

PERSEVERANCE

OF THE

SAINTS

BY

R. B. C. HOWELL

Copyright (Public Domain)

[www.reformedontheweb.com/home/.html](http://www.reformedontheweb.com/home/.html)

## The Privileges of Believers In Christ Include Their Perseverance In Grace Unto the Attainment of Final, and Complete Salvation

*Philippians 1:6* "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

To persevere in grace unto the attainment of final, and complete salvation, is another, and the last in the catalogue which I shall at present particularly consider, of the inestimable privileges growing out of the union of believers with Christ. I need not tell you that a result so glorious will not be achieved without a struggle. The utmost energies of minds renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, will be imperatively demanded. Battles are to be fought; victories are to be won; labors are to be endured; before the end is gained.

. . . Not for thee Spreads the world her downy pillow; On the rock thy couch must me,  
While around thee chafes the billow."

But in every struggle, every conflict, Jehovah is your guide and support, and has promised that you shall be "more than conquerors," through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Many excellent christians however, in opposition to the doctrine maintained by us, hold, to use the language of one of their most distinguished divines, that—"A *believer* may *totally* lose his *faith*, and *regeneration*, and may continue in *apostasy*, and so *eternally perish*."1

Either this proposition is not defensible, or that which asserts the final perseverance of the saints—in other words, the continuance of all believers "in a state of grace to a state of glory"—must be abandoned. Both cannot be true. To which shall we adhere? It is our interest, and our duty, to know the truth, on this, and all other topics; and thanks to our God, the means are accessible and at hand by which the whole inquiry may be fully and satisfactorily determined.

Before entering upon the argument however, whether in refutation of the opinion stated, or in defence of our own conclusion, it is necessary, if you would clearly comprehend the question to be examined, that several preliminary observations should be submitted.

In the first place, we predicate final perseverance in grace of those only who are "born again"—the saints of Christ Jesus—and not of mere *professors* of religion. Let this fact be kept constantly in memory. Professors of religion, members of the Churches, are not all, as a matter of course, the children of God, and followers of the Redeemer. Many, in every age, have assumed the outward forms of godliness, in whose hearts true piety had no dwelling place. In the estimation of enlightened christians of every class, *such* are *expected* to "fall away." Their relations to the Church are not congenial; their spiritual duties are burdensome; they soon become weary; and in going back to the world, they return to a course of life which their hearts always preferred. *Their* apostasy is a natural consequence, and always to be anticipated.

It is, secondly, necessary that you discriminate carefully, between *backsliding*, and *apostasy*. The former is the act of turning back from God; the latter is the forsaking, or the renouncing of the religion of Christ. Backsliding consists either in the relinquishment of evangelical doctrine; or in the loss of

spirituality of mind; or in the gradual departure from correct morals. *All* these evils are embraced in apostasy. The backslider commits transgressions, but returns to his allegiance, and obtains forgiveness, and acceptance. The apostate continues; dies in his sins; and "so eternally perishes." We teach that none of the true children of God—he believing, the pardoned, the regenerated, the sanctified—become *apostate*, but to *backsliding*, of every character and degree, all, it is but too evident, even the best, and most devoted, are constantly, and painfully liable.

A third preliminary remark—Final perseverance in grace is never accomplished without the divinely appointed instrumentalities. The means, and the ends, are invariably associated. And will believers in Christ always employ those means? If they do, the result can never be doubtful. Messiah himself says *they will*. If a man *love me he will keep my words*, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our *abode* with him."<sup>2</sup> "This is the love of God that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous."<sup>3</sup> The saints of the Redeemer—

"Have proclaimed him King, and in their hearts His title is engraven, with a pen Dipt in the fountain of eternal love,"

With these considerations before you, we proceed to weigh carefully, and prayerfully, in the balances of divine truth, the principal objections to the conclusion that all believers in Christ will persevere in grace unto the attainment of final and complete salvation, never "totally losing their *faith*, and *regeneration*," but pressing onward till they reach, and wear, the crown of eternal life.

The first of these objections may be stated thus—Many of the angels apostatized; our first parents also, fell from their original state of holiness; why then, may not christians "lose their faith and regeneration," and so bring upon themselves eternal perdition?

We have here brought before us two classes of intelligent beings; angels in heaven; and men in their primal state of innocence. Let us consider them separately. Angels belong to another world. Of the cause, and nature, of their apostasy, I may be permitted to remark, we know very little. Upon this topic our Heavenly Father has not deemed our instruction necessary. Allusions to the subject in his word, are made only incidentally. No argument therefore, can be predicated upon the fall of *angels*, in support of the doctrine which teaches the apostasy of *christians*. Here we dismiss this part of the objection.

But our first parents also fell from their original state of holiness. If so, may not christians under similar influences, fall and be lost?

This proposition demands our serious investigation. I observe, that between their primitive condition, and that of truly regenerated men of subsequent ages, no such similarity exists, as will admit of conclusive reasoning from the one to the other. Let several facts, evincive of the truth of this statement, be considered. You will, in the first place, remember that the covenant of God with them was wholly different from that upon which you now stand. To Adam Jehovah said—"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."<sup>4</sup>

The obligation of this covenant was a simple negative, upon a single point. How easy would have been compliance. The conditions were explicit—obey, and live; disobey, and die. The result need not be repeated.

With this, contrast the Gospel Covenant—"I will put my laws into their mind, (saith Jehovah) and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more."5

Well may this be distinguished as "*the covenant of grace!*" How utterly unlike the Adamic. With our first parents all was unbending justice; with you all is favor, mercy, boundless forbearance. In the covenant with them, no provision was made for the pardon of sin; in the Gospel covenant, this is one of the strongest features. Besides all this, *they* were, until they sinned, utter strangers to pain, and sorrow, and wasting wretchedness. They had not experience of evil. *You* have known all its bitterness. And further, *They* disposed of their own life, and alas! incurred its dreadful forfeiture! "*Ye* are led (to sin) and *your* life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also, appear with his in glory."6

Their condition was wholly different from yours. Almost its antipodes. The reasoning from analogy therefore—is here clearly out of place—it is not legitimate. Neither, as you now see, from the fall of angels nor of our first parents, from their original state of holiness, can any valid arguments be adduced, proving that regenerated men, once depraved and sinful, but now redeemed and sanctified, are liable to "lose their faith, and regeneration, or to continue in apostasy, and so eternally perish." The objection is without relevancy, or force.

The threatenings, cautions, and warnings, with which the word of God every where abounds, imply, it is alleged, if they do not aver, the probability that some true christians will apostatise, and forever perish. They are therefore presented as a second objection to the doctrine it is my purpose to establish.

That such threatenings and cautions, and warnings, are of constant recurrence in the divine word, and that they are in their character, appalling, is most true. The premises are therefore cheerfully conceded, but the conclusion from thence, does not appear to me, by any means natural, or a matter of course. The reasoning is illogical, as I shall presently fully demonstrate. Let two important facts be here fixed carefully in the mind. The Church of Christ is composed, not of the regenerate alone, but of the unregenerate also. This is the first fact. The second is, that all these threatenings, and cautions, and warnings, are addressed to the members of the Church as a body. Both these truths will, I suppose, be readily admitted by all.

But I would be fully understood, and therefore, will refer you to testimony. I do not admit that the unconverted have any right to a place in the Churches. The word of God, we very well know, does not approve their admission. On the contrary, it is strictly prohibited. But those who administer the affairs of the kingdom of Christ upon earth, are men. They are imperfect; their administration also must therefore be imperfect. Our best efforts may be exerted to preserve the body pure from unworthy members, but we cannot read men's hearts, and in despite of all our vigilance, very many find their way into the Church, who are strangers to repentance and faith; some probably, for some reasons, seeking to appear what they know they are not; and others candid, and sincere, but misled, and deceived. I state the simple fact that there are unconverted men in the Churches. So it has been in every age—in apostolic as well as in our own times. A Judas, and a Simon Magus, were then members of the Churches, and stood side by side, with a James, and a John. So now, the converted and the unconverted,

the eminently holy, and the profoundly depraved, meet and mingle in the sanctuary, and at the very table of the Lord. Such, to a greater or less extent, are all the Churches. This we know to be true, by the institution in the word of God of disciplinary measures to exclude the unworthy when discovered, and by our own personal observation.

To the Churches as bodies, so composed, are all the fearful passages in question addressed. To the members of the Church at Rome for example, Paul said—"If ye live after the flesh ye shall die."<sup>7</sup>

To those of the Churches of Galatia, "Be not deceived God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption."<sup>8</sup>

To the members of the old Jewish Church the prophet Ezekiel said—"When the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he love? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sins that he hath sinned, in them shall he die."<sup>9</sup>

Does any one deny that these, and all similar threatenings, are, in fact, addressed to the members of the Churches. If they are not addressed to members of the Churches, they can have no influence upon the argument; they are directed to those who are *not* members, and whose claims to religion, since all truly religious men unite with the Churches, are at best, exceedingly questionable. They are in truth, however, addressed to the Churches, all of whose members are *professedly* righteous, and *claim* to be accepted of God through Christ. They are so regarded by their brethren, and by all others. For a season, they all act in accordance with their profession. No difference in zeal, and good works, can be perceived between the truly converted and unconverted. They all, whatever may be really the fact, bear the same character. They are known as christians—men of God.

Uniting with the Church however, important as this act may be, is any easy matter. It is but the beginning of the christian life. Next comes the period of trial. Will all who join the Churches, bear the test to which sooner or later, they will most surely be subjected. Remember also that the period which is to try the strength of their faith, patience, obedience, and fidelity, extends through their whole life upon earth. With these facts before you, survey the scene which I will now sketch, as it passes. For *one*, the seductions of sense, ere long, prove too mighty; he yields; lives after the flesh, and dies. Another, carried away by the fascinations of the world,—wealth, ambition, honor, pleasure—is found sowing to the flesh; he reaps corruption. Then the righteous man—he who had been eminent for zeal, and good works, foremost in the sacred ranks, is overthrown, turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and miserably perish! A succession of similar events continues. Their profession when tested, prove unequal to the trial! They have fallen; and are probably lost forever. Behold the picture. Is it imaginary? Alas! far from it. Do these facts, however, prove that the persons in question have "lost their *faith*, and *regeneration*?" Surely not. The facts all concur to demonstrate that they never possessed these high endowments. True they *professed* religion. But the indubitable evidence of a man's *faith* and *regeneration*" is, not alone that he has been excited, and experienced fears and sorrows, and confidence and raptures; nor that he does many righteous acts, and is lauded as eminently devoted; but it is that he sustains the tests to which he is subjected in the christian profession. The "refiners fire" consumes the dross only; the pure gold all remains, and is by the process, rendered but the finer, and the brighter. Can it be proved that these men who have fallen, although they previously maintained the character of great piety, were ever rally regenerated? Never. Such proof is impossible, as long as men can appear to be what they are not. Then *their* fall is very far from showing that the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints is not true.

Do not, however, the truly converted also, sometimes fall? We have seen that there are in the Churches two classes of persons. So, I beg you to observe, are there two classes of persons among the fallen. The one class, now free from the Church, seem to delight in sin; their hearts grow daily, more and more obdurate; their conscience appears but a feeble impulse; their sin against God has no restraint, except their desire to subserve their own personal and family reputation, and interest. The other class are, after a while at least, overtaken by remorse; repentance pursues them; and with self loathing and tears, *they* return, and assure us that, throughout all their wanderings, they were doing violence to their consciences, and their judgment, and were supremely miserable. The former were unregenerate apostates; and latter converted backsliders. If some like Hymeneus and Alexander make shipwreck of their *professed* faith and good conscience, and thus go down miserably to eternal death; others, like a David and Peter, return from their sins, and give themselves anew to the service of him who has graciously said—"I will heal their backslidings; I will love them freely."<sup>10</sup>

These general remarks apply to all the *individual* instances of apostasy recorded in the scriptures, and which are constantly occurring within the circle of our own observation. Prophecy foretells them and time witnesses the truth of the prediction. Many of Christ's own personal disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Men are still characterised by like conduct. Were such ever changed in heart? They have been, we have said, under spiritual influences; they have done many things religiously; but all the testimony accessible forbids the conclusion that they were ever renewed. Of those in the Philippian Church, and they may be safely assumed as examples of all others, Paul does not intimate the former regeneration, but says—"Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction."<sup>11</sup>

Of what value then, we may be asked, are all these threatenings, and warnings, and cautions? They are, I answer, of infinite benefit to those who without having experienced any change of heart, have nevertheless professed religion. True, they have assumed a most dangerous position. Deception—

"—So potent is its spell, That none, decoy'd into that fatal ring, Unless by Heaven's peculiar grace, escape."

Still they are not beyond the boundaries of mercy. They may yet repent, believe, and be saved. But how are they to be reached? Threatenings, and cautions, and warnings, are addressed to the whole Church. Were they not, these graceless professors would never apply them to themselves. The appalling declarations of Jehovah of which we speak, may bring dismay, and trembling to the heart of the contrite; they at the same time however, apprise the unregenerated of their danger, and thus become the means of their salvation. They are promotive also of the highest interests of the true christian. What in fact, are they all, but so many expressions of love, by which their Father in heaven assures them to the inseparable connection which always subsists as well between sin and misery, as between holiness and salvation. They in all cases, imply the opposite promises; and do often, most effectually, the work of mercy. If we truly "have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," the fears they excite will serve to make us cleave to the truth with increased tenacity, and to walk before God with growing carefulness, and humility. By how much therefore the awakening and deliverance of the erring, and the carefulness, and security of these who love Christ, are valuable, by so much are the threatenings, cautions, and warnings of the word of God fraught with benevolence and grace.

Upon a careful examination of this whole topic you must now clearly see that the threatenings, the cautions, and the warnings, of the word of God, and all the individual instances of apostasy recorded in

the scripture, and that occur in our own day, afford no proof that any true believer in Christ will ever "lose his faith, and regeneration," or will not persevere in grace unto the attainment of final and complete salvation.

Many, in the third place, object to our conclusion on this subject from the apprehension that the doctrine may inspire a dangerous security, and create a carelessness in the use of the means of salvation. They think its practical tendency injurious.

Such may be the effect of crude and erroneous notions of the doctrine. Ignorance and error, are always productive of evil. But no such consequences are attendant upon it when truly and fully comprehended. Does any one, professedly a christian, and properly instructed, deliberately, and intentionally, practice sin against God? This fact ought instantly to convince him that he is yet unrenewed in the spirit of his mind; and he may perhaps be moved thereby to seek as never before, and obtain, salvation. It is essential to the very nature of grace that it lead to holiness and obedience in this life, as well as to salvation in that which is to come. But it is said, men are free agents, and therefore, have the power to throw away their "faith and regeneration." Yes, men *are* free agents; but will they therefore act contrary to nature? Because you are a free agent will you leave the abodes of civilization, resort to the fields, and "eat straw like the ox." Never. You will not, because it is in opposition to your nature. The nature of the christian is renewed. His *will* is turned to God, and it determines him to serve God. Can you will in opposition to your will? His *affections* are holy. You love your Lord Jesus Christ.—Can you then love and follow sin? Can you have experience of its criminality, and ingratitude, and misery, and not instinctively reject it? Can you know Christ, and deliberately, and finally forsake him? Can you have faith in the Redeemer, and cherish an impure heart? Can confidence of your safety in Christ become the motive which impels you to rebel against him, and follow the life of a sinner? Surely not. Such things cannot be. Yet they must all occur before it can be rendered probable that the doctrine, which teaches the final perseverance of the saints, is of injurious practical tendency. But there is another, and a still plainer test, by which the strength of the objection may be tried. I appeal to facts. They are numerous, and at hand. Look around you, and tell me, are those who believe in the doctrine that christians "fall from grace, and eternally perish,"—and there are many such—more circumspect, spiritual, religious, or less likely to become apostates, than those who believe in the final perseverance of the saints? We know they are not. They are, to say the least, as frequently as men of any other class, overcome by the evils which so thickly beset the paths of the christian. All the testimony in the case disproves therefore, the injurious practical tendency alleged.

These I believe, are all the objections of any importance, to the doctrine which maintains the final perseverance of the saints—the fall of the angels, and of our first parents, from their original state of holiness; the threatenings of the word of God; the individual examples of apostasy recorded in the scriptures, and that occur in our own day; and the alleged injurious practical tendency of the doctrine. We have candidly and impartially considered them all, and have seen that they are without weight, and fall far short of disproving the proposition that all true believers will at last, gain the crown of eternal life.

We now turn to consider briefly, some of the leading arguments in favor of the doctrine.

Salvation, I remark, in the first place, is preeminently the work of God. This great truth constitutes a primary article in the faith of all evangelical christians. He has redeemed, regenerated, and sanctified his people, with a view to their salvation, and the glory of all his attributes demands that the end

proposed shall be accomplished. His *love* to his people is unchangeable, and therefore they cannot be the objects of it at one time, and not at another. His *faithfulness* to them, and to his promises, is not founded upon their merits, but his own will and goodness; it cannot therefore be violated. His *wisdom* foresees every obstacle in the way, and is capable of removing it, and directing them into the right path. Has he chosen an end so glorious, and will he fail to choose the means necessary for its accomplishment? His *power* is absolute, and perpetually exerted for their preservation, and protection. And will he not save his people? To them all, the divine declaration is made—"To an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you," *ye* "are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."12

The nature of their connection with the Lord Jesus Christ, I observe secondly, justifies the assurance that all the truly regenerate will persevere in divine grace unto eternal life.

"We are bound to give thanks always to God, for you brethren, beloved of the Lord," says an apostle, "because God hath from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; whereunto he hath called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."13

Again. The atonement by Jesus Christ, God the Father has accepted for the forgiveness of your sins. Will he revoke his act of pardon; and will the law once satisfied by Messiah, again turn upon you, and demand at your hands a second satisfaction? Is not the law just, and holy? Again. By your adoption into the family of Jehovah, you are proclaimed from on high, "Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."14

Will this proclamation be reversed, and you disinherited? How can this be, since you receive all these blessings by the *Will* and *Testament* of our Lord himself, and to give full effect to his actions, the *Testator* is dead? And again, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."15

You believe, and therefore have everlasting life. Shall this life be extinguished? This cannot be, since it is impossible that that which is everlasting can after a few years cease to exist. Once more. Jesus Christ is our Advocate to plead our cause before the Father in heaven. Will he fail of success? Now if in Christ Jesus you were from the beginning chosen, to salvation, and to secure it you have been actually called, and endowed with faith, and sanctification; if through him you have been pardoned, and the claims of the law against you fully satisfied; if you are recognized, and proclaimed heirs with Christ of the heavenly inheritance; if you already have everlasting life; and have his glorious promise—"Because I live ye shall live also;"16 what can we conclude but that your connection with Christ secures effectually, your final and complete salvation.

The perseverance of the saints in grace unto eternal life, is also evident, thirdly, from the work of the Holy Spirit.

"Now he," said Paul, "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."17

By this holy anointing the people of God are distinguished as already consecrated to be kings, and priests, on high; by the sealing they are received, recognized, and acknowledged, as his peculiar treasure; and by the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts—that is the giving of a part as a pledge of the future bestowment of the whole—he fully ratifies our title to eternal salvation. Further. Our regeneration, and sanctification constitute important parts of the process by which we are fitted and

qualified for heaven, and give undoubted proof that it is the intention of the Holy Ghost to save us. Will he, after all this, fail of his design?

God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—purpose the salvation of all believers. This truth is now placed beyond the reach of controversy. On this point there is, I must think, no question in the mind of any intelligent christian. No deficiency can exist on the part of Jehovah, nor of any of the persons in the adorable Trinity. If all believers are not saved, the failure cannot be chargeable to God.

Finally. The salvation of all believers is a result guaranteed by the influence of the new nature in the soul of the regenerate.

In every instance of true conversion to God, the will, the affections, the desires, the purposes—all the powers of the mind—are, as we have already said, turned from sin to holiness. The old unsanctified nature, followed worldly things; the new spiritual nature follows of choice, the things of God. This is now the ruling influence of the soul. Men, as a general rule, act always in accordance with the impulses of their nature. This every one knows to be true. To suppose that any one will do otherwise, long at a time, is both unphilosophical, and unscriptural. This principle is recognized by our Saviour himself. "The tree is know by its fruit." "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things."<sup>18</sup> Christians are, by inspiration, addressed as "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling."<sup>19</sup> All men undoubtedly act in accordance with their nature; the nature of believers is holy; they will therefore pursue a course of holy action. Will they then, ever finally abandon themselves to a life of sin? If so they will act in opposition to their nature, to suppose which, we have seen, is against both philosophy and scripture. Into snares, and temptations, they, as has been shown, may, and do, often fall, and not unfrequently, go very far into worldliness, and transgression. But if their nature is renewed, grace will ultimately triumph. The enlightened conscience will not always remain silent. They return to the path of life. This is the doctrine of Paul, who asks—"How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"<sup>20</sup> The grace of the Father, the love of the Son, and the promptings of the Holy Ghost, combine with the desires and aspirations of the soul, and bear the believer onward, and upward, until he stands accepted, and glorified, in the midst of the shining hosts "who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!" If additional proofs of the correctness of this doctrine were needed, they are abundantly supplied by direct, and unequivocal declarations of God himself. I must of many, satisfy myself with one, or two. He says—"I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish."<sup>21</sup> Truly, he "shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>22</sup>

The perseverance in grace of all true believers, unto the attainment of eternal life, is, as we have now fully shown, guaranteed by the perfections of God the Father; by their relations with our Lord Jesus Christ the Son; by the work in their hearts of the Holy Spirit; by the character of the new nature with which they are endowed; and by the express declarations of the divine word of truth. With glowing spirits, therefore, and boundless gratitude and love, we too, may join in that apostolic exultation, which so gloriously delineates the privileges of all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ—"If God be for us, who can be against us? 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? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the

slaughter.' 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 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."<sup>23</sup>

I have now brought in review before you, some of the most distinguished privileges of believers in Christ. How strong the emphasis with which they speak the infinite love and grace of our Heavenly Father! It is yours to enjoy the free and full pardon of sins; to receive from Jehovah entire justification; to be admitted, and approved, among the adopted children of the Most High, an heir of the kingdom of grace on earth, and of glory in heaven; to have conferred upon you all the blessings described in the promises of the divine word; to be animated and sustained by the power of hope; and to persevere in grace unto the attainment of final and complete salvation. How rich are these honors! Surprising unspeakably, is their magnitude! Their excellency, what mind can justly conceive! They clothe you with a dignity and glory, not inferior to those of the *tallest* of the angels in his presence. And by your side stands God himself, your Father, your Friend, your Deliverer and points you to exalted seats in that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." There you will soon be received, perfect, glorified, immortal. Who can describe the rapture which will thrill your bosom, when Messiah shall say—

"Ye blessed of my Father come, ye just Enter the joy eternal, of your Lord; Receive your crowns, ascend and sit with me, At God's right hand, in glory evermore."

#### Footnotes:

1 Limborch's Theol. v. cap. lxxx.

2 John 14:13, 19

3 1 John 5:3

4 Gen. 2:16, 17

5 Heb. 8:10-13

6 Col. 3:3, 4

7 Rom. 8:13

8 Gal. 6:7, 8

9 Ezek. 18:24

10 Hosea 14:4

11 Phil. 3:18, 19

12 1 Pet. 1:4, 5

13 2 Thess. 2:13, 14

14 Rom. 8:17

15 John 3:36

16 John 14:10, 20

17 2 Cor. 1:21, 22

18 Matt. 12:33, 35

19 Heb. 3:1

20 Rom. 6:2

21 John 10:28

22 1 Cor. 1:8

23 Rom. 8:31-39