

Andrew Bonar:

1 Peter 1: 5

ARE there any believers here who are afraid that they will some day bring disgrace on their profession ? Let them study these words. 'Kept' is the whole history of a believer's life. It tells us we are very weak, for we need to be kept; but, at the same time, it is a most comforting word, for it tells us we are worth keeping. God counts us a treasure worth keeping. It has wonderful power to give energy to believers. Rightly viewed, it bears on the interests of holiness in a wonderful manner. There may be ups and downs in the degrees of our faith and of our love, but we cannot be lost, for we are 'kept by the power of God.' The word throws emphasis on the mighty power that grasps us and keeps us; it is 'garrisoned by the power of God.' It is God's own power that encompasses us. None shall pluck us out of His hand.

Â'What from Christ the soul can sever,
Bound by everlasting bands?
Once in Him, in Him for ever,
Thus the eternal covenant stands.
None can pluck us from the Strength of Israel's hands.'

I. We are kept by the power of God.

We are in the arms of omniscience and omnipotence, for it is literally 'kept in the power of God.' We are lying upon that power, and we need it all. The power of the devil is tremendous, the power of the world is tremendous. Its current often carries us away. No wonder if we sometimes say, 'I shall one day perish.' We are 'kept by the power of God.' If you want to know the workings of that power, read Eph. 1:19-23. What a defence! better than ten legions of angels; and yet we have that too. But Jude says, 'Keep yourselves.' We are to keep ourselves, but how? 'By faith.' God keeps us by making us keep ourselves 'by faith.'

II. We are kept by faith.

God's part is to put forth His power; our part is to put forth faith. God enables us to have faith, and He keeps it in us continually, and not all the power of hell can pluck that faith out of our heart. It never decays. We get power continually from God to go on believing from day to day. Our faith will not vanish. It may grow weaker, but it will not disappear. If we give way to unbelief we are letting go our hold of the chain that fastens us to the omnipotent arm. Faith implies that our eye is daily looking to the Cross of Christ - not looking to our feet, not looking about at what might terrify us, but 'looking unto Jesus.' We think of the righteousness He gives us, every day. We think of the blood shed to put away our sin, every day. We think of the new and living way opened to us by Christ, every day. Faith is always looking, not only to the work of Christ, but to His Person. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.' He lives to keep His vine and water it every moment. All the way along we may say

'There is life for a look at the Crucified One' -

new life, every day. We are on the battlefield still, but we may sing

'God is our refuge and our strength.'

When sickness comes we may feel ready to fail, but He will keep us. When death comes we may not be able to think at all, but it does not matter. He will keep us. Preparation for death is almost an imagination. A believer does not prepare for death at all. Christ does it for him. The believer prepares for life. Beware only of slipping back. If you begin to think about yourself, about your frame of mind, about your cares, you may slip; but you will not fall. He who restored Peter will restore you. The fishermen in Brittany have a prayer they use when their boats are going out: 'O our God, keep us, for our boat is very small, and the ocean is very wide.' We shall be 'kept' till the salvation is revealed, and that may be at any moment. It is all ready - like a statue all complete, only waiting to be unveiled. God will keep us till then for our inheritance. He will not have an unlet house in New Jerusalem, no mansion where the grass grows before the door. Each mansion is reserved for some one. Our inheritance is 'reserved in heaven for us.'