Almost every doctrine within the Christian religion has gone through a developmental stage resulting in what is considered orthodoxy today. Our understanding of many current doctrines are the result of heated theological battles that have sprung up and challenged the common thought of their day. The victor in these theological battles has always become orthodox, and the loser's position has generally become known as heresy.

Orthodoxy has been a fluid idea which the majority has held to be true. Heresy, it has been said, is an opinion held by a minority of men which the majority declares unacceptable. Upon this observation we can gather that "orthodoxy" is not necessarily "truth" since the establishment of truth is not to be determined by a popularity contest. In our modern age where "truth" is determined by the latest opinion poll, we can see the necessity of a "more sure" means of measuring what is the genuine orthodoxy of the Christian religion and what is not.

One principle that was brought forth from John Wesley was, "whatever is true is not new; whatever is new is not true." The only sure truth we can know comes from the Bible. If what we believe is a new and novel idea that has never been given any sanction within the Church, we must conclude that it is not the doctrine of the Bible.

Most Christians are very leery of the approach of modern day cults where an individual is elevated to the status of "prop heel." The introduction of new "revelations" from God are supposedly given to supersede the doctrines of the Bible, the established teachings of the early Church, and the cumulative weight of accepted doctrine throughout all of Christian history. Some of these groups do not claim new revelations, but have based their speculative interpretation upon the limited information we have about the New Testament Church. In light of this, they insist that the modern church is corrupt. Their strategy is to decipher the New Testament and restore the church to its original condition. By doing so, they have chosen to bypass all of church history. The mistake that they make is not in their intent, but in their approach. The information we get from the Bible about the New Testament Church is vague enough that we cannot reassemble the original without the aid of extra-Biblical literature. Even with the aid of all the available resources, it is not possible for a 20th century mind to place itself into the unique culture and social situation in which the Church was birthed. Our Westernized understanding of Christianity can do nothing but interfere and distort our thinking of the original Church.

The best gauge that we have of what the early church believed is the record of the Apostolic Fathers. They were the first to have anything that resembled what we have today as the completed New Testament. Some were taught by the Apostles themselves, or were one generation removed. This does not mean that they were inspired, or that they were infallible, but in all probability they were more accurate in their understanding as to the essential nature and unwritten thoughts of the early church. This does not mean that they understood everything more fully that we can seeing that we have a complete Bible and 2,000 years of reflection on its truths. What we can conclude is, that compared to us, they were probably more accurate in what they did know.

Anytime someone endeavors to trace the history of a doctrine they must decide on a method of approach. Some start from the beginning and work forward to show how the doctrine developed. Others start with the present, and work back, showing the historical connection with the past. Since the history of a doctrine can span such a large period of time, I will take a different approach, I will start in the middle. This I believe will simplify things for most readers. By doing this I will start Augustine, the Father of Western thought. It will be easier for most readers to identify with this reference point since his influence has had the greatest impact on our modern theology. I will trace the doctrine of eternal security forward from Augustine, and then I will trace it back from Augustine to the Early Church to show any influences upon his thought.
Many of our doctrines have developed from doctrines in their infant stages to what we know and understand today. This is the case with Augustine. He did not teach eternal security as we know it today, but he was a key figure in setting the groundwork that is the basis in which this doctrine could thrive. His influence on theology and Christian thought as a whole is without question.

This portion of the history of Eternal Security follows Augustine’s influence forward. The development of his thought on back to the birth of Christianity will be discussed later. What is important for the reader to know is that this influence exists before we take a look at whether it is a Scripturally sound influence.

We all have a paradigm on how we approach what we see in the Scriptures. We come to the table with pre-conceived biases that at times will determine what we see as truth from the Scriptures. The foundational beliefs and biases that many Christians have today are to be discovered in the roots of what Augustine has started. For this reason, “Saint” Augustine is referred to with great favor amongst most theologians. While most of these theologians agree with Augustine, many of them don’t. All of them will concede his great influence on Christian thought.

Augustine, the bishop of Hippo, was born in Tagaste, in Numidia, on November 13, 354. He was raised in a divided household where his mother attempted to influence him with Christianity, and his father, also a Christian, directed him toward worldly and secular knowledge that could bring him profit. When he moved to Carthage as an adult, he took an interest in rhetoric and was influenced by the Manichaean error. He believed and taught these errors for around 9-13 years until he was influenced and baptized a Christian on Easter of 387 by Ambrose.

Perhaps there has been no one that has ever lived that has impacted the world of theology as Augustine has. He was a Roman Catholic, and is responsible for much of what we consider “Catholic” doctrine today. Surprisingly, he can also be credited with being a major player in Protestant thought also. Here is a short list, which shows many of the doctrines that he was credited with introducing into the church.

AUGUSTINE’S CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Absolute predestination
2. Impossibility of falling away or apostasy. (Eternal Security)
3. Man has no free will.
4. One cannot know if they are saved.
5. God commands impossibilities.
6. The supreme authority of the Roman church.
7. Purgatory.
8. Prayers for the dead.
9. The damnation of unbaptized infants and adults.
10. Sex is sinful because depravity is inherited.

The first five “contributions” may appear to be what is known as “Calvinism.” This is exactly where the basis of Calvin’s theory comes from. Points 6-10, do not fit the Protestant model of salvation in any way, it is Roman Catholicism. The qu
estion is, how can we accept the first five points that are listed in light of the egregious errors about salvation that this man taught that promotes Roman Catholicism? It is clear that his view of things is at best confusing, self-contradictory, and outright unbiblical at points. Because of this we must cautiously entertain what he taught with great skepticism. How can we blindly accept what he had to say when we know that he obviously was not clear about salvation?

This does not mean that everything that Augustine thought and taught is to be thrown out because of what he believed at other points. I believe the Catholic Church is in great error on the issue of salvation. However, I agree with them about the Trinity of God. Because someone is wrong in one point does not mean that they are wrong in all points, though they may be! I believe that while Augustine may have touched on truth in some ideas that are not listed above, I have singled out the preceding list as an example of what I believe to be his errors. The subject of why I believe that these are all errors will be covered later as I trace the thought of Augustine back to its source. For now, I only want to establish the starting point of these doctrines and to follow them where we are today.

John Calvin is a better-known figure to Protestants today. He wrote the most talked about systematic theology the world has ever known. His ideas have permeated the Protestant world and will perhaps do so until our Lord returns.

Calvin took the ideas set forth by Augustine and developed them even further. Instead of just touching upon the ideas of predestination, final perseverance, and the believers security, he developed an incredible system of thought that knows few rivals. John Calvin took the concept of Augustine and filled in the unanswered voids to form his theology. He followed these ideas to their logical end. If man is not free and God must predestinate, and all are not saved, then God must be Sovereign in salvation. This tends to ignore the fact that if God willed man to be free, and thus responsible for his own damnation, this would still mean that God is Sovereign. Sovereignty and predestination are in no way essential partners.

The acronym for Calvinism is TULIP. This is what is known as the "Five points of Calvinism."

1. Total Depravity (Free will lost) (3)
2. Unconditional Election (Salvation is decreed apart from any change in an individual.) (4)(1)
3. Limited Atonement (Jesus "paid" for the "elect" that he desired to save. No one else!) (1)
4. Imputed righteousness (mystical transfer of righteousness in place of our filthy rags) (5)
5. Perseverance of the saints. (Assurance, eternal security) (2) (1)

(A technical note: The official "l" in TULIP is "Irresistible Grace," which is tied to Unconditional Election. I use Imputed Righteousness because it is the logical progression of explaining "how" a predestined sinner (Points 1-3) is allowed into God's perfect heaven).

After each of the five points there is a number that corresponds to the previous list of Augustine. It is almost as if Augustine had most of the pieces of the puzzle and Calvin put them together and added the ones that he thought were missing.

Following in the footsteps of Calvin we have Theodore Beza who took the conclusions of Calvin to its logical end and developed what we would consider "Calvinism" today. We can attribute the development of the Calvinistic theory of the atonement around this later stage.

We can follow the trail of Calvinism throughout history, mainly through the Church of England and the Puritans. The Baptists held to this system quite consistently until about 1800. At this point there was a compromise on the issue of predestination and the extent of the atonement. This was perhaps due to the influence of the Wesleyan revival or possibly the New Light movement of Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell. For whatever the reason was, there was a definite shift in their thought around this time.

The most definite deviation from Augustine and Calvin, while holding tenaciously to their end conclusion, came with the entry of the theology of dispensationalism. J.N. Darby put this into motion with the Plymouth Brethren, and it was later captured into prominence with the revival associated with D.L. Moody.

The significance of dispensationalism to the development of eternal security lies in the approach in which they divide Scripture. They viewed God as having a different plan of salvation in different times or "dispensations." This seemed to give
sufficient allowance to accept the “Biblical” idea of irrefutable security and free-will at the same time. At this point the idea of a Gospel that allowed all men freedom to enter into eternal life while at the same time denying them freedom in their eternal destiny afterwards, has come to full acceptance within 20th century Christianity.

To understand the impact of this shift we must look back to the high-Calvinistic theory. If you will observe, the logical conclusion of predestination to salvation is the unfalling salvation of the one who is elect. The fact that the elect will never fail or apostatize is in the fact that they were predestined. They are not free to do otherwise. The logical conclusion of the opposite doctrine is that salvation is conditionally based upon faith and available to all. This implication of free grace to all leads us to the inevitable conclusion that we are not “locked in” to salvation in any way. If we take the position that we are given the opportunity to choose whether we wish to be saved or not, does this not infer that we are free to choose not to be saved at a later date? Eternal Security logically requires absolute predestination.

In fairness to the Calvinistic theory we must understand that they believe that a true believer will be evidenced by the fact that they “persevere unto the end” in the faith. Those that depart or fall away show that they were deceived and never really elect. Even though the Calvinistic theory of the perseverance of the saints is expressed differently than our modern idea of eternal security, it must be admitted that the logical outcome of Augustine’s and Calvin’s predestination inevitably demands an Eternal Security for the elect. In this the Baptist and dispensational teaching follows the line of thought properly, but misses the mark of logic and consistency when it denies the doctrine of absolute predestination.

If we are to follow this path backwards we cannot deny the dependence upon the ideas that preceded them. The path cannot vary a little on our way back, but inevitably it arrives at the doorstep of the man named Augustine. One cannot trace the doctrine of Eternal Security all the way back through the Apostolic Fathers and to the Scriptures. The doctrine had a specific time of arrival in history and it was around the beginning of the 19th century. Its beginning has its springboard taken from the absolute predestination and perseverance of the saints as propagated by the Calvinists. John Calvin himself was not the first to discover these ideas but found them loosely stated in the doctrines of St. Augustine. The trail ends here and does not have any endorsement of the early Church Fathers that preceded Augustine.

Where we are Today

It seems like most Christians today uncritically adhere to this idea of eternal security. It has been the predominate doctrine of the Church for the last 80 years and continues to gain strength. Looking at the basis of where we derive this doctrine from, we must ask ourselves as to where Augustine’s comes from. If it is derived solely from the Scriptures, we must listen up and learn from his great observations. If it comes from an outside source we must question it and potentially discard it. Of the two options available to us I believe that the later is the truth.

Up to this point I only wished to show you the theological connection of Eternal Security to the idea of predestination that was taught by Augustine and Calvin. To see this connection is vital and necessary in order for you to see that eternal security is a theological invention based upon theological presuppositions and not upon Biblical and historical examination.

If Augustine was correct in his conclusions about predestination, then he was correct in his determination about the security of the elect. The two doctrines go hand-in-hand.

The historical question confronts us; did Augustine derive his doctrine from the Scriptures? Or did he derive these conclusions from some philosophy outside of Christianity? Does he adhere to the teachings of the early Church Fathers on the subject? Or does he take a drastic deviation from the accepted truth of historical Christianity up to his day? These are important questions for any believer who loves truth.

Augustine, the Manichaean

As discussed in the brief biography of Augustine near the beginning of this history we noted that he was a Manichaean for at least nine years before he entered the priesthood of the Roman Catholic church.

Manichaeanism was a heretical sect that gained such popularity in Augustine’s time that it nearly superseded Christian ity. The founder of this religion was called Mani, in which the term Manicheanism is derived. He lived around 216-276 A.
D. He set out to found a universal religion that was a combination of Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity. The "Christianity" that Mani was exposed to was the Gnostic form of the religion that the apostle John wrote so vigorously against in his First Epistle. He interpreted the N.T. history in an allegorical and symbolical way which was made to represent an entirely new religious system that was totally at odds with Christianity and its fundamental teachings.

There is a question that confronts every one of us. When we concede to the indisputable fact that Augustine was the focal point in Christian history where several doctrines took an unprecedented shift to prominence, and from that point they became the standards in which to build our theologies, we must evaluate where these ideas actually come from. Are they truly expressions of Christian philosophy or Manichaean influence? This is not an unfair question since the introduction of several of Augustine's contributions were not accepted as orthodox Christianity prior to this time, but were associate d with Manichaeanism and "Christian" Gnosticism; both being unorthodox heresies. Some historians have noted that they thought that Augustine brought this influence into the Church. Mainly, this was the Gnostic doctrine of the evil nature of matter and the purity of the spirit, (duality) and absolute predestination. Both of which are the basis and essential elements of the doctrine of eternal security that was to follow after centuries of development.

Because of his influence, much of Catholic and Protestant history has been founded on the belief that matter, (the physical body and its appetites,) are the embodiment of evil. This belief is undeniably Gnostic and not Christian. This duality that the Gnostics taught was illustrated by describing a pure golden ring as the spirit, and a pile of manure as matter, or the body. The ring can be put into the pile of dung and completely surrounded, but the filthiness of the dung does not per meate it. It remains as pure as it always has.

Augustine taught that the body, flesh, was the seat of evil and sin. This is why procreation was a sinful act in his mind. To this day I have heard eternal security teachers refer to the flesh as an entity that cannot help but sin, while at the same time they have asserted that sin cannot affect the spirit or the spiritual security of the believer. Gnosticism is alive today in those who propagate a salvation that makes the spirit pure, while maintaining the sinfulness of matter. The spirit is pure, but the body is sinful at the same time. A little Christian varnish may make this doctrine more appealing, but under the surface it is still pagan and not Christian!

One idea brought over from Buddhism is the idea that we are to die to "self." Being delivered from "self" might get us to Nirvana but not to heaven. The problem here is that the idea of "flesh" is thought of as the person, (self), which being matter, is therefore considered sinful. The Scriptures do not tell us that we are to be saved from "self." There is nothing wrong about the people we were created to be. God's calm with us is not our "person" or "self"; it is our rebellion with Him. The thing we are to be cleansed from is not the "self," but the defilement and the filthiness of flesh. We are commanded "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Jesus Himself made the proper love of our "self" as a duty and a virtue when He said: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

There are many preachers that are mistaken when they teach that we "should die to self." It is true that we should not be selfish, but it is also true that "selflessness" does not save us or make us holy. The Bible reveals to us that there is no one more absolutely "dead to self" than the vilest sinner. They disrespect their own health and welfare through addictions to drugs and alcohol. They are dead to the voice of reason and conscience. They take no care for the future...they are dead to self.

It is an interesting fact that Romans chapter seven, where Paul cries out "Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall save me from this body of death!" was universally understood to be Paul's cry for conversion from Judaism before Augustine changed this defeated image of a convicted and hopelessly sinful man into the norm for the Christian life. He changed his own previously held interpretation of this verse (the historical position) in order to rob his doctrinal opponent Pelagius of a proof text. By doing so he changed the historically accepted meaning of this passage forever, and created a proof text that bolstered his belief in Gnostic dualism. The spirit is holy; the body is evil. The spiritual man is secure while the physical man remains hopelessly corrupt and sinful; holy and unholy at the same time.

Augustine had written refutations to Manichaeanism before he had to contend with Pelagius. It is clear that he maintained the portions that he thought were part of his upbringing in the Christian tradition. The difficulty comes in when we consider the type of Christianity that Mani included into this equation that Augustine draws from. It was Gnostic "Christianity," the very one that the apostle John condemns and warns us about! (1 John 1:1-9)

Augustine thought that Pelagius had taken a heretical stance by saying that man can "will" his own way into the kingdom of God and does not need any special drawing of the Spirit to compel them. To counteract this argument, Augustine went to the extreme opposite end by drawing from the absolute predestination that he was taught as a Manichaean. He brou
ght this belief over with himself when he became a Christian. This was the beginning of what was to become Calvinism and then modern day Eternal Security. Ultimately, the roots of Eternal Security are in the Gnosticism that preceded Augustine, but it was Augustine that has the unwelcome honor of leavening the whole lump.

Eternal Security is pagan in its origin and is a thought that is in opposition to the Bible and genuine Christianity. Its lineage cannot be traced back but a few hundred years where it draws its inspiration from the "perseverance of the Saints" which in turn was drawn from Augustine's introduction of Gnostic and Buddhist thought into the Church. Eternal Security has a history, but not a very good one for the Christian who knows its origin.

May God save us from its falsehood.

BY JEFF PATON

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Re: A HISTORICAL EXAMINATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL SECURITY - posted by BlazedbyGod, on: 2009/6/26 11:39

Hmmmmm, can you tell me, if you don't mind, what parts of this article that you don't agree with?

Re: - posted by BlazedbyGod, on: 2009/6/26 11:52

Here is another Article about the Early Church Father's and the Historical teaching on Eternal Security:

(http://www.achurchinfortcollins.org/eseh.php) Eternal Security Examined Historically

Eternal Security Examined Historically
Did the Apostles Teach Eternal Security to the Early Church?
By Nick Liguori

Introduction
We make a bold claim: we can prove historically, by looking at early evidence outside of the New Testament, that the apostles did not teach eternal security. We want to circumvent the Biblical debate over this controversial doctrine and instead take a historical route to prove that the apostles did not teach eternal security to the early Church. So rather than, "what does the Bible teach?" we will instead be asking, "historically, what did they teach?" This historical route will likely be foreign terrain, and you will likely be shocked by what you learn. We will be following the trail blazed by David Bercot, Roger Forster and others.

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**Note: the reader may wish to skip ahead to early Christian quotations. If so, click one of the links below. Otherwise continue reading this introductory material.**
3rd and 4th century writings (earlier than 325 A.D.)
1st and 2nd century writings (earlier than 200 A.D.)

The Calvinist doctrine of unconditional eternal security is summed up in the phrase "once saved always saved." Charles Stanley, perhaps the leading advocate of this doctrine in the Church today, says:
"eternal security is that work of God in which He guarantees that the gift of salvation once received is possessed forever and cannot be lost."

Stanley writes:
"But a man or woman who has been rescued once from a state of unforgiveness need not worry. For once 100% of a man's or woman's sins have been forgiven, the potential for being unforgiven has been done away with. The risk factor is zero. There are no more fires from which the believer needs to be saved."

So what are the practical implications, or could we say, applications, of this doctrine?

"No matter what you do as a child of God, you are forgiven. You say, 'Murder?' Forgiven. 'Stealing?' Forgiven. 'Adultery?' Forgiven. 'Worshiping idols?' Forgiven."

Does this sound revolting? Stanley further writes,
"Even if a believer for all practical purposes becomes an unbeliever, his salvation is not in jeopardy."
Again he writes,
"believers who lose or abandon their faith will retain their salvation."

"A believer who commits suicide is already forgiven."

Revolting as this may seem, Stanley's view is far from "fringe." In fact, eternal security is a prevalent doctrine in most evangelical and protestant churches today. But is this doctrine true? The reader must wonder: could this doctrine have anything to do with the Church's present state of worldliness, complacency, and high divorce rates?

We believe that a conditional security is the clear position of scripture. This has been discussed in my Eternal Security R e-examined. Conditional security, as opposed to (unconditional) eternal security, simply states that future unbelief can disqualify one from future salvation. Salvation can be lost. It is true that we are saved in an instant of faith and repentance toward Christ, but it is also true that continued salvation in Christ is not automatic. Rather there are conditions that we must continue to meet, with the help of God's grace and power working in us.

A Valid Approach
In the course of this work, we intend to establish the following:
(1) If the apostles taught eternal security to the newly born Church, we had better find somebody teaching the doctrine in the writings of the early Church.
(2) Rather than eternal security, the ancient Church universally taught conditional security until St. Augustine after 400 A.D.

We believe that the following conclusion is inevitable:
(3)The testimony of the patristic writings proves that the apostles preached a conditional, rather than unconditional, security.

Before we go any further, we must answer a number of questions from our Calvinist friends.

The Calvinist asks, "How do you know what the early Christians taught?"

We possess a large body of manuscripts, the most prominent of which have been translated and compiled into a ten volume work, The Ante-Nicene Fathers. These patristic writings consist primarily of apologetic works, writings against heresy, and epistles of correspondence between Churches. We have writings from dozens of prominent early Christians, from bishops (Ignatius) and presbyters (Hippolytus) to apologists (Justin Martyr) and historians (Eusebius). Their writings are often easier to read than the Bible, making it easier to determine their views on eternal security.

"Who cares what they believed anyway? You shouldn't give them the same weight as Scripture."

Agreed. While certainly not scripture, these writings are of tremendous importance for many reasons. The first generation of early Christians -- such as Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp -- knew the apostles personally! They could ask them questions. This renders them experts on whether the apostles taught eternal security. Others had been to church es founded by the apostles, such as Corinth, Rome, or Thessalonica. The language of the New Testament (Greek) was their native tongue. They were in a unique position to tell us what were the apostolic traditions and teachings that were so carefully preserved. Just as the earliest manuscripts carry the most weight in textual criticism, those nearest the fount
of Jesus and the apostles are our greatest and most authentic commentators.

What if the early Christians chose totally different gospels than us? What if they didn’t believe in Jesus’ deity? We would be in serious trouble as Christians, with no historical basis for our faith. Our beliefs on the New Testament and Jesus Christ have been shaped by their beliefs. The beliefs of the Ante-Nicene Christians are critically important to us. How then can we say that their beliefs on the doctrine of salvation are less important? How can we ignore what they believed about eternal security?

“So are you a Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox?”
Certainly not. In fact the primitive Christians predate these Churches, which did not begin until the fourth century. Unfortunately, we disagree with those Churches on a number of points which are beyond the scope of this work.

“Are you just picking and choosing those quotations which suit your preconceived notion?”
Of course we are only going to present passages relevant to the issue of eternal security. And we have included less than 1% of the early Church writings, but we boldly assert that there is nothing in the other 99% that will contradict the unfounded view presented herein. That is to say, you will not find even one early Christian writing embracing eternal security before 400 AD. We therefore issue an open challenge to the Calvinist: find one early Christian writer before Augustine who taught any form of eternal security. John Jefferson Davis, the renown Calvinist theologian, even admits that his doctrine was not taught until St. Augustine. However, Davis and others have not admitted that this disproves eternal security. We will be pushing for a further concession on this point.

“What does history have to do with whether a doctrine is biblical? Is your historical method really valid?”
A great question. This argument is valid because our Calvinist friends make an implicit claim regarding eternal security. In addition to saying, “It’s biblical,” the Calvinist continues by saying, “and the apostles taught eternal security.” You see, the Calvinist makes two claims: the doctrine’s true and the apostles must have preached it to the newborn Church. Although it seems trivial, it is actually significant because Calvinism now becomes vulnerable to falsification from a second front — history. Whatever the apostles passed down to the Church must be the true position of scripture. Having formed this simple connection between doctrine and preaching, history is indeed a valid means of falsifying a biblical doctrine, provided the historical evidence is sufficient.

The Historical Method
Let us consider an analogy regarding creation versus evolution. Evolutionists not only state that evolution can occur, but also that it did occur. What kind of evolutionist would say, “Evolution is fully possible, but I personally don’t think it happened”? Of course the evolutionist insists on both claims. But because he makes two separate claims, his view is open to falsification from two directions, microbiology and paleontology. The creationist microbiologist can say, “Microbiology proves evolution couldn’t happen,” or the paleontologist could declare, “We still can’t find the missing link! Evolution didn’t occur.” Both fields had better agree, either “yes and yes” or “no and no.” But only one proof is necessary, either microbiology or paleontology. In the latter case, no bones means no evolution. Likewise, no evidence in the early Church that the apostles taught this doctrine means no eternal security.

We must modify this statement. Arguing from silence is never valid. If we really had no fossils at all, we could neither prove nor disprove evolution. The paleontological disproof requires positive proof: a whole lot of fossils of creatures with wholly formed limbs, and not merely a lack of transitional fossils undergoing evolution. So it is with refuting eternal security. Not only do we need a silence on eternal security, we also need positive evidence that they taught the alternative, conditional security.

Now if you believe that the early Christians accurately preserved the faith of the apostles, you need not read any further. You have made a sound judgment that eternal security cannot be biblical because the early Church never taught it. Proof will be provided in the following pages. But consider the fact that many Calvinists admit our claim is true. Now after admitting this much, these same Calvinists reject the obvious conclusion that eternal security was never taught by the apostles. How do they avoid that? In a desperate attempt to defend their doctrine, they accuse the early Christians of failing to preserve the apostles’ teaching regarding eternal security. They say that the apostles definitely taught eternal security, but it went “in one ear and out the other” with the early Christians. Thus, the Calvinist retreats as far as admitting that the early Christians did not teach it, but he takes his final stand on the only remaining option: blaming the early Christians for “reinstating legalism,” warping or even denying the apostolic doctrine of eternal security and imposing their own cruel manmade doctrine of conditional security.

Of course this puts our Calvinist friend in a tight spot and gives rise to the same problems we alluded to earlier. Namely,
if the early Christians failed to preserve eternal security, what other doctrines might they have failed to preserve accurately? If they altered eternal security, what else could they have altered? Jesus' deity? The Trinity? The atonement? The Bible? We certainly hope not!

But we have no reason to accuse the early Christians of altering the doctrines of our faith, as Bercot aptly points out the difficulty in making that argument or accusation:

If the churches had departed from the one true faith preached by the apostles, how did they all end up teaching the same thing? There were no church-wide councils, seminaries, printed literature, or any other means to quickly disseminate erroneous teachings throughout the church. So how could all the congregations have independently come up with the same interpretations and practices unless they were simply following what Paul and the other apostles had taught -- even three hundred years after the death of Jesus, orthodox Christians were still one united body.

Bercot adds that each congregation was indeed quite independent from other churches, which protected against heresy spreading quickly, say, from Rome to the other churches. The ultra-conservative spirit of these early Christians, like the Jewish scribes, equating change with error, coupled with their personal integrity and the previously said points, give us great confidence in them.

It seems absurd that the Calvinist should still, against all odds, cling to the view that the early Church altered eternal security, intentionally or unintentionally. But if so, we will proceed to firmly establish a link from the early Church's belief in a conditional security to the inevitable conclusion that the apostles also taught the conditional form. If having proved this conclusion, the Calvinist should still refuse to concede, it will be due to stubborn prejudice rather than reason. At the same time, we can understand that it is difficult to accept early Church testimony that contradicts one's view, especially for one who teaches his view to others. As long as it is even remotely possible that we could be wrong, we must show a degree of humility.

We have some questions for the tenacious Calvinist:

If the apostles taught eternal security, what should we expect to find in a writing that dates from 200 AD? From 150 AD? From 100 AD? If the apostles taught eternal security, what should we find the churches of Corinth, Rome, Ephesus, etc., professing at 175 AD? If the apostles taught eternal security, and the doctrines of the churches have remained unanimously the same from 100 to 200 AD, what should that unanimous view be? If the apostles taught eternal security, what should we expect to find the disciples of the apostles, those who knew the apostles personally, teaching in the early 100s? What should we find the churches teaching before 100 AD, while John was still alive? Will they sound like Charles Spurgeon for eternal security, or like John Wesley for conditional security? And if our prediction turns out to be totally wrong, what does that mean about our assumption?

We will also note that the Apostle John lived until about 96 AD, a date which will serve as a benchmark for our discussion. Based on the Calvinist assumption that the apostles taught eternal security and that the early Church eventually preserved it into conditional security, we have identified the following conclusions.

Under the assumption that the apostles taught eternal security:

Antiquity - An earlier writing is more likely to endorse eternal security than a later writing.

Authenticity - A writing with a known author or source and greater textual reliability is more likely to teach eternal security than one which is spurious or has possibly been altered by some monk teaching conditional security.

Author Identity - A church leader is more likely to teach eternal security than a common Christian layman. Those who personally knew an apostle or who knew someone who knew an apostle are most likely to believe in eternal security.

Apostolic Churches - The Churches founded by the apostles (such as Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome) were the most ancient churches, and they received written and oral instruction from the apostles. These Churches are most likely to have preserved eternal security.

Scope - An authoritative, church-wide view is more likely to support eternal security than one writer's mere personal opinion.

Origin of the Doctrine

The doctrine of eternal security, at least a form very similar to the modern doctrine, was not conceived until Calvin's Institutes of Religion in 1536. That is, eternal security did not exist for the first 1500 years of Christianity. But the roots of Calvinism are found in Saint Augustine of Hippo, who first preached a doctrine somewhat resembling eternal security around 428 AD. At the beginning of Augustine's On the Gift of Perseverance, we read:

I assert, therefore, that the perseverance by which we persevere in Christ even to the end is the gift of God; More could be said about the nuances of Augustine's doctrine of perseverance, and how it is somewhat different than Calvin's doctrine of "perseverance of the saints," but we will suffice it to observe that this is the earliest mention from within
the Church of anything similar to eternal security that we possess. A brief glance through Calvin's Institutes will reveal th at Calvin highly admired Augustine and modeled his own theological system quite similarly. For this reason, Calvinism h as been called "Augustinianism."

We must also point out that during Calvin's day, the patristic writings were generally not available. Luther and Calvin had access to Augustine, but most of the earlier Fathers were inaccessible. It seems that the reformers mistakenly assumed Augustine to be a representative specimen of early Church doctrine. It is interesting to speculate what their theology mig ht have looked like, had these reformers read the works of the early Fathers. But today we have the privilege of diving in to these records of early Christian thought. So let us open wide the wardrobe and take a peek into history to see what th e earliest Christians believed about the security of the believer. Can a truly saved Christian fall from his or her salvation? Is continued salvation unconditional or conditional? Can a once saved Christian go on sinning without risk of forfeiting sa lvation?

The following quotations are taken from The Ante-Nicene Fathers, and are cited in the format (volume number : page number). The reader is encouraged to look up these quotations personally by going to: http://www.ccel.org/father2/ We will be scanning the Fathers from most recent to most ancient. The introductions provided below were found by consulting A nte-Nicene Fathers, Bercot's Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs and the Catholic Encyclopedia.

3rd & 4th Century Fathers
Or the reader may wish to skip ahead to 1st & 2nd Century Fathers
Apostolic Constitutions, c. 390 AD
We begin with a fourth century compilation of eight books on Christian instruction. Within the first page we read: Take care, ye children of God, to do all things in obedience to God; and in all things please Christ our Lord. For if any m an follows unrighteousness, and does those things that are contrary to the will of God, such a one will be esteemed by G od as the disobedient heathen. (7:391)

Another example of the early Christian view:
The Holy Spirit always abides with those who are possessed of Him, so long as they are worthy. ... The Holy Spirit remai ns with a person so long as he is doing good, and He fills him with wisdom and understanding. (7:462)

Lactantius, Christian teacher and apologist, c. 310
Lactantius was a prominent Christian in the early fourth century and has been lauded as the "Cicero of Christianity" for hi s eloquence. In his old age, he was asked by Emperor Constantine to personally tutor his oldest son. His writings are sig nificant, as they prove that the Christian faith had remained intact all the way until the reign of Constantine. More specific ally for us, the following quotation shows that Lactantius taught conditional security. See also 7:191 for his position at gr eater length.

A son ... who deserts his father, that he may not pay him obedience ... is considered deserving of being disinherit ed, and of having his name removed for ever from his family, -- how much more so does he who forsakes God, in whom the two names entitled to equal reverence, of Lord and Father, alike meet? ... Of what punishments, therefore, is he deserving, who forsakes Him who is both the true Master and Father? (7:155)

Anonymous Treatise on Re-baptism, c. 255
As to one who again denies Christ, no special previous standing for be effective to him for salvation, for anyone of us will hold it necessary that whatever is the last thing to be found in a man in this respect, that is where he will be judged. All o f those things that he has previously done are wiped away and obliterated. (5:674)

Cyprian, bishop of Carthage church, c. 250
Cyprian led faithfully during a time of intense persecution. He was eventually captured and beheaded in 258. Most of his writings are letters of correspondence with leaders of foreign churches, which makes them very valuable to us. Consider the following quote:

We must not at all depart from the evangelical precepts ... Therefore, I wonder very much from where this practice has o riginated. For it is contrary to evangelical and apostolic discipline. (5:361)

Cyprian claims that the Church still knows what the apostles originally taught, saying that it needs only to be preserved. Because of his expertise on apostolic teaching, we should expect to find him teaching eternal security. But he doesn't, a s we see below:

For it is written, "Praise not any man before his death. And, again, "Be faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of lif
e." And, the Lord also says, "He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved." (5:283)
You are still in the world. You are still in the battlefield. You daily fight for your lives so you must be careful. It is a small thing to have first received something. It is a greater thing to be able to keep what you have attained. Faith, itself, and the saving birth do not make alive by merely being received. Rather, they must be preserved. Solomon and king Saul, and many others were able to keep the grace given to them so long as they walk in the Lord's ways. However, when the disciple of the Lord was forsaken by them, grace also forsook them. (5:284)
I ask ... that you grieve with me at the death of my sister. For in this time of devastation, she has fallen from Christ. (5:2:98)
This is very powerful testimony against eternal security, as a revered man who claims to hold the original teachings of the apostles, and one who has communicated extensively with leaders of other churches, only 150 years after the Apostle John, writes that believers can fall from salvation. To the Calvinist's surprise, Cyprian sounds very much like John Wesley.

Origen, Christian teacher and presbyter of Caesarea, c. 225
There is a prevailing rumor about Origen that must be addressed. I have often heard people say, "Origen was a Gnostic. He got kicked out of the Church." But there is no evidence for this view. We find it helpful to correct this common misunderstanding so that we can establish his credibility. It is true that Origen was expelled from his church of Alexandria by the bishop Demetrius, but for what reason? From Eusebius' account, we learn that Origen was a presbyter of Alexandria, and he took a trip to Greece to combat heresy. Later visiting Palestine, he ended up strangely being ordained presbyter at Caesarea by the bishop of that Church. Upon learning this, Demetrius barred Origen from returning to the Alexandrian church. But according to Eusebius, Origen was not at fault. Demetrius "accused him bitterly." Origen continued his ministry in Caesarea and died a faithful martyr around 254 AD. Origen is considered the first Christian theologian. Because of his exceeding brilliance, Origen expresses unorthodox views in some of his commentaries. The reader should take his views with an occasional grain of salt, but these were often just personal speculation, not intended as dogmatic assertion. In general he was quite orthodox. Often misunderstood, Origen was by no means a Gnostic. In fact, he wrote against the Gnostics! It is very ironic that some mistaken Calvinists would call Origen a "Gnostic." In the following quotation, Origen rejects the teachings of some Gnostics as heresy -- teachings which resemble those of Calvinists today!

Let us begin, then, with what is said about Pharaoh ... also the statement of the apostle, "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth." And some of those who hold different opinions misuse these passages, themselves almost destroying free-will by introducing ruined natures incapable of salvation, and others saved which it is impossible to be lost; (4:308)
We see later in the same chapter, on page 317, that Origen is referring to the Gnostics as the "heretics" who are destroying free will and teaching that some are unconditionally saved. See also pp. 266, 309 where Origen again rejects eternal security. What then is the verdict? The Calvinist, rather than Origen, seems to be teaching Gnostic doctrine. On the other hand, it appears we've found an ancient John Wesley.

Hippolytus, presbyter of Rome, c. 225
Much like his teacher, Hippolytus defended the Church of Rome from heresy. Hippolytus was a disciple of Irenaeus, who was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John. The testimony of this Greek Father should therefore be given great weight. Based on our assumption, we should expect to find that this man taught eternal security. The disciples, moreover, after they had appointed these Ordinances and Laws, ceased not from the preaching of the Gospel, or from the wonderful mighty works which our Lord did by their hands. For much people was gathered about them every day, who believed in Christ; and they came to them from other cities, and heard their words and received them. Nicodemus also, and Gamaliel, chiefs of the synagogue of the Jews, used to come to the apostles in secret, agreeing with their teaching. Judas, moreover, and Levi, and Peri, and Joseph, and Justus, sons of Hananias, and Caiaphas and Alex ander the priests - they too used to come to the apostles by night, confessing Christ that he is the Son of God; but they were afraid of the people of their own nation, so that they did not disclose their mind toward the disciples. And the apostles received them affectionately, saying to them, "Do not by reason of the shame and fear of men, forfet your salvation before God, nor have the blood of Christ required of you; even as your fathers, who took it upon them: for it is not acceptable before God, that, while ye are in secret with His worshippers, ye should go and be associated with the murderers of His adorable Son. How do ye expect that your faith should be accepted with those that are true, whilst ye are with those that are false? But it becomes you, as men who believe in Christ, to confess openly this faith which we preach." And, when they heard these things from the disciples, those sons of the priests, all of them alike, cried out before the whole company of the apostles, "We confess and believe in Christ who was crucified, and we confess that He is from everlasting the Son of God; and those who dared to crucify Him do we renounce."
Hippolytus narrates an account of the apostles' preaching not found in the New Testament, likely a tradition of some sort
, in which the apostles explicitly say that salvation can be forfeited. Regardless of whether the apostles ever uttered those words, this Hippolytus certainly taught a conditional security. To the great chagrin of the Calvinist, we’ve dug up another ancient John Wesley.

Tertullian, Christian apologist in Carthage, c. 200
It should be noted that Tertullian left the Church later in life and joined the Montanist heretical sect. Fortunately, more than half of his writings were written prior to his becoming a Montanist. And since Montanistic theology is still similar to that of the early Church, even these writings can be of value to early Christian research. Dozens of passages throughout his years of writing could be cited to show that Tertullian believed that salvation could be lost. It is possible, I regret to say, that Tertullian was judged by his own doctrine.
Some think that God is under a necessity of bestowing even on the unworthy what He has promised to give. So, they turn His liberality into His slavery. For many afterward fall out of grace. Is not this gift taken away from many? (3:661) God has foreseen that faith even after baptism would be endangered. He saw that most persons after obtaining salvation would be lost again, by soiling the wedding dress, by failing to provide oil for their torches. (3:639)
But Tertullian tells us more. He taught the same things as the ancient Churches founded by the apostles. This is certainly not what we would expect if the apostles taught eternal security! If our prediction is therefore wrong, what does this tell us about our assumption?
We hold communion with the apostolic churches because our doctrine is in no respect different from theirs. This is our witness of truth. (3:252-253)
I say that my Gospel is the true one; Marcion, that his is. I affirm that Marcion's Gospel is adulterated; Marcion, that mine is. Now what is to settle the point for us, except it be that principle of time, which rules that the authority lies with that which shall be found to be more ancient? (6:349)
No other teaching will have the right of being received as apostolic than that which is at the present day proclaimed in the churches of apostolic foundation. (6:286)
From these statements we may be certain that Tertullian's view of conditional security is the same as that of Corinth, of Ephesus, of Rome, of Philippi, and so forth. The doctrine of eternal security was too important to be overlooked. The burden of proof, therefore, is on the Calvinist to show how all the apostolic Churches could have possibly been corrupted less than 100 years after John

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/6/26 11:57**

Quote:
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BlazedbyGod wrote:
Hmmhmm, can you tell me, if you don't mind, what parts of this article that you don't agree with?
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I do not agree on the part he speaks about dying to self and how the author defines it, neither do I agree with Augustine's view on this subject, both the author and Augustine "missed" what dying to self is about. In my humble opinion, I could write my own definition on dying to self, but it has not so much to do with this topic at hand here....


Many have attempted to discredit the truth of particular doctrines as contained in Holy Scripture by pointing to a "historical gap." What often fails to be mentioned is that there is also little writing to be found on several doctrines, including the Trinity.

The early church fathers were comparatively silent on various areas of doctrine because they were busy defending other areas of scripture. Doctrines are often honed and clarified through persecution and needful defense. Also, when a particular doctrine seems to surface out of nowhere (historically that is), many times it was because of needed refutation against what was already accepted and believed as biblical truth. A lot of folks do not recognize the progressive nature of the Church and its doctrine.

A lack of information on a particular subject by the early church fathers does not nullify a particular doctrine. Often times the doctrine was accepted as biblical truth and simply needed no defending. Their (the early church fathers) silence does little to discredit the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints...or any other one for that matter.
The “historical gap” theory or lack of Early Church Father commentation does little to discredit what the Apostle Paul, Jesus, and God Himself teaches throughout the entirety of the Bible.

Much of the misunderstanding in this area of doctrinal thought comes from the modern perversion of the historically and biblically accurate doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, which should actually be called the perseverance of God.

"It is not the perseverance of man but the perseverance of God which is assured to us in the Scriptures. It is not the faithfulness of man which is assured, but the faithfulness of God. It is not the changelessness of man which is assured, but the changelessness of God.” - Gordon Girod

An excellent article that does much to clarify the misconceptions surrounding this doctrine is found (http://www.the-highway.com/perseverance_Girod.html) here

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2009/6/27 8:19

Quote:
--------------The early church fathers were comparatively silent on various areas of doctrine because they were busy defending other areas of scripture.
--------------

Jesus Christ did not die to set down a set of doctrines. He died and rose again to give us divine life. So that we may be new creations in Him and live forth that life for the whole world to see in His Church.

A 1500 year gap is pretty large if tulip and Calvinism is what the apostles also taught and then it was some how forgotten.

Augustine had so many errors that he introduced into the Church it is questionable to esteem him as one of the Church Fathers of the faith.

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/6/27 9:32

Quote:
--------------Jesus Christ did not die to set down a set of doctrines. He died and rose again to give us divine life. So that we may be new creations in Him and live forth that life for the whole world to see in His Church.
--------------

Amen! I hope all are in agreement to these truths.

Quote:
--------------A 1500 year gap is pretty large if tulip and Calvinism is what the apostles also taught and then it was some how forgotten.
--------------

Not sure what the size or duration of the gap has to do with anything, as I pointed out. I believe what the Apostles taught was the Gospel - the very truth as revealed by God. It needs no other term given by man. I did not use the terms Calvinism or TULIP. I was simply pointing out relevant issues concerning this article.

Quote:
--------------Augustine had so many errors that he introduced into the Church it is questionable to esteem him as one of the Church Fathers of the faith.
--------------

You are right. But like so many other men (i.e., King David - the adultery committing murderer) he still has much to offer.

As for the ECF (early church fathers), more than one of them wrote heretical things from time to time, Origen comes to
mind. The ECF were not infallible. I believe you are right in questioning whether any man be esteemed.

**Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2009/6/27 9:51**

I would soberly encourage all who deny God's preservation of His saints to either repent of their sin of denying God's truth, or cut Jeremiah 32:40 out of their Bibles so that they can at least pretend to believe what is in the Scripture.

*And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.*

Yes, I understand, man has a hard time believing he is not in sovereign control of universe. But, it's the facts. If one want to join the atheists and ungodly in believing man is in control, they can answer for that.

God's preservation of His saints is not a license to live a lifestyle of sin, nor do those so preserved partake of a sinful lifestyle. Those whom God justifies He sanctifies.

If the early church fathers taught contrary to God's preservation of His people, they were simply wrong.

With care in Christ,
Taylor

**Re: - posted by hmmhm (), on: 2009/6/27 14:17**

**Quote:**

TaylorOtwell wrote:
I would soberly encourage all who deny God's preservation of His saints to either repent of their sin of denying God's truth, or cut Jeremiah 32:40 out of their Bibles so that they can at least pretend to believe what is in the Scripture.

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If the early church fathers taught contrary to God's preservation of His people, they were simply wrong.

With care in Christ,
Taylor

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Brother i think no one here denies God being able to keep all those who want to be kept, I do believe your view is a selected view and you overlook hundreds of scriptures to cling top a few selected verses that you can understand and fit your doctrine you believe to be true.

It is possible you are wrong, maybe you are right but i am convinced from scripture your understanding of Gods sovereignty is not the whole truth as scripture describes it.

saying we who believe different should rip this verse out of their bibles makes no sense, i could post 100 verses or more that any calvinist should rip out of their bible using your logic.

And calling people to repent i think is to harsh brother, over this issue, i know you burn strongly for the truth as you perceive it in the scripture and what it teaches, I believe strongly you are in error in your doctrine in some aspects, but i would not call you into repentance. And according to your belief why would you give such an exhortation knowing according to what you believe they can not repent even if they wanted to?
I would be happy discuss the articles at hand, and it can be tricky since history is sometimes different depending on who is telling it and who "wrote" it. But some things in history are clear, and in these articles I have found much is true as far as I possibly can know and understand, some may be "bent" intentionally or unintentionally. But either way, if you want to defend the truth as you perceive it it is better you argue the articles posted, break em down and post evidence they are false claims or maybe just misunderstood or whatever.

I used to hold to the doctrine of eternal security myself, but after going through the new testament and especially what Jesus said and taught I changed my mind, every one who abides in him are eternally secure, since eternal life is not only length.... but now, knowing him is eternal life right now. And if any one chose for whatever reason to not abide in him, they are not secure.

This is what all scripture in its entirety teach, and this is the truth. According to MY view, and many others and we have a ll different beliefs on both sides and in between. I am just afraid we will grow bitter and hard at heart for posting "repent" to each others, better of try with patience and love and humility to try show why you are persuaded this articles and those who think they are in the "right direction" are wrong.

Just some thoughts and concerns brother.

Have a blessed day in the Lord.

Christian

Re: - posted by warriorofgod, on: 2009/6/27 16:11
i think there is a confusion here between security and assurance. A person can be assured that they are saved and secure if they live for Christ. But they cannot be assured if they continue in sin. Though they might be secure, they cannot be assured until they repent and continue to do so for their whole life.

The article doesn't seem to explain away 1 john 3 which illustrates this wonderful truth that I am propagating. Eternal security and assurance, and perseverance is all wrapped up in this chapter and other portions of the book.

Re: - posted by Aussiedler, on: 2009/7/2 7:06
The Word of God is the Word of God, a living Person. This Person does not have to be concordant to Arminianism or Calvinism nor any other Person or confession. Calvin, Arminius and all the others have to bow before the Word of God!

The fact is, there are scriptures in the bible that seem to go along with Calvin and there are scriptures that seem to confirm Arminius. BUT: This is a totally wrong view. If we read the bible from this perspective, i.e. if the bible fits into calvinism or any other "ism", than we are deceived.

Whose side are you on? asked Joshua the Angel of the lord. What was the answer?

"NO; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come"

That "NO" meant: Joshua, you have the wrong perspective. I don't have to fit into anyones thinking. What was Joshuas response?

"And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? "

Joshua humbled himself. Everytime we find something in the bible we don'T understand, we have to humble ourself to the word of god and we have to say something like this in our heart: This is the word of god, I don't understand it, BUT IT IS THE TRUTH AND I WILL CONFORM TO THE TRUTH EVEN IF I DONT UNDERSTAND IT.

Everytime we find scriptures, that seem to contradict, we try to make them fit together. that is eating from the tree of knowledge. that is dead doctrine, mere understanding, trying to make God fit into our mind. So we can try to "bow" every scripture that seem "calvinistic" to make them fit to the "arminian" scriptures or vice versa, BUT THAT WILL ONLY PRODUCE DEAD DOCTRINE.
Brothers and sisters, we should not read the word of god from a wrong perspectice like “Does the bible support Calvinism?” or “Does the Bible support Arminianism?” The Bible supports Christ and every “ism” has to bow before Christ, who is the living Word.

(excuse my english grammar, I am from germany)

Re: A HISTORICAL EXAMINATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL SECURITY - posted by repentcanada, on: 2009/7/2

"Eternal Security is pagan in its origin and is a thought that is in opposition to the Bible and genuine Christianity. Its lineage cannot be traced back but a few hundred years where it draws its inspiration from the “perseverance of the Saints” which in turn was drawn from Augustine’s introduction of Gnostic and Buddhist thought into the Church. Eternal Security has a history, but not a very good one for the Christian who knows its origin."

the above quote is from the initial article posted, and it is heresy.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/7/2 7:53

Quote:
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re repentcanada wrote:
the above quote is from the initial article posted, and it is heresy.
-------------------------

So basically you think or judge me as a heretic? as someone who divides the body of Christ by believing/teaching this to be true?

I have found the above quote to be true, not from reading this article in particular but after reading much else where, and I have come to the conclusion the doctrine of eternal security, depending how you define it since it means different to different people, but the first ones I find teaching this doctrine where some of the gnostic groups. And the apostle John wrote his letter (1 Jo) to address these gnostic teachings, one where once you are saved you can not lose your salvation and thus one can live in sin.

They taught much more things then this, but I think you are to hasty calling people heretics. I know many here on this site do not believe in eternal security, I could define more clearly what i personally believe but it does not matter, to call one a heretic is to say he is not good to fellowship with for other believers.

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/7/2 8:49

Quote:
-------------------------So basically you think or judge me as a heretic?
-------------------------

He said the quote was heresy. Not You. Not anyone. He was addressing the quote.

Quote:
-------------------------I have found the above quote to be true
-------------------------
And I have found it to be false. The word of God is neglected by this author. Jesus Himself teaches/taught perseverance of the saints. It is biblical truth. No amount of articles or historical research is going to nullify the Word of God.

I believe that the problem lies in the perverted OSAS teaching that is so prevalent today. Historically/Biblically accurate perseverance of the saints (POS) does not promote sin or let anyone continue resting in assurance that is engaged in willful sin. As Paul Washer has said many times. "OSAS that is taught in most churches today is damnable heresy." But that does not mean that the eternal security of the believer is not true.

Quote:
-----------------------------
I think you are to hasty calling people heretics. I know many here on this site do not believe in eternal security. I could define more clearly what I personally believe but it does not matter; to call one a heretic is to say he is not good to fellowship with for other believers.
-----------------------------

I cannot find where repentcanada calls anyone a heretic. I ask that you read his post again. It is not personal. He was not addressing you or anyone else. He simply addresses the quote.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/7/2 10:26

maybe i misunderstood, but to me a heretic is someone who holds a heretical doctrine. A heresy... the greek word can mean to divide i think, or is it possible to have "heretical" doctrines without being a heretic?

not sure :-) I dont see or call anyone a heretic for holding the view of eternal security, (depending on definition) but i hav e read scripture and also come to the conclusion its not to be found. As taught by most people today, there are security but it comes with condition, if we fail the condition i am not so sure any more. But not wanting to discuss this right now :-) rather calling those who have found the same thing revealed by God to them to be true and dont see eternal security as taught by most as a true biblical doctrine, are all those in heresy?

It would exclude a large group of christians....

and what i dont see in the scripture is a born again christian can under no circumstances what so ever by any reason never ever end up lost. scripture does not teach that and scripture in its entirety teaches just the opposite. But for all who want to be saved and have faith and continue in that faith until the end such people will never ever be lost. I do agree on Paul Washers statement, and i do know the osas junk preached today is not what "reformed" preachers of old preached when speaking of eternal security, i dont agree with most of them either :-) but its not important

I just thought it was a bit "harsh" calling it heresy, and the logical conclusion of someone who hold to a "heresy" would make him a heretic wouldn't it? or does anyone have a better definition?

gods peace and love.

Re: - posted by repentcanada, on: 2009/7/2 10:57

heresy
HER'ESY, n.

1. A fundamental error in religion, or an error of opinion respecting some fundamental doctrine of religion. But in countries where there is an established church, an opinion is deemed heresy, when it differs from that of the church. The Scripture being the standard of faith, any opinion that is repugnant to its doctrines, is heresy; but as men differ in the interpretation of Scripture, an opinion deemed heretical by one body of Christians, may be deemed orthodox by another. In Scripture and primitive usage, heresy meant merely sect, party, or the doctrines of a sect, as we now use denomination or persuasion, implying no reproach.

2. Heresy, in law, is an offense against Christianity, consisting in a denial of some of its essential doctrines, publicly avowed and obstinately maintained.

3. An untenable or unsound opinion or doctrine in politics.
Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/7/2 11:05

Quote:
--------------------and what i dont see in the scripture is a born again christian can under no circumstances what so ever by any reason never ever end up lost. scripture does not teach that and scripture in its entirety teaches just the opposite.
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This is a problem when folks do not understand the role they played in their salvation. It is ALL of God. We are spiritually DEAD. Not injured. HE chooses us. HE is sovereign. HE gets exactly what HE wants. The elect will be in heaven because HE decreed it. HE chooses us. A faulty view of election often leads to an unscriptural belief that lose of salvation is possible.

John 15:16 (NKJV) You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

It is ALL of God.

HE keeps us.

John 6:37-39 (NKJV) 37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing…

HE will not let us go.

John 10:27-30 (NKJV) 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. 30 I and My Father are one."

HE is the one who perseveres.

Therefore, the elect persevere through HIM because of HIM

It is ALL of HIM.

Philippians 1:6 (NKJV) being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until I the day of Jesus Christ;

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There is really very little scriptural basis that can be used to argue against the eternal security of the believer. While there are a few verses that, if not considered in their context, might give the impression that one could “fall from grace” or lose their salvation, when these verses are carefully considered in context it is clear that is not the case.
(http://www.gotquestions.org/perseverance-saints.html) Source
I know salvation is all of God, but also scripture is full of verses that say "chose ye", scripture is full of jews whom all where chosen by God, saved all by God out of egypt, all of God parted the red sea, all was of God sending manna from heaven, it was ALL God. Yet most of them died in the desert. Many of Jesus teachings and parallels show much the possibility, revelation have many verses, Pauls letters would be totally a waste of space and time to write if they made no difference, in fact it would be better we went straight to heaven when we are saved. Because we can not effect anything anyway?

and i agree with all of scripture, and as i said, i believe in eternal security if one fulfill the conditions.

I amen that verse, but do only i see the condition for never perishing?

And i believe God will make us persevere, if we agree to let him do that in our lives, he never force anyone into heaven just as he never forced the Jews into the promised land.

and to say there are very little support for argue against the eternal security i have found the opposite, i have found very little, just a handful of verses. And all of those have a condition attached to them.

But i will gladly hold to the heresy so called, until God shows me different, i used to believe like many of you but after studying the matter more in depth God showed me differently.

I know we will not agree on this here and now, but knowing the many heretics that also hold this view i am not very worried :-)

But neither do i consider any of you who believe differently to be in heresy.

he will not let us go

no not as long as we want to be kept.

God does not force us into heaven, no one who want sin, self more then God will he force into heaven, adam was not dead as we are, yet God could have forced him not to eat the fruit, he could have "persevered" adam against Adams will but he didn't. Instead he placed the tree in the midst of the garden, in the middle, center of attraction, so adam would be tempted in his obedience.

And no one who wants to depart from the living God after salvation, after God chastise him and by his goodness offer repentance, if that person still prefer the broad way i dont think he will be in heaven. Its impossible for me to know who will be there, but scripture is clear, to me at least. Anyway, i still feel heresy is a to strong word for people who dont hold to eternal security the way augustine, the gnostics, luther viewed it.

Question: "Can a Christian lose salvation?"

Answer: Before this question is answered, the term “Christian” must be defined. A “Christian” is not a person who has said a prayer, or walked down an aisle, or been raised in a Christian family. While each of these things can be a part of the Christian experience, they are not what “makes” a Christian. A Christian is a person who has, by faith, received and fully trusted in Jesus Christ as the only Savior (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-9).
So, with this definition in mind, can a Christian lose salvation? Perhaps the best way to answer this crucially important question is to examine what the Bible says occurs at salvation, and to study what losing salvation would therefore entail. Here are a few examples:

A Christian is a new creation. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17). This verse speaks of a person becoming an entirely new creature as a result of being “in Christ.” For a Christian to lose salvation, the new creation would have to be canceled and reversed.

A Christian is redeemed. “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:18-19). The word “redeemed” refers to a purchase being made, a price being paid. For a Christian to lose salvation, God Himself would have to revoke His purchase that He paid for with the precious blood of Christ.

A Christian is justified. “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). To “justify” means to “declare righteous.” All those who receive Jesus as Savior are “declared righteous” by God. For a Christian to lose salvation, God would have to go back on His Word and “un-declare” what He had previously declared.

A Christian is promised eternal life. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Eternal life is a promise of eternity (forever) in heaven with God. God promises, “Believe and you will have eternal life.” For a Christian to lose salvation, eternal life would have to be taken away. If a Christian is promised to live forever, how then can God break this promise by taking away eternal life?

A Christian is guaranteed glorification. “And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified” (Romans 8:30). As we learned in Romans 5:1, justification is declared at the moment of faith. According to Romans 8:30, glorification is guaranteed for all those whom God justifies. Glorification refers to a Christian receiving a perfect resurrection body in heaven. If a Christian can lose salvation, then Romans 8:30 is in error, because God could not guarantee glorification for all those whom He predestines, calls, and justifies.

Many more illustrations of what occurs at salvation could be shared. Even these few make it abundantly clear that a Christian cannot lose salvation. Most, if not all, of what the Bible says happens to us when we receive Jesus Christ as Savior would be invalidated if salvation could be lost. Salvation cannot be reversed. A Christian cannot be un-newly created. Redemption cannot be undone. Eternal life cannot be lost and still be considered eternal. If a Christian can lose salvation, God would have to go back on His Word and change His mind—two things that Scripture tells us God never does.

The most frequent objections to the belief that a Christian cannot lose salvation are 1) What about those who are Christians and continually live an immoral lifestyle? 2) What about those who are Christians but later reject the faith and deny Christ? The problem with these two objections is the phrase “who are Christians.” The Bible declares that a true Christian will not live a continually immoral lifestyle (1 John 3:6). The Bible declares that anyone who departs the faith is demonstrating that he never truly was a Christian (1 John 2:19). Therefore, neither objection is valid. Christians do not continually live immoral lifestyles, nor do they reject the faith and deny Christ. Such actions are proof that they were never redeemed.

No, a Christian cannot lose salvation. Nothing can separate a Christian from God’s love (Romans 8:38-39). Nothing can remove a Christian from God’s hand (John 10:28-29). God is both willing and able to guarantee and maintain the salvation He has given us. Jude 24-25, “To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.”

Hi everyone,

"We are spiritually DEAD."

I think people are described as being *dead in sins and trespasses*, but I do not think this means that a man's human spirit is not alive or cannot make decisions.

Consider how Paul describes himself(perhaps as a child) in Romans 7:9, or what the Lord Jesus said to the scribe in Mark 12:34.

And too I think of Naaman, and his decision to heed the word that came to him through Elisha(albeit reluctantly), or how he responded afterwards determining to worship God.

I thought also of Cornelius, who, before he had ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, had offered prayers and alms which had come up as a memorial before God.

The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

Wish you all well.
especially one i would consider a brother and could have sweet fellowship. If it is a doctrine that could cause harm to the believers walk, life and to others (church) i can see where we need to confront such a heresy. In this case there is no such danger.

For me the bible is wonderful, for a believer who is in danger of Gods wrath and seemingly ignorant or just not caring about it, i can show him scripture to see whether he is in the faith or even if he is born again, if he is i can show him verses that should case him to take his profession with more fear and more seriousness. To the believer that is born again but perhaps living under satans condemnation and have no assurance i can show him Gods perseverance and Gods promises. Gods book is for all people not only a minor group within an even more minor set of doctrines. And i will not shy away from that fact.

Anyway God bless you all and thank you for your posts.