

The Final Perseverance

Of The Saints

BY

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PREFACE

The motive for the publication of this little booklet, is not because I feel myself capable of instructing my brethren, but because I thought it might prove a blessing to the younger members, and be a means of strengthening and fortifying them against the wiles of the enemies of the truth.

The dogma of the final apostasy, is certainly an invention of the arch enemy of souls, designed to destroy, if it were possible, all ground of peace and comfort of saints, and rob them of any assurance respecting their final salvation. For if there is no certainty that any will finally be saved, there can be no such thing as "The full assurance of hope unto the end." {Heb 6: 11}.

Not only so, but such an uncertain scheme of salvation, serves as an excuse for the wholesale relapses into sin, of the many said to be converted during those protracted meetings, where religious excitement predominates.

When Satan fails to keep his votaries lulled to sleep in sin, his next strategy is to alarm them with the fear of hell, and thus render them an easy prey to

such exciting religious meetings. After they have been converted over and over, at such exciting meetings, they become downright infidels respecting heart felt religion, and claim that they have tested it thoroughly and have found it to be a delusion.

Such a relapse into sin will always be the case, when the person merely "GETS RELIGION," but when religion "GETS THE PERSON," he is "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time." {1 Pet 1: 5}.

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The Final Perseverance of the Saints

Article IX. "We believe that none who are born again will fall away so as to be lost, but that they will persevere through grace to glory."

I. The Love of God

My first argument I deduce from the love of God. God's love is immutable, for "God is love," and he is unchangeable. "He is in one mind and who can turn him?" {Job 23:13}. If God never changes, and is eternally in one mind, then those he loves now, he loved from all eternity, and will love to all eternity. It is written "I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." {Mal 3:6}, and as the name Jacob personifies the Lord's people, it teaches their security.

The reason the saints persevere unto the end, and are not consumed with the finally impenitent, is because God loves them. For "whom he loves he loves unto the end." {John 13:1}, and this is the reason that any come to Christ, for it is written, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." {Jer 31:3}. Without this love, this everlasting love, none would ever come to him, for when God looked down from heaven to see if there were any that did good, he declared, "There is none that doeth good, no not one." "There is none that seeketh after God." {Ps 14:3}: and {Rom 3:10}. Hence the Savior himself said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day."

The Savior in his prayer to his Father said, respecting his disciples, "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me," and in the same prayer he said,

"Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world." {John 17:23,24}. Now, if his eternal love for his Son is so strong that he will never cast him out, the same eternal love for his people will never allow him to cast them out, especially since he has shed abroad his love in their hearts, and declares that "The Lord preserveth all them that love him, but all the wicked will he destroy." {Ps 114:20}.

The apostle John exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." And then he says, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him." {1John 3:1}. Now, if some saints finally fall away and are lost, how did the apostle know that his brethren would see the Savior as he is? How could he speak so confidently about their final end, if there was no certainty as to their finally reaching that blessed abode? If the eternal destiny of one is uncertain, then the destiny of all is uncertain, for no mortal knows the future state of the mind, hence it may be, according to this scheme, that none will reach heaven, and that no songs of praise will ever resound in heaven to the glory of him who sits upon the throne of the universe.

The apostle says, "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure, for a good man some would even dare to die; but God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." {Rom 5:7}. Now, if the Savior's love for us was strong enough to cause him to die for us while we were yet sinners, will he now cast us off because he sees sin in our flesh warring against the law of our mind? If sin, enmity and ungodliness, was no bar to the display of his love for us on the cross, will indwelling sin in us ever prohibit that same love preserving us until we reach eternal glory? It is written, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him, also freely give us all things." {Rom 8:32}. Can you answer this challenge, dear reader, by showing how it is, that he may not freely give us all things? If an earthly father should spend millions to redeem his natural son from captivity, would he not, after he had thus redeemed him, give him all things necessary to preserve him from the enemy?

If "all things work together for good to them that love God," what will work for bad to them? {Rom 8:28}. The same apostle asks further, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these

things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor depth, nor height, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Remember, dear reader, that "Thy help cometh from the Lord that made heaven and earth, he will not suffer thy foot to be moved; he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold he that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore." {Ps 121}.

How comforting are these declarations of holy writ to the Lord's tempest tossed and tried children, who have learned that "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," and have realized in their weakness, that unless they are "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation," they will finally fall away. Satan and his emissaries, would, in their attempt to defend the doctrine of total apostasy, rob the children of God of the comfort afforded them by the consolatory promises he has made them in his holy word, but the blessed spirit of God seals it upon their hearts, and thus enables them to realize its sweetness amidst their trials and temptations during their militant state.

God's love, like that of Jonathan's, is "Wonderful, passing that of women," hence his eternal, unchangeable love will never grow cold. Your sins and iniquity did not dampen it before your regeneration, nor will it ever do so since your regeneration, for "Whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever, nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it," {Eccl 3:14}, hence it will abide all trials.

If you have ever been drawn by the Savior, and have had his love shed abroad in your heart, he still loves you, and is now at his Father's right hand interceding for you, and his Father always hears him; hence he will finally deliver you from all your trials, temptations, doubts and fears, into the kingdom of glory. I say, if he loved you while you were his enemy, and died for you while you were yet dead in trespasses and in sins, and because of that great love quickened you together with Christ, and raised you up

together with him, will not that same eternal, unchangeable love, keep you from falling, and preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom? Or will he, as some affirm, do nothing for his children, unless they do their part?

If God has done all that he can justly do in our salvation, until we do our part, why is the Savior interceding for us now, at his Father's right hand? What good will his intercession do us, if it be true that his Father has done all for us that his justice will allow, until we do our part. If his justice forbids him doing anything for sinners, until they make the start, why ask him to do anything for them? And if after they have made the start, he will do nothing for them, only as they do their part, why ask him to do more, for according to this scheme, he will do his part without asking him to do so.

Thus it appears, according to this plan, that the office of Christ, as our intercessor, is a mere farce, for he dare not ask his Father to help us until we make the start, and then it is useless to do so, for of course he will then do his part, and only his part, just according as we do our part, and keep on doing it. This is certainly a weak scheme of salvation, for as a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, so this plan is no stronger than man, and he is a weak, vacillating creature to lean against. How much better to lean upon the Lord, for "underneath are his everlasting arms." {Deut 33:27}. "Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." {Isa 26:4}.

II. The Will of God

The New Testament teaches that Christ came to do his Father's will, for he said, "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me, and this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." {John 6:38,39}.

Now, will the Father's will be done? Will the Savior do what he came to do? If so, will any that were given him of the Father, be lost? And will he not raise them up at the last day? "Verily, he shall not fail, nor be discouraged." {Isa 42:4}. If these plain statements of the Savior are not enough to put the question at rest, consider the following words of his, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." {John 6:37}. Will the Savior keep his word? or will he in some wise cast out some of them?

In the {John 6:44} 44th verse, he says further, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day." What strong assurance is here given, that all those given the Son by the Father, will be finally saved; for all given him of the Father shall come to him, being drawn of the Father, and the Savior's mission requires that he lose none of them, and that he in no wise cast any of them out, but raise them up at the last day. The apostle was confident of this very thing, that, "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." {Phil 1:6}. This scripture undoubtedly teaches that God begins the good work, and will carry it on until the day of all days.

Solomon confirms this thought, saying, "Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever, nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it, and God doeth it that men should fear before him." {Eccl 3:14}. If God begins the good work in the heart, and continues it until the day of Jesus Christ, it must be because he desires the salvation of his people. It is written that "What his soul desireth, even that he doeth." {Job 23:13}.

The Lord himself says, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." {Isa 46:10}. Now if he does all he desires, and all his pleasure, will not all the Father gave the Son, be finally saved? Further, the Savior prays for all the Father gave him, saying, "I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me. . . . Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me." {John 17:9,11}. Will the Father hear the Savior's prayer? or will he turn a deaf ear to his pleadings? The Savior himself said at the grave of Lazarus, "Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always." {John 11:41}.

Now, if the Father always hears him, will not all those for whom he prays be saved and taken home to glory? For this very end, the Savior fervently prayed, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." {John 17:24}. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." Verse {John 17:20}. Here he prays for all those who believe on him through their word, which is the same as praying for all who are born of God, for "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." {1John 5:1}. Tischendorf's Greek Testament reads, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, hath been born of God." {1John 5:1}.

Another proof that the Lord desires the salvation of all those he gave his Son, is what the Savior said to his disciples, "Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." {Luke 10:20}. The book of life will not be marred by the erasing of a name here and there, because of the falling away of some to eternal destruction, for "Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever." Why rejoice that their names were written in heaven, if they are liable to fall away and finally be lost?

When John the Revelator, saw "New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven," he said, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." {Rev 21:27}. Again it is written, "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him {that is the beast} whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." {Rev 13:8}. Finally in that great and notable assize, where all shall finally appear, the Revelator, in a vision, was permitted to see the books opened, "and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works." {Rev 20:12}. In this great court of heaven, those without grace in their hearts, who clamor for the doctrine of salvation according to their works and die in their sins, will be tried upon their own principles, out of the books, and cast into the lake of fire. For, "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." {Rev 20:12,15}.

Let the child of God rejoice, whose faith is fixed on Christ, that his name was written in the "Book of Life" before the world began, for his Savior, "The Lamb that was slain," will appear for him as his advocate in that tribunal, and will interpose his own blood and righteousness as an allsufficient atonement for all his sins. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the saints of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." {Isa 44:17}.

It is insisted by those who believe that saints may totally apostatize, that the will of God in salvation will be done; that his will is to give a measure of grace to all men, to balance their will, and when they make a righteous choice, he gives them more grace, to help them on their way to glory.

To this, I reply that notwithstanding this supposed measure of grace, given to all men, the Lord looked down from heaven to see if there were any that were doing good, and declared, "There is none that understandeth," and "there is none that seeketh after God." {Ps 110:3}. The apostle, referring to this same passage, says, "There is none that doeth good, no not one, there is none that understandeth, there is none righteous, no, not one." {Rom 3:10,11}.

Now, if such a measure of grace is given to all men, what good did it do, according to these declarations of God's word? It will result in the salvation of no one, for those who advocate the doctrine of the possibility of the saints totally falling from grace, believe that understanding God's word, seeking after God, and doing good, are conditions to be performed by the sinner in order to salvation, hence, it is absolutely necessary to do more for sinners than to give a measure of grace, ere any one will seek after God and do good.

Why not accept what the Lord says by the mouth of the apostle? "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." {Rom 9:15,16}. If the sinner's will must initiate the work of salvation, he deserves, at least, a part of the glory. He who begins any laudable undertaking, deserves more honor than he who merely seconds it. Moreover, this scheme represents God's will as subservient to the will of man in his salvation, for all that God has done respecting man's salvation is futile, unless man makes it efficacious by the exercise of his own will.

How contrary is such a scheme to the word of God, which says, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." {John 1:1}. Also this text, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." {Jas 1:18}. David says, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." {Ps 110:3}. The apostle says again, "For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." {Phil 2:11}. Notice the apostle does not say that God worketh in you the "capacity" to will, but "Worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." The scheme I am combating insists 'that God gives the "capacity to will," only, but does nothing to make it certain that the sinner will exercise that power by willing. But God works in the sinner, both TO WILL and TO DO.

III, Atonement and Final Perseverance

"Atonement signifies expiation, satisfaction or reparation made, by giving an equivalent for an injury, or by doing or suffering that which is required, in satisfaction for an offense or an injury. "Webster.

A careful consideration of this definition will show that there is no such thing as partial, or incomplete redemption, for a thing is redeemed in full, or it is not redeemed at all. If there remains one cent against the property involved, it will hold it until the last cent is paid.

The popular idea that Christ by his death made some kind of conditional atonement or redemption, or that he rendered a conditional satisfaction to the divine law, is too absurd for a thoughtful person to entertain for a moment. For if full satisfaction was not made, so as to remove the offense, no satisfaction has been made, and the law is still in full force against us. By a little reflection it will appear, that those who believe in conditional redemption or salvation, do not believe that Christ made satisfaction in full, or rendered a complete and full equivalent to divine justice by his suffering on the cross. If the Jewish high priest, who was a type of Christ, our great High Priest, had failed to render complete satisfaction by his offering in the holy of holies, he would have perished there, Hence Christ's resurrection was a demonstration that his offering had been effectual, and was accepted by his Father, as complete satisfaction. It is written that he "By his own blood, entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." {Heb 9: 12}. Now, if he obtained "eternal redemption" for us, he must have made complete satisfaction for us, hence our eternal salvation is certain. Moreover, "He was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." {Gal 4:5}. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." {Gal 3:13}. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." {Titus 2:14}. And finally it is written, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." {Rev 5:9}.

Now, if Christ redeemed us from under the law, by what law will we be punished? If he redeemed us from the curse of the law, by what law will we

be tried and punished? Or is there any curse, other than the curse of the law, mentioned in the Bible? If Christ redeemed us from all iniquity, will the penalty be inflicted where there is no iniquity?

If he redeemed us to God by his blood, what else is required after that, to secure our final salvation? And, finally, if he obtained eternal redemption for us, before he entered into the holy place not made with hands, will eternal redemption last long enough to insure our perseverance through grace to glory?

In this great work of redemption, Christ was "offered to bear the sins of many." {Heb 9:28}, and as the Apostle Peter says, "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree." {1Peter 2:24}. Hence the apostle says, "He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," {Heb 9:26} and "by one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified." {Heb 10:14}.

Who can calmly reflect upon these plain declarations of God's word, and yet believe that all was left in uncertainty respecting our final salvation? If he bore our sins in his own body, and put them away by the sacrifice of himself, and by this one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified, what can hinder our final salvation? Sin cannot, for it was borne and put away by Christ, and we were thus perfected forever by his one offering. "Moreover, Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." {1Peter 3:18}. Will he fail in his undertaking? If Jesus suffered for our sins, shall we have to suffer for them a second time? Does divine justice require two penalties for the same sins? "If God be for us, who can be against us." {Rom 8:31}. Who has the temerity to answer the apostle's challenge? "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified." {Rom 8:29,30}. No wonder the apostle challenges any one to show who it is that can be against us, for with God on our side, the final victory will be ours.

Some regard the suffering of the Son of God as only conditional satisfaction to the divine law, and hold that faith, or belief, is the prime and all important condition. But what are we to believe as the conditions? Shall we say that the condition of salvation is the belief that Christ is the Son of God? But this the devils believe, and tremble, and even made public confession of their

belief, see {Matt 8:29}. Certainly such belief and confession cannot be a condition of salvation, unless we say that the devils have a chance to be saved. But, say others, we must believe that Jesus is our Savior, and that this is the condition upon which we are to be saved. But how can a person believe that Jesus is his Savior, if it be not a fact until he has believed it? Are sinners required to believe that which is not true until they have believed it? But, say some, they are required to believe, as a condition of salvation, that Christ died for them on the cross. But how can they believe that Christ actually died for them, if it be true that he died for them on conditions to be performed by them? If this is the scheme of salvation, they cannot believe that he really died for them until after they have believed it. For it is not a fact until they have performed the condition by believing it, for that is necessary to make it a fact.

If such belief is the condition upon which it becomes true that he died for sinners, then they will have to believe that to be true, in order to make it true. But others say they must believe that Christ did bear their sins on the cross, and put them away by his death and suffering. But how can they make that a fact now, by believing it? If he bore their sins in his own body on the cross eighteen hundred years ago, why do they have to believe it now, to make it a fact? How can they make what occurred eighteen hundred years ago true now, by believing it?

Such a ludicrous scheme of salvation does not appeal to the intelligence of mankind. Suppose a physician should say to his patient, "You must have faith in this prescription, you must believe it will cure you, or it will do you no good." In such a case, the patient would decide at once, that if it has no efficacy to cure him until he believes it has, then he will have to believe in that which has no efficacy to cure him, in order to make it efficacious. How

strange it is that such inconsistency can be foisted upon the people as the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ! Yet millions swallow it down as simon pure gospel.

Any view of the plan of salvation that represents Jesus as a High Priest who officiates inefficacious ; as a sacrifice for sin, that removes no sin actually; as a "scapegoat" that bears no sin away ; as a "Pascal lamb," whose blood secures none certainly from the destroying angel ; as a "wave offering" that secures not the crop from mildew and blasting; as a "Redeemer" that buys nothing back certainly ; as a "substitute," that releases no one certainly ; as a

"law fullfiller," that leaves the law still in force against us; as a "shepherd" that dies ineffectually for his sheep; as a "husband" that pays not his bride's debts in full ; as a "deliverer," simply making propositions ; as a "Savior" trying to save and failing, is dishonoring to God, a travesty upon Jesus as a Savior, and extremely discouraging to the Lord's humble poor.

Such a strange, uncertain, indefinite, conditional scheme of salvation, is enough to cause one to exclaim, as did Mary Magdalene at the Savior's sepulchre, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

IV. Imputed Righteousness and Final Perseverance

"Righteousness signifies conformity to law, in heart and life." "As applied to God, it signifies the perfection or holiness of his nature. And as applied to Christ, it signifies his active and passive obedience, by which he fulfilled, in every jot and tittle, the divine law in behalf of his people." See Webster.

Righteousness is sometimes ascribed to men, as it was to Noah, {Gen 7:1-9}; and to Abraham {Gen 18:23}; also in the New Testament, to Zacharias and Elizabeth {Luke 1:6}. But as men have at best, but a broken, damaged, and imperfect righteousness, this word is applied to them in a very limited, or qualified sense, "for there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." {Eccl 7:20}. As man was under and subject to God's infinitely holy law in the beginning, his very nature, though now corrupt and fallen, inclines him to look to the law, and trust in his own obedience to it, as the only way to obtain life and salvation. "But now," says the apostle, "the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God, which is unto all and upon all them that believe." {Rom 3:22}. This proneness to look to the law, and their obedience to it, was characteristic of the Pharisees of old, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." {Rom 10:3}. Hence the Savior said to his disciples, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye can in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." {Matt 5:20}. The punctiliousness of the Pharisees in keeping the outward forms of the law given by Moses, was never exceeded, for they would not so much as pluck an ear of corn, or pick up a stick of wood to cook a meal, on the Sabbath day, and therefore the Savior said of them, that, "They trusted in themselves,

that they were righteous." {Luke 18:9}. Thus they were ignorant of the glorious truth that, "By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." {Rom 5:19}. The apostle trusted in himself that he was righteous until the Lord arrested him while on his way to Damascus. Afterward he said, "I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." {Rom 7:9}. "For !I 'through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." {Gal 2:19}. All our righteousness is as filthy rags, says the prophet, hence the apostle desired to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law. {Phil 3:9}. The apostle thus renounced his lineage as a Jew, his standing and esteem among the Jews, and his own righteousness, for he says, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law." {Phil 3:7-9}.

Prom all this it appears that "It is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saves us." The theory that saints may fall and be eternally lost, is founded upon the idea that salvation depends upon our works of righteousness, for as damnation is the result of bad works, it is argued that salvation cannot be otherwise than the result of good works. But in God's plan he "justifies the ungodly" and "imputeth righteousness without works," saying, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." {Rom 4:8}. It is upon the basis of God's own righteousness imputed, or set to our account, that he can, in harmony with his immaculate justice, be merciful to our unrighteousness, and remember our sins against us no more forever. Thus our salvation is not suspended upon our own righteousness, nor upon our faithfulness, but "The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are his everlasting arms." {Deut 33:27}. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe." {Prov 18:10}. "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, 'and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head, they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." {Isaiah 51:11}.

When the Lord Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, puts his laws into the mind, and writes them in the heart, the writing is indelible, for "Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever." In that Covenant he has promised the covenantees, that he will be to them a God, and they shall be to

him a people." {Heb 8:10}. What a sweet promise this is. No wonder David said, "The Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting." {Ps 100:5}. May we not say with the prophet, "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end." "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord." {Isa 45:17; 44: 8}.

Christ came into the world, not to make propositions, nor to simply offer salvation, but "To make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." {Daniel 9:24}.

What blessed assurance is this, and how it inspires hope in the Lord's humble poor May we not say with the apostle, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and works." {2Thess 2:17}. Those who look to their own works of righteousness, and depend on them for justification before God, thereby ignore and reject the immaculate righteousness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and will find in the end, that their hope is as vain and frail as the cobweb.

But, say some, may we not rely on our own righteousness, provided we look to and trust in Christ's righteousness to make up the deficiency in our own righteousness?

No indeed, the Savior is no makeweight, to be cast into the balance to tip the scale in our favor. He has declared, "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another." {Isa 64:6}. The Savior will never suffer his pure and perfect righteousness to be mixed with "filthy rags." {Isa 64:6}. David dared not trust to such a mixture, for he declared, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God, I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." {Ps 13:16}. Let us remember the apostle's questions, "Who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive ? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" {1Cor 4:7}. Every qualification necessary to prepare us to appear before God, and to be accepted by him, is given unto us freely, through our Lord Jesus Christ, hence it is written, "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, that, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord." {1Cor 1:30,31 }

V. Heirship of Saints and Final Perseverance

In a case where children are jointheirs to an estate, you cannot destroy the title of one, without destroying the title of all, hence, it is written, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God and jointheirs with Christ." {Rom 8:17}. Now if you can disinherit one heir, you can disinherit all, and this would disinherit Christ, and deprive him of heaven, for he is one of the jointheirs. To comfort the Lord's people, and assure them that they will finally inherit their heavenly estate, the apostle says, "God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel {or will}, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us, which hope we have both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." {Heb 6:17-19}.

Thus all who have fled to Christ, and believed on him, have strong consolation, for the will and oath of God {two immutable things} insures to them the eternal inheritance. And this hope, mark you, is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast," because it lays hold of Christ, the rock of eternal ages. If the temptations and trials of life aided by the devil, could break the cable, or dislodge the anchor, it could not be said to be "sure and steadfast."

The apostle further says, that believers are made free from sin, and are become servants to God, and have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. {Rom 6:22}. Now, if all believers are made free from sin, what can destroy them? And if their end is everlasting life, are they in danger of missing that end? The heirs of promise have eternal life, and their Savior is eternal, their inheritance is eternal, and their home is eternal in the heavens, hence they are sure of that eternal abode. If Christ is the life {eternal life} of all his people, is their life in danger of being destroyed? It is written "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." {1John 5:12}. "If Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." {Rom 8:10}. And the Savior said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." This eternal life, is not simply in reserve for them,

awaiting their final entrance into heaven, for the Savior further said, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." {John 6:47}.

If these scriptures are not sufficient to convince you that the believer is now in possession of eternal life, consider the following words of the Savior, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." {John 5:24}. If this scripture does not prove that the believer has eternal life now, "is passed from death unto life," "and shall not come into condemnation," then words are not the signs of ideas. Notice, the Savior does not say that the believer shall have everlasting life in the future, but that he HATH EVERLASTING LIFE. The word "hath" is in the present tense. Now if a person has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, is he in danger of falling away and going to torment? As further proof, I submit the following: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life."

Now can a person know that he has eternal life, if he is not in possession of it, and will not be until after death? Jesus said to Martha, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." {John 11:26}. Martha replied, "Yea Lord." Can you say the same dear reader? You may think that all men have eternal life, but the apostle will contradict you, for he says, "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Notice the word abide, for it means more than to sojourn, or stay for awhile. The Savior said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the spirit of truth, whom the world can not receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." {John 14:16,17}. "Now, if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his," says the apostle, and he further says, "If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you." It was not the preacher, nor the written word, nor an angel, that dwelt in the Roman brethren, but the spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead. In the {Rom 8:16} 16th verse of this same chapter, the apostle says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The word ITSELF, signifies that it was not the preacher, nor the written word, but the Spirit itself. If it were said that the sheriff himself testified in court, we would understand that it was not his deputy, but himself. To the same purpose is the following passage "He that believeth on the Son of God hath

the witness in himself." {1John 5:10}. This blessing is the gift of God, for the apostle says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." {Rom 6:23}. If eternal life comes to us as the wages of our good works, why did the apostle fail to mention it in this place? While he was saying that death is the wages of sin, he certainly would have said that eternal life is the wages of good works, if that were really the truth. But let us see further. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." {John 3:14,16}. The mission of Christ, according to these passages, was to give eternal life, or everlasting life, to all who believe in him. Now as all true Christians are believers, they all have eternal life, and as that which is eternal has no end, they all are in possession of everlasting life, therefore they will never perish. But let us follow up the subject a little further. The apostle says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." {Col 3:14}. Now if Jesus is our life, and he, as our life, is hid in God, what more could have been done to insure our final preservation?

But scriptural evidence to this end is in exhaustible. The Lord has promised to be a wall of fire round about his people, and the glory in their midst. {Zech 2:5}. He says of those that fear the Lord, "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son." {Mal 3:16}. Now all that fear the Lord and work righteousness, are accepted with God, said the Apostle Peter, at the house of Cornelius. "The angels of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them." {Psa 34:7}. Further quotations are unnecessary, for if these will not convince, nothin less than the Holy Spirit will do the work.

VI. Do Saints Ever Fall In Any Sense?

That true Christians do fall, and do wrong is admitted, but that they finally fall, and are eternally lost, we deny, for "there is not a just man upon earth

that doeth good and sinneth not." {Eccl 7:20}. With this agrees the Apostle James. "In many things we offend all." And David says, "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" And finally, James says again, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But the children of God have been "redeemed from all iniquity," and "from the curse of the law," hence there is no eternal punishment in reserve for them, but they are under the parental government of their heavenly Father. Therefore the apostle says, "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children. My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him, for whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." {Heb 12:58}. The Lord never chastens his children unless they do wrong, and this proves that they all do wrong. This, no Christian will deny.

We know that the Apostle Peter sinned egregiously, the night of the crucifixion, but as he was a child of God, and the sin of denying his Savior was "put away" by the sacrifice of Christ, the Savior, therefore, turned himself about and looked upon Peter, "and Peter went out and wept bitterly." Many of the Lord's children have had sad falls, but none have fallen away entirely, hence David says, "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord, and he delighteth in his way ; though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand." Yes, the good man falls, but he is not **UTTERLY CAST DOWN**, but he would be, did not the Lord uphold him with his hand.

David, a man after God's own heart, sinned greatly, in the case of Uriah and his wife, and the Lord chastened him sorely for it, saying, "Therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house, because thou hast despised me, and taken the wife of Uriah." Yet David is regarded by all Christians, as a true child of God, and his whole life, with that exception, bears evidence that he was a child beloved of the Lord, "a man after his own heart." {1Sam 13:3; Acts 13:22}. No wonder he afterward wrote, "The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all that be bowed down." {Psa 145:14}. And Solomen says, "A just man falleth seven times and raiseth up again, but the wicked fall into mischief." With this the prophet Micah agrees, saying, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy ; when I shall fall, I shall arise; when I shall sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me."

One way the Lord chastens his people, is by leaving them to themselves, as he did Peter. Peter, confident of his own strength, said to the Savior, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death." But the Savior replied, "I tell thee Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me." The Savior left him to himself, that he might learn his own weakness, and that after his conversion, he might be able to strengthen his brethren. Before he fell, the Savior said to him, "Simon, Simon, behold satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Thus we learn that the Lord keeps his children, and also keeps their faith, so that it will not fail.

Satan cannot go beyond the Lord's will concerning his people, for that was tested in the case of his servant job. "Then Satan answered the Lord and said, doth job serve God for naught? Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" "Put forth thine hand now, and he will curse thee to thy face." So the Lord suffered satan to destroy all that job possessed, his children, servants, house, and all his stock, but job sinned not, nor cursed God. Satan then said, "Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life." And the Lord said, "He is in thine hand, but save his life." Then Satan afflicted job with sore boils, and job sat down in the ashes, and scraped himself with a potsherd, and his wife plead with him to curse God and die, and job replied, "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" The Lord thus tries his people, that they and their brethren may see the care that he takes of them, and how he overrules their trials for their good, and for the good of their brethren, hence James says, "Behold we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." {Jas 5:11}.

Job having thus learned the truth upon this subject, said, "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger." {Job 17:9}. Thus all the righteous shall hold on their way, but we must have clean hands, if we expect to grow stronger, and stronger. To this end the apostle exhorts his brethren, saying, "Beware. lest ye being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Solomon says, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," but "The way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble." {Prov 4:18,19}.

When our government seals a document, or a letter for instance, the whole power of the nation is behind it, to insure its delivery to its final destination, hence the apostle says, "Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us is God ; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." {2Cor 1:22}. While it is true that we are thus "sealed unto the day of redemption," we may nevertheless, grieve the Holy Spirit, so that he will withdraw his comforting presence from us, and leave us for a time to wrestle with doubts and fears, and may even deliver us over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, !that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. {1Cor 5:5}. Hence the apostle says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." {Eph 4:30}. We are not only said to be sealed unto the day of redemption, by the Spirit of God, but have also received an "earnest of the Spirit." When the heir to an estate receives a portion of the estate, it insures to him the whole estate, by and by, hence the apostle says, "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." The apostle, after expressing the great desire of himself and brethren, to be "clothed upon," i. e., "that mortality might be swallowed up of life," he says, "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who hath also given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, {for we walk by faith, not by sight}." {2Cor 5:57}. This great confidence of the apostle and his brethren, did not cause them to be dilatory, indifferent and indolent, respecting their eternal salvation, as some insist, for assurance of victory will cause a coward to fight valiantly. Such an assurance has caused millions of God's people to face death in every form that Satan in his malice could invent, and yet they would go cheerfully into the flames, singing and praising God.

Job confidently said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me." {Job 19:25-27}.

Like the prodigal son, many of the Lord's children wander away from their heavenly Father, and while starving for heavenly manna, would fain eat the husks that false teachers hand out. But notwithstanding their wanderings, they, like the prodigal son, still remain the sons of God, and ere long return to the parental fold. {Luke 15:11}. Although sick of sin, starving and tired of

wandering, their heavenly Father still loves them and embraces them on their return, and kills the fatted calf, as it were, and the poor prodigal again realizes "the peace that passeth understanding, and the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory." From this parable we learn that God never "casts away his people which he foreknew." {Rom 11:2}. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." {Rom 11:29}. Or as Tischendorf's Greek Testament reads, "For in respect to his gifts and his calling, there is no change of purpose with God." Jonah, the prophet of the Lord, like the prodigal son, tried to run away from his heavenly Father, but was taught the lesson that all the disobedient children of God learn, for in his sad plight "in the belly of hell," while in the depths of the sea, with the weeds wrapped about his head, he learned the lesson that all God's children have learned,

"When low before his throne they knelt,

To pour their feeble cries."

Thus while in their severest trials and deepest sorrows, they are made to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord."

VII. Apostasy of Nominal Professors of Religion

We admit that nominal professors of Christianity, may fall from their nominal profession, but not from grace, for such professors are destitute of saving grace. The Savior refers to such where he says, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." {Matt 15:13}. The Savior, in his interpretation of this parable, of the seed that fell in stony places, says, "The same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for awhile, for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." The Evangelist Luke records the Savior's explanation as follows : "They on the rock are they, which when they hear, receive the word with joy, and these have no root, which for awhile believe, and in time of temptation fall away." {Luke 8:13}. The trouble with the stony ground hearers was, that their "heart was not right in the sight of God." For it will be noticed that none of the seed sown, produced a crop, except that which fell into good ground, and the Savior explained in the parable, that the good ground represents "an honest and good heart." This clearly proves the necessity of a good heart in order to hear the gospel to profit, and Solomon says, "The preparation of the heart in man is of the Lord." {Prov 16:1}.

Hence the Lord opened the heart of Lydia of Thyatira, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. {Acts 16:14}. Simon the Sorcerer, like the stony ground hearers, believed, and was baptized, but the apostle said to him afterward, "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God." "For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." {Acts 8:23}. This man Simon was so covetous that he offered money to buy the power to work miracles, that he might make money thereby. His faith was not the faith that "God is the author and finisher of." {Heb 12:2}. "The faith of God's elect," is inwrought, as it is written, "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself." {1John 5:10}. There is a kind of faith that is the product of natural or external evidence, like the faith of the "many that believed on Jesus when they saw the miracles which he did." "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of men, for he knew what was in man." {John 2:23,25}. But when "the Spirit itself, beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," {Rom 8:16} the recipient of such evidence, will withstand trials and temptations, as job says, "Why persecute him, seeing the root of the matter is found in him." {Job 19:28}. True saving faith works by love, hence, "though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity {or love} I am nothing." {1Cor 13:2}.

"For it is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." The word heart signifies the affections. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God," hence the love of God is not indigenous to the heart, but is an exotic, transplanted from a sunnier clime. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." {Rom 5:5}.

Without God's love in the heart, men may "believe in vain," {1Cor 15:2} and "draw back unto perdition" {Heb 10:38}, but with God's love in the heart, they "believe to the saving of the soul." {Heb 10:39}. Those who are like Hymenaeus and Philetus, may "draw back," and "deny the faith," and deceive men, but not God, for he said of these heretics, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." {2Tim 2:19}. Judas was a nominal Christian, he had the name, but no grace in his heart, for he cared not for the poor, nor for the Savior, for Christ said of him, "I have chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil." {John 6:70}. "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him." {John 6:64}. Judas believed in some sense, for it is written, "The devils also believe and tremble." {James 2: 19}. And the devils confessed their faith saying, "What have we to do

with thee Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" {Matt 8:29}. Jesus not only knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, but he also knew who would believe, for "the Lord knoweth them that are his." " For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." {Rom 8:29}.

But there are some that he does not know as his, for the Savior said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" "Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity." {Matt 7:22}. Now all those who boast of their many wonderful works, will fall away, if not in this life, they will be driven away at the last day. The Apostle Peter speaks of such false professors, saying, "It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

Some argue that as Adam fell from a state of innocency, therefore Christians may fall from a state of grace, since they are still in an imperfect state. But it would be difficult to prove that Adam fell from a state of grace, since there is no evidence that he was in possession of grace before he fell. If it could be proved that he was in possession of grace before he fell, or that he had been regenerated, or born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, or that he was in possession of "eternal life," there would be some force in such an argument. But Adam was natural, not spiritual, for the apostle says, "Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven." {1Cor 15:47,49}. The apostle is here contrasting Adam and Christ, thus proving that Christ "who is our life," {eternal life} is as far above Adam as heaven is above earth ; or as the spiritual is above the natural world. Hence there is not a shadow of proof that Adam fell from grace.

It is argued further that as the angels which kept not their first estate, are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day, {Jude sixth verse} so the Lord's children, who keep not their heavenly estate, will be cast into outer darkness in that great day. To which I will say, that, an argument drawn from the unseen world, is certainly fair fetched, and very irrelevant. However, I reply, that if those angels that fell, had been the beneficiaries of that "everlasting covenant that is ordered in all things and sure," {2Sam 23:5}, and the recipients of that "eternal redemption," {Heb

9:12} "through the blood of the everlasting covenant," {Heb 13:20} and if that covenant had been "written in their hearts," {Heb 8: 10} in which God declares, that, "I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people," and "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more;" [See verses] {Heb 8:12,13}. I say, if they had been the covenantees in such a covenant, they would never have fallen, nor would they have been cast out into outer darkness.

VIII. Apostasy of Nominal Professors, Continued

The following scripture is often quoted to prove, not only the idea of an universal atonement, but also the possibility of the saints apostatizing and being finally lost "There were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. * * * Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not and their damnation slumbereth not." {2Peter 2:13}. It is insisted that these false teachers were bought by the blood of Christ, and that they had been the children of God who had fallen away and become false teachers. But there is nothing in the text, nor in the context, said about Christ, nor his suffering on the cross, nor of his shedding his blood for any one, nor what the purchase price was by which they were bought, nor is there anything said about those false teachers ever having been saints, or the children of God, hence it is mere assumption to affirm that these false teachers were bought by the blood of Christ, or of their having been the children of God. Dr. Clark, a very strong advocate of the doctrine of apostasy, or the possibility of saints finally falling away and going to torment, admits that he is not certain that "the Lord that bought them is Christ, nor that this buying means redemption by his blood." He says, "It is not certain whether God the Father be intended here, or our Lord Jesus Christ, for God is said to have purchased the Israelites" {Exodus 15:16} and to be the "Father that bought them." {Deut 32:6}. Let the reader turn to these references. It should be noticed that the Apostle Peter was addressing

his Jewish brethren, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, hence it was perfectly natural for him, as a Jew to refer their minds to the Lord's goodness to their people, nationally, by way of exhortation, and to magnify the sins of their false teachers. The learned Dr. Gill, in his work titled, "The Cause of God and Truth," says with reference to this word "bought." The Greek word "Despotes," rendered Lord, in the

text, does not design Christ, but God the Father of Christ. The only places besides this, where the word is used, when applied to a divine person, are {Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; 2Tim 2: 21; Jude1:4; Rev 6:10}. In all these places God the Father is plainly intended, nor is there anything in this text or context, that obliges us to understand it of the Son of God, nor should this be thought any diminution of the glory of Christ, since the word "Despotes" is properly expressive, only of that power which masters have over their servants, whereas the word "Kurios," whenever Christ is called Lord, signifies that dominion and authority, which princes have over their subjects. When all this is considered, it will appear that there is little to build an argument upon, in defense of total apostasy, in this passage of scripture.

Furthermore, the learned Dr. Noyes, in his translation of Tischendorf's Greek manuscript, renders the passage as follows : "But there were false prophets also among the people, as there will be false teachers among you also, who will stealthily bring in destructive factions even denying the Lord that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction," etc. Now, according to this translation, it was the "destructive factions" that denied the Lord that bought them, which is not at all unreasonable, for religious factions are often led by false teachers to deny the Lord that bought them, at least in works, as those false teachers did, to whom the apostle refers. {Titus 1:16}. "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him." The fact that false teachers and false brethren, "draw back," and forsake the Lord's people, is no proof that the elect may be deceived by them, and finally fall away and be lost, for the apostle says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they no doubt, would have continued with us, but they went out that they might be manifest, that they were not all of us." The Lord knows how, and will purify his people, for he has declared that "The ax is laid at the root of the trees, therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire." The nature of trees is never changed by the quality or nature of the fruit they bear, hence nothing but good trees bear good fruit, and bad fruit only proves the tree to be bad, and the rooting of them up, only purifies the orchard. There is enough sin about the Lord's people to shipwreck their faith, if it were not for the grace of God, but with his grace, this is impossible, hence the Savior said, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs, and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." {Matt 24:24}. This is clear proof that none of the elect will ever totally apostatize.

The following scripture is quoted with great assurance by those who believe that saints may apostatize, and be finally lost, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away,, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." {Heb 6:46}. It should be noticed that the little word "If," in this scripture, is often used hypothetically, to prove the very opposite of the thing supposed. For instance, the apostle argues hypothetically, in {1Cor 15:14,17}, to prove the resurrection of the dead, thus: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen!" Does the apostle admit in this, that Christ is not risen? He uses the same little word "If," but it is clear that he is affirming the very opposite of the thing supposed. The truth is, the apostle is making a masterful argument in defense of the resurrection of the dead, by showing the awful consequences of the doctrine of nonresurrection. "If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain, yea, and we are found false witnesses of god" and "ye are yet in your sins." Now as it is clear that the apostle is making an argument in defense of the resurrection, by supposing the dire consequences of the doctrine of non resurrection, why is it not just as reasonable that he is making a similar argument against total apostasy of saints, by supposing the awful consequences of their apostasy? Now, if the awful consequences of the non resurrection of the dead is a cogent argument against that doctrine, why are not the dire consequences of the doctrine of final apostasy, a good argument against that heresy? As in Corinthians, he does not admit that the dead rise not, but argues against it, so in Hebrews, he does not admit the final apostasy of the saints, but argues against it.

But this text teaches too much for those who believe in apostasy, for they insist that a person may apostatize, yet by repentance and obedience, be renewed and finally saved, while this scripture declares that it is "impossible to renew them to repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame." That which proves too much, is as bad as that which proves nothing.

After the apostle had made his hypothetical argument against the doctrine of nonresurrection, he affirms the resurrection, thus "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." So the apostle in Hebrews, leaves off his hypothetical argument, and admits their perseverance, saying, "But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you,

and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." The apostle continues arguing the affirmative in this chapter, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?" Thus the apostle continued the argument in defense of their final and complete salvation.

IX. Apostasy of Nominal Professors, Further Considered

"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the spirit of grace." {Heb 10:26,29}. There are several things in the above passage that are relied on by the advocates of total apostasy, to prove that doctrine. First, they insist that those addressed by the apostle, were, or had been, saints, else he would not have included himself, by using the first person plural "we." "For if we sin wilfully." I reply, that this is the apostle's usual manner in exhorting his brethren to duty, lest they should regard his exhortation as an accusation, instead of an exhortation. In this same connection, he says, "I,et us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." [See verses] {Heb 10:24,25.} In this passage it is clear that he did not design himself, for he was not negligent, but those who had been neglecting this duty were. In {Heb 2:1,2}, he makes a similar exhortation, including himself, though he evidently designs not himself, for he in no sense was guilty of "neglecting so great salvation," for he labored more abundantly than all the other apostles.

Second, it is insisted that those addressed by the apostle, had "received a knowledge of the truth," hence they were or had been, real saints, for only real saints, have a knowledge of the truth. I reply, that real saints have an inward, spiritual knowledge of the truth, which is peculiar to them, while others have only a theoretical knowledge, while their hearts, or affections,

are untouched, and unmoved by it. Such may speak fluently, reason logically, and expound with scriptural consistency, yet be entirely destitute of grace, and the love of God. To such the gospel comes "in word only," but not "in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance." {1Thess 1:5}. Hence the apostle says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge and have not charity {or love} I am nothing." {1Cor 13:12}.

Third, it is argued from the language of the above text, that those who had trodden under foot the Son of God, and had counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, must have been real saints before they became guilty of such heinous sins, for those who are sanctified by the blood of Christ, surely must be real Christians.

To this I reply, it was not he who trampled under foot the Son of God, that was sanctified by the blood of the covenant, but it was Christ himself, for he sanctified himself, that his disciples "might be sanctified through the truth." {John 17:19}. As the high priest anciently was sanctified by the blood of animals before he could enter the holy of holies to officiate, so Christ, our great High Priest, was sanctified by his own blood, before he entered into the antitypical holy of holies, or heaven itself, see {Heb 9:24}. Therefore the apostle says, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once, into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." {Heb 9:12}. It was through the blood of the everlasting covenant, that Christ that great Shepherd of the sheep, was brought again from the dead and was thus sanctified {or set apart} as our great High Priest. {Heb 13:20}. When these things are duly considered, it will appear clear that it was Christ himself who was sanctified by the blood of the covenant, and not he who is wrongly supposed to have been sanctified by the blood of the covenant.

Fourth, it is contended further, by those who advocate the dogma of total apostasy, that the one spoken of in the above text could not have done "despite to the spirit of grace," had he not been previously in possession of it himself; hence by doing despite to it he fell from a state of grace.

I reply, a person may do despite to the Spirit of grace without being in possession of it himself. Those who murdered the Apostle Stephen {Acts 7: 51} were charged by him with resisting the Holy Ghost, yet they were not in possession of it themselves, but were evidently in possession of the spirit of

Satan, as their malice and rage against the holy apostle is evidence. Webster defines the word "Despite," as follows : "Extreme malice, violent hatred, malignity," which is a fitting description of those who stoned the holy apostle to death. As his murderers resisted the Holy Ghost, by stoning Stephen, and rejecting the gospel of the grace of God, preached by him, so those who trampled on the Son of God, resisted and despised the spirit of grace by resisting the apostles and early ministers of the gospel. By thus rejecting the gospel of Christ, and despising the saints, who were suffering for his sake, and returning to Judaism and the temple service, they would do despite to the spirit of grace, by which these faithful Christians were actuated, for Jesus regards whatever is done to his disciples as though it were done to him.

There is nothing in this whole connection of scripture, that can, with any degree of consistency, be relied on to establish the dogma of final apostasy, but there are some things in it that clearly prove the contrary; as for instance, the apostle says, "We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of the soul." {Heb 10:39} 39th verse. This passage separates those addressed, into two classes, to-wit : those who draw back unto perdition, and those "who believe to the saving of the soul." Now all nominal professors will, unless they are eventually changed by divine grace, "draw back unto perdition," as many did in the apostles' day, such as Judas, "the son of perdition, {John 17:12} ; the stony ground hearers, {Luke 8:13} ; Simon the sorcerer, {Acts 7:23} and others, of whom was Hymenaeus and Philetus, who denied the resurrection, and overthrew the faith of some. {2Tim 2:17,19}. All such professors as these, and all those who do despite to the spirit of grace, trample on the Son of God, as it were, count the blood of the covenant wherewith the Savior was sanctified, an unholy thing, sin willfully after receiving a knowledge of the truth and privily bring in damnable heresies, etc. All such, I say, will, like "the dog that is turned to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire," {2Peter 2:22} "draw back unto perdition." But those who believe to the saving of the soul, are the sheep, to whom the Savior gives eternal life, and says, "they shall never perish." {John 10:28}.

After all, the apostle's warning was not positive, for he does not say, we have sinned wilfully after we received the knowledge of the truth, but, "If we sin willfully," thus supposing the case. Now, a supposition puts nothing in being, nor does it prove anything. The same may be said of verse {Heb 10:28,29}. There he does not say, of how much sorer punishment is he

worthy, but "Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy." If it were proven that the apostle and other true believers, are included in these words, they are not categorical, but hypothetical propositions, as when our Lord said to the Jews, "If I should say, I know not the Father, I should be a liar like unto you." {John 8:55}. Now this proposition is true, when both parts of it are impossible. It was impossible that Christ should say, "I know not the Father." And it was equally impossible that he should be a liar like unto them. Just so with the proposition in the text. It is true, though it is impossible that true believers should ever sin, so as to perish eternally.

History informs us that many so called Christian Jews, recanted, and returned to their former service in the temple and synagogue, hence the apostle's warning respecting the Lord's "judgment and fiery indignation," which was about to devour the adversaries. The Emphatic Diaglott renders the text, "But some terrible expectation of judgment, even of a fiery indignation, which is about to consume the opponents." The most sanguinary opponents of the Jewish Christians, were their rulers, who the apostle knew, were doomed to an early destruction, along with their temple, city and all its inhabitants, for that awful catastrophe, at the time this Epistle was written, was only three years in the future.

Dr. Thomas Scott, the learned commentator, says of this passage, "They might have clearly seen the signs of Jerusalem's approaching desolation, which the Lord Jesus had mentioned in his predictions of that catastrophe, and which was then evidently approaching. As this epistle was written only a few years before that event, and as it would be a signal deliverance of Christians from the persecutions of the Jews, so it would be peculiarly terrible to those apostates who were returning to their former Jewish service." While many such nominal Christians were drawing back, and returning to their former typical service, no real Christians renounced their fidelity to the Savior and his spiritual service. Pliny, governor of the province of Bithynia, under Trajan, that cruel Roman ruler, in the year 105 A. D., in referring to recanting Christians, says, "They performed sacred rites with wine and frankincense, and execrated Christ, none of which things, I am told, a real Christian can ever be compelled to do." See Milner's Church History, page 146.

X. A Few Texts Relied Upon to Prove Apostasy

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandments delivered unto them. But it has happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." {2Pet 2:20,22}. It will be admitted that the professors mentioned in the text, fell from their profession, but not from grace, for if they had been regenerated and made "partakers of the divine nature," these false teachers would not have prevailed so as to lead them back into such scandalous sins. But, like the puked dog and washed sow, mentioned in verse 22 {2Pet 2:22}, their nature was unchanged by their mere profession. Such nominal, unregenerate professors will, of course, return to their old, sinful practices.

But, says an objector, they escaped their sinful habits through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, which the saints only have. I reply that Simon the sorcerer had not only such knowledge, but believed and was baptized, yet his "heart was not right in the sight of God," for he was still "in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity." {Acts 8: 23,24}.

But it is further argued that the persons referred to in the text "were clean escaped from them who live in error." See the 18th verse. I reply, in the language of the learned Dr. John Gill, that "They might have externally escaped the pollution of the world, reformed their outward lives and conversation, through the. national knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, professed the way of righteousness, and for awhile visibly walked and submitted to the holy commandments and ordinances of Christ, and yet not have been the partakers of the grace of God." See "Cause of God and Truth."

The learned Robert Young, in "The Analytical Concordance," encloses the word "Clean" in brackets, thus indicating that he regarded this word as a questionable translation, for in his preface to his Concordance he says, "Every passage in the New Testament which critical investigators, like Griesbach and Tischendorf, have noted as doubtful, or as having various readings I have marked by brackets," and as before stated, this word is so

marked in his work. Tischendorf, one of those referred to, reads, "They allure in the lusts of the flesh, by dissolute ways, such as were in some measure escaping from those who live in error." Also Dr. J. J. Griesbach, the other author referred to, reads, "Speaking extravagant words of vanity, they allure by sensual lusts and impure practices, those who have scarcely fled away from those living in error."

Now if the persons referred to in the text were only "in some measure, escaping from the evil influences of those who live in error," or if they had "scarcely fled away from those living in error," their reformation was, to say the least, very imperfect. Those who are professors in name only, are like the foolish virgins who took no oil in their lamps {Mat 25:1}. They may, like the stony ground hearers, "endure for a while," but ere long they will fall away, and seek more congenial company. Nothing but the oil of the grace of God in the heart, will cause one to "endure unto the end."

Some contend that those foolish virgins whose lamps went out, represent true Christians, who fell from grace, else they would not have been called virgins. To this I reply that even the enemies of God are called virgins in the Bible. See Isa. xlvii. 1, where Babylon is called a virgin. Also {Amos 8:13}, where idolaters are called virgins. And also Solomon's {Song 6:69}, where queen's concubines and virgins, are distinguished from the dove, spouse, and the undefiled one, the only one of her that bear her.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall ; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. {2Pet 1:10,11}. This passage is often quoted to prove that saints may fall away and be finally lost.

But it has been admitted, in chapter vi., that true saints may, and do fall, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows ; but no saint ever falls away so as to be finally lost. "For the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord. * * * though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand." Hence this scripture was never intended to teach that saints are in danger of final apostasy, but it is an exhortation to the saints, to be diligent in every good word and work, lest their view of Christ be darkened, their evidences of acceptance with him be obscured, and their Christian light be diminished, and they thus left to lament because of their indifference respecting these important duties. There is no uncertainty with

God respecting his election of his people," for "the Lord knoweth them that are his," because they are his "elect according to his foreknowledge." But his people may not be sure of their election, hence the apostle has put "calling" first, in his exhortation, when really, in the plan of salvation, election stands first, because no one can know, or be assured of his election, unless he has first an assurance that he has been called by the grace of God, and this he cannot have while living in disobedience to his heavenly Father. Hence, the Savior said to his disciples, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love," and this abiding love assures us that we are truly called by his grace; and this assurance of our calling, brings assurance that we are really the elect of God.

Some regard the following scripture as proof that saints may fall away and finally be lost: "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright." {Heb 12:16}. The above scripture is quoted often to prove that the children of God are liable to fall away and finally be lost. But Esau is the wrong character to prove the doctrine of final apostasy, for fornication and profanity are not characteristic of the children of God, besides he was one of the nonelect, rejected and hated of God. See {Rom 9:11,13}. Hence his apostasy has nothing to do with the question of the apostasy of saints. The low estimate he placed on his birthright, and his act in bartering it away, was designed to illustrate the estimate which the nominal professor places upon Christ, the church and its service, and is referred to by the apostle as a warning, not simply to nominal professors, but also to all the true children of God, who venture too far in known sins, under the presumption that God will be merciful. For while it is true, as the scriptures teach, that "they shall never be utterly cast down," yet it is also written that "if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes ; nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." {Ps 89:32}. The children of God are under the parental government of their heavenly Father, and he chastises them for their disobedience ; but it is in love, and for their good, for it afterward yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. {Heb 12:11}.

The apostle makes a similar exhortation, by referring to the disobedient children of Israel, and the judgments visited upon them while in the wilderness, saying, "Now all these things happened unto them for examples, {types}, hence they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of

the world are come, "wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." {1Cor 10:12}. This exhortation was designed especially for those Corinthian brethren who were too self reliant, and who thought of themselves more highly than they ought ; and as a consequence, trusted in themselves and their own strength, instead of looking to, and depending upon God to keep them, as David did, when he prayed, "Keep me as the apple of thine eye" ; "Hide me under the shadow of thy wings" ; "O keep my soul and deliver me, let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee."

Whatever tends to break the bands of self reliance, and suspend the soul on Christ and his everlasting strength, is a salutary influence to the child of God, for he lives by faith, not by sight. And this the apostle designed to inspire by saying, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." {1Cor 10:13}.

The following text is often quoted to prove the dogma of final apostasy: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace." {Gal 5:4}. This scripture is often quoted to prove that saints may fall from grace and be eternally lost. But a little reflection will convince one that the apostle is not speaking of God's grace in the heart, but of the doctrine of salvation by grace, which he had previously taught them, and, as he supposed, established them in. Hence he says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you, unto another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you." The Judaizing teachers had subverted his teaching, and led them to trust in the "law of works," and their obedience to it, instead of trusting in Christ and his righteousness. So he reminded them, that "he that is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law," for says he, "If righteousness come by the law,* Christ is dead in vain." "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." "For had there been a law given, which could have given life, verily, righteousness would have been by the law."

It is clear from these scriptures that the apostle was trying to reestablish them in the doctrine of salvation by grace, from which they had evidently fallen away, through the influence and false teaching of the Jewish teachers, but not from the grace of God in their hearts, as some would have us believe.

Finally, the following scripture is often quoted to prove that real saints are liable to fall and be eternally lost : "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book." {Rev 22:19}.

In reply, in this same book we read that "Whosoever was found not written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." {Rev 20:15}. Now, if some who are true believers, have their part in the book of life taken away, it would follow that, not only those who were not written in the book of life were cast into the fire, but also millions of those who were written in the book, were also cast into the lake of fire. And if such will be the case finally why did the Holy Spirit endite such a statement? seeing that it amounts to nothing. Why say that those who were not written in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire, if it be also true that millions of those whose names were written in the book of life will be finally cast into the same lake? The real key to this scripture may be found in Luke's Gospel, and reads as follows "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have." {Luke 8:18}. Just so with the passage in {Rev 22:19}, it is only the part they seem to have, that will be taken away. In reading the scriptures we find that some "seem" to be wise, who were really so {1Cor 3:18}. Others "seem to be somewhat," who were very small in the apostle's estimation. And others still, who "seem to be religious, but were really false professors." {Jas 1:26}. From all this it is not incredible that some may "seem" to have a part in the book of life, yet be entirely destitute of any part in it.

In conclusion, I will say that it seems strange that the advocates of the dogma of final and eternal apostasy, would resort to the Apocalypse, that mysterious book, to search for proof of such an unreasonable and unscriptural position, but those who are hard pressed for proof, will resort to anything, however unreasonable.