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**SERMONS AND TRACTS OF JOHN GILL  
DOCTRINES RELATING TO GOD WORKING SALVATION  
FOR AND IN HIS ELECT**

**The Doctrine Of The Saints Final  
Perseverance, Asserted And  
Vindicated**

*by John Gill*

*(London: George Keith, 1752)*

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;  
that it may be displayed because of the truth*

— Psalm 60:4

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# SERMON 46

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE SAINTS FINAL PERSEVERANCE, ASSERTED AND VINDICATED

In Answer to a late Pamphlet by Mr. John Wesley called,

**“SERIOUS THOUGHTS UPON THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS”.**

*The doctrine of the saints final perseverance in grace to glory, being a doctrine so fully expressed in the sacred Scriptures, so clearly wrote there as with a sun-beam, having so large a compass of proof; as scarce any other doctrine has; a doctrine so agreeable to the perfections of God, and the contrary so manifestly reflecting dishonor upon them, particularly the immutability of God, his wisdom, power, goodness, justice, truth, and faithfulness; a doctrine so well established upon his purposes and decrees, his counsel and covenant, and which so well accords with all his acts of grace towards, and upon his people; a doctrine so well calculated for their spiritual peace and comfort, and to promote holiness of life and conversation; a doctrine one would think, that every good man must wish at least to be true; **It may seem strange, that any man believing divine revelation, and professing godliness, should set himself to oppose it, and call such an opposition, Serious Thoughts upon it, as a late writer has done;** who has published a pamphlet under such a title, and which now lies before me, and which I have undertook to answer, and shall attempt to do it in the following manner. And, it is to be hoped, he will think again, and more seriously, and that his latter thoughts will be better than his former.*

I shall not dispute his account of saints, and the characters of them, though there are some things which require distinction and explanation. He has rightly observed, that the question about the saints falling away, is not meant of barely falling into sin, but so as to perish everlastingly and therefore he has not produced the instances of *David, Solomon, Peter*, and others; which, with great impertinence and impropriety are usually brought into this controversy. **He has put what he has to say upon this subject into**

*Eight propositions, which he endeavors to confirm by Scripture authorities.*  
And,

*The First proposition* is,

“That one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself, may nevertheless so fall from God, as to perish everlastingly;”

in support of which he produces ~~Chap.~~ Ezekiel 18:24,

but when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity—In his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

Which he understands of eternal death, as he thinks is evident from verse 26 (Serious Thoughts, hereafter S.T., pp.4, 5). But

1. such a sense of the words is contrary to the scope and design of the whole chapter, which not at all concerns the perseverance or apostasy of saints, and neither their salvation nor damnation; but the sole view of it is to vindicate the justice of God, from a charge of punishing the Jews, not for their own sins, but the sins of their fathers, and of injustice and inequality in his providential dealings with them, and has nothing to do with the spiritual and eternal affairs of men.—
2. The whole context wholly and solely regards the house of *Israel*, and the land of *Israel*, and the conduct of the people of *Israel* in it, according to which they held or lost their tenure of it, and were either continued in it, or removed from it: so that it is quite impertinent to the case before us and this writer is guilty of what he calls a *fallacy* in others, in applying that to the saints in particular, which relates to the Jewish church and nation only, as distinguishable from all other people (S.T., p. 7), and so stands self-condemned.—
3. The righteous man here spoken of, is indeed called and allowed by the Lord himself to be so; yet that righteousness by which he is denominated, only regards him as an inhabitant of the land of *Israel*, and as giving him a title and claim to the possession and enjoyment of it; but not as justifying him before God, and giving him a title to eternal life and happiness. For this righteousness is called *his*, his own, and not another's, which he himself *had done*, and not what Christ had done for him, his own in which he *trusted*; it was a righteousness of works, as appears from verses 5-9, and

not the righteousness of faith; there is not a word of faith in the account, nor of the obedience of Christ, nor of the sanctifying grace of the Spirit; this man does not appear to be either a righteous man or a holy man in an evangelical sense; wherefore the instance is quite impertinent. Millions of instances of this kind will never enervate the doctrine of the saints perseverance; let it be proved if it can, that any one that has been made righteous by the obedience of Christ, and has been truly and inwardly sanctified by the Spirit and grace of God, ever so fell away, as everlastingly to perish; let this be proved and we have done: As for a man's own righteousness and outward acts of holiness, we allow a man may turn from them and be lost, but not from the righteousness of Christ, which is *everlasting*, nor from an inward principle of grace and holiness, which ever abides.—

**4.** Besides, admitting that a righteous man in an evangelical sense is here meant., though it cannot be allowed; yet what is here said is only a supposition, which puts nothing in being, and is no proof or instance of matter of fact.—And,

**5.** the death here spoken of, is not eternal death, or the death of soul and body in hell; for this death was now upon them, what they were complaining of as wrongfully punished with; it being, as they supposed, on account of their fathers sins, and not their own; and from which death also they might be delivered by repentance and reformation, see verses 23, 32. All which cannot be said of eternal death; but it is to be understood of some temporal affliction and calamity, which in Scripture is often called a death, as in <sup><2K017></sup>Exodus 10:17; <sup><2CO10></sup>2 Corinthians 1:10 and <sup><471123></sup>11:23, such as captivity in which the Jews now were on account of their sins, and was the subject of their complaint. *Dying in his iniquity*, is the same as *dying for his iniquity*, and both in verse 26 (Ezekiel) signify the same thing, and are not two different deaths; which is repeated to shew the certainty of it; and is also what is meant by the death of the soul, not of the soul only, or of the body only, but of the person of the sinner, punished with a temporal affliction for his sins; and so falls short of proving that a truly righteous and holy man may perish everlastingly.

*The Second proposition* is, that

“one who is endued with the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience, may nevertheless so fall from God, as to perish everlastingly.”

In proof of which is produced, <sup><5019></sup>1 Timothy 1:19, 20,

holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck, of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander (S.T., p. 8)

—But,

**1.** It does not appear that these men ever had their hearts purified by faith; this should be first proved, before they are produced as instances of the apostasy of real saints; the contrary appears in their characters; they were ungodly men, and were never otherwise for any thing that is said of them; and after their profession of religion, they increased and proceeded to more ungodliness; they were vain-babblers, opposers of the doctrines of the gospel, and blasphemers of it, and were never upon the foundation that stands sure, or were known by the Lord as his, (see <sup><5011></sup>1 Timothy 1:20 and <sup><5016></sup>2 Timothy 2:16, 19; <sup><5014></sup>4:14, 15).—

**2.** Nor is it clear from the text, that they ever had a good conscience, but rather that they never had one; putting it away does not necessarily suppose they had it, but rather that they had it not, they rejecting it with dislike; as the Jews who never had the gospel are said to put it away; when they contradicted, blasphemed and rejected it, the apostle says, *ye put it from you*, **απωθεισθε**, the same word that is here used; ye rejected it, cast it from you, and would not receive it, so here; had these persons ever had a good conscience, it would rather have been said, *which some having put out of them*; but they never had it; when it was proposed to them, as the Christian religion proposes that a man should exercise a good conscience, they disliked it, and put it away, and would not attend to it, and chose rather to drop the faith they professed, as being contrary to their evil consciences and practices; besides, persons may have a good conscience in some sense, and as it is shews itself by an external behavior among men, which does not arise from an heart purified by faith; the apostle had such an one before he had faith in Christ, <sup><4231></sup>Acts 23:1. though it does not seem as if these men had ever such an one.—

**3.** The faith they made shipwreck of, is not the grace of faith, which it does not appear they ever had, but the doctrine of faith, the Gospel; **περι της πιστιν**, *concerning the faith*, is a phrase that is never used but of the doctrine of faith, see <sup><4224></sup>Acts 24:24. <sup><5021></sup>1 Timothy 6:21. <sup><5028></sup>2 Timothy 3:8. This is the faith they made shipwreck of, denied and destroyed, or

contradicted and blasphemed, as it is explained in the next verse; and the particular doctrine of faith they made shipwreck of. erred concerning, and swerved from, was the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, see <sup><5127></sup>2 Timothy 2:17, 18. Men may profess the doctrine of faith and fall from it; but this is no instance of a man's having true faith which purifies the heart, and falling from God so as to perish.

*The Third proposition* is (S.T., p. 9), that

“Those who are grafted into the good olive tree, the spiritual invisible church: may nevertheless so fall from God, as to perish everlastingly.”

To support which, the text in <sup><5117></sup>Romans 11:17-24 is produced, but to no purpose.—For,

1. By the olive tree, is not meant the spiritual and invisible church of Christ that is, *the general assembly and church of the firstborn which were written in heaven*, and consists only of the chosen redeemed, and saved; to which there can be no addition, and of which there can be no diminution; no fresh engrafture can be made into it, nor any excision from it.—But,
2. The outward Gospel-church-state, or the outward state of the church under the Gospel-dispensation; the national church of the Jews being abolished, and its branches broken, see <sup><2416></sup>Jeremiah 11:16, which signify the unbelieving Jews; who because of their unbelief also were left out of the Gospel-church-state; and the few believing Jews were together with the Gentiles grafted into that true olive tree, the Gospel-church and the first coalition was at *Antioch*.—
3. Those that are signified by the broken branches, were never true believers in Christ; and because of their unbelief, were broken off, and they were left out of the Gospel-church; they are distinguished from the remnant according to the election of grace among the Jews, and are the rest that were blinded, verses 5, 7; and so no instances of the apostasy of true believers.—
4. Though the persons the apostle speaks to were grafted into the olive tree, and were holy believers, and stood by faith, and are threatened in case they did not behave suitable to their character and profession, that they should be cut off: yet this can only intend a cutting off from the outward

church-state, in which they were, and from the privileges of it; and had it took place, would have been no proof of their perishing everlastingly.—

**5.** There is a strong intimation, though this writer says there is not the least intimation given, that such that were cut off should be grafted in again; since it is not only said, that God is able to do it, but that if they abode not in unbelief, it should be done; and the probability of it is argued; and so it will be in the latter day, when the Jews shall be converted, and all *Israel*, be saved, verses 23-26 of which the first Jews that believed in Christ, were the first-fruits and root, said to be holy, verse 16, and so were the pledge and earnest of the future engrafture of their people into the Gospel-church-state. Upon the whole, this is an insufficient proof that any belonging to the invisible church ever so fell, as to perish everlastingly. Let it be proved, if it can, that ever any of the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven; that any of that church of which Christ is the head, whom he loved, gave himself and died for; that any of that body which is the fullness of him, that filleth all in all; or that any who are baptized by one Spirit into it, and have been made to drink of that Spirit, were ever lost or did eternally perish.

**The Fourth proposition** is, that

“those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says I am the vine, ye are the branches, may nevertheless so fall from God, as to perish everlastingly (<sup>4650</sup>John 15:1-5), where it is observed, the persons spoken of are branches *in* Christ, some which *abide not* in him, but are *cast* forth from him and his church, and are *withered*, and so consequently never grafted in again, yea cast into the fire and *burned*. Wherefore it is not possible for words more strongly to declare, that even those who are now branches in the true vine, may yet so fall, as to perish everlastingly” (S.T., p. 13).

To which I answer, that there are two sorts of branches in Christ the vine, the one fruitful, and the other unfruitful; the one are such who were chosen *in him* before the foundation of the world to be holy and happy; and who are truly regenerated by his Spirit and grace in time, and made his new creatures; for *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature* (<sup>4657</sup>2 Corinthians 5:17); these are openly, truly, and savingly in him: he is the green fir tree to them, from whom all their fruit is found; they are rooted in him, and receive their life and nourishment and fruitfulness from him, and abide in him; and can never wither away and perish, as is clear from the

text and context: these are the branches which the husbandman, Christ's heavenly father, purges and prunes, that they may bring forth more fruit; and these as they were loved by Christ in the same manner as his father loved him, so they were chosen and ordained by him, to go and bring forth fruit, and that their fruit might remain and so not perish, verses 2, 9, 16, hence this parable of the vine and branches, furnishes out an argument for, and not against the perseverance of the saints. The other sort of branches are such who are in Christ only by profession: who submit to outward ordinances, and get into churches, and so are reckoned in Christ, being professors of him, and in a church-state; as the churches of *Judea* and *Thessalonica*, and others, are said to be in Christ though it cannot be thought, that every individual person in those churches were truly and savingly in him (<sup><502></sup>Colossians 1:21; <sup><500></sup>1 Thessalonians 1:1). These are such who were never rooted in Christ, or ever received any life, grace, or fruitfulness from him, and so are unfruitful branches; and in a course of time wither away in their profession; and whom the husbandman by one means or another takes away; and who are cast out of the churches into which they get, and by which they have a name of being in Christ, either for their bad principles or practices, or both; and at last, as chaff are burnt with unquenchable fire; but what is all this to real saints or true believers in Christ? no proof at all of their falling and perishing everlastingly.

**The Fifth proposition** is, that

“those who so effectually know Christ, as by that knowledge to escape the pollutions of the world, may yet fall back into these pollutions, and perish everlastingly” (S.T., p. 16);

the text to prove it is <sup><602></sup>2 Peter 2:20, 21, which this writer understands of an experimental knowledge of Christ, which some had and lost and fell back into pollutions, and perished.—But,

**1.** it does not appear that the knowledge the persons in the text are said to have, was an inward experimental knowledge of Christ: had it been such, they could not have lost it for those who truly and experimentally know him, shall follow on to know him; and such a knowledge of him has eternal life inseparably connected with it; yea, that itself is eternal life, and therefore can never be lost (<sup><308></sup>Hosea 6:3; <sup><57></sup>John 17:3).—

**2.** The effect ascribed unto it, *escaping the pollutions of the world*, does not prove it to be an inward experimental knowledge; since that signifies



no more than an outward reformation and amendment of life, which may follow upon a notional and speculative knowledge of Christ, or an outward acknowledgement and profession of him.—

**3.** There is nothing said of these persons which shew that they were partakers of the true grace of God, or but what may be said of such that are destitute of it; all the characters of them in the context, for they are no other than the false teachers there described, shew them to be very vile and wicked men: they do not appear ever to have had any change wrought upon them; they ever were no other than *dogs and swine*; not, only before and after, but even while they were under a profession of religion, and outwardly abstained from gross enormities, as the application of the Proverb to them shews;

it is happened to them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire, verse 22.

Wherefore the characters and case of these persons can never be improved into an argument against the perseverance of real saints, and such as have a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ.

*The Sixth proposition* is, that

“Those who see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of the witness and fruits of the Spirit, may nevertheless so fall from God, as to perish everlastingly;”

for the proof of this, we are referred to ~~300~~ Hebrews 6:4-6, where it is said, the expressions used are so strong and clear, that they cannot, without gross and palpable wresting, be understood of any but true believers (S.T., p. 17).—But,

**1.** admitting that true believers are meant, the words are only a supposition of their falling away, *if they, fall away*, and prove no matter of fact, that ever any did; and at most are only expressive of the danger they are in of falling, and of the difficulty of restoring them, from a partial fall, a final and total one being prevented by the power and grace of God. But, says our author, the apostle makes no supposition at all, there is no *if* in the original the words are in plain *English, it is impossible to renew again to repentance, those who were once enlightened, and have fallen away* but,

though the *if* or condition is not expressed, yet it is implied, and the sense is the same as if it was an hypothetical or conditional proposition may be as truly expressed without an *if*, as with it, as it is here; the words in the original lie literally thus, *it is impossible that those who were once enlightened, και παραπεσοντας, and they falling away, to renew them again unto repentance*; that is, should they fall away, which in plain *English* is, if they fall away; our translators have therefore rightly resolved the participle into a conditional verb, as many other learned men have done, as *Erasmus, Beza, Piscator, Paræus*, and others, the words are indeed in some versions translated without the condition, but then in such manner as to contain an argument for the perseverance of the saints, thus: *it is impossible that any that have been once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gifts,—and yet fall away*; that is, it is impossible that such should fall away; and so the *Syriac* version of the words is, *it is impossible, &c. ܐܘܢ ܕܢܝܘܢܐ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܢܝܘܢܐ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܢܝܘܢܐ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܢܝܘܢܐ* that they should sin again; so as to die spiritually, or lose the grace of God; which would require the crucifying of Christ again, and exposing him again to open shame; things impossible to be done, and therefore the former: for according to this version, the several other things mentioned are joined the word *impossible*; as that they should be renewed to repentance; and also that they should crucify the Son of God and put him to shame.—But,

**2.** there is nothing in the characters of these persons which shew them to be true believers; there is nothing said of their believing in Christ, or that necessarily implies it; there is nothing said that is peculiar to true believers; they are not said to be regenerated by the Spirit of God, called by the grace of God, or sanctified, or justified, or adopted, or heirs of God, and meet for the inheritance, or sealed by the Holy Ghost, or any thing of that kind.—

**3.** What is said of them, is no more than what is to be found in many that are destitute of the grace of God; they might be *enlightened*, or *baptized*, as the *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* versions understand and render it; or they might be enlightened into the doctrines of the Gospel, and to such a degree as to preach them to others, and yet be strangers to the true grace of God, and the spiritual enlightenings that true believers have of their lost estate by nature, need of Christ, and interest in him; they might *taste of the heavenly gift*, whether it be understood of a justifying righteousness, remission of sins, or eternal life; that is, they might have some speculative notions about these things, and desires after them; which might only arise from a natural

principle of self-love, and he destitute of any inward spiritual principle of grace: they might be *partakers of the Holy Ghost*, not of his person or special grace, but of his gifts; and that not only ordinary but extraordinary also, as Dr. *Hammond* and Dr. *Whitby* both understand the phrase, they might *taste the good word of God*, in the bare form and notion of it, and have a superficial knowledge of, and gust for it; and yet never have felt the effectual power of it upon their hearts; they might also *taste the powers of the world to come*; and these, whether they intend the glorious things relating to the state of the church after the first resurrection, or the ultimate joys and glories of heaven; they might have some notions of, and make some natural and self-pleasing reflections on them, without having those foretastes which are peculiar to the people of God: or whether they may intend the **δυναμεις**, miracles, and mighty works done in the times of the Messiah, the Jews, **αβημι** [ which many, as *Judas*, and others, were able to perform, who were not true believers in Christ, (see <sup><4172></sup>Matthew 7:22, 23).— Besides.

**4.** these persons seem to be represented by the unfruitful earth (v. 8), which bears thorns and briars, and is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, and its end to be burned; and true believers are manifestly distinguished from them, of whom the apostle was *persuaded better things, things that accompany salvation, though he thus, spoke*; put such a case, in the hypothetical and conditional form; and which was applicable enough to other persons, though not to them (v. 9), so that nothing can be fairly concluded from hence, against the final perseverance of the saints.

*The Seventh proposition* is, that

“Those who live by faith, may yet fall from God, and perish everlastingly;”

to establish which, the passage in <sup><5108></sup>Hebrews 10:38 is produced;

now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him:

from whence it is inferred that a justified person that now lives the life that is hid with Christ in God, may not endure to the end, may draw back to perdition, and be utterly cast off (S.T., p. 20).— But,

**1.** One that is just and righteous by the righteousness of Christ, or that is truly justified by it, ever remains so; he cannot be condemned or enter into

condemnation; he will be eternally glorified; *whom he justified, them he also glorified* (<sup><B10></sup>Romans 8:30, 33, 34). Such whose life is hid with Christ in God, their life is safe, and can never be destroyed; therefore, when he their life shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory (<sup><S10B></sup>Colossians 3:3, 4), and such who live by faith on Christ, shall never die; for so our Lord himself says, *whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die* (<sup><B11D></sup>John 11:20), that is, he that lives by faith on Christ, shall never die spiritually, or die the second and eternal death; and therefore, such an one can never so fall, as to perish everlastingly.—

**2.** These words are so far from militating against the doctrine of the saints deliverance, that they greatly establish it; for here are manifestly two sorts of persons mentioned: one that were πισίως “*of faith,*” that had true faith in Christ, and lived by faith on him, did not draw hack to perdition, but went on believing to the saving of their souls; or till they received the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls; of this number were the apostle and others with him, included in the word *we*, and every truly just, and righteous man. The other were υποσολης “*of the withdrawing,*” or separation; who forsook the assembly of the saints (v. 25), withdrew from their society and communion, and apostatized from the ways and worship of God; now by this distinction and opposition between these two sorts of persons, it clearly appears, that those that truly believe, do not draw back unto perdition, but continue in the faith of Christ, and in the true worship of God, until they are everlastingly saved; which is a firm testimony to the final perseverance of the saints; so likewise, that those that draw back unto perdition, were not of the faith, were not true believers, nor ever the just ones that live by faith: and so their drawing back or apostasy which was not from faith they never had, but from their profession of religion they once made, is no proof of one that lives by faith falling away, so as everlastingly to perish.—

**3.** It is indeed said, that the text is not fairly translated, and that the original runs thus: *the just man that lives by faith draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him;* making he that draws back to refer to the just man that lives by faith; but that this cannot be the sense, and so not the true rendering of the words, appears from the original text in <sup><S10B></sup>Habakkuk 2:4, from whence these words are taken; *Behold his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him;* which the *Greek* version and the apostle render, *if he withdraws, or draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him:* this then is the man that draws back, and who is opposed unto, and distinguished from the

righteous in the following clause, *but the just shall live by his faith*: hence it is a clear case, that he that draws back, and the righteous man, are not one and the same; and therefore, our translators are to be vindicated in rendering the words by an adversative *but*, and in their supplement of *any man*; which is supported by the authority of other learned men, as *Flaccus, Illyricus, Beza, Piscator*, and others; and even *Grotius* himself, who was no friend to the doctrine contended for, owns the justness of it, that *τις any one*, ought to be supplied, as agreeable to the grammatical construction of the words. Besides, could the translation this writer gives be established, which upon a little reflection he will easily see is inaccurate; it only contains a supposition of a righteous man's drawing back, which proves no matter of fact; and moreover, though such a man may draw back partially, and so as to incur the divine displeasure, yet not draw back into perdition; for from one that does so, the just man is distinguished, as appears from the following verse; *but we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, &c.* which seems to be mentioned on purpose to encourage true believers from the doctrine of perseverance when so many professors were forsaking their communion.

**The Eighth proposition** is, that

“Those that are sanctified by the blood of the covenant, may so fall from God, as to perish everlastingly;”

in proof of which, <sup>3810</sup>Hebrews 10:29 is produced; on which it is observed (S.T., p. 22), that it is undeniably plain, that the person mentioned was once sanctified by the blood of the covenant; that he afterwards by known willful sin trod under the foot the Son of God, and hereby incurred a sorer punishment than death, namely, death everlasting; whence it follows, that one so sanctified may fall, as to perish everlastingly. The sense of the passage, and the argument upon it, depend entirely upon the meaning of the phrase, *sanctified by the blood of the covenant*, and of whom it is spoken: and according to the rules of speech, since the immediate antecedent to the relative *he*, is the Son of God, it must be he and not the apostate that is here intended; and it is mentioned as an aggravation of the sin of such a person, that counted that blood unholy by which the Son of God himself was sanctified, set apart, hallowed and consecrated, to the discharge of that part of his priestly-office, which lay in intercession for his people; as *Aaron* and his sons were by the sacrifices of slain beasts, to minister in the priest's office: it was a most grievous sin to treat with

contempt such a person, as not only God the Father had sanctified, and sent into the world, and who had also sanctified, and set apart himself for the redemption of his people, that they might be sanctified through the truth; but having offered himself a sacrifice for their sins, whereby the covenant of grace was ratified and confirmed, was through the blood of that covenant brought again from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God; and so was sanctified or set apart by it to accomplish the other part of his priestly office, intercession for his people; to do which he ever lives and sits at the right hand of God. And this being the sense of the words, it leaves no room for any argument to be taken from hence, against the final perseverance of the saints.—But,

**2.** admitting that the words are to be understood of the apostate having been sanctified by the blood of the covenant; it should be explained in what sense he had been so, which this writer does not pretend to do, that we may judge whether it is a descriptive character of a real saint, or no; for if it is not, then it is still nothing to the purpose. It is not to be understood of the inward sanctification of nature, or of the heart; for that is by the Spirit of God; this the *Arminians* do not say: Dr. *Whitby* himself owns (*Discourse Concerning Election, &c.* pp. 141, 406), it has no relation to that; yet this is what ought to be proved, to make the person to be a real saint, or a true believer; or else he can be no instance of the saints final and total apostasy. Nor is it to be understood of remission of sins, and justification by the blood of Christ, as the above Doctor interprets it; for either this must be a partial remission of sins, and justification from them, or a full one; not a partial one, for when God forgives sins for Christ's sake, he forgives all sins, and justifies from all iniquities; and if a full one, then even these heinous crimes he is charged with, must be forgiven; and so he stood in no need of any more sacrifice for sin; nor could any punishment be inflicted on him for them nor need he fear any; and especially so sore and severe a one as is here represented: wherefore if these words are to be understood of an apostate, and of his having been sanctified by the blood of the covenant; the meaning must be, either that he was sanctified and separated from others by a visible profession of religion, had submitted to baptism, and partook of the Lord's Supper, had drank of the cup, *the blood of the New Testament or covenant*, though he did not spiritually discern the body and blood of Christ in the ordinance, but counted the bread and wine, the symbols thereof, as *common* things; or else that he professed himself to be sanctified, or to have his sins expiated

by the blood of the covenant, and to be justified by it, and was looked upon by others to be so, when he really was not: and take the sense either way, it furnishes out no argument against the final perseverance of the saints.

Thus having gone through the Eight propositions, laid down by the writer of the *Serious Thoughts*, &c., and shewn that they are without any foundation or authority in the word of God, and that the doctrine of the saints final perseverance stands unshaken by them; ***I shall now proceed to offer some arguments in proof of it and to establish the minds of God's people in it, and shall vindicate such of them, as are excepted to by the above writer.*** And,

***First, This doctrine may be concluded from the perfections of God:***

whatever is agreeable to them, and they make necessary, must be true; and whatever is contrary to them, and reflects dishonor on them, must be false. The doctrine of the saints final perseverance is agreeable to them, and is made entirely necessary by them, and therefore must be true; and the contrary doctrine, of the falling away of real saints, so as to perish everlastingly, is repugnant to them, and reflects great dishonor on them, and therefore must be false; as will appear by the following particulars.

**1.** The immutability of God is concerned in this affair;

I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed (<sup><30R6></sup>Malachi 3:6):

if they were, he must change in his love to them, and whom he now loves he must hate; he must alter his purposes concerning them; whereas, he has appointed them to salvation, he must consign them over to ruin and destruction; he must reverse his promises to them, and his blessings of grace bestowed on them; he must alter the thing that is gone out of his lips, his counsel, and his covenant, and be of a different mind from what he has been; but he is *of one mind, and who can turn him? he is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever:* and, therefore, his saints shall never perish; this is inconsistent with the unchangeableness of his nature, will and grace, and would greatly reproach this glorious perfection of his. This doctrine makes God changeable, with whom there is *no variableness nor shadow of turning;* nor can this writer disprove it; he is indeed unchangeably holy, just and good, as he says (S.T., p. 11); but he is also unchangeably loving to his people; unchangeably true and faithful, and unchangeable in his will,

purposes, promises, and covenant; which he would not be, if his beloved, chosen, and covenant ones should perish.

**2.** The wisdom of God is concerned in this doctrine: No wise man that has an end in view, but will prepare and make use of proper means; and, if in his power, will make those means effectual to attain the end, or he will not act a wise part: the end which God has in view, and has fixed, is the salvation of his people; and is it consistent with his wisdom to appoint insufficient means, or not to make those means effectual when it is in his power to do it? which must be the case, if any of those he has appointed to salvation should perish: No, as he has appointed the end, salvation, he has fixed the means, sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, which he prepares, produces, and makes effectual. Where would be his wisdom to appoint men to salvation, and never save them, to send his Son to redeem them, and they never the better for it; to begin a good work of grace in them, and not finish it? No, the wisdom of God is wonderfully displayed in this affair, in providing all blessings for his people in a covenant ordered in all things, and sure; in putting them into the hands of his Son for the security of them; in their complete redemption by him, wherein he has abounded in all wisdom, and prudence; and in assigning the work of sanctification in its beginning, progress, and issue, to the divine Spirit, who is equal to it, and will perform it.

There is no searching of his understanding; hence he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.—Wherefore, they shall run, and not be weary, and walk, and not faint (<sup>241B</sup>Isaiah 40:28, 29, 31);

shall persevere to the end, and get safe to heaven and happiness.

**3.** The power of God is concerned in this matter: such who are the *elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father*, and are *begotten again according to his abundant mercy*, who have a *lively hope* of a glorious inheritance, these are

kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation (<sup>410E</sup>1 Peter 1:2, 3, 5);

they are kept as in a garrison, as the word used signifies they are surrounded with the power of God: he is a *wall of fire round about them* (<sup>301B</sup>Zechariah 2:5), to protect and defend them, and to offend their



enemies: *as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his people, from henceforth, even for ever.* Wherefore

they that trust in the Lord, shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides for ever (~~<SC21>~~ Psalm 125:1, 2);

and this power of God is continually employed in the preservation of his people, he *keeps* them *night and day, lest any hurt* them (~~<SC21>~~ Isaiah 27:3); they are kept in, and through a course of believing unto the end; and their faith is as much secured and preserved by the power of God, as their persons are, who performs the work of faith with power, as well as begins it; they are kept by it, *unto*, and till they come to complete *salvation* in heaven; their *whole spirit, soul and body, are preserved blameless, to the coming of our Lord Jesus*, and safe *unto his heavenly kingdom* (~~<SC21>~~ 1 Thessalonians 5:23; ~~<SC21>~~ 2 Timothy 4:18): and therefore, since the power of God is so strongly engaged for them, they cannot fall so as to perish everlastingly. The writer, I have to do with, OWNS, that

“undoubtedly so are all they (kept by the power of God) who ever attain eternal salvation; it is the power of God only, and not our own, by which we are kept one day or one hour.”

Now there are not any real saints who are not kept by the power of God, and do not attain salvation; and it lies upon him to shew how the falling away of such, so as to perish everlastingly, is consistent with the words the apostle *Peter* referred to, as he says it is, or with their being kept by almighty power.

4. The goodness, grace, and mercy of God, serve to establish this truth; his goodness endures for ever; his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, on them that fear him (~~<SC21>~~ Psalm 103:17); the mercy of God as it is free and sovereign, plenteous, boundless, and infinite, so it is sure, permanent and perpetual; those that are once the objects of it, are always so, and therefore can never perish:

it is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not (~~<SC21>~~ Lamentations 3:22);

which they would, should any of his be consumed and perish. Can it be thought that that God who is *gracious and merciful, abundant in goodness and truth, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin*; that he who has *begotten men again, according to his abundant mercy*, and because he is

*rich* in it, and for his *great love* to them, *quicken*s them when *dead in trespasses* and sins, after all will suffer them so to fall, as to perish everlastingly? No, as the Psalmist says, *the Lord will perfect that which concerneth me*; the work of grace upon his heart, his whole salvation; his reason for it is, *thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever*: hence follows a prayer of faith, *forsake not the work of thine own hands* (<sup><4008></sup>Psalm 138:8); God will not.

**5.** The justice of God requires that those should be certainly and eternally saved, for whose sins Christ has died, for which he has made satisfaction by suffering the punishment due unto them; it is contrary to the justice of God to punish sin twice, once in the surety, and again in the redeemed, Christ is a surety for; and yet this must be the case, if true believers in Christ, for whom Christ suffered and died, should everlastingly perish: for to perish everlastingly, is the same as to be punished with everlasting destruction.

**6.** The truth and faithfulness of God secures the final perseverance of the saints; his *counsels of old are faithfulness and truth* (<sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 25:1); whatever he has appointed shall be performed *he is faithful that has promised* (<sup><3803></sup>Hebrews 10:23); and will make good whatever he has said; and, whereas there are many things he has said respecting the perseverance of his saints, his faithfulness is engaged to fulfil them;

God is faithful by whom they are called to the fellowship of his Son, to confirm them to the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus (<sup><4008></sup>1 Corinthians 1:8, 9):

and though he suffers them to be afflicted and tempted, yet he is

faithful, who will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able to bear, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape (<sup><4003></sup>1 Corinthians 10:13):

and those whom he sanctifies, shall be

preserved unto the coming of our Lord Jesus, faithful is he that has called them, who also will do it; and the same Lord is faithful, who shall establish and keep his people from evil (<sup><5023></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24; <sup><5023></sup>2 Thessalonians 3:3):

but if any of these should perish everlastingly, where is his faithfulness? we may be assured therefore they shall not perish, for he will *never suffer his faithfulness to fail* (<sup><1983></sup>Psalm 89:33): nor is there any condition annexed to those declarations and promises; the conditions this writer suggests (S.T., pp. 11, 12), are not of God's making, but of his own forging.

*Secondly, The final perseverance of the saints, may be concluded from the everlasting love of God unto them.* Those who are once the objects of God's love, are always so; his love to them in every state and condition into which they come is invariable and unalterable: it is constant, permanent, perpetual, and for ever God loves his people with the same love he loves his Son, and therefore it will always continue; and if it always continues, it is impossible they should ever perish; can a man perish everlastingly, and yet be the object of everlasting love? the love of God to him must cease, or he can never perish but that never can; God always *rests* in his love to his people; it is more immovable than *hills and mountains*; they may *depart*, but his loving-kindness never shall, that is from everlasting to everlasting; *I have loved thee*, saith the Lord (<sup><2403></sup>Jeremiah 31:3), *with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee*: but it is said (S.T., p. 7), this "simply declares God's love to the Jewish church; be it so,

whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope (<sup><6154></sup>Romans 15:4).

The Jewish and Christian church are loved with the same love; saints under the gospel-dispensation are not less loved, than under the legal one; if the Jewish church was loved with an everlasting love, then much more the Christian church, and believers in it, since their privileges are greater; and if the blessings of goodness bestowed on the Jewish church, by which the Lord drew and engaged them to himself, were evidences of his everlasting love to them; then surely the blessings of the new covenant bestowed upon saints under the present dispensation, and particularly, the Lord's drawing them by powerful and efficacious grace in conversion to himself, and to his Son, must be evidences of his everlasting love to them and therefore, they cannot everlastingly perish, because from his love they can never be separated; *for I am persuaded*, says the apostle (<sup><4133></sup>Romans 8:38, 39),

that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor

depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord:

which words do not merely declare the apostle's full persuasion of his own perseverance at that time, as our author suggests (S.T., p. 12); for he does not say, *shall not separate me*, but *us*, and expresses his full persuasion of the perseverance of all saints, whether they themselves had the full assurance of faith, or no; even of all the elect of God, against whom no charge can be laid, because God has justified them, and on whom no condemnation can come, because Christ has died for them, and whose salvation is sure and certain, because he ever lives to make intercession for them, and had made them more than conquerors over all their enemies; and therefore, nothing can obstruct their eternal happiness, or the bringing of them safe to glory (<sup><4833></sup>Romans 8:33-37).

**Thirdly**, *This doctrine of the saints final perseverance, may be established from the counsels, purposes, and decrees of God; particularly the decree of election, which stands sure, not upon the loot of works, but upon the will of him that calleth* (<sup><4811></sup>Romans 9:11), which is unalterable and irreversible. I take it for granted, that there is such a decree, by which God has chosen and appointed some men to everlasting salvation by Jesus Christ; this writer may dispute it with me if he pleases. My argument upon it is this, if God has chosen some men to eternal life by Christ, and any of these should everlastingly perish, then the purpose of God according to election concerning them, would not stand; but his *counsel shall stand*, and he *will do all his pleasure* (<sup><2340></sup>Isaiah 46:10); for who, or what can disannul his purpose? as he

has thought, so shall it come to pass, and as he has purposed, so shall it stand (<sup><2341></sup>Isaiah 14:24, 27);

and therefore they shall not perish. Divine predestination to life, and eternal glorification are inseparably connected together; the former infallibly secures the latter, and all the intermediate grace and means heading to it

whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified (<sup><4830></sup>Romans 8:30).

**Fourthly**, *This truth will receive further strength, from the consideration of the covenant of grace, made with the elect in Christ, before the world*

*began*; which is *ordered in all things*, with all blessings and promises, as well to provide for, and secure the certain perseverance, and eternal salvation of the persons in it, as to promote the glory of God; and it is *sure*, all the blessings and promises of it, and the salvation in it, are sure to all the seed, to all the covenant-ones; it is a *covenant of peace*, that can never *be removed*; sooner may rocks, hills, and mountains be removed than that: it has the oath of God annexed to it, and the faithfulness of God is engaged to fulfil it; who says (~~1883~~ Psalm 89:33-35),

I will not suffer my faithfulness to fail, my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips; once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.

Which covenant does not relate wholly to *David* and his family, literally understood, but to our Lord Jesus Christ, the son and antitype of *David*, and who is sometimes called *David* himself; this is he, whom the Lord found in his infinite wisdom to be a proper Saviour of lost sinners; this is the mighty one, on whom he laid the help of his people; this is he, whom he chose out from among them, and anointed to be, and invested with the office of, the Mediator, to whom he promised all help and assistance as man; this is his first-born, he has made higher than the kings of the earth, and whose spiritual seed and offspring shall endure for ever; all which can never be said of *David* and his family, in a literal sense. Nor was this covenant a conditional one; there is no condition either implied or expressed, on the failure of which God failed *David*, altered the thing that had gone out of his mouth, and broke the covenant of his servant; all which is without truth affirmed (S.T., p. 6): sooner may the covenant with day and night be broken than this covenant with *David*. Indeed, in the latter part of the psalm, some objections are made to the everlasting love of God to his Son, to the immutability of his covenant and the certain performance of it, taken from the sufferings and death of Christ, and his continuance under the power of the grave; when the faith and hope of his people were almost sunk and gone, see ~~1201~~ Luke 24:21, and when it seemed to them, being under the prevalence of unbelief, that the covenant made with Christ was made void: but shall the unbelief of men make the faith of God of none effect? whom shall we believe, God that says, *my covenant will I not break*; or his people in unbelieving frames, saying, *Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant*? not the latter, but the former. Besides, these persons whom the Psalmist represents, emerged out of their temptation, darkness, and unbelief, when they saw the Lord risen from the dead, and

triumphing over death, and the powers of darkness, having obtained eternal redemption for them; wherefore the psalm is closed with expressions of joy and thankfulness; *blessed be the Lord for ever more, amen, and amen.* Since therefore the covenant of grace can never be broken and made void, those who are interested in it can never perish everlastingly; sooner may *the heavens above be measured, and the foundations of the earth be searched,* than that *all,* or any of the spiritual *seed of Israel,* and of the antitypical *David* be cast off so as to perish, and be lost eternally (<sup><28135></sup>Jeremiah 31:35-37; 33:20-21).

*Fifthly, This may be further concluded from the special and particular promises made in this covenant,* and which stand on divine record, relating to the perseverance of the saints; and these are so many, that to name them all, would be to transcribe a great part of the Scriptures; as that the Lord will establish and keep his people from evil; will confirm them to the end, and preserve them safe to his kingdom and glory (<sup><4008></sup>1 Corinthians 1:8; 1 Thess 3:2; <sup><5048></sup>2 Timothy 4:18); that he will uphold them with the right hand of his righteousness, that they shall not be utterly cast down (<sup><23410></sup>Isaiah 41:10; <sup><48723></sup>Psalms 37:23, 24); that the righteous shall hold on their way, and shall grow stronger (<sup><3870></sup>Job 17:9); that he will put his fear into their hearts, and they shall never depart from him (<sup><24340></sup>Jeremiah 32:40); with a multitude of others of the same import, which are all *yea,* and *amen,* in Christ Jesus and these promises are absolute and unconditional: it is indeed said (S.T., p. 12), that in many the condition is expressed, and in others implied; but let it be named what the condition is, that is either expressed or implied in the above promises: and let the condition be what it will, it will be no difficult thing to prove that it is either elsewhere absolutely promised by the Lord, or undertook by Christ, or will be performed by the Spirit of God, in, and upon the Lord's people; so that their perseverance is not at all affected with it: That famous promise, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,* applied to New Testament believers, <sup><38135></sup>Hebrews 13:5. which, as it is an instance of a promise made to a particular person belonging to all the saints in common, and of one being made to a saint under the Old Testament, *Joshua,* belonging to those under the New Testament, so is not a conditional one, as is asserted (S.T., p. 22); so far is any condition from being expressly mentioned in it, or along with it, that that which is said to be so, is strongly enforced by this absolute and unconditional promise; and though it is recited to encourage in things temporal, yet it also may be, and is accommodated to things spiritual; and

is of use with respect to such things, as appears from the inference deduced from it; *so that we may boldly say, the Lord is our helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*; no, nor devils neither: and, if God will never leave his people in time nor eternity, as the phrase takes in both, then they cannot perish everlastingly: now, seeing the promises of God to his people are free, absolute, and unconditional, and he is able to perform them, and his faithfulness is engaged to do it, there is all the reason in the world to believe he will; and, if he will, and does make good these promises to them, it is impossible they should so fall, as to perish everlastingly.

*Sixthly, This may be further argued from several acts of God's grace towards his people, which are of such a nature, as ascertain their sure and everlasting salvation; and, besides his acts of election of them, and making a sure covenant with his Son on their account, before-mentioned, and the putting of them into the hands of his Son, with all grace and glory for them, of which more hereafter, the following ones may be observed:*

**1.** The adoption of them into his family. Predestination to it is according to the good pleasure of God's will, and does not arise from, or depend upon any merit, motive, or condition, in the adopted; the covenant in which God takes men into this relation is absolute and unconditional; it runs thus,

*I will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters*  
(~~2~~2 Corinthians 6:18):

all obstructions are removed, and way is made for the reception of this blessing through the redemption of Christ; the power and privilege of it is a gift of his, and his Spirit bears witness to it, hence called the Spirit of adoption; and such who thus become the children of God, always remain so; they that are of the *household of God*, are *no more strangers and foreigners*, they *abide* in his house and family for ever and are never cast out; if *sons*, no more *servants*, but *heirs of God*, and joint-heirs with Christ, and shall enjoy the eternal inheritance reserved for them (~~2~~Ephesians 2:19; ~~8~~John 8:35; ~~4~~Galatians 4:7); and, therefore, cannot perish everlastingly. To say as our author does (S.T., pp. 23, 246), that "he who is a child of God today, may be a child of the devil tomorrow," is a most vile expression, and reflects great dishonor on that

manner of love the Father has bestowed on men, that they should be called the sons of God (~~1~~1 John 3:1)

his reason for it is weak and groundless: “That a believer today, may be an unbeliever tomorrow, seeing he may make shipwreck of faith, and so no longer be a child of God;” but what, though a blaspheming heretic may make shipwreck of the doctrine of faith, which is all that can be proved from the instance referred to, does it follow that a true believer can make shipwreck of the grace of faith? no he cannot: besides, adoption does not depend upon faith; it is not faith that makes men the children of God, but is what makes them manifest, or makes them appear to be so; it is the free sovereign grace of God, which puts them into this relation, and keeps them there, and therefore, they shall never perish.

**2.** The justification of them by the righteousness of Christ. Such who are justified, can never be unjustified, or be removed from the state of justification, in which they are, into a state of condemnation, but always remain righteous persons through the righteousness of Christ, imputed to them; the righteousness by which they are justified is an *everlasting* one; the sentence of justification passed upon them, can never be reversed by man or devil; if God justifies who can bring a charge of any avail? who or what can condemn? there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, and are clothed with his righteousness; they are passed into justification of life, and shall never enter into condemnation; they have a right to eternal glory, through the justifying righteousness of Christ, and shall enjoy it; between their justification and glorification there is an inseparable connection:

Whom he justified, them he also glorified  
(~~818~~Romans 8:30, 33, 34).

Wherefore, those that are righteous in the judgment of God himself, as all such are whom he justifies by the righteousness of Christ, cannot possibly so fall, as to perish everlastingly.

**3.** The pardon of their sins by the blood of Christ. Those for whom Christ has shed his blood, for whose sins he has made satisfaction by his sacrifice; these God pardons for Christ’s sake; and these he forgives *all* trespasses; he heals *all* their diseases, and forgives *all* their iniquities (~~50213~~Colossians 2:13; ~~9A3B~~Psalms 103:3); not one sin of theirs is left unsatisfied for by Christ, or unpardoned by the Lord; and if so, then all the sins they ever fall unto, or are guilty of, are pardoned; and consequently, they never so fall, as to perish everlastingly: for, is it possible for a man to go to hell, and perish



eternally, with the pardon of all sins? it is impossible; what should he, what can he perish for, when all his sins are satisfied for and forgiven?

*Seventhly, This truth may be proved by the love of Christ to his saints, his care of them, what he has done and does for them, their interest in him, and relation to him.*

**1.** The love of Christ to them. They are the objects of his everlasting love; before the world was, his *delights were with these sons of men* (~~<1085>~~ Proverbs 8:31), and have continued ever since; as his incarnation, sufferings, death, and intercession show. He loves them as his Father loved him (~~<615B>~~ John 15:3); and therefore, his love to them must be very great, permanent and lasting, *yea* everlasting; and indeed, nothing can separate from it (~~<6185>~~ Romans 8:35): and therefore, such who are interested in it, can never perish everlastingly;

having loved his Own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end (~~<615C>~~ John 13:1).

This, the writer I am concerned with (S.T., p. 14), understands of the apostles only, and of Christ's loving them to the end of his life, and not theirs; to which may be replied, that all the apostles were not his own in a special sense, one of them was a devil, and was the devil's, and was not the object of Christ's special love, nor did he love him to the end; and besides, were the apostles the only persons that were *his own*? had he, and has he no special property in others also? certainly he has; who are equally the objects of his love as they were; and are loved by him, not to the end of his life on earth only, but to the end of their lives, even for ever, to all eternity; which is the sense of the phrase used: for to understand it only of Christ's life as man on earth, is a most trifling sense; it makes the love of Christ to be only an human affection, and to last no longer than he lived; whereas, Christ loves his not merely as a man, but as a divine person, and the Saviour of men; and loves them as much now he being in heaven, as when on earth; as his advocacy, intercession and preparations for them there show. Moreover, *εις τελος*, which we translate *to the end*, may be rendered *continually*, as in ~~<2775>~~ Luke 17:5, *for ever*; in which sense it is used by the *Septuagint* in ~~<1906>~~ Psalm 9:6, 18. and ~~<1942>~~ 44:23, and answers to an *Hebrew* word, which signifies *for ever*; and so the text in *John* is rendered by the *Ethiopic* version, *he loved them for ever*.

2. Those who are the objects of Christ's love, are *given* unto him by the Father, as his portion and inheritance, and to be kept and preserved by him: and will he lose his portion, his jewels, when it is in his power to keep them? He will not; he will keep them as the apple of his eye;

they shall be mine, says he, in the day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them, as a man spareth his only son that serveth him (<sup><3987></sup>Malachi 3:17):

when they were given to him by his Father, it was with such a charge, with such a declaration of his Will, that *of all which* he gave him, he *should lose nothing but should raise it up again at the last day* (<sup><4169></sup>John 6:39); which Will he perfectly observed;

those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition (<sup><4172></sup>John 17:12).

It is indeed said,

“the phrase, *those that thou gavest me*, signifies here (if not in most other places too) the twelve apostles, and them only; and that one of those whom the Father had given him, did not persevere unto the end, but perish everlastingly” (S.T., p. 15);

and so is rather against than for the doctrine of perseverance;. to which I answer, that what in the passage and throughout the chapter is spoken of the apostles, is not said of them purely as such, but as believers in Christ, and the disciples of him, and so in common belongs to all in that character; and, if such a fallacy can take place, once and again observed by our author, that what spiritual things are said of the Jewish church under the Old Testament, and of the apostles in the New, must be restrained to them, and them only, there will be little left for the saints to build their faith and hope upon: besides, it is a most clear case, that others besides the apostles are meant by this phrase, in that chapter where it is so much used; more are meant by the *many* the Father had *given him*, verse 2, to more than the apostles had Christ manifested his Father's name verse 8, such as are given him by the Father are opposed to the whole world, and distinguished from them; and even all that the Father had are claimed by him as his, by virtue of this gift, and for whom he prays, verses 9, 10, and it is certain, he prayed for more than the apostles; even for all them that should believe in him through their word, verse 20, as for *Judas*, the son of perdition, it does not appear, though he was an apostle, that he was among those that were given

him by the Father; he is distinguished from them in the very passage, and is opposed to them; for, **εἰ μὴ**, *but*, is not exceptive, but adversative; and the sense is, that none of those that were given to Christ in a way of special grace were lost, but the son of perdition, who was not given him in any such way, he was lost; and so is no instance of the apostasy of such who were given to Christ; for of every one of these at the great day, he will say,

behold I and the children which God hath given me  
(<sup><2813></sup>Hebrews 2:13).

3. These same persons were put into the hands of Christ for safety and preservation, even as early as the everlasting covenant was made with him:

yea he loved the people, all his saints are in thy hands  
(<sup><2813></sup>Deuteronomy 33:3):

hence they are said to be *preserved in Christ Jesus*, as the effect of their being *sanctified*, or set apart by God the Father in election, and previous to their being called effectually by grace (Jude 1); so they were preserved through the fall of *Adam*, though not from it, and in their nature-state, till called to be saints, where they remain safe and secure; they are set as a *seal* on his *heart*, and as a *seal* on his *arm*; they are *engraven* on the *palms* of his *hands*, and their *walls* are *continually before* him; they are a *crown of glory*, and a *royal diadem* in his *hand* (<sup><21816></sup>Song of Solomon 8:6; <sup><23416></sup>Isaiah 49:16; <sup><2518></sup>62:3), and can never be removed from thence; they are called the *sheep of his hand* (<sup><19917></sup>Psalms 95:7), from whence none can pluck them; *I give unto them*, says Christ (<sup><6108></sup>John 10:28, 29), *eternal life*; and who or what then can hinder them of it? *and they shall never perish*; who dare say they may or shall, when Christ says they shall not? *neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand*; **τις**, not any one, man or devil, nor they themselves; nor is there any condition expressed in these words, or in the context, on which the fulfillment of them depends; *hearing* Christ's voice and *following* him, are not conditions of these promises, as is said (S.T., p. 13); but descriptive of the sheep of Christ in his hand, and are plain marks of their perseverance; which is in the strongest manner insured to them by these words of Christ, and still more confirmed by the following;

my Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands. I and my Father are one.

4. They that are loved by Christ, given him by his Father, and put into his hands, are redeemed by him, and are the purchase of his blood, and therefore, can never perish; should they, it must be either for want of sufficiency in the price paid for them, or of power in Christ to keep them; neither of which can be said: the price of Christ's blood is a sufficient and effectual price for them; and he is able to keep them and will: he will never lose the purchase of his blood; should he in any one instance, his death would be so far in vain; nor could it be said, that *the pleasure of the Lord has prospered in his hand*, or that he *sees of the travail of his soul*, and is *satisfied* (<sup>2530</sup>Isaiah 53:10, 11): but our author says (S.T., p. 23), *horresco referens*, enough to make a man shudder to read it; "If the oracles of God are true, one who was purchased by the blood of Christ, may go thither, (that is, to hell,) for he that was sanctified by the blood of Christ, was purchased by the blood of Christ, and such an one may nevertheless go to hell." The assertion is bold and shocking, and stands upon a mistaken sense of the passage in <sup>3809</sup>Hebrews 10:29, as has been shewn before, and is without any foundation in the oracles of God.

5. Those whom Christ loves, were given to him, and for whom he died, for them he ever lives to make intercession; in which he is always heard, and therefore they cannot perish: in particular he prays for their perseverance; he prays for them that *their faith fail not*; that God would *keep them* through his name, that they might *be one*; that he would *keep them from the evil* of the world, and that they might *be with him where he is*, to *behold his glory*; and now as he himself says to his Father, *I know that thou hearest me always*: if he is always heard, and his intercession is prevalent and effectual in all things, for which it is made, then it is impossible that those for whom it is made, should perish everlastingly; and besides, should they, his preparations of mansions of glory for them in his Father's house would be in vain, <sup>3842</sup>John 14:2, 3.

6. There is a close and inseparable union between Christ and the saints which effectually secures them from a final and total falling away, or so as to perish everlastingly; he is the head, and they his body; they are members of his body; they are *the fulness of him that filleth all in all* (<sup>4023</sup>Ephesians 1:23); and, if any one member, even the least, should perish, they could not be said to be *his fulness*: nay, they that are joined to the Lord, are not only one body, but *one spirit*, with him; they have their life from him; it is *hid with him*, and secured in him; *because he lives, they shall live also*; their life is *bound up in the bundle of life with his* (<sup>4167</sup>1 Corinthians 6:17;

Galatians 3:3; John 14:13; 1 Samuel 25:20): so, that as *Luther* said, *si nos ruimus, ruit & Christus*, “if we fall, Christ must fall too.” They are laid on a foundation that is sure: they are built on a rock, against which, *the gates of hell can never prevail*; and from whence, all the *winds and waves and floods* of their own corruptions, Satan’s temptations, and the world’s persecutions can never remove them (Matthew 16:18; 7:24, 25).

*Eighthly, The doctrine of the saints final perseverance, may be concluded from the Spirit’s work of grace upon their hearts, from his habitation in them; and from his being the earnest of their inheritance, and the sealer of them unto the day of redemption.*

1. From his work of grace upon their hearts. The grace that is wrought in them by him, is a *seed which remaineth*, and therefore, the man in whom it is, *cannot sin*, that is, *the sin unto death*, or so as to perish everlastingly; the *seed* he is born of is *incorruptible*, immortall, and never dies; the grace which is put into him, is *a well of water springing up into everlasting life*; eternal life is the certain fruit and effect of it; grace and glory are inseparable things; to whomsoever God *gives grace* he gives *glory* (1 John 3:9; 1 Peter 1:23; John 4:14; Psalm 84:11). The several graces of the Spirit are abiding ones, particularly faith, hope, and love; and *now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three* (1 Corinthians 13:13) love, though the first ardour of it, may be abated and *first-love* may be *left*, it cannot be lost; it may wax *cold*, yet cannot be extinguished; *many waters cannot quench* it; nothing can *separate from the love of Christ* (Song of Solomon 8:7; Romans 8:35); as not from Christ’s love to his people, so neither from theirs to him, so that it is entirely gone: No, in the worst of times, under whatsoever darkness, desertion, temptation or affliction, a believer is, still Christ is the object of his love; as the cases of the church in *Canticles* (Song of Solomon 3:1-3; John 21:17), and of *Peter* shew: hope is an *anchor sure and stedfast*, being cast on Christ the foundation, from whence it can never be removed (Hebrews 6:19); and faith is that *race, which is much more precious than gold that perisheth* (1 Peter 1:7); and what gives it its superior excellency is, because it does not perish itself: Christ is the *author and finisher* of it; he prays for it that it *fail not* (Hebrews 12:27; Luke 22:32), and performs the work of it with power: salvation is annexed to it, and inseparably connected within it; *he that believeth shall be saved* (Mark 16:16); nay it is said, that such an one *hath everlasting life*; is entered

upon it, does in some sense possess it, has the foretaste, earnest, and pledge of it; and that *he is passed from death to life; and shall not come unto condemnation* (~~John~~ John 5:24); and therefore, cannot perish everlastingly. But our author says (S.T., p. 9), the plain meaning is, *he that believeth*, if he continue in the faith, *shall be saved*. But this is an interlineation of his; and to interline a record is felony; and what crime must that man be guilty of that interlines the record of heaven, the great charter of our salvation, the will and testament of our heavenly Father, confirmed by Christ the testator? Besides, he that believes shall continue in the faith; there is no *if* or doubt to be made of it; *he is of them that believe*, or goes on believing, *to the saving of the soul*, till he receives *the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul* (~~Hebrews~~ Hebrews 10:39; ~~1 Peter~~ 1 Peter 1:9); or otherwise it could only be said *he may be saved*: and moreover the phrase, *he shall be saved*, ascertains his continuance in faith, as well as his salvation. But then it is urged (S.T., pp. 8, 9), that “by all the rules of speech,” the other part of the sentence must mean “*he that does not believe* at this moment, *shall* certainly and inevitably be *damned*.” To which I reply, that there is a great difference between faith and unbelief, or between a believer and an unbeliever at the present moment; the one is certainly final, the other may not be final; he that truly believes this moment goes on to believe, and shall certainly be saved: he that does not believe this moment may believe hereafter, and so not be damned: or take the answer in other words, more in the language of Scripture, *he that believeth hath everlasting life*, now, this moment; and according to the tenor of the Gospel, *he shall be* certainly and inevitably *saved*: *he that believeth not*, according to the tenor of the law,

*shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*  
(~~John~~ John 3:36),

even now, this moment; and he shall be certainly and inevitably damned, unless God of his grace bestows faith on him; and then he is openly entitled to what is in the other declaration, *he that believeth shall be saved*. Upon which every individual believer may thus argue, whoever believes shall be saved; I believe, and therefore I shall be saved, and not perish everlastingly.

**2.** In whomsoever the Spirit of God works the good work of grace, in them he takes up his residence; they are his temples in whom he dwells, and in these he dwells, for ever: *I will pray the Father*, says Christ (~~John~~ John 14:16),

and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

and if he abides with them for ever, then they cannot everlastingly perish; he is that *anointing* they have *received* of Christ, which *abideth* in them (~~1~~1 John 2:27), from whence they are denominated Christians, and by which they continue such; and it is by virtue of his inhabitation and abiding in them, that their mortal bodies shall be quickened and raised, and be brought into a state of immortality and bliss (~~Romans~~Romans 8:11).

**3.** The Spirit of God not only continues in the hearts of his people, but he continues there as an *earnest* of their *inheritance*, which ensures it to them, for as sure as they have the earnest, and which they have from God himself, and is no other than the Lord the Spirit, so sure shall they have the whole; and if an earnest makes things sure and certain among men, it must needs do so between God and his people. Moreover, the Spirit is the sealer of them until *the day the day of redemption* (~~Ephesians~~Ephesians 1:13, 14; 4:30); until their bodies are redeemed from the dust of death, from mortality and the graves, he has set his seal and mark upon them, which can never be broken or erased; and assures them of their salvation, and bears *witness* to their spirits, that they are the children of God, and so heirs of him, and joint-heirs with Christ; but of what avail would this earnest, seal and witness be, if they should eternally perish? But from hence it may be most assuredly gathered that they never shall.

*Ninthly*, From all that has been said, it clearly appears, that the glory of all the three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit, is concerned in this affair, and they must lose it, if this doctrine is not true; or if the saints should everlastingly perish, where would be the Father's glory in election, in the covenant of grace, and in the mission of his Son? Where would be the glory of the Son of God in the redemption of his people, in his sacrifice and satisfaction, and in his intercession for them? And where would be the glory of the divine Spirit in the sanctification and sealing of them, if after all this they perish everlastingly? For all depends upon their final perseverance and complete salvation. And therefore we may be assured, that since the saints are held with this threefold cord, which can never be broken, their final perseverance is certain, and their everlasting salvation sure.

**Tenthly**, *The contrary doctrine takes away the foundation of a believer's joy and comfort*; it makes the love of God changeable: the covenant of grace failable; the redemption and satisfaction of Christ insufficient; and the work and graces of the Spirit loseable; and so, must consequently fill the minds of the children of God with great doubts, fears and distresses, if not despair; since their state and condition is so very precarious: what comfort can a believer take in his present circumstances, if they are such as by a single act of sin, to which he is liable every moment, he may be removed from a state of grace into a state of condemnation, and, notwithstanding all the favors bestowed on him, and promises made unto him, and grace given him, he may perish everlastingly? but this writer I have been considering tells us (S.T., pp. 19, 20), that his comfort is not affected hereby; it does not stand upon this, but upon his present knowledge, sight, faith, frames, and a good conversation; and bids men go and find a more solid joy, a more blissful comfort on this side heaven. But blessed be God, we have a better foundation for joy and comfort than all this; the true believer, though he lives *by faith*, he does not live *upon* it; he lives by it as *Esau* did by his *sword* (<sup><0174></sup>Genesis 27:40); he did not live upon it, that would have been hard living indeed, but he lived upon what it brought him: so a believer lives not on his faith, but upon Christ, and the grace of Christ, faith brings nigh unto him. He has better things than uncertain precarious frames to live upon and receive his comforts from; even the unchangeable love of God; the unalterable covenant of grace; the faithfulness of God, who though we *believe not*, yet *he abides faithful* (<sup><0173></sup>2 Timothy 2:13); absolute and unconditional promises; Jesus Christ the same today, yesterday, and for ever; his precious blood, perfect righteousness, atoning sacrifice, and that fulness of grace which is in him.

**To conclude**, If a man may be confident of any one thing in this world, he may be *confident of this very thing*, that in whomsoever, whether in himself, or in any other, God

hath begun a good work, he will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (<sup><0109></sup>Philippians 1:9);

and that *all* the true *Israel* of God

shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation (<sup><2817></sup>Isaiah 45:17);

and that not one of them shall eternally perish.