

**SALVATION MADE SURE: OR, AN ATTEMPT  
TO SHOW THAT ALL CHRISTIANS DO NOT  
OBTAIN THE FULL ASSURANCE HOPE;  
THAT ALL CHRISTIANS CAN OBTAIN IT; THE  
WAY TO OBTAIN IT; AND IMPORTANCE OF  
OBTAINING IT, PP. 1-153, PP. 1-153**

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**WILLIAM BACON**

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SALVATION MADE SURE,

OR,

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THAT ALL CHRISTIANS DO NOT OBTAIN THE FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE;  
THAT ALL CHRISTIANS CAN OBTAIN IT; THE WAY TO OBTAIN  
IT; AND THE IMPORTANCE OF OBTAINING IT.

WITH

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

SOME REMARKS ON THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL DARKNESS;  
TOGETHER WITH SOME DIRECTIONS TO THOSE WHO  
ARE LABORING UNDER IT.

BY

REV. WILLIAM BACON.

SEVENTH EDITION.

AUBURN:  
WILLIAM J. MOSES.  
1856.

## PREFACE TO THE SEVENTH EDITION.

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It is now thirty years since this little volume was first published. Former editions of it were recommended by Rev. Doctors Matthew, L. R. Perrine, formerly Professor in the Theological Seminary at Auburn, N. Y.; Henry R. Wood, of Wheeling, Va.; and President Thomas J. Briggs, of Cincinnati, Ohio; and the Author has had the satisfaction of learning from many, that they had been happily relieved from their doubts and distresses, by perusing it. But for reasons, the relation of which would pain the writer more than it would profit his readers, the book has been for several years out of print; and it is now reprinted at the earnest request of many. The errors which are opposed in the first and second chapters may not be as prevalent now as when the book was written; but it is believed that the matter contained in the third and fourth chapters, and the Appendix, is as needful as ever. Again, therefore, the little book is sent forth, with prayer for its usefulness.

## PREFACE.



BEFORE my entrance into the ministry of the Gospel, I was called by a particular providence of God, to search out non-professing Christians. My observations while thus occupied, convinced me that such an employment was not a little needed, and might be not a little useful to the cause of Christ. And early in my ministry I was called to labour as a missionary, in places where no churches were organized. This led me again to hunt up hidden saints. In this employment my former impressions were much confirmed. And by all my subsequent observations I have been more and more convinced, that there are more non-professing Christians in our several congregations, than is generally supposed; and that the duty of searching them out is very much neglected by those who have the care of souls. Now the most of these persons keep from professing religion through fear that they are not Christians. They therefore need assistance to obtain a good hope. But it has appeared to me, that many who labour for the spiritual welfare of their fellow men, have thought themselves bound to aid them in every other concern, except that of gaining evidence of their own salvation: or rather that their only duty in this respect, was to guard inquirers against ill-founded hopes; and that if any would have "a good hope through grace," they must find their way to it through all possible difficulties, unaided by the instructions of others. Nay I fear that in some instances they have acted from the mistaken notion, that the only way to keep inquirers from a *false* hope, is to increase the difficulty of gaining a *genuine* one.

In refusing to assist others in obtaining "a good hope through grace," these persons are probably actuated by a fear lest they shall encourage those to hope who have no ground to hope. And in general it would be unsafe to tell a man they believed him a Christian, even if they had good

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evidence. But this is not necessary. All they have to do is to tell him what are evidences of grace and what are not ; and then leave him to judge for himself whether, he has these evidences or not. They may assure him with the utmost confidence, that *if he have such and such exercises of heart* he is a Christian, and do it with the utmost safety ; for at the same time, they can guard him against deception by cautioning him not to think he has these evidences when he has them not.

On this subject I was once perplexed. I dared not to give instruction lest I should give dangerous encouragement. But upon farther consideration, I concluded that it was safe to *tell the truth* : and since then, I have never feared to tell the inquirer what were Scripture evidences of saving grace, and to urge him no longer to disbelieve them to be such. Nay, I hesitate not to insist, that he shall either believe himself a Christian, or conclude that he has none of those exercises of heart which the Scriptures declare to be evidences of saving grace. And yet I find room enough for caution. I tell him the heart is deceitful : that the great danger lies in thinking he has these exercises while he has them not. And such is the course which I have endeavoured to take in the following work.

Observation has also taught me, that by far the greater part of *hoping* and professing Christians are troubled with many doubts and fears : and that these their doubts and fears are not only a great affliction to themselves ; but (by checking their growth in grace, and preventing their activity in religion) they are a great detriment to the cause of Christ. Theirs is, then, a case which demands attention : and yet, so far as my observations have extended ; it is a case which has hitherto been very much neglected by those who should watch for souls.

And so far as I have been able to ascertain the causes of the doubts and fears which perplex Christians, they have



been mostly occasioned by ignorance or error, respecting the real evidences of a saving change of heart : or, from the mistaken notion, that they must of necessity remain in this uncertainty ; by which opinion they have been discouraged from striving "to make their calling and election sure." Their case calls loudly, therefore, for instruction on this important subject.

The present is an age of peculiar exertion, light and prosperity in the cause of Christ. Unusual exertions are made to carry the Gospel to the heathen. Many classes of sinners in Christian lands hitherto neglected, are now receiving special attention from the people of God. Numerous new ways of doing good have been devised. Every department of the church seems to have additional attention paid to it. Almost every doctrine and duty is illustrated with greater clearness, and urged with greater force. And by the special outpourings of his Spirit, God is giving signal success to these exertions : thus rapidly extending and perfecting his church. But while all this is done, the subject of *the Christian's hope* is comparatively neglected. And yet the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, by bringing more to be concerned in it, has given this subject additional importance.

These considerations led me to think that something like what is here attempted, was greatly needed. Much, it is true, may be done by the Pastor in his public and private instructions. But it will be impossible for him to *time* his instructions to the occasional doubts and fears of his parishioners ; nor can their difficulties be so well removed by public instruction from the pulpit, as from perusing a treatise on the subject in the closet. In some instances the pastor might afford them instruction in conversation. But this would be such a tax upon his time, as must keep him from other important duties of his office. How much better would it be for *him*, and for *them*, if he could cite them to a treatise on the subject, in which they could find all the instruction that they

needed. They could then sit down at leisure for alternate instruction and self-examination.

On the subject of 'the Full Assurance of Hope,' much, it is true, has hitherto been written. But it has been published generally in connexion with other subjects; and in works too dear to be generally purchased, and too voluminous to be generally read. To meet the exigence of the case there needs a separate work on the subject, *so cheap that all can buy it, so concise that all can read it.* This demand is intended to be met in the present work. I pretend not so much to teach what is new, as to select, arrange in a judicious order, and thus embody in one work, what others have previously published. Many thoughts, however, which I have not seen in other authors, I have ventured to insert; and hope they may not be useless to the reader.

The subject of 'Spiritual Darkness' is very seldom treated on, either from the pulpit or the press; and yet there occasionally occur some most distressing cases of it. It therefore demands attention. And it was this consideration which led to the *Remarks* and *Directions* contained in the Appendix. I appended them to the treatise on the Full Assurance of Hope, because the subjects are somewhat related; and because it was not expedient to publish them in a separate work.

In this little work, *usefulness* not literary merit, has been my aim. I have not written for the learned and refined, much less for the fastidious: but for plain, unlettered and honest inquirers after the evidences of saving grace. To them, I have therefore endeavoured to accommodate my language and style. My studied simplicity and plainness may seem to many the result of faulty negligence. But I only regret that I have not been more simple and plain.

With these prefatory remarks, this little work is committed to the public with more solicitude for its usefulness than for its reputation.

## INTRODUCTION.



The subject upon which it is proposed to treat in the following pages, is of the utmost importance to every individual. Every individual should therefore give it his first and chief attention. As the reader sits down then, to the perusal of this work, let him reflect that the subject of it involves his highest interest; and therefore demands his most prayerful and earnest attention: that however imperfectly the work itself may be executed, it still is of no little importance to him, because of the momentous concern of which it treats. Imperfect as this work may be, a candid and prayerful perusal of it might lead some fearful and desponding sinner to a cheerful and animating assurance of eternal life. It might also convince some self-deceived sinner, that while he has been so confident that he stood firm on the Rock of ages, he has been ready to sink amidst the billows of the wrath of God. And thus it might be the means of leading him to seek and to obtain deliverance from hell, and admission into heaven. Let the reader sit down to this work, then, with deep interest and fervent prayer.

For the successful investigation of any subject, it is important that we have a clear and definite idea what that subject is. And as many have somewhat vague and indistinct ideas of the one before us, it may not be amiss to give it a brief explanation.

Our subject is, SALVATION MADE SURE. What then is Salvation? and what is it *to make* that salvation *sure*? In its most extensive import, Salvation signifies *deliverance from danger*. But in a gospel sense, it signifies *deliverance from the practice and punishment of sin*: from the practice of it by sanctification; and from the punishment of it by justification. Sanctification is a progressive work. It is begun in regeneration, and is not completed until death. But jus-