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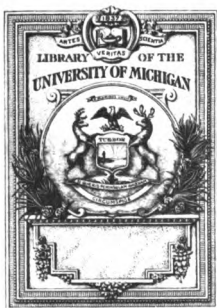
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A FULL

**REFUTATION**

OF THE DOCTRINE

OF

**UNCONDITIONAL PERSEVERANCE :**

IN A DISCOURSE ON HEBREWS II. 3.

=

*BY THOMAS OLIVERS.*

=

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. HEB. III. 12.



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**PREFATORY**  
**DEDICATION,**

**TO THE**

**REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.**

*Late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.*

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**SIR,**

**As** God has made you the first instrument in the present revival of religion in these lands, whereby so many thousands have been turned from the evil of their way; as you have laboured, in carrying on this work, for the long space of upwards of sixty years, and with a degree of zeal, diligence, and fortitude, unknown since the days of the apostles: and as you still continue your mighty labours, without the least abatement, though you are now in the eighty-eighth (or as some say, in the ninetieth) year of your age! and especially, as you have always been the great patron of every doctrine of universal grace, and among the rest,

of that maintained in the following pages; on all these accounts I beg leave, Sir, to recommend this work to your favour and protection, in preference to that of any other.— And I farther beg your acceptance thereof, as another (and perhaps the last) proof of my real affection for your person, and also, of the very high esteem I hope ever to entertain of your very extraordinary character.

However unworthy the performance may be, the subject, Sir, is capable of great service to the cause of truth, as it stands opposed to the popular, and growing error of *unconditional perseverance*. For if it be fully demonstrated, that *that* doctrine is no truth of revelation, then it will follow that the doctrine of *unconditional election* has no foundation in scripture; from whence it will follow farther, that the doctrine which supposes all things to be unconditionally decreed from eternity, is an unscriptural error: therefore if the pillar of unconditional perseverance is fairly

pulled away, the whole temple of this Dagon comes down of course.

Now the argument, which I have urged in the following pages, does this infallibly. For there, Sir, you will find it demonstrated, that one of the most excellent books of the New Testament is no other than a regular chain of reasoning against the doctrine of unconditional perseverance. And that I may prevent all clamour, and make the argument the more decisive, at least, with those in this day, who see more force in the SAYINGS of their admired authors, than in a number of the most perfect demonstrations; to confute and silence, if not to convince these, I have confirmed my interpretation of those passages on which I rest a great part of my proof, with the testimonies of a great number, both of Calvinists and Arminians: whom I largely shew to agree with me in my account of the SCOPE of the whole epistle.

In doing this, I confess I have not paid any regard to what the calvin-

ian writers OUGHT to have said on their own supposition, nor unto what they HAVE ACTUALLY said on various other occasions. It is enough for me, when I say that such words or phrases signify APOSTASY, TOTAL, OR FINAL apostasy, that I can find a sufficient number of calvinian writers who say the same; when this is done, no one can expect me to be responsible for the absurdities, and contradictions, with which they so generally abound.

As to the Method, I beg leave to observe, Sir, that the Discourse was originally an extemporary sermon, on the words cited in the beginning; and that when I was prevailed on to enlarge the subject, and fit it for the reception of the public, I resolved to spare myself the trouble of laying down a new plan; the consequence is, that the argument is rather more complex than the subject necessarily requires: seeing, according to this, it would have been sufficient to have shewn, first, that these Hebrews were true believers; and, secondly, that

notwithstanding this, they were capable of total and final apostasy.

However, Sir, there is one circumstance which in all likelihood you will deem a peculiarity, if not an excellency: that as my business lies solely in the epistle to the Hebrews, I have confined myself very closely unto it. For, first, though there are a great number of propositions most fully demonstrated, there is not so much as a single demonstration brought out of any other part of the Bible. Nor, secondly, is any other part thereof made use of above twice or thrice, either in introducing, illustrating, or amplifying any one point in the whole tract; except when I have been obliged to turn to the Old-Testament, in explaining a few passages which the apostle has quoted from thence.

Thus, Sir, I have given you a full account of this small affair—But before I conclude, I must intreat you not to expect any thing great or excellent on the occasion. No, Sir, I do not, I dare not make any pretence to

deep learning, or great abilities. For the very utmost I pretend to, is, a small degree of zeal; employing a little common sense; which call to their aid a few shreds of learning; to assist truth to stand its ground against a most dreadful and dangerous error.

That you may yet continue here, as a star of the first magnitude, in the right hand of Him who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and be as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever, is,

Reverend Sir, the prayer of

Your dutiful son and servant,

THOMAS OLIVERS.

A FULL  
REFUTATION, &c.



HEBREWS II. 3.

*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*

**SALVATION**—the neglect of it—the consequence of that neglect—and the impossibility of escaping that consequence, are the awful particulars contained in this passage. It is therefore of deep and universal importance that this subject be well understood, by all who profess the name of Christ.

But is this the case? Do all who profess his name, understand it in any tolerable degree? Do they know what the apostle means by *Salvation*? and what by *neglecting* it? I am confident they do not: and I greatly fear that this is the case, not of professors only; but even of some who are Teachers of our holy religion.

The common way of explaining



these words is, to represent this great Salvation as signifying actual deliverance from sin and hell; that to *neglect* it signifies, not to seek and embrace it; and that this is done, only by careless, impenitent unbelievers: all which is as contrary to the intent of the apostle, and the scope of the whole epistle, as light is to darkness, or as Heaven is to Hell.

One reason why many mistake the true meaning of particular passages of Scripture, is, they adopt systems which are incompatible with Truth; and to prevent their giving up a favourite hypothesis, find themselves under the necessity of inventing such interpretations as will agree with their own schemes; which is the case in the passage now under consideration: by which means the lovely face of Truth is quite concealed, and error in a thousand forms, appears in its stead.

Some also, who maintain the Truth in general fall into great mistakes on particular passages, for want of con-

sidering the text in close connexion with its context. This is certainly necessary in order to a right understanding of any passage; but more especially if the terms, on which the greatest stress is laid, are equivocal or ambiguous. Now this is the case in the passage before us. The terms **Salvation**, and **Neglect** are equivocal; and therefore their meaning can only be ascertained by a strict attention to the connexion of the place, and the scope of the whole epistle.

This, therefore, I shall be careful to do: to consider the words, only as a link of that chain of which the whole epistle consists. In doing which I shall attend to the **OCCASION** and **DESIGN** of the epistle, and, as far as I shall judge it necessary, to the apostle's manner of reasoning therein.

By these means I shall be able to shew,

I. What we are to understand by so **GREAT SALVATION**.

II. What by **NEGLECTING** it. And,

III. The **CONSEQUENCE** of so doing,

and the impossibility of escaping that consequence.

IV. I shall then, in the fourth place, conclude with an inference or two.

I. And, first, I am to shew, what we are to understand by, so great Salvation.

The term Salvation, as used in scripture, is, in general, to be understood strictly and properly, according to its grammatical import. In this sense it signifies, Deliverance from evil. Now evil is distinguished into moral and natural. Moral evil is the evil of sin; and is called evil with relation to God, as it is the reverse of his nature, and the transgression of his law. Natural evil is the evil of suffering; and this is called evil with relation to us, on whom it is inflicted as a punishment for sin, and as it is painful to our nature.

Salvation, as it respects both moral and natural evil, implies a two-fold deliverance. First, a deliverance *out* of it: as when we see a man fallen

into a river, we draw him out, and thereby save him from drowning. In this sense we are saved when we are justified and sanctified, as we are then delivered out of that state of guilt, thralldom and misery in which we formerly lay. Secondly, a deliverance *from* it: as when we see a person on the brink of a river, and in danger of falling in, we lay hold on him, and prevent his falling, and thereby save him *from* the evil he was in danger of. In this sense God saves us when he prevents our falling into some sin and misery which we are in danger of; and, in particular, when he prevents our falling into hell.

Again, the term Salvation is sometimes to be understood figuratively; and by a common figure, where the cause is put for the effect, signifies, The cause or means of salvation.— And this is the primary and direct meaning of the term, salvation, in the text. This is evident from the preceding and subsequent words.— In the first verse of this chapter the

apostle says, "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have *heard*"—Observe, they are the things which we have HEARD with our ears, that we are to take heed to. He then adds, verse 2.—"For if the *word spoken* by angels was *stedfast*, and every transgression and disobedience—of that word, received a just recompense of reward," verse 3. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation," or so great a WORD? "which at the first began to be SPOKEN by the Lord himself," &c. It is therefore certain, that by salvation the apostle here primarily intends the *word*, which was SPOKEN by our Lord; which was HEARD by his disciples, and which is greater than the word which was delivered by angels on mount Sinai.

But though he primarily intends the means of salvation, it is plain he does not intend them as separate from their end; from that actual salvation or deliverance from natural and moral evil before mentioned. This is

## UNCONDITIONAL PERSEVERANCE. 15

evident from the whole epistle in general; and from many passages thereof in particular. In chap. iii. ver. 6. there is a caution against neglecting the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope: all which belong to the most spiritual nature of our salvation. Ver. 12. we have a caution against an evil heart of unbelief. Ver. 13. one against being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Chap. iv. ver. 1. there is one against neglecting to enter into rest; that is, eternal life. In chap. x. ver. 38. there is one against neglecting to live by faith. Chap. xii. ver. 1. one against neglecting to lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us.— Ver. 14. we are not to neglect to follow peace and holiness. And, ver. 28. we are not to neglect to have, or hold fast *grace*. From all that has been said it is evident, that by salvation the apostle intended, first, the gospel in general, as the means of salvation, and, secondly, that actual salvation or deliverance from evil, which is obtained thereby.

And this the apostle calls so great salvation. It is clear from the context, that, by a comparison of the law with the gospel, he intends to shew the superiority of the latter. And this he does by shewing that it was given, and promulged by a person who is vastly superior to those who were employed in delivering all preceding dispensations. So chap. i. ver. 1. God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake of old unto our fathers, by the prophets : but now, in delivering the gospel, he has made use of his Son, whom he hath appointed the heir of all things, and by whom he made the world ; who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and who upholds all things by the word of his power. This salvation, then, is as much superior to those former dispensations, as the almighty, and all-glorious Son of God is to weak and fallible men.

Again, chap. ii. ver. 2. The law was given by angels ; but this salva-

tion was given by the Lord himself. It is so glorious in its nature, and of such importance to the world, that no creature, or number of creatures, was capable of such a charge; therefore the Lord himself undertook the vast design. And on this account the gospel salvation is as eminently superior to the law, as the Creator and Lord of all is to a small part of his creatures.

II. Having shewn what we are to understand by so great salvation, I proceed, Secondly, to enquire what is here meant by neglecting it; And that this important question may be fully answered, I shall first shew who the persons are whom the apostle supposes to be in danger of this neglect. And I shall be the more particular in doing this, because it is here that so many go astray in expounding these words: they mistake the persons intended by the apostle; and then they easily mistake the meaning of what is said unto them.

The persons intended by the apos-



tle are frequently supposed to be such as are unbelieving, and unconverted. That these, in some sense, neglect this salvation is certain. Nevertheless, they are not the persons intended in the text. This is evident from hence; the persons intended by the apostle must be those to whom the epistle was written, and not those to whom it was not written. Now the epistle was not written, in whole or in part, to unbelievers, either Jews or Gentiles: of consequence, the apostle could not intend these when he said, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" But who then did he intend? Those Hebrews who had *heard* and *believed* the gospel, and who were *truly converted*, and made the *children of God* thereby.—Therefore, said he, verse 1. "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." We? who? WE CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS: WE CONVERTED HEBREWS

As if he had said, *I, Paul, an apostle, who am a converted Hebrew myself, and who am the author of this epistle: and you to whom I send it, who are converted Hebrews also, ought to take the more earnest heed to the things—the truths of the gospel, which we—you and I have heard, lest at any time we, you and I, should let them slip. “For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, How shall we”—CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS, “escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”*

And that these Hebrews, were not mere professors, but rather genuine converts, and real children of God, is evident from what is said of them, and attributed to them all over this epistle. So chap. iii. verse 1. they are called, “Holy Brethren,” and are said to be “partakers of the heavenly calling.” And, first, they are called “brethren;” that is children of the same Father, and members of the same family with the apostle. Sec-

ondly, they are called "holy brethren;" that is, they were first made holy, and then set apart for holy purposes. Thirdly, they are said to be partakers of the heavenly calling: that is, partakers of the gospel, and its spiritual benefits. So the Calvinian Assembly, in their annotation on the place, say, "Holy brethren,"—"Such as were made holy by Jesus Christ."—"And he calls them brethren, not by merit, in respect of their carnal generation: but because they were ALL partakers of the same holy and precious faith now with him:" and on these words, "Partakers of the heavenly calling, That is," say they, "EFFECTUAL CALLING\*." So Mr. *Henry*, the great oracle of our Calvinists, expounds the words: "Observe," says he, "1. The honourable appellation used to those to whom he wrote, Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling. 1. Brethren; not only, *my* brethren, but the brethren of

\* See the Assembly's Annotations.

Christ, and in him brethren to all the saints.”—“2. Holy brethren, holy not only in profession and title, but in principle and practice, in heart and life.”—“3. Partakers of the heavenly calling, partakers of the means of grace, and of the Spirit of grace that came down from heaven, and by which christians are EFFECTUALLY called out of darkness into marvellous light.”\*

So the Calvinian *Wilson*, author of the *Christian Dictionary*, saith, “*Holy Brethren*”—“such as being sanctified by the Spirit, are received into his fellowship to be one with him.”† To these testimonies I will add that of *Dr. Gill*: “Wherefore holy brethren.”——“The apostle calls the Hebrews BRETHREN, not because they were of the same “natural stock, and lineage, but because they were in the same SPIRITUAL relation: THEY ALL had the same father, belonged to

\* Hen. on the place.

† *Christ. Dict.* on the place.

the same family, were the adopted sons of God, the brethren of Christ, of one another, and of the apostle; and they were HOLY, not by birth nor by external separation from other nations; but through sanctification of the Spirit.—Partakers of the heavenly calling. By which is meant—an internal, special call of grace, to the enjoyment of the blessings of grace here, and to glory hereafter.”\*

If this, then, is not characteristic of a true Christian, it will be in vain to look for any thing that is, in all the book of God.

Verse 6. They are said to be the house of Christ; that is, his spiritual habitation, or place of abode. Again they had confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope. And, first, they had hope; that is a well-grounded hope, or expectation of eternal life. Secondly, they had the rejoicing of the hope, the rejoicing which naturally belongs to, and is inseparably con-

\* See Gill on the place.

ected with it. And thirdly, they had confidence *παρρησιαν*, a liberty of free profession of Christ, in times of trouble: in other words, They had such hope of eternal life, through Christ, as caused them inwardly to rejoice in him, and to confess him outwardly with great boldness. Here, then, we have another proof, that the people supposed to be in danger of neglecting this great salvation, were the genuine children of God.

Verse 12. The apostle calls them "brethren;" and the admonition given them supposes they had union with God.

Verse 14. They are said to be partakers of Christ. "*In hæreditate illâ cœlesti,*" says *Piscator*, in that cœlestial inheritance, of which none are partakers, but TRUE BELIEVERS.\*—The Calvinian *Pool* tells us that *Syrus, Estius, Ribera*, and others comment thus on the place: "*Commixti sumus cum Christo. i. e. in unum corpus cum*

\* *Piscator in loc.*

*ipso coagmentati, ei per fidem insiti et incorporati, facti membra ejus, tandem et gloria :*" that is, we are mixed together with Christ : we are cemented into one body with him : we are made his members, partakers of his spirit and grace, and finally of his glory.\*

Mr. Henry says, "Here observe, 1. The Saints privilege, They are made partakers of Christ, that is, of the spirit, nature, grace, righteousness, and life of Christ; they are interested in all that is Christ's, in all that he is, in all that he has done, or can do.†"

Again, they are said to have "the beginning of confidence." The original word *υποστασις*, according to *Suicorus*, signifies, confidence, reliance, or a foundation on which any one leans. So on chap. xi. ver. 17. he says, it means the same thing derived from the verb *υψισταμι*, which signifies, to bear up, not to yield; but to stand resolutely against an adversary.‡—

\* Pool's Synop. Crit. in loc. † Hen. on the place. ‡ Thes. Eccl.

*Oecumenius* says here, Αρχην ἴης υποστάσεως ἐστὶν πρὸς τὸν χριστὸν πίστις φησὶ δὲ αὐτῆς γὰρ ὑπέστημεν. Καὶ γεγεννημέθα μετὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ, Faith in Christ is the beginning of our subsistence; for by it we subsist, and are made partakers of Christ.\* So *Theodoret*, τὴν πίστιν ἀρχὴν υποστάσεω̄ κεκλήκε δὲ ἐκείνης γὰρ ἐνεργηθημεν, καὶ συνηφθήμεν τῷ δεσποτῷ χριστῷ, καὶ τῆς τῷ παναγίῳ πνεύματος μετέληφωμεν χαρίδος, He calls faith the beginning of our υποστάσις; for by it we are renewed, and joined to the Lord Christ, and receive the grace of his most holy Spirit.† So *Theophylact*, τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς υποστάσεως, τοῦτοις τὴν πίστιν δὲ αὐτῆς γὰρ ὑπέστημεν καὶ ἐστωθήμεν τὴν θεῖαν καὶ πνευματικὴν ἐστώσιν καὶ ἀναγεννήσιν. The beginning of our upostasis; that is faith; for by it we subsist, and receive the divine and spiritual essence and regeneration.‡ *Diodati*, the famous calvinian commentator, calls it, “The gift of God’s Spirit and faith, which is as the root

\* *Oecumenius* in loc. † *Theodoret* in loc.

‡ *Theophylact* in loc.



by which we live and subsist spiritu-  
ally in Christ.”\* And Dr. *Whitby*  
renders τὴν ἀρχὴν ὑποστάσεως “The be-  
ginning of their hope. That hope to  
which we have fled for refuge, chap.  
vi. 18. That hope which causeth us  
to rejoice, ver. 6.†

Chap. 4. verse 3. They are said to  
have believed with the apostle, yea,  
and after the same manner; that is,  
they are said so to believe in Christ,  
as to enter into rest: into the rest of  
gospel grace, which implies peace of  
conscience, and power over sin; and,  
also, that they had a right to, and a  
hope of the rest of eternal life.

Chap. 6. verse 4, 5. Here it is  
said that they were once enlightened,  
and had tasted of the heavenly gift,  
and were made partakers of the Holy  
Ghost, and had tasted of the good  
word of God, and the powers of the  
world to come. And here observe,  
1. They were once enlightened.—

\* See Diodati on the place.  
on the place.

† See *Whitby*

φωτισθεις εν τω κυριω enlightened with the true spiritual knowledge of God. But it may be said, "The ancient fathers understood this of baptism, which they called φωτισμος, illumination."—True; but then they called it so on this supposition, that all who were baptized with water, were, at the same time, baptized with the Holy Ghost, and inwardly enlightened thereby. *Justin Martyr* says, φωτισθεις εν τω κυριω, (enlightened) signifies, those who having been instructed in the knowledge of Christ, and then baptized, were farther enlightened by the divine Spirit.\* So the calvinian *Leigh*, in his *Critica Sacra*, tells us: "The greek fathers sometimes call φωτισμος, baptismum, and φωτιζω, baptiso: For those which are BAPTIZED with THE HOLY GHOST, THEIR MINDS ARE ILLUSTRATED WITH THE BEAMS OF DIVINE LIGHT." And when the apostle said, ye were ONCE enlightened, he meant ye were TRULY and REALLY

\* Apol. 1 Edit. Grabe, Sect. 80.

enlightened. So *Pool* on the place, "Semel hic idem quod *planè* et *verè*, *απαξ* pro *απαξαπλως*, *prorsus*, *perfectè*, ut. Heb. ix. 26, 28. That is, ONCE is one and the same with TRULY, REAL-  
LY, *απαξ* for *απαξαπλως*, ALTOGETHER, PERFECTLY, as Heb. ix. 26, 28. And he quotes *Ribera*, *Erasmus*, *Camero*, and several other divines of great note, who consider the persons here said to be enlightened as men who, "*absolutionem a præteritis omnibus peccatis suis acceperunt, &c. omnibusque christianorum privilegiis donati crant*:" that is, as men who have received the forgiveness of all their former sins, and have all the privileges of Christians bestowed upon them.\*

2. They had tasted of the heavenly gift; that is the gift of grace in general, which came down from heaven. If any thing more particular is here intended, perhaps it is that which is elsewhere called, The gift of

\*Syn. Crit. in loc.

righteousness : that is, justification, or the remission of sins. Accordingly *Paræus* mentions *Erasmus*, and several other eminent divines, who say, the heavenly gift is, "*Fidem, quæ cælitus datur illuminatis ;*" faith which is given from above to those who are enlightened.\* And to taste of this does not mean a slight or superficial participation thereof : but rather a full and perfect one. In this sense we *must* understand the same word, as it is used, chap, ii. ver. 9. where it is said that *Christ tasted* death for every man : certainly he partook of it in the most full and ample manner.

3. They were made partakers of the Holy Ghost : that is, they partook of the witness and fruit thereof. *Pool* tells us that *Grotius* understands it,— "*Donorum et charismatum Spiritus sancti, &c. quæ non contingebant eo tempore nisi justificatis,*" of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, &c.

\* *Syn. Crit. in loc.*

which at that time were given to none but the justified.\*

4. They had tasted as truly and fully as Christ tasted death, the good word of God; that is, they had experienced the nourishment and sweetness thereof, as truly as Christ experienced the bitterness of death. So *Grotius*, "*Gustare, hic et infra est experiendo cognoscere* : that is, to taste here, and in the next clause, means to KNOW BY EXPERIENCE.

5. They had, in the same manner, tasted the powers of the world to come; that is, they had not only been partakers of the gospel and its present benefits, which some understand by the world to come (rendering *μελλοντος αιωνος*, the future age; that is the gospel age, to which the Mosaic was prior;) but also of the powers, the enlivening and strengthening joys of eternity; in other words, they had a foretaste of the joys of heaven.

*Estius, Menochius and Ribera*, ac-

\* *Syn. Crit. in. loc.*

According to *Pool*, say that the powers of the world to come mean, "*Immortalitatum et gloriam, vitamque beatam, et eternam Dei visionem in cælis electis promissam in regno Christi:*" that is, immortality, glory, the beatific life, and eternal vision promised in heaven to the elect in the kingdom of Christ. And they add, that the Hebrews, "*dicunter gustasse, quia eas fide amore, vel magno desiderio perciperunt, earumque spe delectabantur*"—are said to have tasted those powers, because they had a perception of them by faith, love, and a great desire, and were delighted by the hope of them: [the things they had tasted.]

Thus, by considering these five particulars *separately*, we find each of them so expressive of the spiritual nature, or properties of our holy religion, that it is absurd to affirm either of them of any but true believers.—But if we consider them in connexion with each other, and as so many links of one chain, and suppose them *all* to be found in any but a real believer:

the absurdity is much greater. But if we consider them altogether, and in connexion with their context, the absurdity is greater still by many degrees: seeing that, by such an interpretation the coherence is entirely destroyed, and the whole passage turned into absolute nonsense.

To make this appear, let it be observed, that in the two first verses of this chapter, there is an exhortation for the Hebrew converts to go on unto perfection. That, verse 3, the apostle adds, "And this will we do, if God permit:" that is, we will go on unto perfection. Then, verse 4, that (as the calvinian *Diodati* tells us) the apostle "gives a reason of the exhortation of verse one." Well, then, let us see what sort of a reason it is, according to the calvinian interpretation. True believers are to go on unto perfection; *because* it is impossible to renew hypocrites and false professors again unto repentance, if they fall away from common unsaving grace! Wonderful reason indeed!

and well worthy of the cause it is brought to support. Let us next see what sort of reason it is, on supposition that the persons mentioned in the 1st, 2d, and 3d verses, are the same with those mentioned in the 4th and 5th. Let us, Christian believers, go on unto perfection; because, if we do not, we shall do the reverse: that is, we shall forfeit and lose the grace we have. And when once this is lost, we shall find it *morally* impossible, that is, very difficult, to recover it again. Now, according to this interpretation, the coherence is clear, and the argument strictly conclusive. It is therefore certain, that the persons mentioned in the passage under consideration, were not false professors, or hypocrites; but real children of God.

Again, verse 10. They had works and labour of love. 1. They had love, the love of God and of their neighbour. 2. They had works, good works proceeding from that love. 3.



There was found in them labour of love : so great was their love, that it caused them not only to do such works as were good in their own nature ; but also to labour in them, or do them with all their might. Agreeably to this, Mr. Henry saith, " God had wrought a principle of holy love and charity in them, which had discovered itself in suitable works which would not be forgotten of God.\*

Verse 18. They *had* fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them : which hope **THEY HAD** as an anchor of the soul, both **SURE** and **STEADAST**. On this passage the learned *Suicerus* says, "*Metaphoricè vocatur spes Christiana, anchora animæ, quæ in ipso cælorum adyta penetrans, animam nostrum tutam ac firmam præstat adversus omnes tentationum procellas :*" that is, The **CHRISTIAN HOPE** is metaphorically stiled, The anchor of the soul, which penetrating into the recesses of heaven, preserves

\* Hen. on the place.

the soul safe and steadfast against all the storms of temptation.\* So St. Chrysostom, Ὡς περ ἡ ἀγκυρὰ ἐξαρτηθεῖσα τῆ πλοῖου οὐκ ἀφίησιν αὐτὸ περιφερῆσθαι, καὶ μύριοι παρασαλευσῶσιν ἀνεμοὶ, ἀλλ' ἐξαρτηθεῖσα ἰδραίων ποιεῖ ὄψιν καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς; as the anchor cast into the sea, does not suffer the ship to be carried away by the waves: though the winds be contrary, but being thrown out renders her steadfast, so it is with hope.† Again he saith, Ὁραὸς τῆς πίστεως τὸ κατορθῶμα, οἷως ἀγκυρὰ ἵς ἀσφαλῆς, ἕτως ἐκβάλλει τὸν σαλόν· ὅπερ ἔν καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Παῦλος τοῖς Ἑβραίοις ἐπιστελλεῖ, ἕτωςί λεγῶν περὶ τῆς πίστεως· Ἦν ὡς ἀγκυρὰν ἐχομεν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀσφαλῆ καὶ βεβαίαν, καὶ ἐπιερχομένην εἰς τὸ ἰσώτερον τῆ κατὰπετασματος. Ἰνα γὰρ ἀκυστὰς ἀγκυρὰν, μὴ νομισῆς καλὸ καθελεῖσθαι, δάκνυσιν, οἷ καὶ νη ἵς αὐτῆ ἵς ἀγκυρῆς ἡ φύσις, ἔ καὶ ὡ πιεζῆσα, ἀλλ' ἀνω κουφίζῆσα τὴν διανοίαν, καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἕρανὸν μεθίσῆσα, καὶ εἰς τὸ ἰσώτερον τῆ κατὰπέλασματος χειραγωγῆσα· κατὰπετασμα· γὰρ ἐνλαυθα τὸν ἕρανὸν ἐκαλεσε. That is, you see the excellency of faith, it will free you from every fluc-

\*Suicerus page 63. a.

†Chrysost. Hom. II.

tuation; which *Paul* writes to the Hebrews, speaking thus of it; which we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, and enters in within the veil. For, lest you should think, when you hear of an anchor, that it will pull you downward, he shews you that it is an anchor of a new kind, which does not depress the mind, but raises it up to Heaven, and leads you as by the hand to those things which are within the veil; for in this place he calls Heaven, the veil.\* Hence Mr. *Henry*, speaking of this hope, saith, " 1. It is *sure* in its own nature, for it is the special work of God in the soul, it is a good hope through grace; it is not a flattering hope made out of a spider's web, but it is a true work of God, it is a strong and substantial thing. 2. It is *steadfast* as to its object: it is an anchor that has taken good hold, it enters into that which is within the

\* Chrysost. Hom. 14 .

veil, it is an anchor that is cast upon the rock, the Rock of ages; it does not think to fasten in the sands, but enters within the veil, and fixes there upon Christ; he is the object, he is the anchor-hold of the believer's hope."\*

Chap. x. 23. They had the same kind of faith with the apostle, and had made the same profession of it. Verse 26. They had received the knowledge of the truth. Verse 29. They were sanctified by the blood of the covenant. Verse 32. They had been illuminated, and had endured a great fight of affliction: or as Mr. Henry saith, "They had suffered, in former days after they were illuminated; that is, as soon as God had breathed life into their souls, and caused divine light to spring up in their minds, and taken them into favour and covenant."†

Verse 34. They had taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, KNOW-

\* Hen. on the place. † Ibid.

ING IN THEMSELVES THAT THEY HAD IN HEAVEN A BETTER AND AN ENDURING SUBSTANCE.

Verse 35. THEY HAD A CONFIDENCE WHICH HAD A GREAT RECOMPENSE OF REWARD: which according to Mr. Henry, "carries a present reward in it, in holy peace, and joy, and much of God's presence and power resting upon them; and it shall have a great recompense of reward hereafter."\*

Verse 39. At the very time the apostle wrote to them, *They believed TO THE SAVING OF THEIR SOULS.*

Chap. xii. 22—24. They were come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly of the church of the first-born which are written in heaven, to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant,

\*Hen. on the place.

and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. The eight particulars mentioned in this passage are a compendium of the privileges of the christian church; and when the apostle said that these Hebrews were come unto these, his meaning was, that they truly and spiritually enjoyed them. Accordingly Mr. Henry saith, "In coming to Mount Zion, believers come into heavenly places, and into a heavenly society. 1. Into heavenly places; the city of the living God"—"There his people may find him ruling, guiding, sanctifying and comforting them; there he speaks to them by the gospel ministry; there they speak to him by prayer, and he hears them; there he trains them up for heaven, and gives them the earnest of their inheritance."—"2. To a heavenly Society. 1. To an innumerable company of angels, who are of the same family with the saints." "2. To the general assembly, and church of the first-born that are writ-

ten in heaven, that is, to the universal church, however dispersed. By faith we come to them; have communion with them in the same head, by the same spirit, and in the same blessed hope, and walk in the same way of holiness.”\*

Add to all that hath been said, as a farther proof that these Hebrews were genuine Christians, that the apostle hath numbered them with himself, as members of the same family, and as partakers of the same christian privileges, not less than FIFTY times, as may be seen in the following places. Chap. i. 2. chap. ii. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9. chap. iii. 1, 6, 14, 15, 16. chap. iv. 1, 2, 3, 11, 14, 15, 16. chap v. 11. chap. vi. 1, 3, 18, 19, 20. chap. vii. 26. chap. viii. 1. chap ix. 12, 24. chap. x. 10, 15, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26, 30, 39. chap. xi. 3, 40. chap. xii. 1, 2, 9, 10, 25, 28, 29. chap. xiii. 10, 13, 14, 15.

It is therefore certain, upon the whole, that these Hebrews, who are

\* See Henry on the place.

supposed to be in danger of neglecting this salvation, were true believers, were real christians, and genuine children of God.

I now proceed in the next place to shew, what the apostle meant by their neglecting this great salvation.

And, first, it certainly does not mean, that they had neglected to embrace it. This is evident from what hath already been said, concerning their being true believers, and real children of God: for it is certain that if they had neglected to embrace or receive this salvation, they could not be true, genuine christians, they could not be the real children of God: seeing it was only by embracing, or receiving this salvation that they partook of this privilege, and were brought into this number.

And that they did not neglect to embrace this salvation, is particularly evident, 1. From those places which assert that they *had formerly sought and OBTAINED* it: as chap. vi. 18, where it is said that they *had fled for*



*refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them.* 2. From those places where it is said that they were, *at that time*, IN POSSESSION of it: as chap. vi. ver. 19. where the apostle saith, *which hope WE HAVE*, &c. chap. xii. ver. 22--24, where he tells them *WE ARE* come to Mount Zion, &c. and chap. iii. ver. 1. where he tells them that they are PARTAKERS of the heavenly calling. It is therefore undeniably evident, that these Hebrews had not neglected to seek and embrace this salvation; and, of consequence, that whatever the apostle intended by neglecting it, he could not possibly intend this.

But what then did he intend? Neglecting to PERSEVERE therein: or, which comes to the same, by neglecting this salvation he meant, APOSTASY, TOTAL and FINAL apostasy from it.

By *apostasy* I mean, simply falling away from it. By *total* apostasy, I mean falling away, 1. From the spirit of it. 2. From the practice of it; and 3. from the profession of it. By

*final* apostasy, I mean, to fall away thus, and rise no more forever.

Now, that this apostasy was the evil which the apostle supposed these Hebrews to be in danger of, and which in this epistle; he has been labouring to prevent; and, of consequence, is what he intended by neglecting this great salvation, I hope to demonstrate very largely from all parts of the epistle. And the method I intend to pursue is, First, to point out such particular passages, as prove the whole proposition, or any part of it; and then, secondly, by way of confirmation of the truth held forth in these passages, to add a general survey of the *occasion* and *design* of the whole epistle, and the manner of the apostle's reasoning therein.

And, First, I am to point out such particular passages as prove the whole proposition or any part of it.

And, 1. We will consider chap. ii, ver. 1. "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should

let them slip," *μηποτε παραρρωμεν*. Dr. *Hammond* tells us that "*Παραρρωμεν* is a phrase used from the "water, which when it is not kept within limits, falls away and runs out."\*

Dr. *Owen*, the great champion of the Calvinists in the last century, observes on the place, that "*παραρρωμεν*, is no where else used in the New Testament;" and that as it stands connected with *μηποτε*, it means, "Lest we fall; fall down; that is, perish."† So is the word interpreted by St. Chrysostom, *μηποτε παραρρωμεν, τεισιτι με απολωμεθα, μη εκπισωμεν,* "that we PERISH NOT; that we FALL NOT.‡ *Pool*, on the authority of *Camero*, *Erasmus*, *Estius*, *Gerhardus* and *Beza*, says "*Hæc locutio, &c. est metaphora ducto ab aquâ, quæ nisi quodam conceptaculo contineatur, facile defluit; quæ inutiliter effluit; quæ prorsus et irreparabiter perit*: that is, This expression is a metaphor taken from water,

\* See *Hammond* on the place. † See Dr. *Owen* on the Epistle to the Heb. ‡ *Chrysostom* in loc.

which if it is not contained in some proper vessel, easily runs off, flows away to no purpose, and is entirely and irreparably lost.\* And *Grotius*, speaking of this very passage, saith, "*Nihil hic cavere jubemur, quod non et fieri possit, et sæpè fiat:*" that is, the apostle bids us here beware of nothing, but what **MAY**, and **DOES** frequently happen.† The calvinian author of *Critica Sacra* renders it, "let slip, like water put into a cullender or riven dish."‡ Our margin renders it, Run out as leaking vessels. From which I would observe, 1. That the converted Hebrews had the water of this salvation in the vessels of their mind or heart. 2. That these vessels were leaky, that is, liable to let it slip or run out. 3. That if the Hebrews did not take earnest heed, this would certainly be the case: this salvation would slip, or run out of their hearts; that is, they would lose it by apostasy.

\* *Synop. Crit. in loc.* † See *Grotius in loc.*

‡ See *Critica Sacra*, page 430.

The learned Dr. *Whitby* renders *μηποτε παραρρησμεν*, "lest we fall off from them;" that is, from the things which we have "heard:" and he quotes *Oecumenius*, *Theophylact* and *Phavorinus*, as agreeing with him.\* *Diodati* expounds it, "Let them slip, that is to say, that we may not go away from the Communion of Christ and his church, nor forsake his faith and service."† *Mr. Baxter's* comment is, "Lest by negligence or unbelief, we should lose what we have heard, and be as leaking vessels, and be lost ourselves."‡ *Mr. S. Clark* renders it, "Run out as leaking vessels,"—"viz. out of our heads, hearts, or practice, so as to depart from THE FAITH OR service of Christ."§ The Assembly of Divines, on this passage tell us, that "From the former doctrine touching Christ's excellency"—St. Paul infers this following exhortation. "The scope whereof" they say, "is,

\* *Whitby* on the place. † See *Critica, Sacra*, page 430. ‡ *Baxter* on the place. § *Clark* on the place.

to stir up the Hebrews to STAND FAST in that FAITH which THEY HAD RECEIVED.\* The Continuator of *Pool* tell us, that All forgetfulness of memory, ALL APOSTASY IN HEART OR PROFESSION is that which the spirit forbideth in this metaphor, παραρρωμεν.† Mr. *Christopher Love* expounds it, “Lest we let them slip, as a broken and leaking vessel runs out; for μηποτε παραρρωμεν, is a metaphor taken from leaking vessels.”‡ Dr. *Gill* observes, that “the vulgate Latin version renders it, Lest we should run out; and the Syriac version, Lest we should fall; and the Arabic version, Lest we should fall from honesty.”§ Father *Quesnel* saith, “We must not be like leaking vessels out of which the water runs.”|| The Dutch Annotators, as ordered by the Synod of Dort, say, “This is by some understood of the word which we have heard, and we

\* Assembly's anno on the place. † *Pool's* Comment on the place. ‡ *Combat* between the flesh and the Spirit, page 191. § *Gill* on the place. || *Quesnel* on the New Testament.

must take care that the same in us does not run out, or leak through, as is wont to come to pass in forgetful hearers. By others it is understood of persons themselves, who are said to run out, when like water that runs out, they perish, or are lost.”\* Mr. *Deering*, B. D. saith, “The apostle useth a metaphor taken from old tubs, which run out at the joints, and can hold no liquor”—“So we, if we take into us the sweet wine of the word of Christ, as into”—“broken vessels that it run out again, we become altogether unprofitable, all goodness falleth away, and we become as water poured on the ground—and is never after profitable any more.”† Once more: The author of *Critica Sacra*, in his Annotations, and the learned *John Trapp*, in his commentary. (both Calvinists,) tell us that “the *Arabic* renders it, lest we fall; and the *Syriac*, lest we PERISH”—“Accordingly,

\*See Dutch Annotat. as published by Authority in 1637. † See *Deering's Lectures*; published in 1590.

saith Dr. Hammond, "*Theophylact* hath *μη εκπισωμεν μη απολωμεθα*, Let us not FALL AWAY, "let us not PERISH."\*

From all that hath been said, it is evident that the apostle here supposes the Hebrews to be in danger of apostasy; and (if the *Syriac Interpreters*, *Theophylact*, *Crysostom*, *Erasmus*, *Camero*, *Estius*, *Gerbardus*, *Beza*, *Pool*, *Owen*, *Hammond*, *Baxter*, *Deering*, and the Dutch Annotators may be depended on) of such apostasy as would occasion the apostate to PERISH FOR EVER; and therefore it can be no other than total and final apostasy which is here intended.

2. We will consider Chap. iii. ver. 6. "But Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we, IF WE HOLD FAST the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope FIRM UNTO THE END." By the end the apostle certainly meant, the end of life. And when he said that we are the house of Christ, if we hold fast the confidence,

\* Dr. Hammond on the place.



&c. firm unto the end, it was impossible he should mean, that the goodness of their PRESENT STATE depended on their future conduct; because this would be to suppose the effect to precede the cause. Nor could he mean that their future conduct would be an evidence of their being the house of Christ at present. For in the first place, such an evidence would prove too much. For if what a man does to-morrow will prove that he is in a right state to-day, it will equally prove that he was so yesterday; and, if so, it will equally prove that he was so the day before, and so on to the first day of his existence: from whence it will follow, that if he ever does right in future, he was always the house of Christ, or in a right state and condition. Secondly, such an evidence would be useless. It is certain no argument can prove any thing, before that argument exists.— Now the circumstance of holding our confidence firm unto the end, will not exist before the end, or rather, till af-

ter it : at which time there will be no need of any such evidence of our being the house of Christ, at any particular time, while we were here on earth. All that will be necessary to be known of this matter, will then be declared more effectually a thousand other ways ; and, therefore, this sort of evidence will be as useless then, as the light of a feeble taper would now be in the presence of the noon-day sun. Once more : that this interpretation is false, appears from hence, that it has nothing to do with the scope of the epistle. " This," as the learned and celebrated *John Goodwin* has told us, " was not to teach the Hebrews to know whether they were true believers or not, at present, much less to teach them this knowledge by what they should approve themselves to be, at the day of their death, (which had been to give men darkness to see by !) but to animate, encourage, urge and press them to continue constant in the faith, which at present they had embraced, and made profession

of, unto the end.”\* It is absurd, to suppose that the apostle would say, If we hold fast our confidence, &c. to the end, this will at, and after the end demonstrate that we are now, this day, the house of Christ!—But if this is not his meaning, what then does he mean? I answer: that as we are his present house or habitation, by a present participation of this confidence, &c. so we are intended for, yea, and actually shall be his eternal abode, on supposition that we hold fast these graces unto the end of our life. Hence St. *Cyprian* on the place, as quoted by *Erasmus*, saith, “*Nativitas salutaris non accepta, sed custodita vivificat:*” it is not a SAVING birth RECEIVED, but KEPT, that vivifies: (he means, that vivifies in eternity.†)

From what has been said, it follows, 1. That the apostle supposed it possible for the converted Hebrews not to hold the confidence, &c. firm

\*See Redem. Redeemed, page 260.

†Erasm. in loc.

unto the end. 2. That if they did not, they would not be the house of Christ always, though they were once so. Hence Dr. *Heylin* saith, "We are then his house, if we steadfastly persevere to the end in that confidence and hope which we have so good reason to boast of."\* So *Estius* and *Ribera*: "*Tacitè eos hortatur ad perseverantiam in vocatione sua, in spe et fide, ne reverti velint ad legem Mo- sis, ne inutile eis sit bene incepisse.* He [the apostle] tacitly exhorts them to perseverance in their vocation, hope, and faith, lest they return to the law of Moses; lest their good beginning should come to nothing.† This therefore is another proof that total and final apostasy was the evil which the apostle, in this epistle was labouring to prevent; and of consequence, what he intended by, **NEGLECTING THIS GREAT SALVATION.**

3. Another proof of the point we have, chap. iii. ver. 12. "Take heed,

\**Heylin* on the place. †*Poli. Syn. in loc.*

brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." The original word, *Αποστασία*, is rendered, *defection*, and signifies a defection, or falling away from that which we formerly stood to. *Ribera* and *Estius*, as quoted by the calvinian *Pool*, say, that an evil heart of unbelief, means here, an heart "*Abjectâ fide Christi ad judaismum rediens,*" returning to judaism after throwing away the faith of Christ.\* *Mr. Henry* says, that An evil heart of unbelief is at the bottom of all our sinful departures from God; it is a leading step to *apostasy*; if once we allow ourselves to distrust God, we may soon desert him."—And his observation on this passage is, that "CHRISTIAN BRETHREN *have need to be CAUTIONED against APOSTASY.*"† *Bishop Hall* saith, "Take heed, brethren, lest after this holy profession, made by you, there be found in any of you an evil and unbelieving heart, to fall

\*Pol. Syn. in loc.    †Hen on the place

away, and depart from the colours of the living God, to take part with infidelity.”\* Mr. *Wilson*, author of the *Christian Dictionary* saith, “To depart from God, signifies to fall away from God by infidelity.”† Mr. *Perkins* says, “The author to the Hebrews shews five degrees of apostasy, by which the illumination of the gospel is turned into darkness; Heb. iii. 12. saying, ‘Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, &c. Where the first degree is, consenting unto sin, being deceived with the temptation to it. The second is, hardness of heart upon practices of sin. Thirdly, the heart being hardened becomes unbelieving, and calls the truth of God into question. Fourthly, by unbelief it becomes evil, having a base conceit of the gospel. Fifthly, this evil heart brings a man to apostasy and falling from God, which is the extinguishing of the light

\* Bp. Hall on the place. † See *Christian Dictionary* on the *Epistle to the Hebrews*.

of the gospel.”\* The calvinian author of *Critica Sacra* says, it signifies, **A SPIRITUAL DEPARTURE FROM GOD,** “*Heb. iii. 12.*” This witness is true. For according to the apostle, it is the **HEART** which departs from God in the act of unbelief. Now, as faith is the root of all inward holiness, and this the root of all outward obedience; so unbelief is the root of all inward unholiness, and this of all outward disobedience. Therefore whenever the heart departs from faith to unbelief, the consequence will be, that it will depart from holiness to sin: and then, in consequence of this, there will be an outward departure from an holy, to an unholy conversation. Again, the very learned *Mr. John Gregory*, formerly chaplain of Christ-church, Oxford, tells us, “The Arabic is,”—“An obdurate and unbelieving heart; and which goeth far, or **QUITE** away from the living God: on which he

\*See Third Volume of Perkins's Works,  
page 174.

observes, "This is that heart of unbelief which we are bid here to take heed of; this looseth ALL our hold, and UTTERLY estrangeth us from the life of God, and leaveth us ALTOGETHER without him in the world."\* The calvinian continuators of *Pool* say, that the departing from the living God here spoken of implies, "Turning away, standing off, and separating the heart; it implies in it a *real*, TOTAL, and FINAL defection: actual and formal apostasy from him whom THEY HAD OWNED and RECEIVED."— "So that to apostatize from him [Christ] and his religion, is to apostatize from God, and to renounce ETERNAL LIFE, and to subject *themselves* to ETERNAL PUNISHMENT."† This passage then, is another proof, that the apostle was speaking, not only of apostasy; but also, of TOTAL and FINAL apostasy.

4. Again, verse 13. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day, lest any of you be hardened

\*Gregory on the place. †See *Pool's Comment on the place.*



through the deceitfulness of sin. *Estius*, as quoted by *Pool*, says, that here we must understand by sin, "*Hunc actum peccati, qui est deficere a Christo, ut precedentia et sequentia satis declarant* :\* that act of sin, which consists in falling away from Christ, as what precedes and follows sufficiently declare. The original word, *σκληρυνθη*, which is here rendered *hardened*, is the same as that in Acts xix. 9, where the unbelieving Jews, who would not receive *Paul's* preaching, are said to be hardened. Now concerning their hardness, we may observe three things: 1. They were so hardened, that they would not be persuaded to believe St. Paul's preaching. 2. They were so hardened as to *blaspheme* it before the multitude. 3. They were so hardened as to cause the apostle to give them up to a reprobate mind.—And, therefore, it seems that their disorder was incurable; that it was *total* and *final* hardness.

\**Synop. Crit. in loc.*

Again, the hardness which the apostle supposed these Hebrews to be in danger of, he compares to that which excluded the ancient Hebrews from the land of Canaan. So verse 8. "Harden not your hearts, AS IN the provocation, AS in the day of temptation in the wilderness:" verse 9. "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years." verse 10. "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do always err in their hearts, and they have not known my ways." verse 11. "So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest."

Now, concerning these Israelites, I observe, 1. That they had seen much of the goodness of God. 2. That they had a promise of greater favours. 3. That, for awhile, they believed and obeyed God, according as he had required of them. But, 4. they did not continue to do this. By this means, 5. God was so grieved with them, that he swore in his wrath, They shall never enter into my rest.

In consequence of this, 6. They never did enter in.

Now the parallel intended by the apostle is this: 1. As your fathers saw much of the goodness of God in Egypt, the Red sea, and the wilderness, so have you seen much of it in what he has already done for your souls, in the gospel of his Son. 2. As they had a promise of a greater blessing, even the land of Canaan, that land of rest, flowing with milk and honey; so have you a promise of the heavenly Canaan, that land of eternal peace and plenty.—3. As they, for a while, believed and obeyed in such a manner as they ought; so, also, have you. 4. As they did not continue to believe and obey; so you are in danger of following their example in this particular. 5. As they, for want of continuing in well-doing, provoked God to swear in his wrath that they should never enter into his rest; in like manner you will provoke him to swear in his wrath that you shall never enter into heaven, if you apostatize as they did.

6. In consequence of this oath they never did enjoy the PROMISED LAND; even so, if you provoke him as they did, you shall never enter the kingdom of heaven. This then is another incontestible proof, that neglecting this salvation, unto TOTAL AND FINAL APOSTASY, was the evil which the apostle apprehended these Hebrews to be in danger of.

5. Verse 14. "We are partakers of Christ, saith the apostle, καὶ ἀρχόμεν, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."—*Baxter's* comment is, "We are initially made partakers of Christ as our Saviour: but if we will attain salvation by him, we must hold the subsisting faith (or the confidence) in which we have begun—firm unto the end: (for perseverance is made a condition of the promise of salvation.)\*" *Grotius* on the words says, "*Jus nacti sumus ut participemus de Christi claritate; sed jus pendens, datum sub condi-*

\* *Baxter* on the place.

*tione perseverandi.* That is, We have got the right to partake of Christ's glory; but that right given us is suspended upon the condition of persevering.\* Calvin says, "*Laudat, quod bene cæperint. Sed ne prætextu gratiæ quam consequuti sunt, carnis indulgent securitati, dicit opus esse perseverantiæ. Nam plerique delibato tantum evangelio, quasi ad summum pervenerint, de profectu non cogitant. Ita fit, ut non modo in medio studio, adeoque propè ipsos carceres desideant, sed alio vertunt cursum suum. Speciosa quidem est ista objectio, quid ultrà volumus, postquam adepti sumus Christum? Verum si fide possidetur, in eâ perstandum est, ut nobis perpetua maneat possessio. Ergo hac lege se nobis fruendum dedit Christus, ut eâdem quâ in ejus participationem admissi sumus fide, tantum bonum conservemus usque ad mortem.*" That is, He [St. Paul] commends them that they had begun well. But lest under a pretence of that grace,

\* Grotius in loc.

which THEY HAD OBTAINED, they should indulge a carnal security, he tells them they had need of perseverance. For many having only tasted lightly of the gospel, do not so much as think of any proficiency, as if they were come to the highest already.— Thus it cometh to pass, that they do not only sit down in the midst of the race, yea sometimes at the very entrance of the race; but TURN THEIR COURSE QUITE ANOTHER WAY. This indeed is a very specious objection, When we have gotten Christ what should we desire more? But if Christ, be possessed by faith, we must persist in faith, that our possession in this kind may be perpetual. Therefore Christ hath given himself to be enjoyed by us upon these terms, or by this law, that as we are admitted by faith to a PARTICIPATION OF HIM, SO WE SHOULD BY THE SAME FAITH PERSEVERE, and keep so great a good until death.\* Dr. *Heylin* saith, “ We are

\* Calvin in *loc.*

made partakers of Christ upon condition that we retain, inviolably to the end, that hope in him which we had at the beginning.”\* Mr. *Sam. Clarke*'s comment is, “Take heed of apostasy, and be careful to persevere; because all your interest in Christ depends hereupon.”† Mr. *Flavel* expounds the words thus: “If we have followed him through many sufferings and troubles, and shall turn away from him at last, we lose all that we have wrought and suffered in religion, and shall never reach home to God at last: the crown of life belongs only to them who are faithful to the death.”‡ Now, from this passage, and from what has been said on it by these great and learned divines, (both *Arminians* and *Calvinists*) I conclude, that apostasy is the evil which the apostle has here been labouring to prevent; and therefore, that it is this

\* Heylin on the place. † Clarke on the place. ‡ Flavel's Works, Vol. I. p. 320. Second Edit.

which he intended by, neglecting so great salvation.

6. A sixth proof of the point in hand we have, chap. iv. verse 11. "Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man FALL after the same example of unbelief."—From hence we learn, 1. That the evil which the apostle supposed the Hebrews to be in danger of, was, **FALLING**. 2. That it was, falling after the example of the Israelites of old. Though it has been largely considered already, in what manner these fell, I shall again, briefly inquire into two things. The first is, How far they fell? and the second, by what means? As to the first, they fell **TOTALLY** and **FINALLY** from the **PROMISE** which **GOD HAD GIVEN THEM**: that is, they **TOTALLY** and **FINALLY** fell short of possessing that rest, which **GOD HAD PROMISED** they should possess. This is an undeniable and undoubted matter of fact. But, secondly, By what means did they thus fall? by unbelief or disobedience (for the original



word, ἀπειθεῖα, signifies either.) That this was the cause of their apostasy is evident from chap. iii. verse 17. where it is said that their carcasses fell in the wilderness because they had *sinned*; and from verse 19, where it is said, that they could not enter in because of unbelief; Compare this with chap. iv. verse 6. But let it be well remembered, that it was not because they had never believed and obeyed, that they could not enter in; but because they did not continue to do it.

Now on this I would observe, that it was impossible for the converted Hebrews to fall after this example, as the apostle saith, without, first, falling **TOTALLY** and **FINALLY**, as they did. Nor, secondly, could they do it after this example, but by **DISCONTINUING** to believe and obey. And I would observe once more, that when the apostle exhorted these Hebrews to labour that they might not fall after this example, he certainly supposed that there was a possibility of their doing

it. The truth of this is so evident, that the calvinian continuators of *Pool* have, by the force of evidence, been constrained to confess it. "The particle *in*, (say they) may be read *into*, and then it implies, lest any of you prove rebels and apostates. Or it is read *by*, or *after*, and then it is a fall to DESTRUCTION AND HELL, with all the miseries that those feel who are shut out of God's rest."\* *Baxter's* comment on the place is, "Let it then be the care and diligence of your heart and life, to attain the rest, and not to lose it by apostasy."† *Dr. Heylin* saith, "Let us therefore hasten diligently to enter into that rest, lest any of us, imitating the disobedience of the Israelites, should perish as they did.‡ So the author of the *Christian Dictionary*, "To FALL—to *perish* or be *destroyed*."§ This therefore is another demonstration, that TOTAL and FINAL apostasy was the evil in-

\* *Pool's* comment on the place. † *Baxter* in loc. ‡ *Heylin* in loc. § *Christ. Dict.* on the place

tended by neglecting this great salvation.

7. To the same purpose is verse 14. of the same chapter. "Seeing then that we have an high-priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the SON OF GOD, let us HOLD FAST, *ομολογιας*, OUR PROFESSION, or *confession*. The not holding fast their profession, or apostatizing from it, is what the apostle apprehended the Hebrews to be here in danger of. And in supposing them to be in danger of apostatizing from their profession, he supposed them to be in danger of TOTAL apostasy; seeing their profession was that part of their religion which was easiest kept, and of consequence, that which they would retain the longest: they would, first, let go the life and spirit of their religion; then, secondly, the practice of it; and then, thirdly, and lastly, the profession of it.— Hence Mr. *Henry*, on the place, saith, "Let us hold fast the enlightening doctrines of Christianity in our heads and the ENLIVENING PRINCIPLES OF IT

IN OUR HEARTS, and the open profession of it in our lips, and our practical and universal subjection to it in our lives.—Observe here, 1. We ought to be possessed of the doctrines, principles and practice of the Christian life. 2. *When we are so, WE MAY BE IN DANGER OF LOSING OUR HOLD,* from the corruption of our hearts, the temptations of Satan, and the allurements of this evil world. 3. That the excellency of the High-Priest of our profession, would make our APOSTASY FROM HIM most heinous and inexcusable: it would be the greatest folly, and the basest ingratitude. 4. CHRISTIANS must not only SET OUT WELL, *but they must HOLD OUT; they that EN-DURE TO THE END shall be saved, and NONE BUT THEY.*”\*

3. The next proof of the point we have, chap. vi. verse 4—8. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partak-

\* Henry on the place.

ers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they FALL AWAY, to renew them again unto repentance: seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned."

That falling away is the evil intended in this passage, is evident from verse 6, where the apostle says, *Καὶ παραπίστοντας*, If they FALL AWAY, &c. But it may be said, "The apostle speaks nothing positively concerning falling away; he only speaks on supposition, *if they fall away.*" To this I answer, 1. Suppose we allow that the apostle spake only on supposition; it is certain that a supposition made by the Holy Ghost in this manner, infers

the conclusion as fully as the strongest affirmation. For it would be great impiety to say that the blessed and holy God makes use of vain, groundless, and impossible suppositions in dealing with his people. So the learned *Junius* saith on the place: "*Si non possit fieri ut justus vel credens aliquis deficeret, neque hypothesein hanc factururus esset apostolus, neque ex hypothesei tam grave pronunciatum allaturus, neque ad hanc causam quæ agitur, hoc dictum Hebræis quibus scribebat accommodaturus.*" That is, If there were no possibility that a righteous man, or a believer might fall away, neither would the apostle have made this hypothesis or supposition, nor would he have inferred so grave or weighty a saying upon the supposition: nor would he have applied this saying to the Hebrews, to whom he wrote in the cause which was now in hand.\* So the author of a book entitled "*Absolute Election and Reprobation fully detected,*" saith on the

\* *Junius in parellel. ad Heb.*

place, "Now the graces which the apostle here speaketh of, are not ordinary or common; but special and excellent graces; such as illumination, faith, a relish of God's word, and a taste of heaven. And the persons spoken of are apostates, such as are under a possibility of falling away for ever, and consequently reprobates: whereas if it were impossible that good men should fall from grace, it would be absurd and ridiculous in the apostle to warn them against it; because no solid exhortation can be built on a danger not possible to come to pass."\* But 2 I deny that here is any supposition at all. For the word *if* is not in the original. Mr. *Wesley* has justly observed, that "The words are *Αδυνατον της απξ φωτιδενιας και παραπισουτας*. That is in plain English, it is impossible to renew again unto repentance, those who were once enlightened and have fallen away."† Dr. *Whitby* renders *και*

\*See page 157, 158. of that work.

†Predestination calmly considered.

πραπιστοιτας, "and yet fall away."\*

It is therefore certain, as *John Goodwin* has well observed, that here is no "Hypothetical sign or conditional particle :"<sup>†</sup> and therefore I conclude, that the apostle was not speaking of an imaginary falling away, which in reality, could never happen; but of such as was very possible in itself, and which the Christian Hebrews were in very great danger of. The venerable Archbishop *Cranmer* quotes this passage in proof of the possibility of the falling away of those who are justified: "It is NO DOUBT," said he, "but although WE BE ONCE JUSTIFIED, YET WE MAY FALL THEREFROM, by our own free will and consenting unto sin, and following the desires thereof. For albeit the house of our conscience be once made clean, and the foul spirit be expelled from us by baptism or penance: yet if we wax idle and take not heed, he will return with seven

\* Discourse on the Five Points, p. 404, third edit. † Redemption Redeemed, p. 283. sect. 18.



worse spirits, and possess us again. **AND ALTHOUGH WE BE ILLUMINATED, AND HAVE TASTED THE HEAVENLY GIFT, AND BE MADE PARTAKERS OF THE HOLY GHOST: YET MAY WE FALL AND DISPLEASE GOD.** Wherefore, as *St. Paul* saith, "He that standeth, let him take heed that he fall not."\* *Dr. Heylin* saith, If they fall away, means, "If they apostatize."† The Dutch Annotators on the place say, "AND FALLING away [or falling;] whereby we are not to understand all kinds of sins whereinto true believers sometimes fall, as David, Peter, &c. who afterwards came to repentance; but a TOTAL FALLING, OR APOSTASY from the Christian RELIGION."‡

But what kind of falling was it which the apostle apprehended them to be in danger of? I answer, It was TOTAL AND FINAL APOSTASY. The

\* See the chapter on Justification, in the NECESSARY DOCTRINE AND ERUDITION FOR ANY CHRISTIAN MAN. † Heylin on the place. ‡ See Dutch Annot.

truth of this proposition will fully appear by considering, first, what the apostle apprehended they were in danger of falling from. And, 1. He supposed them in danger of falling from divine, gospel illumination.— 2. From tasting the heavenly gift.— 3. From partaking of the Holy Ghost. 4. From tasting the good word of God. And, 5. From tasting the powers of the world to come. Add to this, secondly, the consideration of the effects and consequences of this falling. And, 1. The apostates are said, *ανασταυρῆν*, to crucify Christ a second time; and *παρὰ εὐσευματιζῆν*, to inflict open punishment on him: and, as Dr. Hammond has observed, “That must need include renouncing and denying of Christ, the looking on him as such as the Jews pretended him to be when they crucified him, that is, an impostor.”\* Beza saith, “They that crucify him again, “make him a mocking-stock to all the world, and that to

\* See Dr. Hammond on the place, Note (a.)

their own destruction, as *Julian* the apostate did."\* And in King *Edward* the Sixth's Bible it is, "They which are apostates, and sin against the Holy Ghost, hate Christ, crucify and mock him, but to their own destruction, and therefore fall into desperation, and cannot repent."† The 2d effect would be, that the apostates would render it, *αδυνατον*, impossible for them to repent; of consequence their forgiveness would be rendered as impossible; then, of course, their salvation must be rendered equally impossible, and their damnation equally sure. Hence it is that the apostle compares them to the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, yet beareth thorns and briers; on which account it is, first, rejected; secondly, it is nigh unto cursing; and, thirdly, whose end, (that is, the end of the apostate, who is compared to the earth) is to be burned. "The end of such unhappy creatures," says

\* Beza on the place. † Note on the passage.

Dr. *Doddridge*, SHALL BE EVERLASTING BURNING.”\* And *Grotius*, speaking of this ground observes, “*Sentibus et tribulis respondet contemptus religionis Christianæ; maledicto herili damnatio; incendio pœna gehennæ:*” the contempt of the Christian Religion answers to the thorns and thistles—damnation, to the proprietor’s curse; and hell-torments to the burning of the field.† Once more; The *Assembly of Divines* say, “As the earth painfully tilled and plentifully watered is good for nothing but to be burnt, if instead of good fruit it bringeth forth thorns and thistles: so those who have been plentifully watered with many sweet showers of the word of God, and enriched with divers excellent graces, are good for nothing but to BURN IN HELL FOR EVERMORE.”‡ One Mr. *Thomas Moore*, in a book entitled, *An Explicit Declaration of the Testimony of Christ,*” &c. saith,

\**Family Expositor*, vol. vi. page 47. †*Grotius* in loc. ‡*Assembly’s Annotations* on the place.

on this passage, "The briers and thorns here meant, appear in this epistle to be a letting slip the things we have heard, and so a neglect of the great salvation, and a listening to the deceitfulness of sin, and so a hardening our hearts against the teachings of the grace of God, and allowing in ourselves any root of bitterness, uncleanness or profaneness, and so turning from him that speaks from heaven, through an unbelieving heart departing from the living God. And then a neglect of the ordinances of Christ, and a forsaking the assemblies of the saints; and then crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame. And so when fallen from such a faith, by the oracles of God fastened on such a foundation, and affording such principles; they have trodden under foot the Son of God; and have counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified, as an unholy thing, and have done despite to the Spirit of grace. These are briers

and thorns ; and these not repenting, but continuing thus crucifying Christ, &c. even themselves are briers and thorns, nigh to cursing, being rejected, and their end is to be burned : and this justly and deservedly. Because of the truth, goodness, and riches of the faith, taught by such divine oracles, and brought on such a foundation ; affording such principles, sweet experiences, and blessed hope, all so watered from heaven ; as in others brought forth meet fruits ; but the rewarding evil for good have so foully departed ; and continue contemning, and bring forth briers and thorns, till they” [themselves] “ become briers and thorns : so that even in this demonstration of the equity, justness, and holiness of God’s proceeding, the faith they fell from, and that others abiding in, are found fruitful, and exhorted to abide, appears to be true, and of the right kind.”\*

From all that has been said, I con-

\* See the above Declaration, &c. p. 599.

clude, that the falling away here spoken of, is nothing less than **TOTAL** and **FINAL APOSTASY**.

Before I dismiss this passage, I shall add a few testimonies to shew that learned and pious Calvinists as well as Arminians declare, that it is *total* and *final* apostasy which is spoken of in this passage. So *Diodati*: Those who "*fall away*—not by some particular sin of human frailty, but by an **ENTIRE** and **voluntary APOSTASY** and renouncing of the faith, do return to their state of spiritual death, and **TOTAL SEPARATION FROM GOD**, as they were before their vocation.—He [the apostle] shews the **IMPOSSIBILITY OF SUCH APOSTATES' REPENTANCE**, for their killing Christ maliciously."\* So the author of *Critica Sacra*, "If they shall fall away—**ALTOGETHER, TOTALLY**; *prolapsi, id est, prorsus lapsi*. Anselm. *Notat universalem ab evangelio defectionem*. CALVIN. This place must be understood of a wilful ma-

\*See *Diodati* on the place.

licious apostasy.”\* Dr. *Doddridge's* paraphrase is, “If they **TOTALLY** fall away;” and he observes in his Note, that “It is *certain* the words, fall away, **MUST** be understood thus; or it would prove, contrary to the plainest fact, that it is impossible to recover Christians who have fallen into great and wilful sins.”† *D. Dickson* Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow saith, The apostle presupposeth, except they study to make progress, they shall go backward: and that going backwards, tendeth to apostasy: and that voluntary and complete apostasy from known truth doth harden the heart from repentance, and cutteth off a man from mercy.”‡ The learned *Trapp* expounds it thus: “If they shall fall away—**TOTALLY** and **FINAL-  
LY**, as Judas and Julian did.”§ The *Assembly of Divines*, on chap. vi. ver. 4. say, that “The apostle observing

\*Leigh on the place. † Family Expositor.  
‡ See Dickson on the place. § Trapp's Comment, page 374.



that the Hebrews were ready to revolt from the Christian faith, into Judaism, and by little and little to fall into the unpardonable sin which he here describes, labours to keep them from both: first by manifesting the danger of such a relapse.”\* Again, on verse 6, they say, “*Fall away*—that is, by universal apostasy, into Judaism, or Paganism, maliciously and despitefully contemning and persecuting the faith of Christ; of whose truth they were convinced in their consciences by the Holy Ghost.”† Bishop *Fell*, on ch. vi. verse 6. says, “The apostle speaks of an universal apostasy from Christianity back to Judaism.”‡ Mr. *Sam. Clarke*, on those words, For it is impossible, &c. says, “It concerns you to make some progress in Christianity, because the neglect thereof makes way for apostasy.”§ The continuators of *Pool* say, “The foregoing counsel the Spirit

\*Assembly's Comment. †Ibid. ‡Fell on the place. §Clark on the place.

enforced on the Hebrews, from the danger of apostasy, to which the neglect of it doth dispose them, and the terrifying consequences of it, from ver. 4. to 9. We must go on to perfection unless we will **DRAW BACK TO PERDITION**; so he bespeaks them: you have been sluggish and dull, and going backward already; lest you grow worse, stir up yourselves; if you neglect it, **YOU ARE IN DANGER OF UTTERLY FALLING AWAY.**"\* The learned *Beza* saith on the place, "He [the apostle] addeth a most sharp threatening of the **CERTAIN DESTRUCTION** that shall come to them who fall from God and his religion." Again: "He [the apostle] speaketh of a general backsliding, and such as do **ALTOGETHER FALL AWAY FROM THE FAITH.**"† *Gomarus*, and *Jacobus Capellus*, on the place, (as quoted by *Pool*) tell us that the sense of it is, "*Desinite retrocedere, ne abducemini nē*

\**Pool* on the place †*Beza* in loc.

*defectionem ac ruinam prorsus insanabilem :*" Cease to draw back, lest you FALL INTO APOSTASY, and into a DESTRUCTION ALTOGETHER WITHOUT REMEDY."\* *Calvin* says on these words of the apostle, If they fall away, &c. that the persons spoken of are not men, "*qui aliqua in parte Deum offendunt sed qui ejus gratiã se penitus abdicant,*" who are guilty of some partial offence before God; but who totally abdicate or abandon his grace.† *Wilson*, author of the Christian Dictionary, expounds to fall away "By universal apostasy into Judaism or Paganism, maliciously and despitefully contemning, persecuting, or opposing the faith of Christ; of whose truth they are convinced in their consciences by the Holy Ghost."‡ In the Book of Homilies we are told, that "In the sixth and tenth chapters of the epistle to the Hebrews," the apostle is speak-

\*Synop. Crit. ii. loc.

†Calv. in. loc.

‡Christian Dictionary on the place.

ing “ of The FINAL falling away from Christ and his gospel, which is a sin against the Holy Ghost, that shall never be forgiven, because that they do UTTERLY forsake the known truth, do hate Christ and his word, they do crucify and mock him, (but to their utter destruction) and therefore fall into desperation, and cannot repent.”\*

But it may be said, “The apostasy here spoken of by the apostle, is not to be understood of true believers; but of hypocrites and false professors.” To this I answer, first, It has already been demonstrated that the persons spoken of were true believers, and genuine Christians. Secondly, To suppose them to be any other than true believers, is absurd and contradictory. For if they were only hypocrites and carnal professors, they never properly stood, and therefore could not fall. Again, if they were only carnal hypocrites, they had

\* First part of the Hom. on Repentance.

no genuine repentance; and therefore, to talk of RENEWING them *again* to that which they never had, is absurd with a witness! If it is said, that "They had common grace, from which they might fall; then I ask, Would hypocrites, by falling from this *common*, unsaving grace, crucify unto themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame? And would they, by falling from this counterfeit grace, be rejected, and nigh unto cursing, and at last be burned? And is the sin of falling from such false, ineffectual grace, so aggravated, that it is impossible to renew unto repentance those who have once been guilty of it?

Again, it may be objected farther, that the apostle says, verse 9, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we speak thus." True: but then the question is, What does he mean? It is impossible he should mean, We have a full, absolute persuasion, that you cannot

let this great salvation slip; that you cannot possibly let go the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope; that you cannot harden your hearts as in the provocation; that you are incapable of an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; that you cannot be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, or fall through unbelief. Had this been his meaning, how came he to suppose that they were in danger of these evils, and to write a whole epistle to prevent their falling into them? What! did an inspired apostle caution them against letting the great salvation slip, while he was absolutely persuaded that they could not do it! Did he, in the most solemn manner, warn them not to depart from the living God, while he had an absolute persuasion that it was impossible? 'Tis absurd and impious once to imagine it. No: if the apostle (I will not say was inspired: but if he) was in his senses, he did not write this verse on purpose to contradict all the rest of his epistle.

But what then did he mean? I an-

swer, that he was persuaded, first, that these Hebrews were not THEN of the number abovementioned ; that is, that they were not apostates AT THAT TIME ; and, secondly, that he hoped, or believed, IN A JUDGMENT OF CHARITY, that they never would.

That this matter may be set in a clear light, let it be observed, 1. That before the writing of this epistle, great numbers of the converted Hebrews had already totally apostatized from Christ and his gospel : and 2. that many of those who were not yet thus fallen, began to abate in their attachment to Christ, and were in danger of imitating their brethren, by a like total apostasy.

Now, as the awful threatenings made use of in the preceding verses were intended to alarm their fears, and thereby to prevent their ruin, the apostle was apprehensive that some of them might make a wrong use thereof, by concluding that he thought their case already desperate : and that, because they had begun to decline, he thought, that by so doing,

they had crucified unto themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame: and that, therefore, he thought they were the persons who were incapable of repentance, and who resembled the earth which was rejected, and nigh unto cursing, whose end was to be burned.

To prevent, or to remove this mistake, the apostle added these words, "Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things which accompany salvation, though we speak thus." As if he had said, Though we speak with such seeming severity, and lay before you such dreadful considerations; you must not hence conclude that we look upon you AS ALREADY in that dreadful condition. For we are persuaded better things of you; namely, that, AT PRESENT you are in a state of salvation, and in the way to the full and eternal enjoyment of it: and the great love we have for you gives us a *charitable persuasion* or *hope*, that you will continue therein. Nevertheless, as we



see you exposed to great dangers, we think it our duty to warn you in the most solemn manner.

An excellent commentator who wrote on this epistle about the year 1646, and who is strongly recommended by Mr. *John Downname*, expounds this passage thus ; “ I am persuaded that you are YET in that state that ye may be saved, if ye have a will to it.” Mr. *Wesley's* exposition is, We are persuaded you are now saved from your sins : and that ye have that faith, love, and holiness which leads to final salvation, though we speak thus to warn you, lest you should *fall* from your present steadfastness.”\* Professor *Dickson* tells us that the apostle “ MITIGATETH HIS THREATNING, for fear of hurting their faith.”† The learned *Beza* saith, *He* [the apostle] MITIGATETH and ASSUAGETH all that sharpness, HOPING better of them to whom he writeth.‡ Dr. *Doddridge's* paraphrase is, “ We have this *cheerful*

\* See Wesley on the place. † Dickson on the place, ‡ Beza in loc.

*expectation* concerning you, though we think ourselves obliged thus to speak; that nothing may be wanting to guard you against the greatest danger."\* The Calvinian Assembly expound the passage thus: "But beloved — To moderate and sweeten his former harshness, here he shews his good opinion which he had of the Hebrews, and to comfort them, by giving them assurance of God's mercy in rewarding them, if they continue steadfast in their profession". See chap. x.39."† — "*Temperat austeritatum præcedentium verborum,*" says Erasmus: ‡ the apostle tempers here the severity of the preceding expressions. Mr. Henry saith, "The apostle having applied himself to the fears of these Hebrews, for the exciting their diligence, and preventing their APOSTASY, now proceeds to apply himself to their hopes and candidly declares the *good hope,*" (not the absolute persuasion)

\* Family Expositor. † Assembly's Annotations.

‡ Erasm. in loc.

“ he had concerning them, that they would persevere ; and proposes to them the great encouragement they had in the way of their duty.”\* Mr. *Thomas Moore* saith, “ And now in his supposition he set forth before them the heinousness of the sin and danger of such *departing* and *falling away* : comparing such transgressions and transgressors, to briars and thorns, whose end is to be burned, he *mollifies* the harshness of his sentence in respect of them, and saith, We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak ; which plainly shews the better things to be better than thorns and briars, which tended to damnation : and it shews also that his speech in the warning was directed to them ; else they needed not to be *mollified* with, Though we thus speak. Surely none would fancy the apostle to warn the Hebrews, by speaking at such a rate as this ! There

\* Henry on the place.

is a rock of stability, on which whoever once believeth"—“can no more fall off—and you are upon that rock, &c. Hold fast therefore your confidence; take heed lest any of you fall through an evil heart of unbelief: and give us leave to fear lest any of you come short; for there is an unstable rock, on which, not you, but some others are built. And they that are built on that rock of instability, if they abide they perish; if they fall, they can no more rise.”\* “By these words,” say the Dutch Annotators, “the apostle *mollifies* the former threatning, and declares in that which follows, why he sets before them the grievous punishment of *apostates*, namely, not that he held them to be such, but to warn them, and to exhort them to hold fast to the doctrine of the gospel, and to God’s promises.”† Father *Quesnel*’s remark is, “Ill does that person understand the art of gain-

\* *Mocre*’s works, page 613. † See Dutch Annotations on the place.

ing upon the minds of men, who is always full of reproaches and invectives. If we find them dejected by the dread of damnation, and by our upbraiding them with their impenitency, we must raise their spirits by marks of our ESTEEM and HOPE.”\*

From all that hath been said, we learn, 1. That they are not different persons who are spoken of in this, and the preceding verses, but one and the same. 2. That all that is intended in this verse is, to *soften* the seeming severity of the former remarks, lest the Hebrews, instead of being stirred up to godly jealousy, by what was said, should abandon themselves to despair. Now of this interpretation I observe two things, 1. It preserves, (yea, and is absolutely necessary to preserve) the connexion and coherence of the place. And, 2. That on this account it is, that the most learned and candid among the calvinian writers are constrained to insert it.

\**Quesnel's New Testament on the place.*

9. The next proof that falling away was the evil intended by the apostle, we have in verse 11. of this chapter. "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." On this passage, I observe, That *perseverance* to the end was that which the apostle had still in view: therefore the evil he supposed them to be in danger of was that of APOSTASY, or of not persevering to the end. And it is very observable, with what prudence the apostle proceeds in labouring to prevent the apostasy of these Hebrews. From the 4th to the 8th verse, he uses an argument of great terror, to alarm their fears. Then, lest this should terrify them too much, in the 9th and 10th verses, he lifts them up by declaring that he was persuaded better things of them. "FOR GOD is not unrighteous, says he, to forget your works and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And now again."

says a learned author, lest they should be too confident of themselves—and flatter themselves with an infallible hope of salvation, he shews them their wants, that being thus reduced to a temper, that they might not despair of salvation, nor presume of it.” And that they might not thus presume, We desire, said the apostle, that every one of you may shew the same diligence that you have formerly shewn, and still are shewing, unto the full assurance of hope unto the end: that is, according to Dr. *Doddridge*, “in order to ESTABLISH the full assurance of your hope even unto the end of your Christian course:”\* For, according to Father *Quesnel*, “It is not so much good works, as PERSEVERANCE in them, which assures our hope. †—These words unto the end, may be applied, first, unto the diligence which the apostle recommends; and then the meaning is, that he desired the

\* See Family Expositor. † *Quesnel's New-Test.* on the place.

Hebrews might continue this unto the end ; which supposes that there was a possibility of their not doing it. Or, secondly, they may be applied to the full assurance of hope ; and then the meaning is, that they ought to keep up their former diligence that this full assurance might continue to the end ; which supposes it possible for it not to continue : or which is the same, that they might apostatize from it.

10. The next passage which I shall produce in proof of the point is chap. x. verse 23. " Let us hold fast the profession of our *ἐλπίδος*, hope, without wavering." The hope here spoken of was, undoubtedly, the hope of everlasting life. And the profession of it, was that which the Hebrews had first made at their baptism, and continued to make to the time the apostle wrote this epistle. Now, when he exhorted them to hold fast this *profession*, he tacitly acknowledged that there was a possibility of their *not* holding it fast ; or, in other words,



of their falling away from it. And in supposing this, he supposed there was a possibility of their not holding fast the *practice* which was the effect of their profession. And then that there was a possibility of their not holding fast the *hope* itself. For it is certain, that when the profession, &c. of this hope was gone, the hope itself could not continue."—Hence Mr. *Baxter's* comment is, "Let us, against all subtle, deceitful adversaries, against all cruel persecutors, under all trials and sufferings, HOLD FAST both our *hope* and *faith*, and the open PROFESSION of it."\* The continuators of *Pool* expound the words thus: Let us therefore PERSEVERE in the FAITH and HOPE of him; really, actually, STEADFASTLY RETAINING, with all our might and power, whatsoever insinuations may be used to entice us, or violence of persecution to force us from it, RETAINING it still in our mind, will, affections and operations.\*

\*Baxter on the place.

†Pool's Comment.

Mr. *Henry* saith, "Our spiritual enemies will do what they can to *wrest our faith, and hope, and holiness, and comfort, OUT OF OUR HANDS*; but we must **HOLD FAST** our religion as our best treasure. The manner how we must do this, is, without wavering, without doubting, without disputing, without dallying with temptation to apostasy"—"They that begin to waver in matters of Christian faith and practice, **ARE IN DANGER OF FALLING AWAY,**"\* The Dutch Annotators say, "Let us hold fast, that is, **STEADFASTLY RETAIN**, without turning from it, or being seduced from it, the unwavering profession of hope: namely, **WHICH IS IN US.**"† This passage then is another demonstration that the apostle's caution is against **APOSTASY**.

11. Again, verse 25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but

\*Henry's Comment on the place.

†Dutch Annot. on the place.

exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." It is certain that the assemblies here spoken of, were the public and private assemblies of the Christian church. Now when the apostle said to these Hebrews, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is," he in effect declared, 1. That some of them had already done this. And, 2. That he saw that those to whom he wrote the epistle were in danger of following their bad example.—This is evident from the advice he here gives them, 1. Negatively: not to forsake these assemblies. 2. Affirmatively: but to exhort one another, "To perseverance in the faith," says Dr. *Whitby*.\* And so much the more as ye see the day approaching, which will put an end to all your present troubles. *Estius* on the place observes, that the apostle exhorts the Hebrews, "*Ne ecclesi-*

\*See *Whitby* on the place

*am deserant per schisma, aut apostasiam, ad quam Hebræ proclives erant. Sic Latini fere accipiunt.\** “Not to forsake the church by schism or APOSTASY, to which the Hebrews were inclined: “this is, said he, the almost GENERAL SENTIMENT OF THE LATIN FATHERS.” Mr. *Henry* saith, “We have the means prescribed for preventing our APOSTASY, and promoting our fidelity and PERSEVERANCE, ver. 24, 25, &c.” Again: “There were in the apostles time, and should be in every age, Christian assemblies for the worship of God, and for mutual edification. And it seems, even in those times there were some who forsook these assemblies, and so began to apostatize from religion itself.—The communion of saints is a great help and privilege, and a good means of steadiness and *perseverance.*”† Again: “After having mentioned these means of establishment, the apostle proceeds, in the close of the chapter, to enforce his exhortations TO PERSE-

\*Syn. Crit. in loc.

† Henry on the place,

VERANCE, and AGAINST APOSTASY, by many very weighty considerations, ver. 26, 27, &c.”\* The calvinian *Dickson's* remark is, “That mutual edification of Christians among themselves”—“is a special help to *constancy* in true religion, and a preservative against APOSTASY:”† which abundantly shews, that, according to the judgment of this learned Calvinist, APOSTASY was the evil which the apostle was labouring to prevent.

12. The next proof of the business in hand we have in the 26th and following verses. “For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin: verse 27. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries: verse 28. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: verse 29. of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye,

\*Hen. on the place. †Dickson on the place.

shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.”

Observe, 1. The sin here spoken of is, a wilful FALLING AWAY. This is evident, first, from hence, it is said to be done, *εὐσθως*, wilfully. The Geneva translation renders it *Scientes et volentes*, wittingly and willingly. They who thus sinned, did it, not through ignorance, as carnal and unenlightened people often do; but they did it with their eyes quite open.—Calvin saith, “*Non loquitor de particularibus lapsibus, sed de universali defectione, qui illi ultro, scientes et volentes, se ab ecclesiæ societate et a Christo alienabant atque abdicabant:*” He [the apostle] does not speak of particular falls; but of an *universal defection*, by which they, of their own accord knowingly and willingly, left the society of the church, and re-

nounced THEIR INTEREST IN CHRIST.\* So *Baxter*: "The dreadful case of *apostates* must deter you: for if you WILFULLY forsake *Christ* and *Christianity*, after you have received the knowledge of the truth of it, BY THE SPIRIT,"† &c. Secondly, it is said to be done after receiving, *επιγνωσιν της αληθειας*, the acknowledgement of the truth; after they had, not only heard the truth; but after they had inwardly experienced it, and had outwardly acknowledged it. The continuators of *Pool*, on these words say, "Who sinneth at a higher rate than a Jew against *Moses'* law, being an APOSTATE from the gospel, a revolter from, and a rebel against it."‡ The Dutch Annotators say, "For if we sin wilfully—that is, wilfully FALL AWAY FROM THIS FAITH, which the apostle hath here described, as hereafter in verse 29. this sin is more largely declared, which the apostle

\* Calvin in loc. † Baxter on the place.  
‡ *Pool's* Comment.

also, as heretofore, chap. vi. verse 6. calleth a falling away. He speaketh not here, then, of every kind of sin or falling away; but of that sin which Christ calleth the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.\*

Observe, 2. That it is TOTAL AND FINAL APOSTACY which is here spoken of. This is evident, first, from those effects of this sin which respect GOD and his grace. 1. He who hath thus sinned, hath trodden under foot the SON of GOD: that is, he hath treated him in the most contemptuous manner, as if he were dung and dross.—*Theophylact, Ambrose, and Prymasius*, expound κατὰ πᾶσιν, “contemn and despise Christ:” and the author of *Critica Sacra* renders it “Extremity of contempt.” 2. He hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy, καὶ ἅγιον an unclean thing. Dr. *Doddridge’s* paraphrase is, “a common or an unclean thing, like the blood of a male-

\* Dutch Annot. on the place.



factor justly executed for his crimes.\* *Pool* quotes *Gomarus, Estius, Menochius, Ribera, and Grotius*, as saying that this passage belongs, "*Ad apostatam, qui eo sanctificatus dicitur, i. e. redemptus, emundatus a peccatis, &c. a vitiis purgatus, sanctusque factus, remissionem peccatorum, et sanctificationem consecutus,*" TO AN APOSTATE, who on that account is said to have been sanctified, i. e. redeemed, cleansed from his sins, &c. made pure from his vices, and holy; having obtained remission of sins, and sanctification.† And the Continuator of *Pool* tell us that, *Ἐν τῷ νηυσθῆν, in, or by* which he was sanctified, is BY MOST interpreters referred to the APOSTATES."‡—When the apostle said that the apostate counted the blood of the covenant a common, unclean, or an unholy thing, he meant, that the apostate's behaviour was exactly such as if he had counted it so. 3. He hath done

\* See *Doddridge* on the place. † *Syn. Crit.* in loc. ‡ *Pool's Comment.*

despite to the Spirit of Grace. That is, he hath treated that good Spirit, which was graciously bestowed on him, for gracious purposes, as if he was a most vile and hateful enemy. *Diodati* expounds it thus, "Do despite—by secret or open blasphemies, with thoughts, deeds, and words, against God's truth which hath been revealed unto him, and the certainty whereof hath been REVEALED IN HIS HEART BY THE HOLY GHOST."\* *Dr. Whitby* says, "To do despite unto the Spirit of grace, cannot well signify less than that which our Lord stiles the sin against the Holy Ghost, which men cannot commit, and in their hearts be Christians."† *Grotius* says, *Vides hic etiam eos qui Spiritum acceperant, qui nisi justificatis non datur, defectores fieri posse* :‡ You see here also, that those *who had received the Spirit*, which was not given to any *but the justified*, may become APOS-

\* *Diodati* on the place. † *Whitby* on the place. ‡ *Grotius* in loc.

**TATES.** The continuators of *Pool* expound the words thus, "Injuring, wronging, despising, greatly grieving, not a creature, but **GOD** the Spirit, the quickening Spirit of dead sinners, who fits them for union with **GOD**, and in order to it uniteth them to Christ and his body, and animateth them; who graciously communicated to **THESE APOSTATES** the knowledge **NATURAL** and **SUPERNATURAL**, which **THEY HAD** and **ABUSED.**"\*

Again; that it is **TOTAL** and **FINAL** apostasy which is here spoken of, is evident, secondly, from the consequences of it which relate to the apostate himself. These are, 1. That **GOD** looks on the apostate as an adversary. This is evident from verse 27th, where he is expressly called an adversary. He had acted the part of an adversary in treading under foot the Son of God, in counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and in doing despite unto the Spirit of

\* *Pool's Comment.*

grace: and, therefore, God judged of him according to what he was. 2. There remained no more sacrifice for his sins. As he had rejected, yea, trampled on that sacrifice which God had provided for him; so God, in righteous judgment, determined that he should have no other. 3. Instead of having another sacrifice, a fiery indignation was provided to devour him. 4. This indignation was to come upon him in a sorer manner than that which came on those who despised the law of Moses, and who died without mercy. I therefore conclude upon the whole that the apostle could not here intend any thing less than **TOTAL AND FINAL APOSTASY.**

And the truth of this conclusion is so evident, that the most learned Calvinists, as well as Arminians have been constrained to acknowledge it. *Pool* quotes not only *Erasmus*, but *Beza* also, and other divines, who say that the apostle speaks, "*De peccato apostasiæ a fide et religionone Christiænâ quo quis ex professo, et in universum resilit a Christo*" of the sin of APOSA

TASY from the faith, and the Christian religion, whereby a man openly, and TOTALLY falls back from Christ.\*—*Mr. Sam. Clarke*, on the place, saith, “It concerns us to use all means to PERSEVERE, because APOSTASY is so dangerous.”† *King Edward’s Bible* hath it, For if we sin wilfully—“That is, forsake JESUS CHRIST, as *Judas, Saul, Arius, Julian* the APOSTATE did.”‡—*The Assembly of Divines* say, “The apostle doth speak here, not of all kinds of wilful sin, or falling away; but only of that which our Lord CHRIST calleth blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.”§ So *Diodati*: “I exhort you to take heed of the first degrees of impiety, for by them YOU MAY FALL INTO THE EXTREME, WHICH IS THE IRREMISSIBLE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST. He adds on the word, “wilfully, by a TOTAL APOSTASY and extinction of the Holy Ghost, done

\* Syn. Crit. in loc.

† Clarke’s Comment.

‡ Note on the place.  
§ Annotations.

§ Assembly’s Annotations.

purposely and through malice with delight."\* To the same purpose are the words of Professor *Dickson*, on verse 29. "Another motive to constancy in the truth of religion, taken from the fearful case of WILFUL APOSTATES, who sinning the sin against the Holy Ghost, are secluded, FOR EVER, from mercy. I say, the sin against the Holy Ghost; because we shall find the sin here described, not to be any particular sin against the law, but against the gospel: not against some point of truth, but against Christ's whole doctrine: not of infirmity, but wilfulness: not of rashness, but of deliberation, wittingly and willingly; not of ignorance, but after illumination, and profession: such as Jews turned Christians, revolting from Christianity, back again to their former hostility against Christ, did commit."† By sinning wilfully, Dr. *Gill* says, "The apostle

\* *Diodati* on the place.

† *Dickson* on the place

intends a TOTAL APOSTASY from the truth, against light and evidence, joined with obstinacy.”\* Dr. *Doddridge* on these words, trodden under foot the Son of God, says “It appears to me, that this is a description of a case that could only occur, when what was properly the sin against the Holy Ghost was committed.”† So the learned *Trapp*: “For if we sin wilfully against the grace of the gospel, despising and despiting it, as those do that fall into the unpardonable sin,”‡ &c. I shall conclude this point with the words of Dr. *Whithy*. “They so sinned that there remained no more sacrifice for sin; but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, and so as to do despite to the Spirit of grace, by rejecting him as a lying spirit, and his gifts and miracles as illusions, and so were guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, fell

\*Gill on the place.

† Doddridge on the place.

‡ Trapp on the place.

TOTALLY and FINALLY, is so exceeding evident, that I know of none who ever ventured to deny it.”\*

13. The next passage which shews that neglecting to persevere was the evil the apostle apprehended these Hebrews to be in danger of, is the 35th verse of this same chapter.—

“Cast not away therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward!” By confidence, the apostle intended faith in Christ, and liberty of freely confessing it. And that this confidence was a true and genuine one, appears from hence, that it had a great recompense of reward.—

Nevertheless; these Hebrews could CAST IT AWAY, otherwise the apostle would not have supposed they could, by bidding them not do it. The continuators of *Pool*, say, that this passage, “Introduceth the last direction for helping on their *perseverance* in Christianity:” and adds, that “*Μη αποβαλητε*, denieth all degrees of APOS-

\* Whitby on the five points, p. 407.



TACY.”\* *Jacobus Capellus* and *Beza* (as quoted by *Pool*) say, *Ne igitur (cum tam horrendum sit desertorum exitium, &c.) abjicite, vel jacturum facite rei tam pretiosæ*: Since the destruction of APOSTATES is so horrible, &c. do not cast away; do not throw over-board so precious a thing [as your confidence, &c. is]†

14. Again, verse 38. Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. The original word, *υποσειληται*, is a military term, taken from soldiers who draw back out of their place, and in whom their captain has no delight. Therefore the learned *Trapp* renders it, “Steal from their colours, run away from their captain.”‡ *Dr. Whitby* hath justly observed, that “*Dr. Hammond* hath shewed from *Phavorinus*, that this word signifies, to draw back, refuse,

\* *Pool's* comment on the place. † *Ibid.* ‡ See *Trapp* on the place.

and fly from a thing.”\* *Aretius* renders *Και εαν υποσειληται*, *Et si subductus fuerit*: and expounds it, *Ostendunt autem judicium Domini contra apostasiam, et eordis pertinaciam seu rebellionem, q. d. rebellio sine morâ separat ab amore Dei, ex amicis hostes facit, ex patre Deo inimicum et vindicem facit*: † the meaning of which is, That apostasy and rebellion presently separate from the love of God: of friends make men enemies, and make God an enemy and an avenger, who was a father. The Dutch annotators say, “And if (any one) withdraw [namely, from his faith and patient expectation, by apostasy, and denial of Christ and his truth] my soul hath no pleasure in him.” ‡ The Assembly of Divines say, “Draw back—from their faith and patient expectation, by FALLING AWAY and denying Christ and his truth.” § It is therefore cer-

\* Whitby on the place. † See *Aretius* in loc. ‡ Dutch Annot. on the place. § Assembly's Annotations.

tain that the apostle was here speaking of falling away.—But what kind of falling was it? I answer, TOTAL AND FINAL APOSTASY. That it was total apostasy appears from hence, God says, “My soul shall have no pleasure, *οὐκ εὐδοκῆσιν* in him. *Οὐκ εὐδοκῆσιν*, is an Hebraism, says *Suicerus*, in which, as in many other places, more is intended than expressed; and is an expression of the strongest aversion and abhorrence.\* So the Calvinian author of *Critica Sacra*, says, “More is meant than spoken, after a Hebrew manner of speech, as though he should say, I *abhor* all those that fall away through unbelief.”† The renowned *John Goodwin* expounds it thus: “My soul shall have no pleasure in him, *i. e.* according to the import of the Hebraism, my soul shall HATE OF ABHOR him TO THE DEATH.”‡ Now, if God has no pleasure in such

\* *Suicerus Theus. Eccl.* † Leigh on the place. ‡ See *Redem. Redeemed.* p. 290

a one, but does hate or abhor him to the death, it must be, because he is fallen into *total* apostasy. The continuators of *Pool* say, that “the Hebrew word here translated *υποστειληται*, is variously rendered, as elated like a bubble, lifted up, making pride and unbelief to be the sins threatened here; and the proper sense of the word here used, is, for fear, or sloth to withdraw, or leave their standing, so that the meaning in both” (the Hebrew and Greek words) “amounts to this, If any, out of the pride of their heart, will not depend on Christ’s righteousness, as the Jews would not, or out of fear and sluggishness will not hold out, but withdraw themselves in time of persecution, from their faith and confidence in Christ, professed, shrinking through fear, or losing it through sloth, or forsaking it by treachery, either gradually or totally, confiding in themselves, and so despising God, reject him, and draw away from him—God himself will be so far from taking any pleasure or de-

light in such a soul, or vouchsafe it any joy or life, that his very soul abhors it, is highly displeased with its sin, and ABOMINATES ITS PERSON.— In his displeasure is misery, death, and ETERNAL PERDITION.\*” So *Baxter*, “If any man forsake THIS FAITH, and its profession, either through fraud, flattery, or fear of men, GOD will forsake him.”† *Father Quesnel’s* remark is, “All the past is counted for nothing, unless PERSEVERANCE secures the future.”‡ Therefore *Baxter*, in another place saith, “If any man draw back, Christ saith, his soul shall have no pleasure in him. Even those that have endured the great fight of affliction, being reproached and made a gazing-stock, and that have taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, in assurance of a better and enduring substance, have yet need to be warned, that they cast not away their

\* Pool Comment on the place.

† Baxter on the place.

‡ *Quesnel’s New Test.* on the place.

confidence, and draw back to perdition, and lose not the reward for want of patience and perseverance.”\*— And that *final*, as well as total apostasy, is here intended, appears from hence, that the apostate is said to draw back unto *απωλειαν*, *perdition* or *destruction*: yea, to that perdition or destruction which is opposed to the *περιποιησιν ψυχης*, to the saving, delivering, or preserving of the soul.

But it may be said, “The person who is supposed to draw back, is not the same with him who lives by faith; he is only a hypocrite or carnal professor who draws back.” To this I answer, What can a hypocrite or carnal professor draw back from? If he draws back at all, it must be either from that which is good, or else from that which is evil. If he draws back from that which is good, then he had goodness to draw back from. The carnal professor, is in reality, no carnal

\* See Epistle dedicatory to a book entitled, *The Right Method for a settled Peace of Conscience and Spiritual Comfort.*

professor:—Or if he had no goodness to draw back from, and so was in truth, a carnal professor, then, in this case, he drew back from that which he never had! If he draws back from that which is evil, would God have no pleasure in him on that account! or would God hate or abhor him to the death, as *Goodwin* hath it? and is this the way, viz. by drawing back from that which is evil, to involve himself in that perdition which is opposed to the saving of the soul!

But it may be objected farther, that “The apostle doth not say, if any of you, but if any man draw back,” &c. I answer, the original is και εαν υποστηληται, AND, OR BUT IF HE (that is, the just man that liveth by faith,) “draw back.” Theophylact says,—Εαν υποστηληται ο δικαιος, τειξιν, αμφιβολιαν τινα παθη και διαγμονη το υποστηληται, αλλι τε υπολαπνωθη τοις πειρασμοις If the just man shall draw back; that is, if he shall be doubtful, or hesitate, or give place to temptation.\* Mr. *Wesley* renders

\*Theophyl. in loc. page 987.

it, "If, ο δικαιος, the just man that lives by faith, (so the expression necessarily implies, there being no other nominative to the verb,) draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.\* Dr. *Whitby* renders εαν υποστραληται, "If HE draws back;" and observes "that it refers plainly to the just man who lives by faith."† Dr. *Hammond*, after having examined the original words as they are found in this place, in other parts of the New-Testament; and after having examined them as they are found in Hab. ii. verse 4, according to the Septuagint, Hebrew, Chaldea, Arabic, the Targum, &c. and after considering the interpretation of *Phavorinus*, *Rabbi Tanchum*, *Ignatius*, and our English *Pocock*, observes, "And all this sets down the true notion of the word in this place, thus: But if HE that should live by his faith, shall

\* Predest. calmly considered. † *Whitby* on the five points, page 408.



cowardly withdraw himself from the public worship of Christ," &c.—So again; "If—the just, the Christian proves thus pusillanimous, hangs back from the performance of his duty; if by afflictions he be disheartened and terrified, GOD's soul hath no pleasure in him, he is utterly rejected and disliked by GOD."\* The learned and Calvinian *Diodati* explains this drawing back as done by the just man who lives by faith.—"The just." says he, "draw back—If HE depart from his belief in me, if he becomes careless or disloyal in following my vocation," &c.† Dr. *Heylin* supposes the same, "The just shall live by faith; but if HE draws back, retreats or deserts his post, he shall not be approved by me."‡ So *Calvin* renders it, "*Justus autem ex fide vivet: et si subductus fuerit, non oblectabitur,*" &c. that is, and if HE

\* See Hammond on the place; note. † *Diodati* on the place. ‡ *Heylin* on the place.

shall draw, or be drawn back, my soul, &c.\* And so evident is this, that even Mr. *Kendal*, who wrote against Mr. *John Goodwin's* *Redemption Redeemed*, says, "I YIELD THAT ANY MAN IS NOT IN THE TEXT."†

But it may be objected again, that "The apostle, in the next verse saith, We are not of them who draw back unto perdition: but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." I answer, The apostle does say so.—But then the question is, what does he mean? It is impossible for him to mean, we are not of that sort of people who CAN draw back unto perdition; but we are of that sort who MUST believe to the saving of the soul. Had this been his meaning, how came he to write a whole epistle to warn and caution them not to draw back? How came he to caution them against letting this salvation slip? chap. ii. ver. 1. against hardening their hearts

\* Calvin in loc. † See answer to *Redemption Redeemed*.

as in the provocation? chap. iii. ver. 8.—against an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God? in verse 12.—against being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? ver. 13.—against falling through unbelief? chap. iv. verse 11.—against not holding fast their profession? verse 14.—against falling in such a manner as to be incapable of being renewed again unto repentance? chap. vi. ver. 4, 6.—against not being diligent to the end? verse 11.—against not holding fast their profession? chap. x. 23.—against forsaking the assembling of themselves together? verse 25.—against sinning wilfully after having received the knowledge of the truth? verse 26.—against casting away their confidence? verse 35.—against drawing back in such a manner that God shall have no pleasure in them? ver. 23. To suppose that the apostle would send such a number of warnings and cautions to these Hebrews, and then tell them that they were not the persons to whom these cautions

belonged, is to suppose that he wrote only for the sake of absurdity and self-contradiction!

But what did he mean when he said, We are not of them who draw back unto perdition? &c. Answer: we are not AT PRESENT of that number.—It has been observed already on chap. x. verse 25. that many of the converted Hebrews had forsaken the assembling of themselves together, and that there was danger the rest would follow their example. Now as this epistle was written on purpose to prevent this evil, the apostle, both in the passage under consideration, as well as elsewhere, lays before them the dreadful state of apostates. But that this might not discourage them, and cause them to abandon themselves to despair, he very judiciously tells them, that whatever *danger* they were in of becoming apostates, they were not, AT PRESENT, of that number; but rather of the number of those who *yet* believed to the saving of the soul. I therefore conclude, notwithstand-

ing all that has been said to the contrary, that the evil which the apostle here supposed the Hebrews to be in danger of, was, so to neglect this salvation as to draw back unto TOTAL and FINAL APOSTASY.

15. Another proof that falling away was the evil the apostle apprehended the Hebrews to be in danger of, is, chap. xii. ver. 3. "For consider him that ENDURED such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be WEARIED and FAINT in your mind." Καμνισιν, literally signifies, To be tired. The expression is agonistical, and belongs to those who are worsted, or overcome in fight, and who give over the combat through despair of success. So Dr. Hammond tells us from *Phavorinus*, that it signifies, "To give over to despair—to play the coward or run away." He also tells us that ψυχαις εκλυισθαι signifies, "To turn coward or pusillanimous, such as whose souls within them fall away like water, dissolve; and it is spoken of those who give over the attempt as

hopeless, fly disheartened, or crest-fallen, out of the field.”\* The continuators of *Pool*, expound the place thus: “Lest faintness, languishing, or deficiency of soul, that is, of vigour, strength, and activity of heart should befall them, and so they should LIE DOWN and CEASE to run the christian race.”† *Suicerus* says, *καμνεν*, signifies to faint, and also to die, whence the departed are also called *καμνοτες*.‡

Now this was really the case.— These Hebrews had entered the list on their first receiving the gospel, and for a while had courageously carried on the encounter; but when they saw that instead of drawing to an end, it was still growing heavier and heavier, they were so disheartened, as to think of yielding, and of giving up all for lost. And therefore to fortify them against this the apostle lays before them the example of Christ, who not only *took up* the cross, but also EN-

\* See Hammond on the place, Notes (b) and (c). † *Pool's Comment*. ‡ *Thes. Eccl's*

**ENDURED** it, verse 2. that is, who not only exposed himself, for the present, or only for a short time, to the contradiction of sinners; but **ENDURED**, *patiently* **ENDURED** it, to the end. Now, says the apostle, consider him, and learn from his example; so you shall not grow weary, but endure to the end, as he did before you.—Again, he tells them, verse 4. “Ye have not resisted, *μηχρῖς αἱματός*, as far as blood, striving against sin.” As if he had said, You ought not to be disheartened by your present sufferings; for you have not gone so far as the *Athletæ* of old did in the Olympic games, who did not give over after brandishing their weapons, nor after slight skirmishing; but went on to that part of the combat which was often attended with blood and death. Now your past and present conflicts, are only like their slight skirmishes; and as the prize which you contend for, is so much better than theirs, it would be very absurd for you to grow weary, and give up the encounter before you

go so far as they did. It is therefore certain, from what has been said, that **FALLING AWAY** was the evil which the apostle intended by growing weary and faint in their minds.

16. The next proof of the point we have in the 12th and 13th verses of this chapter. "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees: and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be **TURNUED OUT OF THE WAY**; but let it rather be healed." From these words it is certain, that **TURNUED OUT OF THE WAY** was the evil which the apostle apprehended these Hebrews to be in danger of.—Now the question is, What he meant by turning out of the way? The Greek word, *ετραπην*, may be taken either for spraining a joint or sinew, by which means walking is rendered impracticable: or else it may be taken for turning out of, and leaving the right way. The former of these significations agrees best with the metaphors of lameness and healing, which are mentioned presently



after ; but the other agrees best with the preceding words concerning making straight paths for the feet, lest that which is lame **ALREADY** be turned out of the way.—To understand the words in the former sense, would be to make nonsense of the passage : for it would suppose the apostle to say, **Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is sprained already be sprained ! lest that which is lame already be made lame ! lest that which already halteth be made to halt !** But if we take the words in the other sense, the meaning is easy, clear, and regular. **Make straight paths for your feet—Remove, so far as in you lies, every impediment and difficulty out of the path, or way of duty, lest that which is lame—the tempted, the feeble, the halting soul, who has not courage enough to surmount many and great difficulties, be turned out of the way which leads to heaven.—**And to this agrees Dr. *Doddridge's* paraphrase : “ **Make straight paths for your feet. Regulate matters so,**

that the way of duty may be as obvious and easy as possible, that the infirm, the lame, and the decrepit, may not by discouragements and temptations, be turned out of the way, or thrown down; but that every such feeble traveller in the way to Zion, may rather be healed; recovered from falls or weakness, and strengthened to a course of more strenuous and PERSEVERING piety.”\* *Diodati* expounds it thus: “Make straight—make the way of the gospel plain and easy for you, by your voluntary obedience, and using it—lest those who have neglected to strengthen themselves in christian virtues be, through God’s just punishment, put out of the way into APOSTASY.”† The continuators of *Pool* expound it thus: “Lest being lame, or halting in their minds between Judaism and Christianity, because of the violent persecution of them by their infidel brethren, they

\* See *Doddridge* on the place. † *Diodati* on the place

should be TURNED ASIDE OUT OF GOD'S WAYS, erring and deviating from the truth of the gospel; but rather that they be restored to it, so as no sufferings upon that account, under GOD'S hand, might make them suppress the truth, or expose them to APOSTASY.\* *Jacobus Capellus* observes that the original word *εστρεψθη*, means, "*plane pervertatur ac penitus immutetur,*" should be ALTOGETHER PERVERTED, and TOTALLY ALTERED: *στρεψω*, adds he, "*est mutare,*" to turn, "*εστρεψω, prorsus immutare,*" to ALTER ENTIRELY.† From all that has been said, I conclude, that apostasy from Christ and his gospel was what the apostle meant by turning, or being turned out of the way.

17. Another passage which shews that falling away was the evil intended, is the 15th verse of this chapter. "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you,

\* Pool's Comment.

† Syn. Crit. in loc.

and thereby many be defiled.”—By the grace of God is meant, 1. His favour; and 2. Those inward privileges, of light, power, &c. which are bestowed on all who enjoy that favour. By failing of the grace of God, cannot be meant, to fail of *receiving* it; seeing, as I have demonstrated above, that these Hebrews had already received it. What therefore the apostle intended by the expression was, failing to **RETAIN** the grace of God, or failing to **PERSEVERE**. Hence the words in the original, *υστερω απο*, are frequently rendered, **FALL FROM** the grace of God, and so our translators have rendered them in the margin. And that this is the true import of the expressions, we learn farther from **Duet. xxix.** verse 18. from whence the apostle quoted them. “Lest there be among you any man or woman, or family, or tribe, whose *heart* **TURNETH AWAY** this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and worm-

wood." Now it is certain that the apostle quoted this passage to shew these Hebrews, that they were in danger of the same kind of evil which their predecessors were in danger of in the days of Moses and the prophets. But that was the evil of APOSTASY, or turning away from the Lord their God. Therefore it was APOSTASY, or turning away from the Lord our God, that the apostle intended in this passage.

And so evident is the truth of this, that Calvinists and Arminians equally agree in asserting it. Dr. *Hammond* expounds the place, "Taking all care that ye walk like Christians, THAT YE FALL NOT OFF from the gospel state."\* Dr. *Whitby* tell us, that "ὄσπρηκεναι, is the same with ἀφίστασθαι, to depart from the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, or, to depart from the faith, and, by so doing fall short of the promised rest, Heb. iv. 1. The words of the apostle, and

\* Hammond on the place.

his *scope*, which is to prevent the Jews from BACKSLIDING from Christianity to Judaism, and the following exhortation, not to refuse him that speaketh now, ver. 25. and *εχει την χάριν*, to RETAIN AND HOLD FAST the grace of God, ver. 28. sufficiently shew."\* So Mr. G. M. in his learned and judicious comment, saith, "The author here alludes to the words of Moses, Deut. xxix. 18. wherein he likewise speaketh of APOSTATES. By roots of bitterness—he understands APOSTATES."† Mr. Trapp's observation is, "Perseverance crowns all;"‡ from whence it is evident that he understood the passage as speaking of perseverance. Dr. Doddridge's paraphrase is, "Look to it therefore, with the greatest attention and care, for yourselves and one another, lest any one, BY APOSTASY from the christian religion, fall short of the grace of God."§ In king *Edward* the Sixth's

\*Whitby on the place. † See on the place.  
‡Trapp's Comment on the place. §Dr. Doddridge on the place.

bible it is, "Take heed that no man FALL AWAY *from the* GRACE of GOD;" and on these words, "lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you," &c. the Note is, "Of heresies, or APOSTASY."\* The continuators of *Pool* render it fail of, or "FALL FROM" *the* GRACE of GOD.† *Beza* hath it, "Take heed that no man FALL FROM," &c. and on those words, lest any root of bitterness, &c. the Note is, "That no heresy or BACKSLIDING be an offence."‡ *Dr. Heylin* saith, "Superintend what passes among you, lest any one should FALL AWAY FROM GRACE."§ The Dutch Annotators expound it, "Looking to it lest any one stay behind [that is, abide behind, TURN AWAY] from the grace of God."|| *Mr. Henry* saith, "Here the apostle enters a serious caveat against APOSTASY, and backs it with an awful example."¶ It is therefore certain that

\*King Edward's Bible on the place. †*Pool's* Comment. ‡*Beza* in loc. §*Heylin* on the place. ||*Dutch Annot.* on the place. ¶*Henry* on the place.

falling away, or apostasy, was the evil spoken of in this place.

18. The next proof of the proposition we have in verse 25, of the same chapter. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if WE TURN FROM HIM, ἀποστρεφόμενοι, or turning away from him that speaketh from heaven. The evil here spoken of is, TURNING AWAY from him that speaketh from heaven; that is, from Christ. But the question is, What is meant by turning away from him? It cannot mean, to turn away so as never to give him a hearing: seeing that these Hebrews had already heard him in this sense, as we learn from chap. ii. verse 1, yca, and believed in him also, to the saving of the soul, chap. x. ver. 38. Therefore to turn away from him must signify, to discontinue their hearing of him: or, to refuse to PERSEVERE in hearing him.—This is evident from hence, that the turning away with

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which the apostle compared what he intended here, was of this sort. The Israelites of old had for some time hearkened to, and obeyed *Moses* when they were in Egypt; but when they were got through the Red Sea, into the wilderness, they turned away, they rebelled against him, and would not hearken unto him any longer: see Numb. xvi. Certain it is, then, that the turning away here spoken of by the apostle, was that of APOSTASY. And concerning the ancient Israelites, I would observe, that their turning away from him who spake on earth was TOTAL and FINAL: seeing they escaped not, as the apostle tells us; but died without mercy. It therefore follows, that the turning away from Christ, which the apostle compares with that turning away from him who spake on earth, is TOTAL and FINAL also.

19. The last evidence, of this sort, which I shall bring, we have, verses 28, 29. “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let

us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire." The question here is, What are we to understand by *having* grace? The words in the original are, *ἔχωμεν χάριν*, and are often rendered HOLD FAST grace; and it is thus that our English translators have rendered them in the margin. "It is the observation of critics here and elsewhere, says Dr. *Whitby*, that *ἔχειν*, to have, is often put for *κατεχειν*, to RETAIN and HOLD FAST: SO *ἔχειν πίστιν καὶ ἀγαθὴν συνείδησιν*, is to HOLD FAST faith, and a good conscience, 1 Tim. 1. 19. *ἔχειν τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως*, to HOLD the mystery of faith; *ὑποτυπωσὶν ἔχειν*, to HOLD FAST the form of sound words, 2. Tim. i. 13." And that the words must be rendered thus, in the passage under consideration, is evident. For as these Hebrews were Christian believers at the time the apostle wrote to them, they must be supposed to be in possession of grace:

of consequence, if, by having grace, the apostle meant, let us endeavour to get possession of it; this would be to say, let us labour to get that which we have already! But, on the other hand, if we suppose them first, to be in possession of grace, and, secondly, to be in danger of losing it, the apostle's exhortation to hold it fast, and not to let it go on any consideration, was very necessary and proper. It is therefore evident, that when the apostle said, let us *have* grace, his meaning was, let us hold it fast, and, by so doing, continue to have it.—Accordingly the learned *Diodati* expounds it, “Let us—KEEP ourselves in the fruition of GOD’S grace, and of the gift of his Spirit,”\* Mr. *G. M.* in his very judicious comment on the place saith, “*Have* is here put for RETAIN OR HOLD.” And Professor *Dickson* hath it, “Let us *have* grace, or HOLD FAST THE GRIP OF GRACE.”†—“LET US HOLD FAST GRACE,” said the

\* See *Diodati* on the place. † *Dickson* on the place.

Continuators of *Pool* :\*—said the Assembly of Divines: †—said *Samuel Clarke*. ‡ *Grotius* and *Piscator* say, “εχωμεν, pro κατεχωμεν,” let us have, for LET US RETAIN. § “εχειν, pro κρατειν,” says *Beza*, to have, for TO HOLD FAST. || So that the meaning of those expressions (to use the words of *Beza*, *Estius*, and *Jacobus Capellus*) is, “*Firmiter retineamus, nec ullis tentationibus ab eâ nos sinamus revelli* :” Let us firmly RETAIN GRACE, nor let us suffer it to be TORN FROM US by any temptations. ¶ Agreeably to all this, the Dutch Annotators render it, “Let us hold (fast) grace [namely, which we have already received.]”\*\*

Again, that the apostle here supposed the Hebrews to be in danger of TOTAL and FINAL apostasy is evident from the following words, For our GOD is, Πυρ καταναλισκος, a consuming fire. This indeed his very name im-

\* *Pool*'s Comment. † Assembly's Annotations. ‡ *Clarke*'s Comment. § *Grotius* et *Piscator* in loc. || *Beza* in loc. ¶ *Syn. Crit.* in loc. \*\* Dutch Annot. on the place.

ports. So *Gregory Nazianzen*, Ἀπο τῆ αἰθεῖν ἐτυμολογῆται, δια το δαπανητικὸν τῶν μοχθηρῶν ἐξέων, καὶ γὰρ πῦρ καὶ ἀναλισκὸν ἐντευθευ λεγέται. It (the word Θεός) is derived from αἰθεῖν, to consume; on account of his power of consuming vicious affections.\* So *Damasceus*: Το Θεός ὄνομα λεγέται ἐκ τῆ αἰθεῖν, ὁ ἐστὶ καίεν· ὁ γὰρ Θεός πῦρ καὶ ἀναλισκὸν πᾶσαν κακίαν ἐστὶ. “The name, God, is taken from αἰθεῖν, which is, to burn; for God is a fire, consuming all wickedness.”† And these words are added by the apostle, as a reason to enforce the performance of the aforesaid duties; as if he had said, Hold fast the grace you have, that therewith, or thereby, you may serve God in a manner which shall be acceptable unto him. For if you do not, you shall experience him to be a consuming fire, in causing his fiery indignation to devour you, chap. x. verse 27, or as the Dutch Annotators have it, “As a

\* *Greg. Nazianzen. Orat. 36. fol. 589.*

† *Damaso. Orthod. Fide, lib. cap. 13.*

consuming fire towards them that are disobedient or APOSTATES."\* It is therefore certain from the nature of the punishment which is here threatened (which none but those who apostatize TOTALLY and FINALLY, are capable of) that the apostle here intended TOTAL and FINAL APOSTASY.

But it may be objected, that "In the xiiiith chap. and 5th verse, GOD hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. In which words, according to the original, there are five negatives, Ου μη σε ανῶ, ουδ' ου μη σε εγκαταλιπο· that is, I will not leave thee, neither will I not forsake thee; or thus; I will not, I will not leave thee, I will never, never, never forsake thee." To this I answer, that the number of negatives, suppose they were five hundred, or five thousand does not in the least degree *shew* the sense of the place: the very most that they can do is, to shew that whatever the sense is, it is emphatical; and

\* Dutch Annot: on the place.

therefore, let any one declaim as he will on his five negatives, it is infallibly sure, that nothing more than this can be inferred from them.

But what is the meaning of the words, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee? I answer, It is impossible for them to mean, I will not leave it in thy power to neglect this salvation; I will not, no, I will not suffer thee to let it slip, I will never, never, never suffer thee to let go thy confidence or the rejoicing of the hope; to harden thy heart as in the provocation; to have an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; to fall so as to be incapable of being renewed again unto repentance; to fall by unbelief, after the example of the Israelites of old; to cast away thy confidence which hath great recompense of reward; to draw back unto perdition; to be wearied and faint in thy mind; to fall from the grace of God; or to let it depart in such a manner, as to

know by experience that he is a consuming fire. I say, it is impossible for the meaning to be, I will not, I will not so leave thee, I will never, never, never so forsake thee, as to render it possible for thee to fall into those evils which I have so often declared thou art in danger of, and which I have so often warned thee against.

But what then do they mean? That God would not fail to provide for his people while they were obedient to, and trusted in him.—As this promise was originally made to *Joshua*, and afterwards unto these Hebrews, it respected temporal things and these only. As it was made to *Joshua*, it only respected his conquest of Canaan. So we read, Josh. i. 1.—“The Lord spake unto *Joshua* saying, verse 2. *Moses* my servant is dead, now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give unto them, even to the children of Israel. Verse 3. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I give



en unto you. Verse 4. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even unto the great river Euphrates—verse. 5. There shall not be a man able to stand before thee all the days of thy life : as I was with *Moses*, so I will be with thee : I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.” It is therefore evident that here is nothing promised but temporal success.

And that this promise was conditional, is clear beyond a doubt. For when the people fell into disobedience, their enemies were so far from being unable to stand before them, that they were not able to stand before their enemies. So we read, chap. vii. verse 5. “And the men of *Ai* smote of them about thirty and six men : for they chased them from before the gate, even unto *Shebazim*, and smote them in the going down : wherefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water.” Verse 11. God informs *Joshua* of the cause of this disaster. “Israel hath sinned, and they have transgressed my covenant

which I have commanded." Verse 12. "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed:" it is then added, "neither will I BE WITH YOU ANY MORE, except ye destroy the accursed from among you."

From all that hath been said, observe, first, that although God hath said, "There shall not a man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life;" yet when they disobeyed him, there were men, even the men of Ai, who not only stood before them, but destroyed some of them, and chased the rest quite away. Observe, secondly, that although God had said, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee;" yet we find that when they had sinned, he NOT ONLY FORSAKE THEM; but also declared,— "Neither WILL I BE WITH YOU ANY MORE except ye destroy the accursed from amongst you. It is therefore certain that this promise, as originally

made, was only a **CONDITIONAL** promise of success in conquering and possessing the land of Canaan.

As it is applied to the converted Hebrews, it is a promise of outward provisions. This is evident from the context. "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."—For a better understanding of these words, let it be observed that the converted Hebrews had formerly been spoiled and plundered in their worldly goods, on account of their attachment to the Gospel. This, for a while, they took joyfully. But when they looked forward, and saw nothing in this world but prospects of greater poverty and distress, many of them were in danger of too great solicitude about these worldly things: and it is not improbable that some of them were in danger of leaving Christ, because his religion exposed them to great poverty, as well as to other worldly inconveniences.

To prevent this, the apostle very seasonably said, let your *τροπος*, your disposition, your manner, your turnings and windings for a livelihood, be without covetousness; that is, without anxious mistrustful care; and be content with such things as ye have, or as it is often rendered, with the present things: for he hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." It is therefore certain, that neither the text nor context do, in the smallest degree, authorise us to expound this promise otherwise than as speaking of temporal things. And, that even in this sense, it must be understood conditionally, appears from hence, that when God made it to *Joshua*, it was certainly conditional; for though the condition was not mentioned in the promise, the event fully shews it to be conditional; as I have shewn above. And as we have no authority to understand the same promise conditionally in the days of *Joshua*, and unconditionally in the days of *Paul*, I conclude that it must

be understood conditionally in this epistle to the Hebrews: and that, upon the whole, the meaning is, I will not, I will not leave thee to want the necessaries of life, while thou trustest in me; I will never, never, never forsake thee, while thou art obedient to my word. *Estius*, after observing that the original promise was made to *Joshua*, says “*Extenditur ad omnes justos, et ad omnem temporalem necessitatem*”—it extends to all the righteous, and to every TEMPORAL necessity.\* *Junius* confines it yet more when he says, “*Pertinet ad pios omnes vocationi suæ hærentes:*” it belongs to all the righteous, WHO ADHERE TO THEIR VOCATION.† This passage, therefore, does in no wise militate against the general conclusion maintained in this discourse.

Having demonstrated from nineteen texts in this epistle, that the evil which the apostle apprehended these Hebrews to be in danger of, was total

\* *Estius in loc.*      † *Junius in loc.*

and final apostasy ; and having considered the three texts (which are all that can be found in the epistle) which have the appearance of an objection to the general conclusion : I shall sum up all that hath been said on this head, by giving a brief account of the OCCASION and DESIGN of the epistle, and of the apostle's manner of reasoning therein.

The Christian religion being so contrary to the corrupt principles and practice of the world, those who embraced and propagated it were, on those accounts, rendered very odious wherever they came. The consequence of this was, that heavy persecutions were raised against them in most places. The converted Hebrews, because they had turned their back on the law of Moses, and embraced the religion of that JESUS whom their rulers had crucified, were exceedingly persecuted by their countrymen. Sometimes the unconverted Hebrews persecuted their converted brethren themselves ; at other times

they stirred up the Heathen, who were round about, to do it. By these means the believing Hebrews had a great fight of afflictions, chap. x. ver. 32, and were made gazing-stocks, both by reproaches and afflictions, verse 33, and experienced the spoiling of their goods, which for a while they took joyfully, verse 34.

But this was not at all : for as the Christian religion was then a new thing in the world, it is natural to suppose that the new converts had many scruples, and reasonings in themselves concerning the lawfulness of what they had done in embracing it. And what added to these scruples was, the constant endeavour of the judaizing teachers to lay stumbling-blocks in the way of these Hebrews, which they too often effected by means of their diverse and strange doctrines, mentioned chap. xiii. verse 9. The consequence of this opposition, both from within and without, was, that great numbers of the Hebrews apostatized from Christ and his

gospel, and went back to the law of Moses, while the fluctuating state of the rest, gave the apostle too much reason to fear a general, if not an universal apostasy. Now this apparent danger was the OCCASION of this epistle, and the DESIGN of it was, to prevent the threatened evil if possible.

And that I am not alone in this opinion, the following testimonies abundantly declare. *Clemens Alexandrinus* saith, *Ἐπει καὶ Παῦλος τοῖς Ἑβραίοις γραφῶν τοῖς ἐπιπαρακαμπτήσῃ εἰς νόμον ἐκ πίστεως*, that is, Paul also writing to the Hebrews, RELAPSING from the faith unto the Law, saith,\* &c. Now if the other Fathers, so often quoted in the preceding pages, such as *Ignatius*, *Chrysostom*, *Oecumenius*, *Ambrose*, *Cyprian*, *Phavorinus*, *Theophylact*, *Greg*, *Nazianzen*, *Damascenus*, &c. expounded the particular passages above cited, according to their view of the scope of the whole epistle (which would be absurd to suppose they did not) they must be supposed

\* *Strom. lib. vi. fol. 645, Colon. edit.*



to agree with *Clemens Alexandrinus*, that it was intended as a CAVEAT AGAINST APOSTASY. And the same must be said of those of later date, which I have so often cited: such as *Grotius*, *Erasmus*, *Camero*, *Ribera*, *Calvin*, *Junius*, *Gomarus Gerhardus*, *Capellus*, *Menochius*, *Aretius*, *Piscator*, *Suicerus*, *Beza*, &c. For we cannot suppose that such profound Commentators and Critics would give one uniform exposition of so many particular passages, in this, or any other epistle, which they thought was unconnected with the occasion and design of the whole.

To what has been said, I shall add the express testimony of a great number of other writers, many of whom are of a more modern date.

The learned *Marlorat* says, "*Utrâque parte epistolæ eos hortatur; illic ne Christum rejiciant, hic autem ut Christo fidant, et per patientiam in veritate persistent:*" that is, In both parts of the epistle, he (the apostle) earnestly exhorts them on the one hand, that

they would not *reject Christ*; but wholly trust in Him by Faith, and **PATIENTLY PERSEVERE** in the Truth.\* So *Ostervald*, "*Il exhorte les Hebreux a la perseverance dans la foi:*" He exhorts the Hebrews to **PERSEVERANCE** in the Faith.† *Le Clerc* says, "*Ut animus Christianis addatur, quo constantes ac perseverantes sint,*" &c. the apostle wrote this epistle, To animate the Christians, that they might be **CONSTANT** and **PERSEVERING** in the Faith.‡ The great *Bengelius* says, "*Totus in id incumbit, ut fratrem fidem in Jesum Christum confirmet:*" that is, The apostle employs **ALL HIS STRENGTH ON THIS SINGLE POINT**, that he might confirm the faith of the brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ.§ So *Michælis*, "He (the apostle) writes this epistle to the Christians in Palestine. A severe persecution not only deprived them of the apostle *James*; but rendered almost the whole church

\* See comment, page 965. † Ostervald in loc. ‡ Le Clerc's preface on the place. § See his preface on this Epistle.

WAVERING in the faith."\* The learned *Hallett* says, "The Christians were continually persecuted by the unbelieving Jews—Heb. x. 32—36. chap. xii. 4, 5. By these persecutions they were tempted to APOSTATIZE from Christianity."† *Dr. Roberts*, in his *Clavis Bibliorum* saith, "The apostle's SCOPE is—To exhort the Hebrews to CONSTANCY in the Faith—from the peril of APOSTASY."‡ Again he saith, "The apostle exhorts the Hebrews faithfully to hearken to and obey Christ's doctrine, and constantly TO PERSEVERE in the Faith of the Gospel; and that against all grounds and occasions of APOSTASY."§ *Calmet* saith, The apostle "addresses himself to the BELIEVERS in Palestine, to CONFIRM them against those evils which they were about to suffer from the unbelieving Jews."|| *Cradock*, in his apostolic History, says, *St. Paul*

\* See Lectures, page 360. † *Hallett's* Synop. as quoted by *Dr. Lardner* in his history of the apostles, page 383. ‡ See page 542. § *Ibid.* 543. || *Calmet's* Dictionary, page 529.

“exhorts them—to be **STEADFAST** in the Faith: representing to them the horrible danger of **RELAPSING**, after they had tasted of the gift of the Spirit.”\* *Mr. G. M.* whose comment is so strongly recommended by *Mr. J. Downham*, saith, “The principal end of it [this epistle] is to exhort to **CONSTANCY** and **PERSISTANCE** in the Christian religion.”† The learned *Dr. Sykes*, in his paraphrase and notes saith, “It was—wrote to Hebrew Christians—to keep them steady to their professions, and to guard them from **RELAPSING** into Judaism.”‡ *Dr. Lightfoot* saith, that The apostle’s “intention is, if he can, to argue them into an establishment against that grievous **APOSTASY** that was then on foot.”§ *Dr. Hammond* saith, that The Hebrews—“began to forsake the Christian assemblies, and to fall off from the profession of their faith:

\* See page 301. † See the Argument to his Comment. ‡ Introduction. § Harmony of the New Testament, p. 141.

which being" (observe it well)—"THE OCCASION of this monitory epistle THE SUBJECT consequently is, to confirm them in the truth," and to represent the great danger and sin of **FALLING OFF.**\* Dr. *Whitby* saith, that this epistle was "written to persons now relapsing from Christ to Moses."† Again, in his discourse on the Five Points, he saith, "Now to *prevent this apostacy* of the believing Jews, the epistle to the Hebrews was manifestly written! and as the excellent Dr. *Barrow* used to say, that it was written" (observe well :) "AGAINST THE DOCTRINE OF PERSEVERANCE.‡ In the Argument to the epistle to the Hebrews, in *Edward the Sixth's Bible*, we have these words, "Wherefore according to the example of the old fathers we must **CONSTANTLY** believe in him, that being sanctified by his justice, taught by his wisdom, and governed by his power, we may stead-

\* Preface to this Epistle. † Preface to this Epistle. ‡ See Discourse on the Five Points page 414.

fastly and courageously, even to the end, continue or persevere in hope of that joy which is set before us."\* Dr. *Owen*, the great champion of the Calvinists in the last century, in his learned exposition, on the epistle to the Hebrews, saith, *St. Paul* "had a SPECIAL eye unto the APOSTASY of some of the Hebrews, accasioned by the persecutions which then began to grow high against them. Whatever argument or testimony in his passage gave him advantage to press an exhortation unto CONSTANCY, and to deter them from BACKSLIDING, he lays hold upon it."† Again, says the same author, "As it is likely from this epistle, many of them who had made profession of the gospel, rather than they would utterly forego their old way of worship, DESERTED THE FAITH, and cleaving to their unbelieving countrymen PERISHED IN THEIR APOSTASY, whom our apostle in an es-

\* King Edward's Bible, † Dr. Owen's Exposition, page 38.

pecial manner forwarns of their INEVITABLE DESTRUCTION, by the fire of God's indignation."\* Again, "All the fears the apostle had of their APOSTASY into Judaism—arose from their adherence unto, and zeal for the law of Moses"† Again, "His PRINCIPAL END THEREFORE IN THIS WHOLE EPISTLE (AS HATH BEEN DECLARED) was to prevail with the Hebrews unto SLEADFASTNESS *in the faith of the gospel.*"‡ *Echard* saith that "the Hebrew converts" had "heavy persecutions both from Jews and Gentiles—besides a train of plausible insinuations to reduce them to their ancient Mosaic institutions, to which many of them had turned of late, APOSTATIZING from the purity of the Christian faith. Wherefore, partly to warn and instruct them, and partly to encourage and support them, he [*Paul*] wrote this celebrated epistle."§ The Assembly of Divines in their argu-

\* *Dr. Owen's Exposition*, page 43. † *Ibid* page 353. ‡ *Ibid.* § *Ecclesiastical History*, page 229.

ment to this epistle say, "The apostle observing, that the Hebrews (at least a great part of them) were ready to FALL FROM THE FAITH OF CHRIST into their former Judaism, by reason of the cruel persecutions which they suffered, HENCE TOOK OCCASION TO WRITE THIS EPISTLE UNTO THEM; wherein he laboureth to CONFIRM them in THAT FAITH which THEY HAD RECEIVED, and to stir them up to stand STEADFAST IN IT; and that by divers arguments: as first, from the excellency of Christ's nature," &c. "Secondly from the DANGER OF APOSTASY."\* *Mr. Sam. Clarke* saith. "The scope of it is this: the BELIEVING, OR CHRISTIAN Hebrews suffered under two great evils, one inward, the other outward; the former was a great error, in joining Christ and Moses—the latter was their grievous persecution from their countrymen for *turning Christians*, whereupon many of THEM WERE IN GREAT DANGER OF APOSTASY."

\* *Assembly's Annotations*



—“Against the latter, their persecution, he endeavours to fortify them by laying down *several motives to, and grounds of PERSEVERANCE in the FAITH and TRUTH.*”\* Bishop *Fell* in his introduction to this epistle saith,—“Some of them” (the converted Hebrews) “began to use great compliances and weariness in their religion, and to FORSAKE the Christian assemblies. See Hebrews x. 25. and some others TO RELAPSE and FALL AWAY FROM THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. He (the apostle) represents to them the great sin, and desperate condition of APOSTASY, and the fruitlessness of former endeavours and suffering, without PERSEVERANCE.”† Mr. *Henry* saith, “The DESIGN of this epistle was to promote and press the BELIEVING Hebrews to a constant adherence to the Christian faith, and PERSEVERANCE in it.”‡—Dr. *Gill* says, “The OCCASION and DESIGN of it is,”—“to exhort them

\*Clark's comment. †Fell on the Hebrews;

‡Argument to the epistle to the Hebrews.

to PERSEVERANCE, and to strengthen them against APOSTASY.”\* *Dr. Doddridge* saith, “Now the MANIFEST DESIGN of St. Paul in this epistle is, “To CONFIRM the Jewish Christians in the faith and practice of the gospel of Christ, which they might be in danger of DESERTING, either through the insinuation, or ill treatment of their persecutors.”† The great calvinian *Diodati* saith, the “Hebrews to whom it” (the epistle) “was directed, were JEWS CONVERTED to Christ:” and that the apostle shews “them the DANGER OF FALLING into APOSTASY to the IRREVOCABLE DAMNATION OF THEIR SOULS.”‡ The calvinian author of *Critica Sacra* saith, “The apostle writes to the Hebrews not to FALL AWAY from christianity to Judaism, “which,” saith he, “is the FULL SCOPE OF THIS EPISTLE.”§ *Mr. Collyer* in his *Sacred Interpreter*, gives the following account a little more at

\* *Ecclesiastical History*. † Preface to this epistle. ‡ *Diodati's Preface* to this epistle. § See *Leigh's Annotations*.

large. “ By the Hebrews are—meant—those of the Jewish people WHO HAD RECEIVED THE FAITH.—Many of these were in danger of FALLING AWAY.—Now this being the case, the apostle labours, the better to keep them steady in their christian profession—he sets forth the excellency of Christ as to his nature ; he being the Son of God, and far above angels—and more excellent than Moses. Farther—the apostle shews the excellency of Christ’s priesthood—Then, as to sacrifices—that the sacrifice of himself which Christ offered—was more effectual by far, than all the oblations and sacrifices appointed by the law of Moses—and therefore they [the Hebrews] ought to KEEP STEADFAST TO THEIR CHRISTIAN profession; otherwise the danger would be great, even of their UTTER DESTRUCTION.

“ This dangerous effect of APOSTASY the apostle twice mentions. First in chap. vi. 4, 5, 6. where he tells them it would be impossible to renew them again unto repentance, if after

being enlightened with the knowledge of Christ—and—endued with the divine Spirit—they should now CAST OFF their holy religion, and so become APOSTATES FROM CHRISTIANITY, and fall back to Judaism.

“The like dangerous effect of APOSTASY the apostle repeats chap. x. 26, &c. assuring them there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment,—therefore he exhorts them to PERSEVERANCE. He [the author] then observes, that “What has hitherto been mentioned is the SUBSTANCE of the epistle, to the beginning of the 11th chapter. He [the apostle] goes on chap. xi. to set before them the power of the grace of faith, and proposes the example of the saints in former times, and then tells them, chap. xii.—that all these examples of faith and CONSTANCY ought to be encouragements to them, to run with patience in the Christian race. Afterwards—he instructs them to adorn their christian profession—and (which was all

along the MAIN DESIGN) to take heed that no one amongst them—should despise and CAST OFF their glorious privilege in Christ Jesus, and their interest in the gospel, and in being members of Christ's holy church, with the benefits of the new covenant through Christ's blood.

“Lastly, chap. xiii. 1, &c. he gives them sundry particular directions for a christian life and behaviour, and then again encourages them to PERSEVERE in the christian faith.”\*

That this account is true, will fully appear from a more particular survey of the contents of the whole epistle.

Chap. i. The apostle shews that all former dispensations were delivered to the world by men and angels, who were only servants in what they did; but that the gospel salvation was delivered by Christ, who is the Son of God, and the Heir of all things.—How naturally does he then infer the

\* See Sacred Interpreter, from page 274, to 279.

superiority of the gospel over the law ; and, of consequence, the great absurdity of leaving the former for the sake of the latter !

Chap. ii. He obviates an objection which might be made to the superior excellency of Christ, on account of his humiliation. To this end he shews that this humiliation was voluntary : that it was intended for many important purposes, viz. That we might be sanctified, verse 11. That through his death we might be delivered from death, verse 14, 15. And that Christ, by experiencing our infirmities in his own person, might become a faithful and a merciful High-Priest, verse 17, 18. The inference then is, That his taking our nature upon him, and dying therein, is no argument of his inferiority, either to the prophets or to the angels ; and therefore it is no excuse for those who APOSTATIZE from the gospel for the sake of the law.

Chap. iii. Here *Christ* is particularly compared with *Moses*, and shewn

to be superior to him in several respects. As, 1. *Christ* is the great builder of that house, of which *Moses* is only a small part, verse 3, 4. 2. *Christ* is as a Son in his own house; but *Moses* was only as a servant in his master's house, verse 5. Therefore *Christ* and his salvation are superior to *Moses* and his law, and ought not to be neglected on account of that which is inferior to it.—From verse 7 of this chapter, to verse 14 of the 4th chapter, the apostle shews the great danger of APOSTATIZING from *Christ*, by the severe sentence which was passed on those who rebelled against *Moses*, and apostatized from his law.

Chap. v. *Christ* is compared to *Aaron*, and preferred to him on several accounts. As 1. *Aaron* offered for his own, as well as for the sins of the people; but *Christ* offered only for the sins of others, having none of his own to offer for, verse 3. 2. *Christ* was not a priest after the order of *Aaron*, but after the manner of *Mel-*

*chisedec*, which was a superior order, verse 10.

Concerning *Melchisedec* and *Christ*, the apostle observed, that, through the dulness of the *Hebrews*, there were some things which they could not easily understand, verse 11—14. He therefore calls on them, chap. vi. to labour for a more perfect acquaintance therewith; withal promising them his farther assistance, ver 1—3. The necessity of their doing this, of their thus going on unto perfection, he enforced by the following consideration, that if they did not go forward, they would be in danger of APOSTATIZING in such a manner as would be irrecoverable, verse 7, 8. From thence to the end of the chapter, he encouraged them to patience and PERSEVERANCE, by the consideration of the love, oath, and faithfulness of GOD; and, also, by the example of their father *Abraham*.

Chap. vii. The apostle resumes the parallel between *Melchisedec* and *Christ*, and shows that they agree in



title and descent, verse 1—3. and then from instances wherein the priesthood of *Malchisedec* was preferable to the priesthood of Aaron, he infers the superiority of *Christ's* priesthood over that of *Aaron's*, verse 4—17. From thence to the end of the chapter he shows that the priesthood of *Aaron* was only subservient to the priesthood of *Christ*, in which it was consummated and abolished; and, of consequence, that all those legal obligations were thereby abolished. How naturally then did the apostle infer the absurdity of APOSTATIZING from the gospel to the law, seeing they who did this, not only left the greater for the less; but also left that which remained in full force, for the sake of that which was disannulled.

Chap. viii. is employed partly in recapitulating what had been demonstrated before concerning the superior dignity of our great High-priest, verse 1—5. and partly in showing the superior excellency of the new covenant as established in *Christ*, and as

containing better promises ; verse 6, to the end of the chapter. From this last consideration, the impropriety of going from the new covenant to the old, is as naturally inferred, as from any other of the afore-mentioned considerations.

With the same view the apostle, chap. ix. compares *Christ* and his priesthood, to the tabernacle of old, and to what the high-priest did therein on the great day of atonement ; in all things giving *Christ* the preference, from verse 1, to the end.

Chap. x. The apostle sets down the difference between the legal sacrifices and the sacrifice of *Christ*. The legal sacrifices were weak and could not put away sin, verse 1—4. but the sacrifice of *Christ* was powerful, doing that which the other could not do, verse 5—10.

The next point of difference was between the legal priests who offered these sacrifices, and the High-priest of our profession. And, first, the legal priests were many ; our's is one.

Secondly, they stood when they presented their offerings to God; but *Christ* sits at the right hand of his Father. Thirdly, they offered often; but *Christ* once for all. Fourthly, they, with all their offerings could not put away the smallest sin; but *Christ*, by his one offering, put away all sin, verse 11—18. Now, from all these considerations, the apostle infers the great superiority of the Gospel over the Law; and consequently, the impropriety of leaving the former for the sake of the latter.

The next thing that the apostle does, is to improve his doctrine. This he does by showing that, for the reasons above given, the Hebrews ought to cleave to *Christ*, to hold fast their profession, and not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, ver. 19—25. And as a farther inducement to cleave to *Christ*, and to PERSEVERE unto the end, he urges the consideration of the difficulties which they had overcome already; and also of the love which they had formerly shown

toward *Christ* and his gospel, verse 32—34. He also encouraged them not to cast away their confidence, seeing it had a great recompense of reward, which they should soon enjoy, if they PERSEVERED to the end, ver. 35—37. Another consideration which he urged was, that they ought not to depart from faith to the works of the law; because it is by faith that a just man liveth, and not by the works of the law; because God has no pleasure in those who draw back from faith in him; and because every one who does this, exposes himself to eternal perdition, ver. 36—39.

Another inducement which he laid before them, to CONTINUE to expect salvation by faith and patience, was the consideration of the powerful effect of these graces, as is exemplified in the patriarchs of old, and the rest of the ancient worthies: chapter the xi. throughout. "This chapter," according to Mr. *Perkins*, "depends on the former, thus; we may read in the former chapter, that many Jews having received the faith, and given

their names to *Christ*, did afterward **FALL AWAY**; therefore towards the end of the chapter, there is a notable exhortation tending to persuade the Hebrews to **PERSEVERE** in faith unto the end.”—“Now in this chapter he continues the same exhortation: and the **WHOLE CHAPTER (AS I TAKE IT)** is **NOTHING ELSE** in substance but one reason to urge the former exhortation to **PERSEVERANCE** in faith: and the reason is drawn from the excellency of it: for this chapter doth divers ways set down what an excellent **GIFT OF GOD FAITH** is: his **WHOLE SCOPE** therefore is manifest to be **NOTHING ELSE**, but to urge them to **PERSEVERE** and **CONTINUE** in **THAT FAITH**, proved at large to be so **EXCELLENT** a thing.”\*

And as a farther encouragement to patience and **PERSEVERANCE** he adds the example of *Christ*, chap. xii. verse 1—3. And as to the afflictions they met with on the gospel's account, he tells them that they ought not to

\* See Perkin's Comment on the Epistle to the Hebrews, page 1.

be discouraged, and driven away from *Christ* on their account, seeing they were signs of the divine favour, and permitted to come upon them, only for their good, verse 4—11. He then exhorts them to encourage one another, to PERSEVERE in well-doing, verse 12—14. To watch over one another, lest any of them fall FROM THE GRACE OF GOD, verse 15—18. And seeing they were then in possession of privileges, gospel privileges, such as the law of *Moses* could not give, he exhorts them to HOLD FAST the grace they had, that thereby they might serve God, in such a manner as the great obligations they were under required; which alone would be acceptable unto him: and this they ought to do the rather because if they did not, they would find God to be as much more severe to them, as his gospel is superior to the law, verse 19, to the end of the chapter.

Chap. xiii. He exhorts them, instead of APOSTATIZING, to CONTINUE their brotherly affection one for an-

other, verse 1—3. To CONTINUE their purity of behaviour; their dependence on GOD; and their regard for their teachers, verse 4—8. He exhorts them not to suffer themselves to be CARRIED ABOUT (from *Christ* and his gospel) by divers and strange doctrines; but rather to strive to be established in grace; which they would find to be of more service to them than running about after Jewish ceremonies, verse 9. Again, he exhorts them to CLEAVE TO, and follow *Jesus* without the camp, and continually to give praise to GOD, through Him, verse 9—16. and instead of TURNING AWAY after seducers, that they might avoid persecution, and the scandal of the cross, he exhorts them to submit to and obey their own Christian teachers, and to pray for their success and welfare, verse 17—19. concluding the whole with some salutations, and a solemn benediction, from verse 20, to the end.

Now if we closely attend to these general contents of the epistle, we

shall find that EVERY ARGUMENT, and MODE of REASONING, which would be *proper* in a treatise, wrote, professedly, on the sin and danger of apostasy, is made use of in this epistle.

For, 1. As great temptations to prefer the law of *Moses* to the gospel of *Christ*, was one circumstance which exposed them to the danger of apostasy, nothing could be more to the purpose, than to shew them that the gospel is superior to the law. Now we have seen how largely this argument is prosecuted in chap. i. ii. iii. v. vii. viii. ix. and x. If we reduce it to form, it runs as follows :

No one ought to prefer that which is less excellent unto that which is more so ;

But the law is less excellent than the gospel :

Therefore none ought to prefer the law to the gospel, by apostatizing from the latter to the former.

2. Another argument, equally proper on such an occasion, is that taken from the consideration of the punish-



ment which all apostates are exposed to. This argument is urged, chap. ii. verse 2, 3. chap. iii. verse 7. to the end. chap. iv. verse 1—14. chap. vi. verse 4—8. chap. x. verse 26—31. chap. xii. verse 25, 28, 29. In most of these places the apostle compares the punishment which will be inflicted on apostates from Christ and his gospel, to that which was inflicted on the apostate Israelites of old : and he frequently shows that the former will be far greater than the latter. This argument is as follows,

You ought not to do that which will expose you to as great and greater punishment, than that which God inflicted on the rebellious Israelites of old ;

But total and final apostasy from Christ will expose you to this ;

Therefore you ought not totally and finally to apostatize from Christ.

3. Another argument proper on such an occasion, is that taken from the consideration of the great reward which God has promised to perseve-

rance. This the apostle urges, chap. iii. verse 6, 14. chap. iv. verse 1, 9. chap. v. verse 9. chap. vi. verse 9—11. chap. ix. verse 28. chap. x. verse 35—39. This argument runs thus :

You ought to be careful to do that which God has promised greatly to reward ;

But he has promised you this on condition of your perseverance in the gospel of his Son ;

Therefore you ought to be careful to persevere therein.

4. A fourth argument, which must operate powerfully on such an occasion, is taken from the consideration of losing their present privileges by apostatizing. This argument is insisted on, chap. ii. verse 11. to the end. chap. iii. verse 1. chap. iv. verse 3, 14—16. chap. vi. verse 18—20. chap. vii. verse 19. chap. viii. verse 10—12. chap. ix. verse 14, 15. chap. x. verse 14—22. chap. xii. verse 22, 24, 28. chap. xiii. verse 10—14.— This argument runs thus :

You ought not to do that by which

you will lose the gospel privileges you now enjoy.

But if you apostatize from Christ and his gospel, you will lose these.

Therefore you ought not to apostatize from *Christ* and his gospel.

5. A fifth argument very proper in such a work is taken from the consideration of their former zeal and diligence, in cleaving to *Christ*, and in professing his religion. This argument is handled, chap. vi. verse 10. chap. x. verse 32—34. The argument here is,

Those who have formerly been zealous in well-doing ought not to grow weary, but rather to be steadfast therein unto the end.

But you have formerly been zealous in your adherence to *Christ*, and in professing his religion ;

Therefore, you ought not to grow weary of adhering to *Christ*, or of professing his religion.

6. Another argument proper on such an occasion is taken from the example of such persons as are held

in very high esteem. Now this argument is urged, chap. vi. verse 12—15. chap. xi. throughout ; chap. xii. verse 1—3. Here the argument is,

Whatever you esteem as an excellency in the example of the holy men of old, you ought to imitate ;

But you esteem as an excellency in their example, that they were steadfast, and did not apostatize from God and his ways ;

Therefore you ought to imitate their example in being steadfast, and in not apostatizing from *Christ* and his gospel.

From all that hath been said, in these several surveys of this epistle, it undeniably appears. 1. That the apostle apprehended these Hebrews to be in danger of total and final apostasy ; 2. That he wrote this epistle to them on purpose to prevent it, if possible ; and, 3. That of consequence it was total and final apostasy which he meant by neglecting this great salvation.

III. Thus having largely shown what is meant by neglecting so great salvation, I proceed, Thirdly, to shew the consequence of neglecting it; together with the absolute impossibility of escaping that consequence, if we neglect it.

And, First, as to the consequence of neglecting it. This has often been mentioned in general, in the course of the preceding pages. But we will now be a little more particular.

In the verse preceding the text the apostle observes, that the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and that every transgression and disobedience received a **JUST RECOMPENSE OF REWARD**: that is, they received such a recompense as in its *quality* and *quantity*, was justly due to the *nature* and *degree* of such an offence. He then adds, "How shall we escape"—a just recompense of reward, "if we neglect so great salvation?"—But what is that just recompense of reward which belongs to the neglecters of this salvation? I answer, such as in its

*quality* and *quantity*, that is, in its **NATURE** and **DEGREE** is justly due to total and final apostasy.

As to the *nature* of the punishment, the apostle saith, chap. vi. verse 8.—that “**their END IS TO BE BURNED.**” Mr. *Henry*, on these words saith, “*Apostasy* will be punished with **EVERLASTING BURNINGS**, with the fire that shall never be quenched. This is the sad end to which *apostasy* leads, and therefore Christians should go on, and grow in grace, lest if they do not go forward, they should go backward, till they bring matters to this woeful extremity of sin and misery.”\*

In chap. x. ver. 27. we are informed with what they are to be burned, and also in what manner. And, first they are to be burned with a *fiery indignation*. That is, with the fierce displeasure, wrath, and vengeance of a sin-avenging God. Secondly, this fiery indignation is to devour them. That is, it is to devour them, body

\* Henry on the place.

and soul forever. *Menochius* and *Estius*, as quoted by the calvinian *Pool*, say, "*Est prosopœia, quæ igni tribuit vitam et vires, sensum, zelum pro gloria Dei, vindicandisque illius injuriis, et impatientiam tantæ moræ et dilationis; ut ignis sit instar irritatæ feræ, quæ prædam apprehendit et devorat, vel instar lictoris acerbati, qui gestit vindicare:*" it is a prosopopœia, which attributes to fire, life, strength, sense, and zeal for God's glory, and for the revenging of the injuries done to him, and impatient of so long delay; insomuch that fire is represented like an angry wild beast, that seizes upon and devours its prey, or like an exasperated executioner who is impatient to strike the blow.\* And *Estius* says again, "*Instar ignis acerrime et celerime punit:*" like fire he punishes in the most quick and severe manner.† *Mr. Henry* saith, "Some think this refers to the dreadful destruction of the Jewish church and state; but certain-

\* *Syn. Crit. in loc.*      † *Ibid.*

ly it refers also to the utter destruction that awaits for all obstinate APOSTATES AT DEATH AND JUDGMENT, when the Judge shall discover a fiery indignation against them, that will devour the adversaries: *They will be consigned over to the devouring fire, and to everlasting burnings.*"\* Thus the APOSTATES shall know, by woeful experience, that vengeance belongeth unto the Lord; that He will recompense; that He will judge the people; and that it is a dreadful thing for them to fall into the hands of the living God," chap. x. verse 30, 31. and that to such, "Our God is a consuming fire." chap. xii. verse 29.

But in what *quantity*, or *degree* will this punishment be inflicted on them? I answer, It shall be inflicted in a larger quantity, or in a greater degree than upon any other sinners who ever lived.—To make this appear, I shall observe, 1. That the manifestations of Himself, which, from time to time,

\* Henry on the place.



God has made to the world, have been in various degrees. The lowest manifestation of himself was to the Heathens, by the light of nature. The manifestation of himself made to the Jews, by *Moses* and the Prophets, rose several degrees higher. But the most clear, full, and perfect manifestation of all, is that made by *Christ* and his gospel: see chap. viii. verse 10, 11. chap. ix. verse 7—9. 11. Observe, 2. That as God has manifested himself to different people, in different degrees, so he will proportion their degrees of punishment to the measures of light and opportunity which they have received, and abused. The Heathens, who abused the lowest dispensation of God's grace, will doubtless be very severely punished. So saith *St. Paul*. "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of man that doeth evil; to the Jew first, and also the Greek," that is, the heathen who abused the light of nature. And that these will be severely punished, is evident from

what God has already done in the case of some of them. *Jude* tells us that the people of "Sodom and Gomorrah are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Dreadful then is the punishment which God has already inflicted on the heathen world for neglecting, or abusing those inferior manifestations of his will. But as the revelation of his will, made by *Moses* and the prophets unto the Jews, is more great and glorious, so the punishment of such of them as are refractory and disobedient will be more great and terrible. So our Lord told the disobedient Jews of his day. "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment than for you." As if he had said, Your punishment in kind shall be the same; for you with them shall "suffer the vengeance of eternal fire." But as you have abused greater mercies, and sinned against greater light; your *degree* of that vengeance shall of consequence be greater. Our Lord then adds, "it shall be more tol

ble for *Tyre* and *Sidon*, those other heathen cities, than for you. The men of *Nineveh*, also, and the queen of the South (all Heathens) shall rise up in judgment against this generation—of disobedient Jews, and shall condemn it.” It is therefore certain, that severe as the punishment of disobedient heathens will be, that of disobedient Jews will be more severe and intolerable.

But how will it be with disobedient Christians? particularly, with those who so neglect this great salvation as to fall into total and final apostasy? I answer; their punishment shall be much greater than that of a disobedient Jew. The truth of this proposition is undeniable from chap. x. ver. 28, 29, of this epistle. “He, said the apostle, that despised *Moses’* law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: of HOW MUCH SORER punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God? &c. Now, let it be well observed here, that the neglecter of this salvation, that the

total and final apostate from Christ and his gospel, shall be counted worthy of (and of consequence receive) PUNISHMENT, SOREER punishment, MUCH sorer than the rebellious and apostate Jews. So bishop *Hopkins*, in his sermon on Heb. x. 30, 31. "In the four precedent verses, we find the apostle threatening most tremendous judgments against all that should wilfully transgress, AFTER THEY HAD RECEIVED THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH. He tells us, there remains no more sacrifice for their sins: nothing to expiate their guilt, but that THEY THEMSELVES MUST FALL a burnt sacrifice to the offended justice of GOD, CONSUMED with that FIERY INDIGNATION that shall CERTAINLY SEIZE and PREY on them FOR EVER. And in verse 28, 29, he sets forth the exceeding dreadfulness of their judgment, by a comparison between those that violate the law of *Moses* and those that RENOUNCE and annul the law of *Christ*. He that despised *Moses'* law—was to die without mercy;

certainly much sorer judgments await those who reject the laws of *Christ*, —such as these shall **ETERNALLY PERISH** with **LESS MERCY** than those that died *without mercy*.”\* So father *Quesnel*, “If there was no mercy for him who despised the law of *Moses* in one single point; what ought the perjured person to expect who violates the *Christian covenant*, and tears off a member from *Jesus Christ*, by **DESERTING HIM**? Such a person will have both heaven and earth as witnesses against him, and **GOD** for a judge and avenger of his own cause.”† So on ver. 30. “It belongs to **GOD**, to avenge the holiness of his covenant, when violated by **APOSTASY** and sin. Men punish as men: **GOD** punishes and executes vengeance as **GOD**, that is, holily, infinitely, eternally.”‡ It is therefore, most infallibly certain, that the greatest measure, the heaviest, and most intolerable load of the wrath of **GOD**,

\* *Bishop Hopkin's Works*, third Edit. page 368. † *Quesnel's New-Testament on the place.* ‡ See *Quesnel* on the place.

will be the consequence of neglecting this great salvation.

Having shown what the consequence of neglecting it is, I proceed, Secondly, to show the *impossibility* of escaping this consequence if we neglect it. By IMPOSSIBILITY of escaping, I mean, that there is no way of escaping which can possibly be found, or means of it which can possibly be used.

But it may be said, "Does not the apostle suppose that there is some way or other to escape when he asks, how it may be done? I answer, he supposes no such thing. His words, properly understood, rather suppose the contrary. For, when an impossibility is required, it is common to say, How can that be done? certainly the meaning is, it is impossible to do it. And that this was the apostle's meaning in the passage under consideration, appears from chap. xii. verse 25. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much

*môre* SHALL NOT *we* *escape*, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven. Here then the apostle declares that we SHALL NOT escape if we neglect this great salvation : that as it is certain, that those who refused him who spake on earth, DID NOT escape, so it is equally certain that we SHALL NOT escape, if we refuse him who speaketh from heaven. Mr. *Henry* on the place saith, “The misery of such sinners is described and declared to be unavoidable, ver. 3. How shall we escape ? This intimates, 1. That the despisers of this salvation are condemned, under arrest, and in the hands of justice already.—2. There is NO ESCAPING out of this condemned state.—As for those that neglect it, the wrath of God is upon them, and it abides upon them, they CANNOT DIS-ENGAGE THEMSELVES, they CANNOT emerge, they CANNOT get from under the curse.—There is yet a more aggravated curse and condemnation waiting for all those that despise the grace of God in *Christ* and that *most*

*heavy* curse they CANNOT ESCAPE.— There is no door of mercy left open for them, there shall be no more sacrifice for sin, they are *irrecoverable*. The UN-AVOIDABLENESS of the misery of such is here expressed by way of question, —How shall we escape? It is an appeal to universal reason, to the consciences of sinners themselves; it is a challenge to all their power and policy, to all their interest and alliances, whether they, or any for them, can find out, or can force out, a way of escape from the vindictive justice and wrath of God.”\* Dr Owen saith, that, “The design of the apostle in these verses is, to prove that they shall DESERVEDLY and ASSUREDLY PERISH who shall neglect the gospel.”† Again, “The apostle in the next verses—lets them know that their destruction is CERTAIN, and that from God.”‡ And the reason why we shall not escape is, because it is impossible:

\* Henry on the place. †Owen on the place.

‡Ibid.



God cannot in any wise, consistent with his wisdom, holiness, justice and truth, admit of it; for if he could possibly have done it, consistently with these attributes, there is no doubt but his goodness would have done it! therefore, I conclude, that there is no possibility of escaping for those who neglect this great salvation.

But it may be said, "Suppose I should neglect this salvation, cannot I escape by depending on the mercy of God?" I answer, No. For though it be a great and sacred truth, that God is infinite in mercy, it will not follow—that the abusers of this mercy shall be saved thereby. *St. Paul* tells us, chap. x. verse 28. that "He that despised *Moses'* law died WITHOUT mercy, under two or three witnesses." He then adds, "Of how much **SORER** punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God," &c. **As** if he had said, The sin of despising *Moses'* law was so aggravated, that the mercy of God would not interpose

in behalf of such an offender. Now, as the sin of those who have trodden under foot the Son of God, &c. is so much more heinous, there is abundantly more reason to believe that mercy will not interpose on their behalf; but rather that it will suffer the punishment they have so dearly deserved, to fall on them without remedy, and to remain on them forever.

“But suppose I neglect this salvation, by totally and finally apostatizing, cannot I escape the afore-mentioned punishment by living a sober, moral life?” I again answer, No.—For the apostle declares, all over this epistle, that our salvation is by *Christ*, and by adhering unto him. So chap. i. verse 3. *Christ* is said, by himself to have purged our sins: chap. ii. verse 9. to have tasted death for every man: verse 10, that he is the captain of our salvation: verse 14, 15. that he died to destroy the power of death—and to deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage: verse

17. that he made reconciliation for the sins of the people; chap. iv. verse 14. that he is our great High Priest: verse 16. that he has erected a throne of grace, unto which we are to come for mercy, &c. chap. v. verse 9. that he is become the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him: chap. vi. verse 18. that he is our refuge to which we are to fly, that we may lay hold on the hope set before us: chap. viii. verse 6. that he is the Mediator of the new Covenant: chap. ix. verse 12. that he has obtained eternal redemption for us: verse 14, that it is his blood which purgeth our consciences from dead works to serve the living God: verse 15. that by his death we receive the promise of the eternal inheritance: verse 26. that he hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself: chap. x. verse 5—9. that when God had no pleasure in Jewish sacrifices and offerings, a body was prepared for *Christ*, in which he freely and cheerfully came to do the will of God:

verse 10. by the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of *Christ* once for all; verse 19. that we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of *Jesus*: verse 38. that we live by faith in him: and that thus it is, according to chap. xii. verse 2, that he is the author and finisher of our faith.

Now, from this account we learn, that the whole of our salvation, both in time and eternity, is by *Christ* and his gospel only: I say, *only*; for we are told, chap i. verse 3. that *Christ* BY HIMSELF hath done it. And that our salvation is only by *Christ*, is so strongly implied, in almost every part of this epistle, that it cannot, with any shadow of reason, be denied.—Therefore, I conclude, that whatever laws, or rules, a man may walk by, whether they be those delivered by *Moses*, or those laid down by *Epicte-tus*, *Socrates*, *Seneca*, or *Plato*; if he is a total and final apostate from this great salvation, he never can escape the dreadful consequence.

But it may be said once more, "Suppose I should at present, or at any future period thus neglect this great salvation, will not my former attachment to it be sufficient to screen me from the punishment above mentioned?" I answer, it will not. And for proof of this I observe, that, perhaps there never was a people more cordially, and zealously attached to Christ and his gospel, than these Hebrews had formerly been. For the apostle tells them, chap. x. verse 32, 34 that, After they were illuminated, they endured a great fight of afflictions: partly, said he, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. On this passage I observe, that here was not only great zeal for Christ, his gospel and perse-

cuted servant; but it was such as was built on a solid foundation: for they firmly adhered to Christ and the gospel for a while, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, "knowing in themselves that in heaven they had a better and an enduring substance."— And yet, notwithstanding all this, they are threatened with the sorest punishment that God has to inflict, on supposition that they apostatize. It is therefore certain that past attachments to Christ, and zeal for his glory, be they never so genuine and fervent, will not be sufficient to acquit those who shall afterwards, by apostasy, neglect this great salvation.

Having shewn, I. What we are to understand by so great salvation: II. What by neglecting it: and, III. The consequence of so doing, and the impossibility of escaping it; I now proceed in the IV. place, to draw a few inferences from the whole.

1. And, First, from what has been said we learn, that the doctrine of unconditional perseverance is no truth

of God; is no doctrine of revelation. This, the epistle to the Hebrews most absolutely demonstrates. The total and final apostasy of true believers, is the one supposition which runs through the whole epistle, from beginning to end: and, as I have observed above, the epistle is no other than a regular treatise on this subject, wherein every argument, proper on such an occasion, is used by the apostle in the most judicious, and conclusive manner. Here then is solid proof that Christian believers are capable of **TOTAL** and **FINAL** *apostasy*: a whole book of the New-Testament; which is justly deemed one of the most learned and excellent in all the sacred volume; drawn up into one argument, or rather into one chain of arguments, in support of the awful truth. To oppose such a **CONNEXION** of arguments with detached passages, picked up hither and thither, without any regard to the scope of the books, or the coherence of the places from whence they are taken, is a mode of

reasoning so truly ridiculous, that it is astonishing how any man of real learning, or sober sense, can be capable of it.

If the doctrine of unconditional perseverance be a revealed truth, and if it be of such importance as the advocates for that doctrine continually assert, let them produce more certain evidence in its favour, than that which I have here produced against it. Or, if they cannot do this, let them produce an equal degree of evidence: that is, let them point out a whole book of the New-Testament, of equal dignity and importance with this epistle to the Hebrews, which labours, as professedly and fully, in support of their hypothesis. Or if this is too much, let them produce a canonical book of less importance, which thus professedly and logically supports it. But this cannot be done: no whole book; no half book; no, nor so much as the quarter of any one book in all the Bible, can be pointed out which maintains this doctrine in



a regular succession of conclusive arguments. No other proof of it can be given, than that which depends on the sound of tortured words dragged into the service, without any regard to the connexion of the places from whence they are taken; and therefore it is impossible, without the most palpable absurdity, to suppose that it is any doctrine of Revelation: or that it is any other than one of those diverse and strange doctrines, mentioned chap. xiii. verse 9. by which we are not to be carried about.

And from hence we learn that the doctrine of unconditional election is no truth of Revelation. This doctrine supposes that God hath, from eternity, unconditionally elected or chosen, a certain number unto eternal life. That, in order to this end, they were absolutely decreed to be born in time; to be called by the gospel; to obey the call; to be converted thereby; and to persevere to the end. Now, if it can be demonstrated that these persons have failed in ANY of

these particulars, this will equally demonstrate that they were not thus unconditionally elected. For instance: if we can demonstrate that these supposed persons were not actually born in time, this will demonstrate that they were not elected to that end, and by those means above mentioned; seeing that one of these means, and that which is indispensably necessary, in order to the existence and use of the rest, never existed. Or suppose they were born in time, yet if it can be fairly proved that they were never called and converted by the gospel, this will prove that they were not thus elected to everlasting life; seeing that those intermediate means, which the supposed decree has made equally necessary with that before mentioned, never existed. But if we allow them to be born, and also to be called and converted by the gospel; yet if they did not persevere to the end, but fell away and perished forever, it is most infallibly certain that they were not un-

conditionally elected to everlasting life; seeing it is not possible that God should thus elect them to it, and that after all they should not enjoy it.— But it has been demonstrated, in the preceding pages, that persons born in time, and called and converted by the gospel, may nevertheless fall away and perish for ever; and therefore I conclude that such persons were not unconditionally elected unto everlasting life; and of consequence, that the doctrine which supposes the contrary is no truth of Revelation.

And from hence we learn farther, that the doctrine which asserts that all things are unconditionally decreed from eternity is no truth of Revelation. This doctrine supposes that every cause, and every effect, that every event and circumstance attending it, which did, does, or shall exist, was most absolutely, unconditionally, and unchangeably decreed from eternity; that this is particularly the case in the decree of election, where every circumstance attending the salvation of

the elect, such as their birth, calling, conversion and perseverance were all unconditionally decreed from everlasting : God has unconditionally decreed whatever exists ; but in the execution of the decree of election, the perseverance of true believers exists ; therefore, God has unconditionally decreed it. To this I answer : it has been demonstrated, in the preceding pages, that the perseverance of true believers does not always infallibly exist ; yea, that it never exists unconditionally : seeing they may, yea, and often do, fall away and perish for ever. I therefore conclude, First, that the perseverance of the saints is not unconditionally decreed : that of consequence, Secondly, all things cannot be thus decreed : and that therefore, Thirdly, the doctrine which supposes the unconditional decree of all things, is no truth of Revelation.

Inference 2. From what has been said, we learn, Secondly, that christian believers ought to be careful not to neglect this great salvation. Doubt-

less it was a conviction of the need and importance of this care, which caused the apostle to lay down the weighty cautions, solemn warnings, and awful admonitions which we find all over this epistle ; and doubtless a like conviction ought to awaken all to whom these cautions belong, to receive them in a becoming manner.— Now as we, and all christian-believers, at all times, and in all places, are in danger of neglecting this salvation, are in danger of total and final apostasy, it highly behoves us to suffer ourselves to be admonished.

Let us then, one and all, take earnest heed to the things of Christ, which we have heard, lest at any time we should, *by apostasy*, let them slip out of our hearts, lips and lives, chap ii. verse 1. Let us, instead of *apostatizing*, hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end of our lives, chap. iii. verse 6. Let us on no account, nor by any means, harden our hearts, *as* in the provocation, in the day of temptation.

in the wilderness, verse 8. Let us take earnest heed lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in *departing totally and finally*, from Christ, who is the living God, verse 12. Let us, from the consideration of the danger of *apostasy* (which we are all in, exhort one another daily, while it is called, To-day; lest any of us be so hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, as to *apostatize from Christ*, and his salvation, verse 13. Let us seriously, deeply, and constantly fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us, by *apostatizing*, should come short of it, chap. iv. verse 1. Let us rather labour, with all our might, to enter into that rest, lest any man *fall*, totally and finally, after the same example of unbelief, or disobedience, which was found among the Israelites of old, verse 11. Let us courageously, and in opposition to all the powers of darkness, *hold fast* our Christian profession, verse 14. Let us, instead of *apostatizing from*, come boldly *unto*

the throne of grace, that we may obtain pardoning mercy for what is past, and find grace, *persevering* grace, to help us in every future time of need, verse 16. Instead of *apostatizing* from that measure of the Christian life which we now enjoy, let us rather go on unto perfection, chap. vi. verse 1. Let us show the same diligence, which we have formerly shown, to the full assurance of hope *unto the end of our lives*, verse 11. Let us not be slothful, in cleaving to, and obeying Christ; but rather be followers of them, who, in spite of all opposition, through *steadfast* faith, and *unwearied* patience, inherit the promises, verse 12. Let us *continue* to draw near to God with a true heart, in full assurance of *persevering* faith in Jesus, chap. x. verse 22. Let us *hold fast* the open profession of our faith without *wavering* any longer, verse 23. Let us consider one another, how weak we are, and how liable to *grow weary* of the cross of Christ; and therefore let us study how we may provoke

each other unto love and to good works, verse 24. Let us not *forsake* the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; who have already *apostatized*; but let us rather exhort one another, to *constancy* and *perseverance*; and so much the more, as we see the day of heavier trial swiftly approaching, verse 25. Let us not sin wilfully, by *total* and *final apostasy*, after we have truly, and experimentally, received the saving knowledge of the gospel-truth, verse 26. Let us rather call to our remembrance the former days, in which, after we were spiritually illuminated, we courageously *endured* a great fight of afflictions, verse 32. and let this encourage us, instead of *apostatizing*, to endure, in the same manner, whatever may befall us in time to come. Let us not *cast away* our holy confidence, which hath great recompense of reward, verse 35. Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us continue to run with *patient perseverance* the

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race that is set before us, chap. xii. ver. 1. Let us be ever looking to the holy example of Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, *patiently and perseveringly endured* the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, ver. 2. Let us consider the example of him, who *steadfastly, and to the very last moments* of his life *endured* the contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be *wearied and faint* in our mind, and so *apostatize* from Christ and his gospel, ver. 3. Let us manfully *endure* the chastening of the Lord, nor *faint* when we are rebuked of him, ver. 5. That the feeblest soul among us may not *apostatize*, let us lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, ver. 12. Let us make straight paths for the feet of each other, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way of Christ, into *apostasy*, ver. 13. Instead of *backsliding*, let us follow peace with all men, and holiness without

which no man shall see the Lord, ver. 14. Let us look diligently, lest any man *fall from* the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness, that is, any backslider, or apostate, springing up, trouble us, and thereby many others be defiled, ver. 15. Let us not refuse, or *turn away from him*, (that is, from Christ) that speaketh from heaven, verse 25. Let us *hold fast* the grace we have, whereby we may continue to serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, verse 28. Let brotherly love *continue to the end*, chap. xiii. verse 1. And instead of *leaving the gospel*, and associating ourselves with unconverted Jews, let us not be forgetful to entertain christian strangers, verse 2. Let us remember them that are in bonds for Christ and his gospel, as if we were bound with them, verse 3. Let our conversation be without covetousness; and let us, for Christ's sake, be content with such things as we have, verse 5. Let us not be *carried away* with the diverse and strange

doctrines, taught by the Gnostics, and other heretics; and particularly that doctrine which teaches that true believers cannot fall away totally and finally, verse 9. Let us go forth *unto* (not *from*) Jesus without the camp, *patiently* and *steadfastly* bearing his reproach, verse 13. Instead of *for-saking Christ*, by him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God *continually*, verse 15. To do good and to communicate, let us not forget, or *grow weary*; seeing that with such sacrifices God is well pleased, verse 16. Let each of you obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch over your souls, that you may not *depart from Christ* into *apostasy*, as they that must give account, verse 17. Pray for them, that God may preserve *them* from *apostasy*, and that he may make them the happy instruments of *preserving all those* committed to their care, verse 18.

Thus, upon the whole, let you and I, and all who desire to be preserved

from total and final apostasy; suffer the word of exhortation, verse 22. Let the consideration of the *superior excellency* of CHRIST'S person and religion; of the *dreadful punishment* which will certainly be inflicted on all who *apostatize* from them; of the *great reward* which will be given to all who *persevere* to the end; of the *great loss of past labours* and *present privileges* which *apostates* shall infallibly sustain; and of the *dishonour* of acting a part so exceeding contrary to the example of all the ancient worthies, which have been since the world began: I say, let all these solemn considerations stir us up to *cleave* to Jesus with our whole heart; to follow him closely and *steadfastly*, in all the ways of christian obedience, till we are called to enjoy that rest which remains for the people of God, chap. iv. verse 9.

Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting

covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you all that wisdom, holiness, happiness and *perseverance*, which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever Amen.

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