Christian Soteriology

HUMAN SOUL and ETERNITY

CHALLENGES OF MODERN HERESIES



A Festschrift
Celebrating 70 years of Life and Work of
Josephine OlaTomi Soboyejo

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Published By

JOES Publications (learnwithjoes)

LWJ
LEARN WITH JOES

Printed in the United States of America

By

Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing

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Cover Design By:

germancreative (Fiverr)

Typesetting By:

Moshood Saliu

First Published 2023

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Chapter Two

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION OF ETERNAL SECURITY IN THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH WINNING ALL (ECWA) IN NIGERIA: ITS CHALLENGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Prof. Rotimi Williams Omotoye, Dr. Mary Taiye Daniel &
Dr. Olumuyiwa Aduralere Ajetomobi

Abstract

ONE OF THE MAJOR doctrines in Christianity is the doctrine of salvation, which finds its deepest meaning in the spiritual aspect of life. Its fulfillment is held vigorously in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ which brought about salvation which is the highest goal of Christianity. 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 omnipotency. This variation was further compounded by the unanimity in the doctrines of churches that God is holy and has zero tolerance for sin in His sovereignty. Within this context, these schools of thought emerged namely: Calvinism and Armenianism. In Calvinism, God offered irresistible grace to those whom He elected to save in the exercise of His sovereign power, while in Armenianism God's grace was the source of redemption but could be resisted by people through free choice. The doctrine of ECWA as their articles of faith and practice (8) confirmed Calvinism. The objectives of the paper were to determine the import of sin and how the doctrine of eternal security could remain intact where sin did not abound; to determine the significance of dependence on God and how the conditions can be fulfilled as requirement for eternal security. The research methods used were historical and interpretative. Some major findings were as follows; though some Christian denominations do not profess the doctrine of eternal security, but there is a reflection of the doctrine in some, and once God's exercise of sovereignty was not denied this attribute would as well blend with God's grace not to sin; sin and the practice of it could be said to be voluntary and those who chose God would not see the beauty of sin over belief in God; the imminence of eternal salvation was a design of God and He remained its guarantor and; the Calvinists and Arminians need God's grace as strong bottom-line for the achievement of eternity. The Calvinist argument dovetails into the acceptance of the view that God remained the author of Christian conversion. (Acts 11;18). The element of faith accompanied with repentance is the acknowledgment of the truth of the gospel. Apparently, the stable life in Christ is taken to be vulnerable to regeneration and transformation; thereby guaranteeing eternal security. It is recommended that Christians should be diligent, hopeful and upright for the attainment of eternal security.

Keywords: *Salvation, ECWA, Eternal Security, Armenianism, Calvinism*

Introduction

The doctrine of "eternal security" in the Evangelical Church Winning All as a denomination teaches that a Christian once saved remained eternally saved. This doctrine is controversial and misinterpreted by other denominations, because it is often assumed, that it is a way of discrediting the concepts of sin to salvation. The research is 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. Indeed, what eternal security means is that those who truly believe in Christ can never be lost as long as 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 doctrine has strong footings in predestination and adoption. Guy

Duty noted that Augustine, a fifth century catholic monk originated the doctrine of predestination. His teaching on predestination is that;

> God from all eternity predestinated 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 430 AD that the doctrine of predestination got introduced into the church[3]. John Calvin a Christian theologian who lived between 1509 and 1564 AD got his inspiration on predestination from Augustine. He developed Augustine's doctrine to a conclusion that he coined his own doctrinal position which he called "Calvinism", therefore, 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 want God to do for him. For example, the death prediction or message to King Hezekiah by Isaiah made the former to go on his knees before God for a change, and God did answer his prayer. (II Kgs 20:5).

Jacobus Arminius' position is stronger than Calvin's when he said; "if a person truly regenerates and neglects grace and grieves the Holy Spirit with sin, he falls away totally and at length finally falls from grace into eternal probation".[6] 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 Jesus Christ and be lost forever. Since then, there has been a great dichotomy among Christians in this area of theology. It is observed that some Christian denominations remain sharply divided doctrinally on the issue of eternal security, which Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) is one of such that salvation, once received, can never be lost; it is forever.

The aim of this work is to examine whether the arguments on eternal security is a problem of biblical interpretation or not. The role of 'grace' in salvation seems

not to approximate the tendency of once saved. Ordinarily, grace is unmerited favour attached to human activities governed by principles and duties inseparable from the end-results. So, we intend to see how grace cannot abound when people relish in sin. In this research, we shall show how comfortable the teaching on eternal security is in dutiful circumstances in Christian living.

The Biblical Concept of Eternal Security

Salvation is the centre of Christian experience and theology. Believers in Jesus saw it as a reason that prompted Jesus to leave His throne in heaven for this world to fulfill God's plan for the salvation of human. It is in the light of this that Lewis Chafer said that; "salvation represents the whole work of God by which He rescues human from eternal ruin and doom of sin and bestows on him/her the riches of His grace, even eternal life now and eternal glory in heaven."[7] The message of salvation may appear simple but its biblical teachings are sometimes complicated because of all that it takes to sustain it. Doctrinal teaching such as eternal security of a saved Christian is a controversial issue for biblical scholars. William Orr, said that;

> It is not news to tell you that there are opposing schools of thought on the question of the security of the believers in Christ. One which holds that it is impossible to a duly-saved person to ever be lost. While the other school holds that under certain conditions a saved person may lose his salvation.[8]

These two schools of thought can be acknowledged as having certain conditions which amounts to being punished, if a sin is being committed, but God still finds a way of bringing the sinner back to himself. The condition is that God is willing and always accepts that sinner if he repents, for example, in Psm 51, David begged God for forgiveness after he sinned.

The issue of eternal security has caused a stormy debate right from the beginning of the Church between 396-430 AD. According to William Orr, "it has divided the Christian world of theology since the days of Church Fathers." In the gospel of Saint John, Jesus opined that "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 takes cognizance of His sheep; they hear and listen to his voice and he distinguishes 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.

In the 21st century, Christian denomination, some scholars still remain sharply divided over the question of whether a person once saved, can subsequently forfeit his salvation or not. It is important to say at this point that the 'certain conditions' which illustrates 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 the 'certain conditions. The problem between the Arminianism and Calvinism is the factor of permanence in salvation experience.

A Brief History and Growth of ECWA

Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), (formerly known as Evangelical Church of West Africa), has roots in the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM). It is interesting to note that the name changed as a result of restrictiveness of the Mission to West Africa. By way of moving from this restive status quo, it was considered necessary to globalize the mission intention which resulted in the name "Evangelical Church Winning All". The history of ECWA cannot be discussed in isolation. The SIM being the mother body of ECWA, it is therefore appropriate to begin this work with a brief history of SIM.

In the year 1893 – 1900, Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) emerged in Nigeria. It was the period when the Mission was formed and it made several unsuccessful and fruitless attempts at gaining foothold in the Sudan. The first attempt was made in 1893 by three pioneering missionaries; namely, Walter Gowans, Thomas Kent and Rowland Bingham but did not succeed. They were unable to gain foothold in Nigeria, instead Gowans and Kent died at the end of 1893. The disappointing return of Bingham to Canada could be viewed as fruitless, but spiritually, it was the sowing of the seed of the gospel by means of "martyrdom" which was

to germinate in later years. The two early pioneers became "martyrs" for a good cause, "The burden of the Sudan"[9].

SIM established an indigenous body in the 1954 known as "The Association of the Evangelical Churches of West Africa (ECWA)"[8]. This church has grown from a position of weakness, obscurity and humble beginnings in Northern Nigeria since 1954 to become Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), one of the largest denominations in Nigeria today.

Great success was witnessed in the work of the SIM in Nigeria between 1915 – 1949. Olatayo substantiated this by saying; "more missions and stations were opened and many local churches were started in both the North and South of the Niger in Nigeria"[10]. It is observed that the church has achieved more success till date.

ECWA Doctrine of Eternal Security

The singular goal of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) is to glorify God; and this is achieved through the preaching and teaching the Bible, which is the inspired and infallible Word of God that comprises both the Old and the New testaments. ECWA believes that 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[11].

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 unto the day of redemption. Salvation is received by faith alone in Jesus Christ apart from works.[12]

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 God-head that assures his salvation is secured.

This is true of "born again" people only, (Jn. 3:3) because there are those who profess but do not possess life. Sometimes, we can make a reasonably sure judgement as to whether an individual only professes or actually possesses eternal

life, and sometimes we cannot. But the regenerated person's salvation is secure because of that relationship to God which he has, through faith.

Reasons given by ECWA for believing and teaching eternal security are categorized under the relationship that exists between the Triune God; that is God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit[3]. They are as follows:

a. **Reasons related to the Father:** God purposed to glorify the same group of people he predestined, called and justified (Rom. 8:30). This statement is daring and could not be made if any one of that group could lose his salvation. If so, then the ones whom He justified would not be the same. Christians would agree that God's power is able to keep the believers (Jude 24) but some would argue that it can be thwarted by a person renouncing his faith. But the Lord said that those who believe in Him are secured in His hands and the Father's hand and that no one can seize the believer from the safe position (Jn. 10:28-29). Now, "no one" means no one, including the individual himself. The promise does not say that no one, except yourself, can seize the believer out of God's hand, it says no one.

b. **Reasons related to the Son**

i. *Jesus Death:* Paul ask two questions in Rom. 8:33, who will bring a charge against God's elect, and who condemns them? His answer that no one can is based on the death, resurrection, intercession and advocacy of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:34). If any sin can undo a believer's salvation and if, in fact, he can lose that salvation, then Jesus Christ's death did not pay for that sin. But it did. Paul asserts: Jesus also declared that He would lose nothing – of what the Father gave Him (Jn. 6:39-40), everyone who believes in Him will be raised at the last day[13]

ii. *The Prayer of Jesus:* Jesus' present ministry in heaven of praying for His own consists of two aspects: a preventive ministry (intercession) and a curative ministry (advocacy)[5]. Chapter 17 of John's gospel illustrates the preventive aspect. There he prayed that Christians (v.17), that they would be united (v.21), that they would be in heaven with Him (v.24), and that they might behold His glory (v.24). Because of His unceasing

intercession for Christians – he is able to save them completely and eternally (Heb7:25).

Advocacy comes into action when sin is committed (I Jn.2:1). Again, if any sin can undo salvation (and any can), then Satan has an airtight case against any believer whenever he sins (Rev. 12:10). Satan can justly demand the Christian's eternal damnation, and were it not for the advocate Christians would be condemned. But the Lord points to His work on Calvary that removes the guilt of all sins committed by the Christians, those committed before and after salvation, and this suffices to answer Satan's charge.

c. **Reasons related to the Holy Spirit**

i. *The Holy Spirit regenerates:* (that is, it gives new life to everyone who believes). If Christians are born again by the Holy Spirit when they believe, if one can renounce his faith to lose his salvation, then he would have the new birth taken away as well.

ii. *The Holy Spirit indwells:* (that is, resides in everyone who truly believes). If salvation can be lost then the presence of the Holy Spirit that resides within the life of the believer would have to be removed.

iii. *The Holy Spirit Baptizes:* (that is, places every true believer into the body of Jesus, thus joining each believer in mystical union). The Holy Spirit joins the believer to the body of Christ when he believes (I Cor. 12:13) therefore, if salvation can be lost, the believer would have to be detached from the body of Jesus Christ.

iv. *The Holy Spirit Seals:* (that is, by the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer, the divine mark of ownership is eternally placed to indicate that the one indwelt in God's own eternal possession). The Holy Spirit seals the believer until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30). If salvation can be lost, then His sealing would not be until the day of redemption but only until the day of sinning, or apostasy, or disbelief[14]. Of course, Holy scripture gives no hint that a Christian can lose the new birth, or that the holy spirit cannot indwelt in him/her or that he can be removed from the body of Christ (thus maiming

His body) or be unsealed. Salvation is eternal and completely secured to all who believe.

To be sure, believers are warned against false profession and Christian's immaturity, but God never takes back the gift of His salvation once it is received. Believers will not always persevere in godlessness. For instance, in Gal 2:11, Peter the Apostle did not. Many Ephesians believers did not (Acts 19:18). Lot did not (2 Pet. 2:7). At the judgement seat of Christ there will be some whose works will be burned and who will be saved as through fire (I Cor. 3:15). Even though every believer will bear some fruit (4:5). It is difficult if not impossible to quantify how much or what kind each one will bear and thus to make judgements as to the spiritual condition of an individual.

ECWA believes that there are some passages of the Bible that are misunderstood as invalidating the doctrine of eternal security. We shall examine some of these passages to show that there are interpretations that do not contradict the doctrine of eternal security. ECWA teaches what might appear to go against the doctrine of eternal security is really about losing one's inheritance (reward), not about losing one's salvation. For instance, one can be dis-inherited without ceasing to be a member of the family[15].

A. Two passages severely warn against trying to replace the way of grace with the old way of the law. In Gal. 5:4, Paul clearly declares that those who attempt to be justified by the law have" fallen from grace". That is, trying to use the law as the ground for justification is to fall away from grace which provides the only way to be justified. The same kind of warning appears in Heb. 10:26-31. Here, the writer warns that if a person rejects the truth of Christ death for sin, there is no other sacrifice for sin available and no other way to come to God.

B. Passages which warn against losing rewards (But not salvation). Paul speaks of this possibility in the "race" passage I Cor. 9:24-27. Races are run for rewards, and Paul felt the need to live a disciplined life so that at the end he would not be disapproved, nor, eliminated from the race, not losing his crown.

The Lord's illustration of Vine and the branches teaches the same truth (Jn. 15:1-17). These branches are in Him, thus referring to believers. Believers, then are to abide in Him in order to be fruitful. Abiding means to keep Christ's

commandments (vs 10 & I Jn. 3:24). The believer who does not abide, though still in Christ and thus saved, loses his opportunities and rewards, both in life and at the judgement seat of Christ. The casting forth, withering, and burning refer not to loss of salvation but to loss of present witness and future rewards[16].

Another passage is Heb. 6:1-8, which is understood to be referring to "born again" people who are not growing in the word of God. The phrase in vs 4&5 clearly refers to a conversion experience. It is a strong admonition to go on in the Christian life. The warning against immaturity and fruitlessness are severe and the consequences significant. But those consequences do not include hell because of losing eternal life. Paul exalted in the confidence that nothing, including any other created thing (which has to include oneself), can separate the Christian from the love of God which is in Christ (Rom. 8:38-39). And he again declared, if we are faithless, He remains faithful for He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:13). The consistency of God's character guarantees a secured salvation

The Teachings of Two Key Players on Eternal Security

i. The Armenians Teachings on Eternal Security

Guy Duty notes that the Arminians are the followers of a Dutch theologian named Jacobus Arminius who lived between (1560 – 1609).[17] Arminius engaged in bitter arguments about Calvinism, rejecting the Augustinian – Calvinistic 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".[18] 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 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 judgement 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 doctrine of eternal security or not. No person can neglect something that he does not have. Paul warns the saints that every sin will be judged by God and that it is possible to let the truth and salvation slip away.

In Heb 10:38, Paul says that;

> Now, the Just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

This implies that the just shall live by faith, if they continuously move with Jesus and do not "draw back". James teaches that anyone who is a hearer of the word but not a doer is self-deceived; and this religion is vain, but if he continues to do it, he will be blessed.

James says in Jas. 1; 23-25 that;

> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forget what he 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.

II Pet. 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 Savior Jesus Christ.

Peter says Christians should make their calling and election sure by being diligent to their salvation. The names of God's elect shall never be removed from the book of life if they remained faithful to their calling.

ii. The Calvinists Teaching on Eternal Security

The Calvinists are the followers of John Calvin, a Christian French theologian who lived in Geneva between 1509 -1564 AD. He was a follower of Augustine, a monk who lived in the 5th century. He was the originator of the doctrine of predestination. Calvin developed Augustine's doctrine of predestination to a conclusion that he coined his own doctrinal position which he called "Calvinism". The concept of Calvinism on predestination is generally referred to as "eternal security" today[19]. 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). The doctrine of Eternal security is based on God's promise and not by works. It 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 Calvin, Berckhof wrote; "If one has gotten salvation, he never loses it and if he is said to have lost it, he has never gotten it"[20]. This implies that those who are 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.

Beckhof further maintained that; "The believer in Jesus will continue to the very end because God never forsakes His work. The continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life will be brought to completion at eternity"[21]. The Calvinists maintain 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"[22].

The Calvinists support their views with many biblical passages, such as; "I gave to them eternal life, and they shall never perish, no one can snatch them out of my hand…" (Jn. 10:28-29) "And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear… he will make a way of escape that you will be able to bear all temptations" (I Cor. 10:13). "…and into an inheritance that can never perish…" (I Pet. 1:4) "Who are kept by the power of God" (I Pet. 1:5)… Because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy (Heb. 10:14).

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[23]. The New Testament does not teach that after the coming of Jesus we become new creatures, and that the man or woman will not sin again. One central premise in the gospel is that man is not good, nor can he be good. For example, Paul the apostle 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 misbehaved. The scripture tell us that sinning Christians are to be disciplined;

> Because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes every one he accepts as a son (Heb. 12:6).

Therefore, it says nothing about being cut off from God for all eternity; this is in conformity with the teachings of the Calvinists.

It is observed that some Christians may not be comfortable with this teaching: because so many vices are committed everyday by some Christians. There is corruption, embezzlement, rape, injustice, oppression, unholy acts being practiced by Christians. We cannot conclude therefore that these 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 that one cannot continue in sin and expect grace to abound (Rom 6:1) therefore, one must remain permanently in the salvation experience in order to be eternally saved.

Challenges of Doctrinal Issues in the 21st Century

Eternal security has been the doctrine of Evangelical Church Winning All that *"once you are saved you are saved forever"*, but however, there are divergent opinions through various interviews on the challenges of the doctrine. According to Kayode Olorunshola in an unstructured interview on Eternal Security is that one cannot lose salvation once he gets it, though such a person can commit sin but he should be careful not to relish in it, or else, if he dies relishing in sin, he has lost it forever. He continues that some pastors in ECWA do not understand the doctrine of eternal security because they do not have ECWA background.[24] According to Victoria Odeyemi, she says that once one is born again, God has adopted such a person as His own child, there is a need to consciously walk in the light of his word. She continues that one cannot lose his salvation once one does not die in sin, though repenting every time can be frustrating, the mind needs to grow in the word of God.[25] According to Abegunde Jones, he believes in the concept of eternal security but some don't stand on it because of different interpretation of scriptures by different denominations.[26] But when you have real encounter, your eternity will be secured. God knows how to bring his child back to Himself in form of reconciliation like the prodigal son in the bible. Some lose the salvation because they are not genuinely born again. According to Kolapo Odetayo, he quotes Hebrews 5:9, that Jesus is the author of eternal security. Misconception comes from the inability of some ministers to understand the scripture and some also read the bible out of context.[27] Ministers should study the scriptures properly because according to him, there are people who do not study the word of God as expected of them. Christians are to live faithfully in accordance with God's word.

According to Elder Olayemi Olaniran, he doesn't want to misjudge the concept of Eternal Security. He believes that once you are saved you are saved because of the word ETERNAL.[28] You cannot disown a child because deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) present in the human body is there to prove it, Children of God don't relish in sin. It is dangerous because if you are not on the same page with God then there is a problem. One doesn't believe it and move about doing evil but rather revalidate the relationship with one's God. Thus, asking for reform might be from new members of the Church, therefore, they should be given some time to grow

in the word of God. God speaks to his children, and one should not allow sin to be a barrier to salvation.

According to S. O. Olabiyi, a pastor in Shalom Baptist Church, Ilorin. He said among others that eternal security is one of the statements of the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC) and he laid claim to the fact that truly once you are saved, you are saved forever and the stand of Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC) does not change beyond this statement but that some of the young ministers in NBC now raised some conditions to be attached to the statement that once you are truly saved, you are saved forever "if" you still work in line with the salvation requirements as it is written in Romans 8:35 that who shall separate us from the love of Christ …?[29] Though, there are some personalities that the bible recorded that they were saved but they backslide. For example, Demas in 2 Timothy 4:10, Ananias and Saphira Acts:5, the seven churches recorded in revelation in the book of Revelation which only a church was written to have kept the faith the Church of Syrmnia (Rev 3:8) like that of the first love they had for Christ. The Holy Spirit dwells in every believer so the Spirit helps someone that is saved. According to Rev. Aweda, J.T, he also laid claims that United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA) does not believe in eternal security, that human being is fallible and once the person repents from sin and returns to Christ, the person can be restored.[30] It is possible one can lose that salvation, if he does not maintain that salvation experience. According to Sunday Olaoye, as a person, initially I didn't believe eternal security when I was new in Christ.[31] Though, it is right, because you will be strong in Christ. One can do follow-up for evangelism so that they can be deep in the word of God. Those asking for reform should be taught what the concept is all about. According to Elder Samuel Babatunde those asking for reform in terms of the position of the church on Eternal Security are talking based on their understanding of their relationship with God.[32] We are not perfect but must repent whenever we err.

Conclusion

It is pointed out that ECWA believes in the doctrine of Eternal Security of a truly saved person, and not one who professes to be a Christian with mere lips. The believer in Jesus who does not abide (though still in Christ and thus saved) loses

the opportunities and rewards, both in life and at the judgement seat of Jesus Christ and not his salvation. No matter how many conditions one kept, it is only by God's undeserved grace that Salvation is received, and one must continue in the grace of God (Acts 13:43, Titus 2 11-12). Good works is to complement the saving grace of God.

The interpretation and teaching of eternal security is seen as a challenge within the Christian circles; it has been established that some Christians believe that those who hold to the teaching of eternal security of the believers in Jesus are purposely promoting a license to sin. On the other hand, some Christians believe that those who do not believe in the eternal security have to keep their salvation by works. Both sides often misrepresent the other and instead of being gracious on this debatable issue (as commanded in Rom.14:1-12), people accuse one another of being unbiblical.

We have examined some scriptures bearing in any way with eternal security. The paper has found some promises of eternal security for true believers and often plainly stated a condition attached to the keeping power of God over the promises The paper has also given repeated emphasis in this study that a Christian cannot merit nor earn salvation no matter how many conditions are kept. It is a gift of God and not of works. Many struggle helplessly to fulfill their responsibility to obey God's laws but end in defeat. Paul confirms this in his spiritual battle in Romans chapter seven; and then talks about the delivering power of the Holy Spirit in chapter eight of the same Romans. No one seems to have everything perfectly understood in relation to the topic of this paper. Each position has its strengths and weaknesses and if we understand human depravity properly, we know it does not take much to use the grace of God for evil no matter what position being held.

Notes and References

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An Interview with Mrs. Victoria Odeyemi, A Member of ECWA Kulende, Ilorin, 35 years on 13/02/2023

An Interview with Mr. Abegunde, An Elder in ECWA, Kulende , Ilorin, 45 years old on 14/02/2023

An Interview with Mr. Kolapo Odetayo, a member of ECWA, Kulende, Ilorin, 35 years old on 12/02/2023.

An Interview with Elder Olayemi Olaniran, An Elder in ECWA Kulende, Ilorin, 65 years old on 16/02/2023

An Interview with Rev. S.O. Olabiyi, an ordained, minister in Nigerian Baptist convention, Shalom Baptist Church, Tanke, Ilorin, 45 years on 15/02/2023

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