

CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE.

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"For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."—2 Tim. i. 12.

The keeping of the soul is of infinite importance, and mainly on two accounts:—first, because of the immense value of the soul, and second, because of the imminent danger to which it is exposed. The apostle Paul, fully aware of the value of his soul and the danger to which it was exposed, and conscious of his own inability to keep it, had entrusted it, with all its interests for time and eternity, to the guardianship of the Lord Jesus Christ; and such was his knowledge of the Lord Jesus, that he felt persuaded the sacred deposit was in his hands safe. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." This is the language of strong assurance. Paul had been led by the Spirit of God to see that he needed a protector, and that Christ was just the protector which his necessities required; and having in the exercise of faith given himself up to the keeping of Christ, he had no fear in regard to the future. What though enemies many and powerful surrounded him, what though dangers the most fearful threatened him, what though he had to contend with the frailty and sin of his corrupt nature, he nevertheless not only believed but *knew* that the fountain of his life, the treasure of his soul, the citadel of his salvation, was *proof* against all these enemies, all these dangers, all these vicissitudes, for it was in the keeping of *Jesus*,—in the keeping of Him who possessed in the highest degree those attributes which ensured the *security* of whatever was entrusted to Him.

Brethren, we have a right to make our own the confident exultant language of the text. If we have committed our immortal interests to the guardianship of the great Mediator, we are perfectly safe, and with Paul may exclaim, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

We will better understand and appreciate

the meaning of the text, if I make two preliminary remarks by way of explanation.

1. Though Christ will keep the soul committed to him, yet he will not keep it as a senseless, inanimate thing is kept, as a rock or a tree, but as a *soul*,—as a rational, immortal, accountable being. He will not keep it as a watch placed upon a shelf, taken down at stated times, wound up, and then replaced, but as a *spirit*, and in a manner consonant with its own nature. He will keep it by making us do our part, as well as He doing his. We must make a diligent use of the means of grace, we must watch and pray, we must guard against temptation and resist sin, we must strive after holiness, we must put forth strenuous effort to make our calling and election sure. Even Paul, who uttered the text's strong language of assurance, has in another place declared, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." In other words, Paul was persuaded that if he relaxed his efforts, if he were not constantly on his guard against sin, and did not use the means of divine appointment for his sanctification and salvation, God would *reject* him, notwithstanding his prominent position, his distinguished attainments, and the many tokens he had received of the divine acceptance—and

2. That act by which we commit our immortal interests to Christ, is an *act of faith*. It is the gift of the Holy Ghost; it is something which Christ makes us *willing* to do in the day of his power. It is entrusting our whole selves, body and soul, to the keeping of the Lord Jesus. It is coming to Christ and saying, "Lord help me, I perish!" "Lord, I am blind, give me sight! I am ignorant, give me knowledge! I am poor, make me rich!" It is stretching out the withered arm. It is saying, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean!" "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief!" If we thus commit