

THE BELIEVER'S SAFETY.

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"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."—*St. Jude* 24, 25.

There seems to have been some similarity of design between the epistle of St. Jude and the second epistle general of Peter. Many have conjectured that they were written about the same time and in opposition to the same threatening heresy; but little is known, subsequently to the death of Christ, of the life and fortunes of Jude. There have been cavils about the catholicity of his epistle, but there is overwhelming evidence in its favour. It is certainly written in an apostolic spirit, and tells of the temptations of the man that is in Christ Jesus. After he has denounced the doom of false and gainsaying teachers—a warning to others against the contagion of their pernicious errors—he exhorts them to the maintenance of the Christian life, that they should add the superstructure of graces to the foundation of faith by living in the spirit of prayer; and that they should be sustained by the living and majestic hope of everlasting life. He then tells them that in their treatment of offenders they should make a difference between the weak and the wicked, between the misleader and the misled—that they should roughly handle the sin, but that they should very compassionately care for the sinner. And then follow the words which we have just read in your hearing as the text—a glorious doxology—exhibiting at once in a pastor's tenderness and a saint's devotion, the utterance of a heart which was loyal in its attachment to God, and whose very pulse was brimming tenderness for man.

In the consideration of these words this morning there are four thoughts which are presented to our notice—God's people preserved; God's people presented; God's attributes indicated; God's homage accorded. The first two of these will be amply sufficient to occupy us on the present occasion. Our remarks will therefore, mainly be directed to these two, which are, after all, the main thoughts of the text—God's people preserved and God's people presented.

I. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling." Preservation implies

danger. We should not need to be reminded of God's ability to save us if we were surrounded by no peril. The apostle seems to teach us in this chapter that though we have been called by Christ—though we have hearkened to the call—though we have received spiritual gifts—a new heart, and a new motive to action—we must not expect that our work is accomplished, and that we can resign ourselves to the selfish and indolent enjoyment of our privileges. We are still in a state of probation; and a state of probation of necessity implies that we should be surrounded by adverse influences—by numberless spiritual enemies, who will war against our souls. Watchfulness must be exercised, and strength must be exerted to keep us in the right way. The existence in us of this liability to fall, and the presence in the midst of us of subtle and malignant adversaries, are truths which are made matters of announcement and of warning very frequently in the pages of the Word. The apostle announces, for example, the necessity for his own self-mastery; for though he was a man of high endowments, and of exalted office—compelled, from his very position to live in a sort of halo of sacredness, and to minister familiarly with the things of God—even he might be in peril and overthrown—"For this cause I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest after having preached to others I myself should become a cast away." Peter, whose heart would throb with the memory of contrite bitterness while he gave the warning, tells the called and chosen that they must be diligent and faithful if they would make their calling and election sure. Christians are exhorted to give all diligence, to cast not away their confidence which hath great recompenses of reward, but to look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God. They are warned that their enemy, the devil, like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. They are told to beware lest they be led into the error of the wicked one, and so fall from their own steadfastness. They are told to