

Praise for God Who Keeps Us

C. H. Spurgeon

Let us adore him who can keep us from falling.

To the people of God, I have to say this dear brothers and sisters, *we need keeping; therefore, let us adore him who can keep us.* As saved souls, we need keeping from final apostasy. "Oh!" saith one, "I thought you taught us that those who are once saved shall never finally apostatize." I do believe that doctrine, and delight to preach it; *yet it is true that the saved ones would apostatize, every one of them, if the Lord did not keep them.*

There is no stability in any Christian, in himself considered; it is the grace of God within him that enables him to stand. I believe that the soul of man is immortal, yet not, in and of itself, but only by the immortality which, God bestows upon it from his essential immortality. So is it with the new life that is within us. It shall never perish; but it is only eternal because God continues to keep it alive. Your final perseverance is not the result of anything in yourself, but the result of the grace which God continues to give you, and of his eternal purpose which first chose you and of his almighty power which still keeps you alive. *Ah, my brethren, the brightest, saints on earth would fall into the lowest hell if God did not keep them from falling.* Therefore, praise him, O ye stars that shine in the Church's sky, for ye would go out with a noxious smell, as lamps do for want of oil, did not the Lord keep your heavenly flame burning. Glory be unto the Preserver of his Church who keeps his loved ones even to the end!

We need keeping for doctrinal error. But there are other ways of falling besides falling finally and fatally. *Alas, brethren! we are all liable to fall into errors of doctrine.* The best-taught man, apart from divine guidance, is not incapable of becoming the greatest fool possible. There is a strange weakness which sometimes comes over noble spirits, and which makes them infatuated with an erroneous novelty, though they fancy they have discovered some great truth. Men of enquiring and receptive minds are often decoyed from the old paths, — the good old ways; and while they think they are pursuing truth, they are being led into damnable error. He only is kept, as to his thoughts and doctrinal views, whom God keeps, for there are errors that would, if it were possible deceive even the very elect; and there are men and women going about in this world, with smooth tongues and plausible arguments, who carry honeyed words upon their lips, though drawn swords are concealed behind their backs. Blessed are they who are preserved from these wolves in sheep's clothing. Lord, thou alone canst preserve us from the pernicious errors of the times, for thou art "the only wise God our Savior."

And, dear friends, we need keeping from an evil spirit. I do not know whom I should prefer, — to see one of my dear Christian brethren fall into doctrinal error, or into an un-Christian spirit. I would prefer neither, for I think this is a safe rule, — of two evils, choose neither. It is sad to hear some people talk as if they alone are right, and all other Christians are wrong. If there is anything which is the very essence and soul of Christianity, it is brotherly love; but brotherly love seems to be altogether forgotten by these people; and other Christians, who, in the judgment of sobriety, are as earnest, and as true-hearted, and as useful as themselves, are set down as belonging to a kind of Babylonian system; — I hardly know what they do not call it, but they give it all sorts of

bad names, and this is thought to be a high style of Christianity. God grant that the man may be forgiven who thought it, to be a worthy purpose of his life to found a sect, whose distinguishing characteristic should be that it would have no communion with any other Christians! The mischief that, man hast done is utterly incalculable, and I can only pray that, in the providence of God, some part of it may die with him.

O brethren and sisters, I charge you, whatever mistakes you make, not to make a mistake about this one thing, — that, even if you have all knowledge, and have not charity, it profiteth you nothing; even if you could get a perfect creed, and knew that your modes of worship was absolutely apostolic, yet, if you also imbibed this idea that you could not worship with any other Christians, and that they were altogether outside your camp, your error would be far worse than all other errors put together, for to be wrong in heart is even worse than to be wrong in head.

I would have you true to God's truth, but, above all, I would have you true to God's love. My brother, I think you are mistaken about this matter or that, but do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, I love you. I have no doubt, that I also am mistaken about some things, but, do not therefore withdraw your hand, and say that you cannot have fellowship with me. I have fellowship with my Father who is in heaven, and with his Son, Jesus Christ, and with his blessed Spirit; and methinks that it ill becomes you, if you call yourself a son of that same God, to refuse to have fellowship with me when I have fellowship with him. God save you from this evil spirit; but, you may readily enough fall into it unless the Lord shall keep you. Your very zeal for truth may drive you into a forgetfulness of Christian love; and if it does, it will be a sad pity. O Lord, keep us from falling in this way!

We need keeping from the danger of sin. But there are falls of another sort which may happen to the brightest Christian; I mean, falls *into outward sin*. As you read Jude's Epistle through, you will see what apostates some professors became, and you will be led to cry, "Lord, keep me from falling." And if you were the pastor of a large church like mine, you would see enough to convince you that traitors like Judas are not all dead, — that, amidst the faithful, the unfaithful are still found, — that there are bad fish to be thrown away, as well as good fish to be kept; and every time we execute an act of discipline, — every time we have to bemoan the fall of one, who looked like, a brother, — we may thank God that, we have been kept, and may sing this doxology, "Unto him that is able, to keep us from falling, be glory and power for ever."

Edited from a sermon by Spurgeon entitled "Jude's Doxology."