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Eternal Security

### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this dissertation is to respond to the Arminian charge that NT warning passages contradict the Calvinist doctrine of eternal security. As a theological platform from which to launch a study of NT warning passages from a Calvinist perspective, the author makes a case for eternal security on the basis of five NT passages: John 10:27–30; Romans 8:28–30; Ephesians 1:13–14; 1 Peter 1:5; and 1 John 3:9.

The bulk of the dissertation consists of the study of sixteen NT warning passages determined to be the most difficult to harmonize with eternal security. The passages are grouped into four categories: (1) the writings of Paul—Romans 14:15; 1 Corinthians 9:27; Galatians 5:1–4; Colossians 1:21–23; 1 Timothy 1:18–20; (2) the writings of John—John 6:60–71; 15:1–6; 1 John 5:16–17; Revelation 3:11; 22:19; (3) the writings of James, Peter, and Jude—James 5:19–20; 2 Peter 2:20–22; Jude 5–12; and (4) the Epistle to the Hebrews—Hebrews 3:7–4:13; 6:4–8; 10:26–31.

From the study the author offers plausible interpretations of the warning passages that cohere with eternal security. The results are synthesized into three categories. First, some of the passages warn true believers, but their salvation is not at stake. To account for the danger the author suggests a variety of views: Damaged Conscience; Loss of Ministry; Loss of Freedom; Loss of Progress in Sanctification; and Loss of Reward.

Second, other passages contain warnings related to salvation, but which are not directed to genuine believers. The author employs the Test of Genuineness View to argue that these passages warn professing believers that by repudiating Christ they show their faith to be spurious. Third, one passage is not a warning but a litotes—a positive affirmation expressed by the negative of the contrary. The author concludes that the NT does contain

passages that teach clearly the concept of eternal security, and that none of the sixteen warning passages examined conclusively overthrow this doctrine.