and went to hell.

The Bible is full of many verses that tell us that a person can fall from grace. Some good folk in the church of Christ and or Christian Church will use John 10:28 as proof that once saved is always saved. That verse states, "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish and no one shall snatch them out of My hand." However they neglect to read the previous verse which gives the complete thought. My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. The ones who cannot be snatched out of the Masters hand are those who listen to His voice, the word of God and who follow Him. What happens if you stop hearing His voice and stop following Him? The obvious answer is the deal is off and you will be snatched. And now consider the following statements that indicate you can fall from grace.

MATTHEW 24:12-13 "And because iniquity shall be multiplied the love of the many shall wax cold, but he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved." Jesus included this statement as He preached about His Second Coming and the end of the world. He warned them of persecution, and to strengthen their resolve, he warned that only those who stuck it out would make it. Is there

any reason for us to believe that it will be any different for us today? And if this is not conclusive, turn to...

MATTHEW 24:45-51 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom His Lord hath set over His household to give them their food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom His Lord when He cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you he will set him over all that he hath. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord tarrieth and shall begin to beat his fellow servants and eat and drink with the drunken the Lord when He cometh will cut him asunder and appoint his portions with the hypocrites, there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." The Lord is speaking of servants that he personally hath set over His household such as elder, preacher, and evangelist. When the Lord comes He will set the faithful steward whom He hath set over His household over all that He hath. The unfaithful will be cut asunder. Cutting asunder is what they did to some of the Old Testament servants of God. Paul in Hebrews says that some of the great ones of faith were sawn asunder. When the Lord returns he will get in on that sawing asunder routine himself. From this account the Lord told Himself it is evident that elders and preachers can fall from grace and if this is not conclusive, turn to...

MATTHEW 25:30, "And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This statement of Jesus is in his parable of the talents. He had given some five, some two and some only one. These servants were his, not the Devil's. To his unfaithful servant the order went forth from the Lord, "Cast him out . . ." What other conclusion can you reach from this that once you are saved you can be lost? If this isn't conclusive, turn to...

JOHN 15:6, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." In the preceding verses, Jesus had said that He is the vine, and we are the branches. He said if we don't bear fruit, we shall be cut off to wither and then to be burned. Need any more be said? How could it be plainer? Cut off from Christ, whither and burn. And if this is not conclusive, turn to...

ACTS 8:20, But Peter said unto him, "Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money." Here Simon a former fortuneteller, a member of the Church at Samaria, offered money to the Apostle Peter and John for the ability to lay his hands on others and gives> them miraculous powers. I must say that I have a lot more respect for Simon the Sorcerer than for these modern day fake healers and tongue speakers. At least he was willing to pay for it. These modern day fakers try to get it for nothing. Peter said thy silver perish with thee. What other conclusion could you reach, but that Simon would perish with his money, if he did not repent? Some would try to tell us that he was not really a converted follower of Jesus in the first place. That is something those who make that charge will have to prove. The scriptural account tells us that Simon also himself believed and being baptized continued with Philip. If this isn't conclusive, turn to...

ROMANS 11:21, "For if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee." In these verses God's people were likened unto a tree. The Jewish branch had been cut off because of disobedience. God asks the question, if he spared not the natural branch, what chance would a branch that has been grafted in have? Those grafted in were the Gentiles. What other conclusion can we reach from this, than that we can be cut off. If this is not conclusive, turn to...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 9:27, "...but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage; lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected." Here in these verses Paul recognizes the possibility that he could fall, himself. He indicated that he had to fight his body to win victories over the flesh. Who is the boss in your life? Do you boss your body or does your body boss you? What other conclusion can we reach from this passage than that a person can establish churches, live a sacrificial life, do great things for the Lord and then be rejected if he does not control the dictates of his fleshly desires. If this is not conclusive, turn to...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 10:12, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed unto himself lest he fall. Paul had just listed some of the times that the ancient Israelites had fallen. He mentions the story of their idolatry, their fornication, their murmuring and then says this happened to them as an example for us. What is the example, if it is not an example of how a person can fall away? Hear it again - "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." What other conclusion can we reach except to believe that a saved person can be lost? If this is not conclusive, turn to...

GALATIANS 1:8, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." From this verse we learn that preachers who preach a different gospel will be accursed. We all can say that we know of preachers who have been baptized into Christ and have been faithful in preaching the word and then defected. Paul says they are accursed. Does this sound like they are going to heaven? If preachers can be accursed, others can too. What other conclusion can we reach from this passage than that a person once saved can be lost? If this isn't conclusive, turn to...

GALATIANS 5:4, "Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law, ye are fallen away from grace." This verse seems to be tailor made to prove the error of once in grace, always in grace. Hear it again, Ye are fallen away from grace. These Christians who were keeping the law and trying to earn salvation by works were severed from Christ. How can you be cut off from Christ if you never were joined to him? I have a missing finger on my right hand. It was severed from my hand. How could it be severed from my hand if it was never a part of my hand in the first place? What other conclusion can we reach from this than a Christian can be severed from Christ after being a part of Him? If this isn't conclusive, turn to ...

SECOND TIMOTHY 2:18, "men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and over-throw the faith of some." Here Paul reminds Timothy that false prophets by their teaching have overthrown the faith of some. If you overthrow someone's faith, then he no longer believes in Jesus and his resurrection. What else can we say about him, but that he is lost? We all know of those who at one time believed in the risen Lord, who no longer believe it. Are they still in a saved condition? What other conclusion can we reach than that a person once saved can be lost? If this is not conclusive, turn to...

HEBREWS 6:6, "...and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame." Here the writer is speaking of those who were enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, made partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted the good word of life and the power of the age to come and fell away. This passage

speaks as clearly about the question as can be written. Fell away: impossible to renew them again to repentance, while they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh. Any honest person can see it. A person once saved can be lost, if the Bible and its testimony are to be accepted.> What other conclusion can we reach than that a person once saved can be lost? If this is not conclusive, turn to...

HEBREWS 10:26-27, "For if we sin willfully after we receive the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacri-fice for sins but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries." If a saved person can never be lost, how come he can be de-voured by fire if he sins willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth. The writer is talking about saved people here because he says, we. He includes himself in these who sin will-fully. Hear Paul as he continues, how much sorer punishment shall they be judged worthy who have trampled underfoot the body of the Son of God and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace. What other conclusion can we reach from this passage than that a saved person can be lost? If this is not conclusive, turn to...

SECOND PETER 2:21, "For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Peter was talking about those who had escaped the defilement of the world and then were overcome. He said, better for them never to have known about it. He then said they were like dogs again turning to their own vomit and sows that had washed to wallowing in the mire. What other conclusion can we reach from this than that a person once saved can be lost? If this is not conclusive, turn to...

REVELATION 2:5, "Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works or else I come to thee and remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." Jesus is speaking to the Church at Ephesus here and he tells a church that he will remove their candlestick unless they repent. What kind of mental gymnastics does a person have to perform to read this and still maintain that a saved person can never be lost? And if this is not conclusive turn to...

REVELATION 3:1-6 Jesus told the Church at Sardis, "He that overcometh shall be arrayed in white raiment and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess him before My Father and before His angels." From this verse it is evident that the pen Jesus uses to write your name in the book of life has an eraser on the other end. He says that He will not blot out certain names. He had told this Church that it had a name that they lived, but He said you are dead. There are many people who have their names on the roll book of Churches whose names were never written in the roll book of Heaven. The Lord is speaking here of the roll book in Heaven. If these people had never been Christians in the first place, the Lord would never have put them in the book of life. But here He says there are a few names in Sardis that have not defiled their garments. They shall walk with Me in white for they are worthy and I will not blot their names out of the book of life, which I have written. The gospel song says it for us. When the Bridegroom cometh will your robes be white? Are you washed in the blood of the lamb? Are you freely trusting in His grace this hour are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Any one of these scriptures would have been enough to prove this proposition, but when we pile scripture on top of scripture and then more scripture on top of that, it makes the person who would maintain, once in

grace, always in grace, look like an elephant trying to climb through a key hole. We close where we started. And because iniquity shall be multiplied the love of the many shall wax cold, but he that endureth unto the end the same shall be saved.

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