

Volume 6 No.1, January - June, 2018

A K U N G B A

JOURNAL OF RELIGION & AFRICAN CULTURE

**Special Issue on the 500th
Anniversary of the Reformation**

EDITORIAL BOARD

Professor Olu E. Alana

Editor-in-Chief

Dr Babatunde Adedibu

Dr. Benson O. Igboin

Guest Editors

Dr. Sunday Awoniyi

Treasurer

Dr. Richard A. Ogunleye

Business Manager

Dr. Lawrence O. Ekundayo

Member

Editorial Consultants

Professor Afe Adogame

Princeton Theological Seminary, NJ, USA

Professor Gabriel Oyedele Abe

Adekunle Ajasin University,
Akungba-Akoko, Nigeria

Professor John A. Onimhawo

Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria

Professor Jacob K. Ayantayo

University of Ibadan,
Nigeria

Dr Rose-Mary Etego

University of Ghana

Dr Abel Ugba

University of East London

Editorial Office:

Department of Religion and African Culture,

Adekunle Ajasin University,
P. M. B. 001, Akungba-Akoko,
Ondo State, Nigeria.

Printed and bound by:

Johnny Jes Limited, Nigeria

johnnyjes12@gmail.com;

johnnyjes@yahoo.com

+2348033003179,

+2348024444491

AKUNGBA JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND AFRICAN CULTURE

VOLUME 6,

NUMBER 1,

January-June 2018

Editorial 03

ARTICLES

Critiquing the Motivations for Luther's Reformation 06
Mepaiyeda, Solomon Makanjuola

Martin Luther has Resurrected: An Appraisal of GAFCON and Anglican Orthodoxy 18
Benson Ohihon Igboin & Nelson Olusegun Adewole

'This is Nigeria!' Creativity, Development and Contemporary 'Indulgence' Amongst some Pentecostal Churches 34
Babatunde Adedibu

The Beauty and The Beast of the sale of Indulgences: Implications for Contemporary Church 49
Akiti Glory Alamu

John Calvin's Teachings on Eternal Security and Its Implication on Contemporary Church in Nigeria 63
Mary Taiye Daniel

Is Church God's Business or Man's? An Exegesis of Acts 20:28-31 76
Akintunde, Felix Bamidele & Akindolie, Akinwumi Ambrose

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth in 2Timothy 2:15 and its Theological Implication for the Contemporary Church 88
Michael O. Oyetade

John Calvin's Teachings On Eternal Security And Its Implication On Contemporary Church In Nigeria

MARY TAIYE DANIEL
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIONS,
danielmarytaiye@gmail.com

Abstract

Salvation is a Christian doctrine which finds its deepest meaning in the spiritual aspect of life. Its fulfillment is held vigorously in the death of Christ, and the highest goal of Christian commitment is to achieve salvation. In the 'Articles of faith and practice' of different churches, teachings on salvation vary in content but not in goal. This variation became unavoidable from the point of view of God's sovereignty and omnipotence. This variation was further compounded by the unanimity in the doctrines of churches that God is holy and has zero tolerance for sin. Within this context, two schools of thought emerged namely: Calvinism and Arminianism. In Calvinism, God offered irresistible grace to those whom He elected to save in the exercise of His sovereign power. While in Arminianism God's grace was the source of redemption but could be resisted by people through free choice. The doctrine of ECWA and Baptist as their articles of faith and practice confirmed Calvinism. The Calvinist argument dovetails into the acceptance of the view that God remained the author of Christian conversion (Acts 11:18). Methods used were historical, interpretative and comparative. The historical was of need because the history of the concept needed analysis and to trace it to the contemporary church experience, interpretative by way of interpreting some theological concepts that are related to the concept of eternal security and comparative method was used to compare past and recent views of scholars for balanced viewpoints.

Keywords, - Salvation, Predestination, Eternal Security, Reformation, Calvinism.

Introduction

The concept of "eternal security" teaches that Christians once saved remain eternally saved. This doctrine is silently controversial because it is often assumed it is one way to discredit the relevance of sin to salvation. In this work, the assumed irrelevance will be meaningful to help us see the point those churches that do not teach it, do not necessarily neglect sin as much as the church that teaches it as part of their doctrine. Indeed, what eternal security means is that those who truly believe in

Christ can never be lost, they do not remain in sin, once they are saved, it is forever. Ryrie opined that, "eternal security is the work of God which guarantees that the gift of salvation once received is forever and cannot be lost."¹ This implies that all true believers in Jesus Christ are free from the danger of losing their salvation, they are permanently secured in Him, because even if they sin they will always repent and go back to Christ. This concept has strong footings in predestination and adoption. Guy Duty noted that Augustine a fifth century Catholic monk originated the doctrine of predestination. His teaching is that: "God from all eternity predestined some to be saved and passed the rest of the race by, with no offer or possibility of salvation, and that those elected for salvation would finally persevere and can never be lost."² It was by the comment of Augustine, a theologian who lived between 354 and 430AD that the doctrine of predestination got introduced into the church.³

John Calvin, a Christian theologian who lived between 1509 and 1564AD got his inspiration on predestination from Augustine. He developed Augustine's doctrine to a conclusion that he coined his own doctrinal positions which he called Calvinism. Today, the concept of Calvinism on predestination is generally called "eternal security."⁴ Calvin, like Augustine, taught predestination as God's eternal decree by which God's absolute sovereign-will decided the eternal destiny of every individual.⁵ The rigidity that characterizes Calvin's position is total in the absoluteness of God; this cannot be denied. However, God has not made man sufficiently irrational for him to decide on what he wants God to do for him. Having said this, we have to know Calvin well enough to study his position on an issue, therefore the next to be studied is a brief history of Calvin.

A Brief History of John Calvin

John Calvin lived between 1509 and 1564. He was born precisely on July 10th 1509 in Noyon, France into a staunch Roman Catholic family. About 1533, Calvin had a sudden conversion: "God subdued and brought my heart to docility."⁶ Apparently, he had encountered the writings of Luther. Calvin broke away from Catholicism, left France and settled in Geneva as an exile.⁷ He was a student at the University of Orleans when he first joined the cause of the reformation in 1536 and published the text *Institutes of the Christian Religion* an early attempt to standardized the theories of Protestantism where he made a clear articulation of Reformation teachings. "Calvin lived in Geneva briefly until anti-protestant authorities forced him to leave in 1538, though later re-invited to Geneva in 1541 because the faction that saw to his banishment became ungovernable and social ills

¹C. C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, Wheaton: Victor Books, 1986, 528.

²G. Duty, *If ye Continue: A study of the Conditional Aspects of Salvation*, Chicago: Bethany Fellowship Inc 1966, 5.

³Duty, 5.

⁴Duty, 6.

⁵Duty, 6.

⁶Adapted from Christian History Institute's book, *100 most Important Dates in Church History* Published by Revell, April 28, 2010.

⁷Adapted from Christian History Institute's book,

became the order of the day again.”⁸ “The city council became helpless and repented of their actions, and the citizens cried out for Calvin; who later returned to Geneva after much persuasion. Geneva was to be Calvin's home until he died in 1564.”⁹

Reform of Geneva prior to Calvin's arrival

Geneva had been governed politically by its Bishops and the count of savoy for two centuries before it had its independence in 1526 and made alliance with Berne and the Swiss.¹⁰ “The new government made up of citizens of liberated Geneva allowed reformers like Farel, Viret and others to preach the Gospel in Geneva, and officially adopted the advocated reforms. The mass was abolished, images and relics removed, bishops banished and in fact, all Catholic worship was forbidden. Daily sermons, simple communion, and a strict discipline was introduced; a school and hospital were founded.”¹¹ All these were done by the new government not because they love God or holy living but because of the hatred they had for Rome.

According to Justus, “the great majority of them were haters of God and of his truth and holy living. They were licentious and loose-living. He says further that for centuries, Geneva had known almost nothing of moral discipline. Before the expulsion of Rome, its clergy was profligate, its government tyrannical and its people demoralized. The Genevans reveled, danced, played at cards and fought in the street, sang indecent songs, uttered fearful blasphemies, indulged in all sorts of excesses.”¹² Though the people embraced Protestantism but not with their hearts because many of them were still papists at hearts and many were still deeply tinted with materialistic philosophy. There was no church discipline. All these liberties were allowed to partake in the Lord's Supper under the reign of the Roman bishops. In those days everybody belonged to the church, infidel and believer, sinner and saint alike. And the great weakness of the Lutheran reformation was that it allowed the world to continue in the church. The world was in the church when Calvin arrived in Geneva, despite the fact that Geneva had embraced Protestantism. The great achievement of Calvin was that through the vigorous exercise of church discipline by the ruling ministry which he restored to the church, the world in Geneva was cast out of the church.

Calvin's first Labours in Geneva

Calvin was appointed to give lectures on the scriptures and to preach, which he did in the Cathedral. “Within a short period, Calvin had compiled a brief but

⁸Adapted from Christian History Institute's book,

⁹Adapted from Christian History Institute's book,

¹⁰Adapted from Christian History Institute's book,

¹¹Justus Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, San Francisco: Harper, 1985, 9.

¹²T. H Wadkins, “A Recipe for Intolerance: A Study of the Reasons Behind John Calvin's Approval of Punishment for Heresy,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. 26,4 (December 1983): 431.

comprehensive creed of the Christian faith, and a catechism for the instruction of the youth. Both were adopted and approved by the governing council."¹³

Calvin also drafted a number of rules for the reformation of the morals of the city. These rules forbade the social ills such as games of chance, oaths and blasphemies, dances and lascivious songs, fight and masquerades in which the people indulged in publicly. "He produced commentaries on almost every book of the Bible. He wrote dozens of devotional and doctrinal pamphlets, carried on vast correspondence, and trained and sent out scores of missionaries. (He manages to do all these while constantly battling various ailments). The reformer wanted Geneva to be like the kingdom of God on earth."¹⁴

They often balked at his attempts at improving morality. But Calvin's influence was everywhere in schools, notably, but also as a kind of overarching presence, because he urged excommunicating church members whose lives did not confirm to spiritual standards, and every

citizen of Geneva had to subscribe to his confession of faith that had been adopted by the city council. "Geneva became a powerful moral magnet, attracting protestant exiles from all over Europe."¹⁵ This is so because it is believed that no other reformer ever stated Protestantism beliefs so clearly. Though, Luther wrote much, but not in one book did he bring all key beliefs together. Calvin's book which he kept enlarging throughout his life covered all the bases.

The Teachings of Calvin on Salvation

Calvin examined the doctrine of regeneration – that is, how are Christians saved? He claimed that salvation is only possible through the grace of God. Even before creation, God chose some people to be saved. This is the bone most people choke on; predestination. Curiously, it isn't particularly a Calvinist idea; Augustine taught it centuries earlier, and Luther believed it, as did most of the other Reformers. Yet Calvin stated it so forcefully that the teaching is forever identified with him.

For Calvin, God was above all else sovereign. Like all the Reformers, he hated the way Catholicism had degenerated into a religion of salvation by works. So, Calvin's constantly repeated theme was this: "You cannot manipulate God nor put Him in your debt. If you are saved, it is his doing, not your own."¹⁶

God alone knows who is elect (saved) and who isn't. but Calvin said a moral life shows that a person is (probably) one of the elect. He impressed it on others that the

¹³Wadkins, 431.

¹⁴W. Robert, "Beyond the Sphere of our Judgement: Calvin and the Confirmation of Scripture," *Westminster Theological Journal* 58,1 (1996), 30.

¹⁵W.S Reid, "Bernard of Clairvaux in the Thought of John Calvin," *Westminster Theological Lining Papers*, Wheaton: III Tyndale House, 220.

¹⁶Duty, 6.

need to work out their salvation – not to be saved but to show they are saved. This emphasis on doing on acting to transform a sinful world, became one of the chief characteristics of Calvinism.

The Influence of Reformation on John Calvin

Scholars have tried writing various kinds of influences the reformation has on the theology of John Calvin. It is believed that Calvin made a powerful impact on the fundamental doctrines of Protestantism, and is widely credited as the most important figure in the second generation of the protestant reformation. John Calvin (1509-1564) is best known for his doctrine of predestination and his theocratic view of the state. His doctrine and theology created profound changes within the fledgling protestant churches. Calvin influenced the Reformation in two important ways. First, his concept of predestination and his popular postulate that God is the Supreme authority became the theological hallmarks of future protestant denominations such as the puritan, Presbyterian and the reformed churches. Second, he influenced future protestant – led governments to incorporate church authority into the affairs of the state. He contributed important ideas and leadership skills to the furthering of the protestant Reformation. Calvin proposed that, as described in the new churches of the New Testament, the hierarchy of leadership should consist of deacons, elders, ministers and teachers. Calvin looked to the New Testament to delegate specific duties to persons in each of these roles. For instance, he found a Biblical basis for two major functions of deacons in his new church organization. He enjoined all persons to attend the sermons on the Sabbath and on week – days and retire to their homes at a specific time at night. Calvin also recommended that the government appoint some people who will work with the ministers to monitor and oversee all the citizens of Geneva, and report the unworthy to the church for discipline, and if need be, for excommunication out of the church.

This recommendation was also adopted by the ruling council; but not without opposition from the people. "These rules led to hatred of Calvin by the worldly element in Geneva. Coupled with the fact that ministers would remove from the rolls of the church the names of members who live in sin and refuse to repent. Eventually, Calvin and Farel were banished from Geneva because they refused to serve the Lord's supper to some people due of their blasphemies and immoralities."¹⁷

With the possible exception of Martin Luther, no man has had a greater impact on the theology of the protestant churches today than Calvin. While it is impossible to condense numerous volumes of Biblical commentary of Calvin down to a short summary, it is true that Calvin's most well-known teachings, set

¹⁷Gonzalez, 9.

forth in "the institution of Christian Religion" are the often – quoted "five points of Calvinism."¹⁸ A common acronym used to help remembering them is "TULIP" they are: "Total Depravity of man, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and Perseverance of the saints."¹⁹

It is worthy of note to state here that the principle on which Calvin rested his whole scheme of church government was: holy things are not to be given to the unholy. In other words, what he labored for, in the first place, is purity of the church and in the second-place morality in the state.

The Concept of Eternal Security

The concept of "eternal security" teaches that Christians once saved remained eternally saved. This concept is silently controversial because it is often assumed it is one way to discredit the relevance of sin to salvation. The concept of eternal security has caused a stormy debate right from the beginning of the church. According to Orr, "It has divided the Christian world of theology since the days of church fathers."²⁰ While on earth Jesus touched the issue briefly in the gospels and in one of the places, He said, "My sheep listen to my voice, I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can snatch them out of my hand. My father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of my father's hand" (Jn. 10:27-29). Jesus took cognizance of His sheep, they heard and listened to his voice and Jesus distinguished them from others and provided happiness for them by giving them eternal life. They shall be saved from everlasting perdition and by no means perish forever.

Salvation is the centre of Christian experience and theology, believers in Jesus believed it was the reason that prompted Jesus to leave His throne in heaven for this world to fulfill God's plan for the salvation of man. It is in the light of this that Lewis Chafer said that, "Salvation represents the whole work of God by which He rescues man from the eternal ruin and doom of sin and bestows on him the riches of His grace, even eternal life now and eternal glory in heaven."²¹ The message of salvation may appear simple but its biblical teachings are sometimes complicated because of all that it takes to sustain it. Teaching such as the eternal security of a saved Christian as earlier pointed out is a controversial issue.

These two schools of thought can be acknowledged as having certain conditions. It is only that the person who has been duly saved has overcome these conditions while there is no denial of the conditions, whoever falls away has not overcome them; i.e. has not overcome sins. Even today Christian denominations

¹⁸Gonzalez, 10.

¹⁹Orr, 10.

²⁰Orr, 10.

²¹L. Chafer, *Salvation is Forever*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1944, 56.

remain sharply divided over the question of whether a man once saved can subsequently forfeit his salvation or not. It is important to say at this point that the 'certain conditions' which illustrate relishing in sin are also tenable for the school of thought that says some are duly saved. The point here is that those who have not been duly saved still claim to be saved when they have not overcome 'certain conditions'. The problem between the two schools of thoughts is the factor of permanence in salvation experience. This will be clearer as we proceed to discuss the teachings of the two key players on eternal security.

The Teachings of two key players on eternal security

(i) The Calvinist teaching on Eternal Security.

The Calvinists are the followers of John Calvin (1509 – 1564AD) a Christian French theologian and reformer. The view of the Calvinists contends that once an individual is a recipient of the saving Grace of God he cannot fall from that state, but that he shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. In other words, those who hold this view believe that no Christian can ever lose his salvation even if he falls into sin for it is by grace you have been saved, it is the gift of God not by works (Eph. 2:8). They hold that Christians persevere because God preserves and that the concept of eternal security is based on God's promise and not by works. It also holds that if the elect could at some point lose their salvation, God's elect of them to eternal life, would not be truly effectual. In support of the Calvinists, Berkhof opined that: "If one has gotten salvation, he never loses it and if he is said to have lost it, he has never gotten it."²²

This implies that those who are genuine Christians cannot be lost. Though, they may fall into sin temporarily, they will eventually return and be saved and if they refuse to return, then they were never Christians in the first place. Anyone living consistently in sin is not a true follower of Jesus Christ. Berkhof further maintained that, "the believer in Jesus will continue to the very end because God never forsaken His work. The continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life will be brought to completion at eternity."²³ The Calvinists maintained that the Christian kept by grace of God, will successfully endure all trials and temptations of this life and remain true to the Lord until death. To buttress this, Pink opined, "If there is no guarantee that salvation is permanent, believers may experience a great deal of anxiety and insecurity that will distract them from the major task of the Christian life."²⁴

The Calvinists support their views with many biblical passages. A few of them are: John 10:28-29, 'I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, no one will snatch them out of my hand,' "And God is faithful; he will not let you be

²²Berkhof, 545.

²³Berkhof, 545.

²⁴W.Pink "Eternal Security" <http://www.theologie.org/html>, September, 29th 2010.

²⁴Pink
²⁵Dun
²⁶Dun

tempted beyond what you can bear" (1 Cor. 10:13). "God will make a way of escape that you will be able to bear all temptation," (1 Pet. 1:4) "and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you" (Heb. 10:4). "For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy." Pink observed that, insisting that one must follow rules and laws and be objectively good in order to obtain or to keep one's salvation is actually an indirect opposition to the true gospel."²⁵ The New Testament does not teach that after coming to Jesus and we become new creatures, and that the man or woman will not sin again. One of the main premises in the gospel is that man is not good nor can he be good. Paul did that: he sometimes did things he did not want to do and that he still sometimes sinned (Rom. 7:15-24), hence the need for the leading of the Holy Spirit and for God to chastise the Christians when they misbehave. The scripture says that, "sinning Christians are to be disciplined, "because the Lord disciplines the ones he loves, and he chastises every one he accepts as son (Heb. 12:6). It says nothing about being cut off from God for all eternity, this is according to the Calvinists.

One may not be comfortable with these teachings because so many vices are committed everybody by so called Christians. We hear cases of corruption, embezzlement, rape, money rituals and a host of unholy acts being practiced by both pastors and laymen, right in the house of God. We cannot say that because such people have professed to be Christians they are therefore saved forever. If they continue in sin they will definitely lose their salvation and go to hell. This is based on what the scripture says in Romans 6:1 that: one cannot continue in sin and expect grace to abound, therefore one must remain permanently in the salvation experience in order to be eternally saved.

(ii) The Armenians teaching on eternal security

Guy Duty notes that, "The Arminians are the followers of a Dutch theologian named Jacobus Arminius who lived between (1560-1609AD).^{26,27} Arminius engaged in bitter arguments about Calvinism, rejecting the Augustinian – Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Arminius' position is stronger than Calvin's for Arminius said, "if a person is truly regenerated and neglects grace and grieves the Holy Spirit with sin, he falls away totally and, finally falls from grace into eternal probation."²⁷ Arminius believed that Christians become the elect of God and remain so as long as they meet the conditions of salvation. He believed and taught that it was possible to fall away from Christ and be lost forever, because the Christian's security is dependent upon his state of grace. Here are some of the biblical passages Arminius used to support his views.

We must pay more careful attention therefore, to what we have

²⁵Pink "Eternal Security" <http://www.theologic.org/html>, September, 29th 2010.

²⁶Duty, 5.

²⁷Duty, 6.

heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord was confirmed to us by those who heard him (Heb. 2:1-3).

This passage teaches that diligent attention must be given to the scriptures read so that the truth does not slip away from us. It is the great concern of every true Christian to give the most earnest heed to all biblical directions, and to prize them highly in his or her judgment as matters of the greatest importance, to hearken to them diligently, read them frequently, meditate on them closely and mix faith with them; either one believes the concept of eternal security or not

No person can neglect something that he does not have. Paul warns saints that every sin will be judged by God and that it is possible to let the truth and salvation slip away. In Hebrews 10:38-39, Paul says, 'But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back I will not be pleased with him.' "The just shall live by faith," if they continuously move with Jesus and do not "shrink or draw back." James teaches that anyone who is a hearer of the word but not a doer is self deceived and his religion is vain, but if he continues to do it he will be blessed.

Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like man who looks at his face in a mirror, and, after looking at himself goes away and immediately forgets what it looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard but doing it, he will be blessed in what he does. (Jam. 1:23-25).

II Peter 1:10-11 says 'therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' In the above passages, one must do some things in order to make his salvation sure, then the salvation of those who do them not is unsure. Peter says Christians should make their calling and election sure by adding some virtues to their salvation.

Eternal security in Church Today – Baptist and Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA).

Statement of faith and practice of the Nigerian Baptist convention

Baptists are a people who profess a living faith rooted in Jesus Christ. The only authority for faith and practice among Baptists is Jesus Christ whose life and will is revealed in the Holy Scriptures. "The statement of faith is not a creed to be adopted because it is not regarded as complete without error or as an official

²⁸ C.D

²⁹ Osi

³⁰ Osi

document of authority demanding compulsory adherence. The purpose of these statements of faith is to set forth certain teachings which they uphold and believe."²⁸

They are not meant to add anything to the condition of salvations as revealed in the New Testament. For the Baptists, salvation is God's gift of a new life to a repentant sinner who has put his trust in God and Jesus. "The old has become new and the saved sinner is now a new being in Jesus in consequence of God's redemptive act through Jesus and Holy spirit."²⁹

Parts of Baptists' confession in relation to the doctrine of salvation is that all human beings stand in need of salvation for all have sinned and continue to fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). That the wage of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). This implies that rebellion against the source of one's existence has placed the individual in a situation whereby one could not fulfill the purpose of his creation, consequently, humanity can only become true humanity when such life is redeemed from the pit of sin and unrighteousness. Baptists hold tenaciously to the confession that Jesus is the only way of salvation.

The Confessional Statement: According to the doctrinal position of Baptist

Those whom God has accepted in the beloved and sanctifies by his spirit will never totally or finally fall away from the state of grace but shall certainly persevere to the end and though they may fall through neglect by temptation into sin whereby they grieve the spirit, impair their graces and comfort. Bring reproach on the Church and temporal judgment on themselves, yet they shall be renewed again unto repentance and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.³⁰

The reasons that justify such confession according to Ossai are:

- (a) Salvation is a work of grace in God,
- (b) Salvation is eternal life, and
- (c) The fact that salvation does not mean one cannot sin, but the grace is sufficient to forgive sinners and there is a sustainable grace to also keep and make one abound in faith (Rom. 5:20, Jn. 10:27-29). Those in God cannot be snatched away.

The meaning of the confessional statement

While it is accepted that the phrase "those whom God has accepted and sanctified by his spirit," is ambiguous, the phrase should be seen in the divine human encounter. It appears that the meaning of the statement is found in God's faithfulness to keep his promise, that is, those who have accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord have become new creatures in Him and therefore possess eternal life. Such

²⁸ C.D.Ossai-Ugbai, *Baptist Doctrine: A Handbook on Its Faith and Practices*, Ogbomosho: Nigeria Theological Seminary, 2002, 19.

²⁹ Ossai-Ugbai, 19.

³⁰ Ossai-Ugbai, 19.

persons are kept by the power of God's presence as the guardian of their salvation experience. These ones have chosen to persevere and struggle under the guardianship of the Holy Spirit to retain salvation God has offered them.

The struggle would involve repentance at any point of sin as long as they remain in the consciousness of God's presence. The basis of this confession as Baptists is that God is able to save to the very end those who have received salvation and endure to the end, because of the fact that:

- (i) Salvation is a gift from God and God is able to sustain that gift which he has offered his own (Jn. 10:27-29) and
- (ii) Jesus Himself bears witness to this (Jn. 17:12).

The problem with the confession is the inability to differentiate a true believer from one who merely professes from his lips. Scripture role does not totally justify once saved, always saved. This is because several passages support the fact that the saved person is capable of falling away from the salvation experience. Therefore, the doctrine is a statement of faith and not a dogmatic assertion based on reason. In this body of doctrines, the Baptist Church stipulates the fact of perseverance in one's belief in Jesus. This perseverance is the linking word between the Armenians and the Calvinists which end result can be salvation. The Baptist Church subtly states in the statement of faith; that perseverance can lead to eternal security; i.e. that those who accept Christ and persevere in Him will in the end be saved eternally.

ECWA Concept of Eternal Security

The goal of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) is "to glorify God through preaching and teaching the word of God – that comprises both the Old and New Testaments. ECWA believes the scriptures are without error in the works of the original writings, the complete revelation of God's will for salvation of men, and the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and practice."³¹ As far as eternal security is concerned, ECWA teaches that everyone who truly believes in Jesus Christ's atoning work and has appropriated this benefit personally to life is assured of salvation both now and forever. "Those so assured are eternally kept saved due to the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit into the day of redemption. Salvation is received by faith alone in Jesus apart from works."³²

This implies that basically, security is based on the grace of God and the fact that eternal life is a gift and it is forever. When a person believes in Jesus, he is brought into a relationship with the Godhead that assures his salvation is secure (this is true of born again people only), because there are those who profess but do not possess life. Sometimes we can make a reasonably sure judgment as to whether an individual only professes or actually possesses eternal life, and sometimes we cannot. But the

³¹ECWA, Constitution and Bye-Laws of Evangelical Church of West Africa, Jos: Challenge Press, 2012, 21.

³²ECWA Constitution and Bye-Laws of Evangelical Church of West Africa, 27.

regenerated person's salvation is secure because of that relationship to God which he has through faith.

Critique

The teachings of the Armenians that one can lose salvation under certain conditions is occupied with conditions. According to them, man must be willing to be saved or else God cannot save him, this indicates that God cannot do anything on the issue of salvation without the cooperation of man thus making God dependent on man before salvation can take place. This also implies that man can save himself through the exercise of free-will and can equally lose the salvation that he once had. This makes it difficult to reconcile the fact that it is God's will to save the sinner which is the overriding factor on the issue of salvation.

Moreover, the position of the Armenians places a lot of questions on God's sovereignty and His ability to act independently of man. It is observed that the true believer in Jesus cannot lose his salvation. This is the stand of the Calvinists and also the position of the churches studied in this paper, i.e. Baptist and ECWA. This is based on the fact that God is the initiator of the believer's salvation from start to finish (Rom. 8:29-30). God gives the salvation to man free with no legal observance before it is obtained. More so, the Baptists subtly states that perseverance can lead to eternal security. Those who accept Christ and persevere by remaining permanently in Him will be saved eternally. It is believed in Christianity that Jesus had paid for the believer's sin through His atonement. God can no longer require from the believer that which Jesus had paid for. Besides, the believer had been sealed by the Holy Spirit as Jesus' purchased possession. If one who is saved is to be lost, it is necessary to return him into the state of being under the law. As he was free from the law by Christ's payment of death penalty. Believers can be brought back under it only by undoing the execution of Jesus's substitute. Until that is done, the law can have nothing to say to him. A sealed business transaction is unalterable. It is final and irrevocable. The belief of those who are against eternal security that a believer in Jesus is saved by grace, he can become lawless and lives a carefree life is as far from the truth as anything can be because God does judge his people; therefore, the concept of eternal security is not a license to sin. Those who talk as though they can live as they please just because they are saved are either not saved at all or else they need to know the truth concerning the concept.

Conclusion

Repeated emphasis has been given in this paper that a Christian cannot merit nor earn salvation no matter how many conditions kept. It is a gift of God and not of works. Many people struggle helplessly to fulfill their responsibility to obey God's law but end in defeat. Paul confirms this in his spiritual battle in Romans 7, and then talks about the delivering power of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8.

My position in this research work is that a truly born again Christian cannot lose his or her salvation. Salvation depends upon God to bring it to pass, the eternal and sovereign purpose of God who determined to save us by grace through faith in His son. Since God's holiness has been satisfied by the death of Jesus, He can be just and the justifier of those who receive His Son by faith. The father's work of discipline proves we are still sons even when we sin, he does not disown his children but rather discipline them. Sin does not change the relationship that exists between God and His children though it does affect their fellowship, the intimacy of walking with God, the ability to serve Him, and the rewards to receive in the future kingdom (1 Cor. 11:30-32). As mentioned above, rather than disown a disobedient child, God disciplines his children. At times it may even be to the point of physical death, but believers still remain his children. A specific and wonderful promise from the Lord is that no one (including Satan and ourselves) can remove us from either the hand of the Son or the Father. Scriptures say Christians are in God's hand, which is a place of perfect security because He is greater than all. The goal of understanding eternal security is an assurance that motivates to godly living, never careless living or taking the Lord for granted. Remember, God is the heavenly father who, in love will discipline His children to draw them back to himself.