

## **KEEPING OURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD**

THIS thought of the responsibility of each child of God to keep himself, is set forth in various terms throughout the Scriptures. Our Lord said, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Our part is to do the watching and praying; to do our very best, and then it is God's part to overrule and direct and supervise our affairs so that all things shall work together for good to us, because we have come into this proper relationship with the Father.

We recognize that this Scripture and other Scriptures are not given to the world, but are addressed only to God's people, to "the sanctified in Christ Jesus." It is these sanctified ones who are to keep themselves. The unsanctified, unholy, have not made any start toward the Lord, and are not, therefore, in a place which they should wish to keep; they are rather in an undesirable place which they should seek to abandon. But those who have accepted God's terms, and have been begotten of the holy Spirit, and have experienced an entrance into this "grace wherein we stand, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God," are admonished that they must keep this place, must preserve themselves in this position, must "keep themselves in the love of God." If they do not thus keep themselves, do not keep their hearts with all diligence, they are not of the kind that God designs to keep; they are the kind that he designs shall fall, and for whom he has provided special snares and difficulties that they *may* fall – not into eternal torment, as some of us formerly thought – but fall away from the promises of God and the particular favors provided for the Elect.

The Lord has not predetermined what place we shall occupy in the future, but he is allowing our course to be influenced by

conditions of the present life, so that all those who choose to be in harmony with God may follow in the footsteps of Jesus. There are outward manifestations by which the Lord's people may know their own standing, and to some extent may be able to know of their progress. In proportion as one realizes the Spirit of Christ developed in himself, in proportion as he sees the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit, he may know of his own progress in the love of God, and may know also that unless he keep himself in the love of God, **[R4660 : page 253]** he will not stand, will not maintain his place, but will fall; as the Apostle Peter says: "If ye do these things ye shall never fall." If we conform to the Divine arrangement, if we keep ourselves in the love of God, we shall, therefore, be preserved.

All those who are thus in Divine favor have the Divine promise and all the Divine power behind the promise, necessary to keep them. So, then, our text is in full accord with other texts bearing upon this subject. Those who are begotten of the holy Spirit have the responsibility of keeping themselves in that holy condition of heart. They may not be responsible for some of the outward circumstances that beset them, nor for the condition of others, nor for the temptations that come to them. They may not in the fullest degree be responsible for all of their own course, because of the imperfections of the "earthen vessel"; but under the Lord's providential arrangement, if they keep their hearts, "that Wicked One toucheth them not," will not injure them, will not harm them. His besetments may serve to test, may be permitted of God to work out for them, if properly exercised thereby, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"; but the Adversary can do them no harm, because they belong to God, and he is pledged to defend in the highest sense the best interests of all those who have given their hearts to him in full consecration.

