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Assurance of salvation

Knox, D. Broughton

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ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

D. B. KNOX

"THE CHRISTIAN FAITH"

Billy Graham was asked on T.V. the other night whether he was sure that he was going to heaven. He said he was and this surprised his interviewer. He couldn't understand how a person can be sure that he will go to heaven when he dies. There has been some correspondence in the newspapers on the same subject. It seems to interest people and a lot of people get very angry when they hear that someone is sure that he is going to heaven when he dies.

How can a person be sure? If it rests on the quality of your life, of course you cannot be sure. God may see something in your life which you have overlooked. In fact He is certain to. We are inclined to give ourselves more marks than we deserve and God's standard is 100% pass. You have no hope of going to heaven based on being good. We can never be good enough for a place of perfection. Heaven will not be the reward for our life but it is the reward for Jesus' life for He was perfect. There was never a moment's lust in His thoughts, He never despised other people, never sought His own advantage. He always exercised perfect faith in His Heavenly Father and His life was tested to the extreme. On the cross He bore our sins, deserted by God and yet He never faltered in His obedience or love. He passed the test, He ascended to heaven and He brings to God all who pray to Him for He is God as well as man, the mediator between us and our creator and God has promised in His word the Bible very clearly that all who pray to Jesus for salvation will be saved. The future is only known to God but He has revealed it in the Bible so that Christians go to heaven at death. As the apostle Paul put it "absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8) and he longed to depart and be with Christ which is far better (Phil. 1:23).

As Jesus promised the dying thief who had no merits, but was now repentant and believing in Jesus "today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). The reason why believers go to heaven at death is because the Son of God has taken away their sins completely through His death on the cross. No barrier remains.

The second question is why a Christian can be sure that he is a participant in these benefits of Christ's death. This conviction rests on God's promises, e.g. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31). "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). It is not presumptuous to believe God's promises. Secondly, these promises are confirmed and sealed by the gift of God's Spirit. "Because you are sons of God" said St. Paul, "God sends the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, through whom we pray 'Father'". (Gal. 4:6). Thus the Christian knows he is saved, not only by the truth of God's word but also by the experience of God's presence, and he is sure for the future because of God's faithfulness. Jesus not only saves now (which we experience now), but will save on the Day of Judgement (1 Thess. 2:23,24). Jesus said "I give to them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:28) Those who have heard and believed these promises rest in them, for God is faithful.

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