

SOME TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE SHOWN IN THE LIGHT OF THE FOREGOING.

(1) "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he *fall*." – 1 Cor. 10:12.

(2) "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never *fall*." – 2 Peter 1:10.

(3) "Whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are *fallen* from favor." "Christ shall profit you nothing." – Gal. 5:2,4.

(4) "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened...if they shall *fall away*, to renew them again unto repentance." – Heb. 6:4-6.

(a) "Him that is able to keep you *from falling* [stumbling] and to present you faultless." – Jude 24.

(b) "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life,...nor things present, nor things to come,...shall be able to *separate* us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." – Rom. 8:38,39.

(c) "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, neither shall any *pluck them out* of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no one is able to *pluck them out* of my Father's hand." – John 10:27-29.

In the light of the foregoing statement of the doctrine of election as deduced from Scripture, the above and similar texts cease to seem contradictory and become clear, harmonious and reasonable. To show the harmony we have [R835 : page 4] selected some of the apparently most contradictory and positive; which will serve to illustrate how all

similar statements are in harmony. The first four show the possibility of falling from grace or favor; the three last seem to many to teach that to fall from God's favor is an impossibility.

It is a mistake to suppose that favor and love are synonymous, for though the favor of God always implies his love, yet the withdrawal of favor does not imply hatred. To illustrate: When God created our race representatively in Adam, he placed it in a position of favor, and when it afterwards fell from that favor by disobedience to the conditions, God so loved the race [fallen from his favor] while yet sinners, as to provide a ransom for all; that thereby he might in due time restore all to the original favor, thus giving another or second opportunity to enjoy life as his favor, everlastingly.

Every act must be in harmony with his justice, love and wisdom – not with one alone, but with all of these divine attributes must every act of God conform. Hence in dealing with us, should we fall from his favor, whatever happens to us will be in full harmony with God's character; whatever his justice, wisdom and love indicate to be best. Let us keep this well in mind.

To fall from favor implies that those who fall had first been lifted up, given a vantage ground for present or future possibility and advantage. The seriousness and loss by a fall from favor, depends upon the greatness or amount of the favor spurned or left.

Two of the three of the above-mentioned texts (a,b,c) assure us that God will not withdraw from us any favor he ever bestows; he will never cast us off or cause us to fall. And more than this, his love is so great that he will not permit others to separate us from his favor contrary to our own will. And since his love is so great and his power all mighty, we have full confidence that no power in earth or heaven can forcibly separate us from his love and favors granted us in and through our Redeemer. Here rests our full assurance of faith – none can pluck us from our Father's favor and protection. Here our song is triumphant:

"In God I have found a retreat,
Where I can securely abide;
No refuge nor rest so complete,
And here I intend to reside."

"Oh what comfort it brings,
My soul sweetly sings,
I am safe from all dangers
While under his wings."

But is there then no danger? There is no danger of others plucking or forcibly separating us from God's favor, or turning his love away from us; the only danger is in our own doings; we can despise or lightly esteem the favors of God, and thus forfeit our privileges under those favors, and fall from them; but we cannot forfeit all favor, except by direct and open apostasy. God will not force his favors upon any, but decides that those who do not appreciate the favors when made fully aware of them, are not worthy of them.

The text above, numbered 1, guards us on this very point; our safety is in a vivid realization of our own helplessness and dependence upon God's favor. To realize our own imperfection and inability to justify ourselves, is the safeguard against that self-righteousness which spurns justification as the favor of God, through the ransom given by Jesus. True humility and dependence upon God, accepts his favor of justification in the way he provides it – through Christ's ransom – and thus prevents these from spurning and counting a common or ordinary thing the sacrifice of Christ – "the blood of the covenant." (Heb. 10:26-29.) In harmony with this is the text above, marked *a*. God is able to keep us from falling or even stumbling over his favors; and he is so willing to aid us and keep us, that he has in his Word made every provision for our assistance, and assures us that the Scriptures are able to make us wise regarding his favors, so that we shall be able to avoid falling from them, and obtain them.

And here text numbered 2 applies, and shows that while God has supplied every necessary aid to keep us from falling, he has left the matter in such a way as to make our earnest desire for the promised blessings, a condition of our not falling from or failing to secure, the favors offered us. We must give diligence and attention to the assistance and directions he has provided.

A difference in the extent of the fall and the seriousness of the consequences is shown in texts numbered 3 and 4. The former shows a Jew who had trusted in his ability to keep the Law, who afterward came to see, in Jesus his Redeemer, and became a follower of him and thus reached and laid hold of *justification*, God's favor granted through Jesus' ransom, who under false teaching had been led to the erroneous conclusion that though Jesus was a good example of holy living, yet all must still be justified, if at all, by perfect obedience to the Law. Paul addresses this one and all such in this text (3), and assures them that by such conclusions they renounce and reject God's favor, and place themselves again just where they were before they heard of Christ – under the Law which could never justify them. Rom. 8:3, margin.

Their conclusion that Jesus was merely an example and teacher was fallacious. There were, and had been, many noble exemplars and good teachers, and in thus regarding Jesus they were rejecting all that was specially valuable in Him. He was "*nothing*" if not a *Redeemer* – a *Justifier* from sin and its penalty. Regarding Christ as an "example" would be of no profit or advantage; nothing could do them any good until past sins were cancelled and they reckoned justified through the shed blood [the death] of Christ. Rom. 5:9.

This fall, though serious, in that it would hinder their progress and keep them on the level of the Jew and unjustified world, would not be an everlasting loss or fall, because if they perceive not their error sooner, the time will come when "every hidden thing shall be made manifest," and when a correct knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth, and none shall need to say unto his neighbor, Know thou

the Lord! (or Understand thou of the ransom for sin) for all shall know him from the least to the greatest; and then if not sooner these and the prejudice blinded Jews and all, shall see clearly and enter gladly upon the favor from which the Apostle tells us these were falling.

But the other text (4) tells of a fall from favor that is a far greater loss, and one which can never be regained in this or any age. The Apostle assures us of those who thus fall away, that "it is impossible to renew [or restore] them again" (verse 4). Why is it thus – why the difference in these fallings? We answer: Because the class here referred to (Heb. 6:4-6) have had fuller knowledge; and by having gone along from favor to favor, their fall is without excuse and indicates a deliberate wilfulness, wholly inconsistent with their knowledge. While the others (text 3) were but deceived "babes," these (text 4) were matured and advanced in knowledge beyond first principles. And any who have not advanced to the point of favor here indicated, could not fall from it, and from such state of favor only, is it possible to fall so utterly as to be beyond hope – in the second death.

But notice carefully the conditions of such a fall – the height of the multiplied favors from which, if any fall, it is impossible to restore or renew them. They must have been "once enlightened," brought to clearly discern sin, its penalty, and its ransom price, Jesus' life. They must have "tasted of the heavenly gift," not merely heard of Christ's sacrifice, etc., but tasted in blessed experience the results of that ransom in realizing sins forgiven, and communion and fellowship with God restored, through "the blood of the Lamb." They must have been "made partakers of the Holy Spirit," coming into heart fellowship with God's plans, and for a time at least being co-workers with him – begotten by the Spirit to fuller appreciation of the truth and to new hopes, aims, etc. They must "have tasted of the good Word of God," by experiencing the pleasures, of the appreciated fulfillment of some of the statements and promises thereof, and recognizing a grandeur and beauty, in the as yet unfulfilled portions. These must also have tasted, experienced, or come to appreciate "the powers of the coming age,"

realizing from the good Word of God the blessings and powers that will then be brought into exercise for the blessing and restoring of mankind, all as the fruit and result of the ransom.

Should such as have seen, tasted, experienced, and enjoyed all these favors then fall away to the extent of "denying the Lord having bought them" (2 Pet. 2:1 *Diaglott*) denying the ransom – the very foundation of all those hopes and blessings seen and experienced – thus treading under foot the Son of God, counting the *blood of the covenant*, wherewith they *were* sanctified (and in which they had trusted, and on account of which they had been privileged to grow in grace and knowledge); if they then count that blood an unholy [ordinary] thing, and despise the favor of God in providing the sacrifice for our sins, (Heb. 10:26-29). FOR SUCH, there is no forgiveness; no restoring from such a miserable fall from such heights of favor and knowledge. And who, except those who thus "fall away," would dispute the righteousness of this our Father's decision? The expression of his justice and wisdom in full harmony with his character of love is that such shall "be as though they had not been" born. The prolongation of such lives could neither be a profit nor pleasure to God, to themselves, nor to their fellows.

The sentence is manifestly just; it is wise, because if these have thus seen the grand outline of God's plans, and despise and repudiate the divinely-appointed foundation of it all, then moral force, the force of truth, is seen to be unavailing upon them, and God sees that it would be impossible to renew them or to make them recognize the beauty of his way; therefore divine wisdom has decided that all thus out of harmony, without possibility of reformation, shall be utterly destroyed as, and for the same reason, that thorns and briers are destroyed. Heb. 6:7,8.

And this same principle will obtain in the next age as well; when the full opportunities of that age of favors are enjoyed by all the world. Those who wilfully reject and despise the precious blood, spurn

forgiveness through IT, and thus crucify Christ afresh, despising his sacrifice for sin, will thereby fall hopelessly; because, after having enjoyed the blessings secured by the ransom, they spurn and reject it. Christ dieth no more; the one sacrifice, once fully appreciated and wilfully rejected, leaves such in the same state as though no ransom had ever been given. It remands them again under the original penalty, DEATH, extinction. And, because they had once been redeemed from it as the adamic penalty, and had thus again come under it of their own will and act, it is called *second* death.

Thus may not all see clearly, God's election of classes for future service, and of nations and individuals for present service, and yet recognize that God leaves his creatures free to exercise their own wills in accepting or rejecting His arrangements and favors? He seeketh such to worship and serve him as serve from the heart – in spirit and in truth; and such pre-eminently are the classes selected in this age and in the preceding selection for the kingdom's positions and honors.

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