

DISENHERITED CHILDREN

Joan Crawford, the famous movie star of several decades back, left some of her children out of her will. She was not the first to do so, nor is she likely to be the last. It is the right of parents to disinherit a child or children if they choose to do so. Let it be observed, however, that such disinherited children do not cease to be the children or offspring of the withholding parents; they simply are left out of the will, cut off from receiving any of the estate.

Can—and will—God ever disinherit His children? One of the major tenets of Calvinism is “Perseverance of the saints,” which avers that once a person is a child of God he can never do anything sinful or evil enough to fall from God’s grace and lose his eternal inheritance. However, those who will read the New Testament with clear, rather than glasses colored by Calvinistic dogma, will discover a plethora of passages that teach otherwise.

- Simon became a Christian, but fell into the “bond of iniquity,” for which he was commanded to pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:21–24). Why bother with the inconvenience of repentance if he could not be lost?
- The Galatians were in danger of falling from grace (Gal. 5:4).
- Paul said that he had to practice rigid self-discipline, lest that while he preached to others he might be lost himself (1 Cor. 9:27).
- Even in the Old Testament, God literally disinherited an entire generation of His people for faithless rebellion (Num. 14:26–30).

It is a tragedy that most of the Protestant world has been lulled into a false sense of security by this heresy.

Is it possible that some members of the Lord’s church have unwittingly drifted into this very dangerous position? If they have not consciously imbibed this error, they certainly behave as if they have done so. Otherwise, it is very difficult to explain how some brethren can go hunting or fishing, visit relatives, or take a vacation, and deliberately forsake the prescribed assemblies of the church. Yet, through the years I’ve known of many children of God (at least in name) who have thus behaved, apparently believing it matters not to their heavenly Father.

Then there are those who attend regularly and perhaps even give generously of their money, but their lives are marred by ungodly habits, speech, dress, or other behaviors that dishonor God and disgrace the church before unbelievers. Yet, their attitude seems to be, “I am what I am and I cannot change.” And what of those who “drop out” for weeks or even months at a time and then just sort of “drop in” again as if nothing were wrong in their relationship with God and the church. Surely, they must labor under the assumption that God will not keep His

promises of condemnation of His unfaithful children.

Once one is “born of water and the Spirit” (John 3:5), he never ceases to be a child of God. But let us soberly reflect on the fact that God has promised to disinherit unfaithful children. If the Lord will **not blot out the names** of those who are faithful (Rev. 3:5), what does this imply that He will do concerning the names of those who are unfaithful (20:15)?

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