

Scripture Reading from Ephesians chapter 1 verses 1 to 14

PERSEVERANCE

We come now to the final study in this series. We have considered the Total Depravity of fallen man, God's Unconditional Election of those who are to be saved, the Lord Jesus Christ's mission of Particular Redemption to save them, and the Irresistible or Efficacious Grace of God in converting them. We come lastly, then, to the doctrine of Perseverance. Or to put that in other words: those spiritually dead sinners God has eternally chosen in Christ for life; those for whom Christ died on the cross, effectually to secure their salvation; those who - in their own experience - have been brought to Christ by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit: these people are then sovereignly enabled to endure to the end in the practice of faith and repentance - to go on trusting in Christ, to go on living in Christ - so that they all without exception keep on the pathway of life, and all without exception enter the gates of heaven at last, not one of them lost, but each and every one of them glorified in the presence of God for ever.

One of our hymns expresses it thus:

Where God begins His gracious work,
That work He will complete,
For round the objects of His love
All power and mercy meet.

Each object of His love is sure
To reach the heavenly goal;
For neither sin nor Satan can

Destroy the blood-washed soul.

Satan may vex, and unbelief
Believers may annoy;
But they will conquer, just as sure
As Jesus reigns in joy.

The precious blood of God's dear Son
Shall not be spilled in vain;
The soul in Christ believing must
With Christ for ever reign.

The doctrine of Perseverance has always been the most popular of the so-called "five points of Calvinism". Indeed there are many "one point Calvinists" who reject Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Particular Redemption, and Irresistible Grace, but who accept Perseverance. The reason is not far to find. It is, of course, reassuring, comforting, and encouraging to believe that I cannot lose my salvation. However, it is completely inconsistent to detach the doctrine of Perseverance from the other four points, and think that it can be believed by itself, in isolation. If we reject the other doctrines, the foundations of Perseverance are destroyed.

After all, those who disbelieve in Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Particular Redemption, and Irresistible Grace, must believe the opposite of these doctrines. So they believe that fallen sinners are not spiritually dead, but still have some degree of spiritual life in them, and therefore possess the freedom of will to move towards God by their own human choice. They believe that God's election of the saved is conditional on His foreknowledge of those who will freely come to Christ. They believe that Christ died simply to make

salvation available, so that it is up to us to accept or reject it. And they believe that God's grace in conversion can be resisted. The human will is the great deciding factor: will I, or will I not, choose to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He seeks to draw me to Christ? In all of this, we can see that the free will of man has been enthroned as the ultimate reality.

Those, however, who set up human free will on the throne in this way, cannot truly have a doctrine of Perseverance. If my free will was the great deciding factor in accepting Christ, then my free will can always reject Him again. There is no way of avoiding that conclusion. If free will is the ultimate reality, then the same free will that trusted in Christ could stop trusting Him; the same free will that enlisted as His volunteer could desert the ranks; the same free will that married Him could divorce Him. In other words, should all the other doctrines of the Reformed faith be cast off in favour of this exalted notion of free will, we can hardly turn around and abolish free will the moment a man has come to Christ. Supposing he had the free will to come, he must still have the free will to leave again. Freely I embraced salvation: just as freely I can lose it. That is the inevitable outcome of a theology that exalts our free will and sets it on the throne.

The only guarantee that a Christian will indeed endure to the end, and be finally and eternally saved in heaven, lies in the fact that his salvation is not ultimately his own choice or his own doing, but God's. God, not human free will, is on the throne - the throne of the universe, and the throne of salvation. Therefore, at the back of Perseverance lie the other great truths we have been considering. Total Depravity: I cannot save myself. I am by nature entirely lost and dead in sins and transgressions, a helpless bondsman of Satan. Unconditional

Election: it is not ultimately I who choose God, but God who chooses me, and His choice to save me is unqualified, sovereign, absolute, and free. Particular Redemption: it is not I who give effect and fruit to Christ's death, but Christ took flesh and died in order infallibly to secure my salvation, in accord with God's electing purpose. Irresistible Grace: I did not convert myself, but God raised me from the dead, recreated me, gave me a new birth; I am a Christian by the almighty, efficacious, transforming grace of the Triune God.

And therefore, following on from all this, once having been saved in Jesus Christ by the sovereign grace of God, I am assured of my salvation for time and for eternity. I could have done nothing to save myself; and now that I am saved by God alone, I can hardly trample the Father's election, Christ's redemption, and the Spirit's grace in the dust, overthrow the work of the Triune God, and cast myself into hell. How could I do that? That would entirely contradict everything that election, redemption, and regeneration mean. No, my endurance to the end is part and parcel of the gift of salvation, rooted in the soil of Unconditional Election, Particular Redemption, and Efficacious Grace.

Perseverance, then, may be the most popular of the five points, to the extent that many hold only to this point. But a careful consideration will show that we cannot divorce Perseverance from the other four points. They belong together. They are a seamless garment, all of a piece. If therefore we would have the reassurance and encouragement that we who believe are utterly safe in the hands of Christ, and that nothing - not even our own sins - can pluck us out and destroy us, then we must see how our perseverance in grace to glory is anchored deep in the other four points of Reformed teaching on salvation.

Perseverance stands or falls with Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Particular Redemption, and Efficacious Grace.

Our confession of faith, the 1689 Baptist Confession, says this on the doctrine of Perseverance: “Those whom God hath accepted in the Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.”

Where do we find this doctrine in the Scriptures? One place is **Ephesians 1:13-14** “in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” In verse 14, the Holy Spirit is described as the “guarantee” of the believer’s inheritance. The AV says “earnest” rather than “guarantee”. “Earnest” is an old-fashioned word for a pledge, a guarantee, or a down-payment. Since we no longer use the word “earnest” in that sense - indeed, we use it to mean “sincere”, “serious”, “committed” - it will prevent confusion if we translate the Greek term here as “guarantee”. The Holy Spirit, then, is the guarantee of our inheritance if we are in Christ by faith.

This idea of a guarantee or a pledge comes from the world of trade and commerce. An illustration may help. A dealer in cloth ships his merchandise into a port in Palestine. In exchange for cloth, he wants wheat - so many sacks of wheat for so many bales of cloth. But the wheat merchant would not be able to bring to the port his entire supply of wheat. He would bring just a few sacks, to show what quality of wheat he

had for sale. The deal between cloth merchant and wheat merchant is transacted, and the wheat merchant gives his few sacks of wheat to the cloth merchant as a pledge or guarantee that the full delivery will follow in the agreed time, and that it will be the same quality as the wheat in the sacks. The sacks of wheat are in fact a down-payment: the first instalment of payment, given in pledge that the rest of the payment will follow.

So, says Paul, the Holy Spirit is the guarantee, the pledge, the down-payment, of our inheritance. The Spirit is both the first instalment of our salvation and the absolute promise of God that the rest will follow. As Matthew Henry says:

“The pledge is part of payment, and it secures the full sum: so is the gift of the Holy Ghost; all His influences and operations, both as a sanctifier and a comforter, are heaven begun, glory in the seed and bud. The Spirit's illumination is a pledge of everlasting light; sanctification is a pledge of perfect holiness; and His comforts are pledges of everlasting joys.”

We should also say something about the inheritance that the Holy Spirit guarantees. If the Spirit is the down-payment, the first instalment, of our inheritance, then clearly the inheritance is heavenly in nature. The sacks of wheat given in pledge guarantee that the rest of the wheat to come is of the same quality; the first instalment guarantees that the rest will be of identical character. The guarantee of the Holy Spirit, then, points by its very nature to the spiritual, glorious, heavenly, eternal, perfect quality of our ultimate inheritance. The Christian experience of the Holy Spirit is in fact our foretaste of life in the new creation. In receiving the Spirit of Christ, we are tasting the powers of the world to come, as we are told in

Hebrews 6:5.

So the fact that the Holy Spirit is the pledge, the down-payment, the first instalment of the promised inheritance, demonstrates the heavenly nature and character of the believer's inheritance. Not perfect happiness in this world, but perfect and everlasting happiness in the next: that is what God the Father has promised to His sons and daughters. And that is what the indwelling Spirit guarantees.

Now we see how Paul's teaching here is relevant to the doctrine of perseverance. The fact that the Holy Spirit is the pledge of our heavenly inheritance guarantees to us that we will surely possess that inheritance. Just as a down-payment is a guarantee that the rest of the payment will follow, so the gift of the Spirit is God's guarantee that the full inheritance of heaven will follow. The God of truth does not have less honesty or integrity than a man. If God gives a pledge, He will honour it; if God gives a down-payment, the full payment will certainly follow; if He gives a first instalment, we are assured of the rest.

For God cannot lie. He cannot go back on His word. He cannot trifle with us or practise deceit. Those are the characteristics of Satan, not of God. God is a God of truth: nothing false or deceptive can have any fellowship with Him, or survive in His presence. Truth is essential to His character, and to His dealings with men. **Numbers 23:19**, "God is not a man, that He should lie." **Titus 1:2**, "God who cannot lie." **Hebrews 6:18**, "it is impossible for God to lie." In the Bible, as I say, lying is consistently associated with the devil. He is the father of lies. But God is the God of Truth, and His Holy Spirit, the guarantee of our salvation, is the Spirit of Truth.

John 15:26, “the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father.”

How then does the believer know, how can he be confident, that he will enter heaven at last? Because he is indwelt by the Spirit of Truth who is the pledge, the guarantee, of his inheritance. The Lord Jesus Christ gives the Holy Spirit to all who trust Him for salvation. As the apostle Paul says here in **Ephesians 1:13**, “in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” He who believes in Jesus Christ is sealed with the Holy Spirit. So then, if I am looking to Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord, and God has thereupon sealed me by His Spirit, as He invariably seals true faith, then the indwelling Spirit is my guarantee, my absolute divine pledge, that I as a believer will surely enter the fullness of heavenly life and blessedness. My perseverance to the end is made certain by the truthfulness of God. When He gives a guarantee, His truth must first perish before the guarantee can fail.

Are there any other passages of Scripture that teach the perseverance of the believer? Let us consider four types of passage. The Bible presents perseverance in these four ways, as the inevitable consequence of election, the fruit of God’s sovereignty in conversion, the God-given property of the life that is bestowed in conversion, and as a thing made secure by Christ’s High Priestly intercession in heaven. Let us then look at these four types of passage.

First, *perseverance is the inevitable consequence of election.*

Romans 8:29-30, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom

He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

In this passage, Paul links together predestination, efficacious grace, and perseverance. Those whom God predestines to salvation in the mystery of election, these He effectually calls to Christ in the mystery of conversion; and those whom God thus calls, He justifies in time and glorifies in eternity. Glorification follows on inevitably from predestination and conversion. God has fused these things together in an unbreakable chain. That is why Paul immediately adds the triumphant cry of verse 31, “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” And that is why he concludes the chapter a few verses later with, “nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” If I am chosen in Christ before time began, and converted to Christ in time, then I must be glorified at last in heaven. The chain that began in eternity with election must end in eternity with glorification. Perseverance, then, is the inevitable consequence of election.

Second, *perseverance is the fruit of God’s sovereignty in conversion.* **Philippians 1:6**, “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” It is God who begins the work of salvation in my heart. I did not begin it; He did. And He who began it will finish what He has begun. Arthur Pink comments: “This good work within the soul is commenced by God, being wrought neither by our will nor our agency. That was the ground of the apostle’s persuasion or confidence: that He who had begun this good work would perform or finish it - had it been originated by man, he could

have had no such assurance. Not only did God initiate this good work, but He alone continues and perfects it - were it left to us, it would quickly come to nought.”

If the good work of my salvation were begun by my will, it could be ended by my will, especially since my will is characterised by weakness, changeableness, temptability, and corruptibility. But if the good work of my salvation is begun by the sovereign, eternal, omnipotent will of God, then my salvation rests on unshakable foundations. Sovereignty will finish what it has begun; eternity knows no change of purpose; and omnipotence cannot be baffled or overthrown. God, the Master Craftsman, the Architect of creation, has begun the good work, the best work, of salvation in my sin-wrecked life, and He will surely finish what He began. Perseverance is the fruit of God’s sovereignty in conversion.

Third, *perseverance is the God-given property of the life that is bestowed in conversion*. The new life in Christ is often described as “eternal” life, or as the AV sometimes translates it, “everlasting” life. If the life that God gives in Christ is eternal, how can it ever perish? By the mercy of God, it is an imperishable life, a life that endures for ever. Several passages bring out this truth.

John 3:16, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” The contrast between perishing and everlasting life is very clear. Outside of Christ, the life we have is a perishing life. There is nothing solid or enduring about it. But once a man is in Christ by faith, he has a new life: a life that can never perish - everlasting life. If he could lose that life, it would be as perishable as the old life he had

outside of Christ. He would merely have exchanged one perishable life for another. But no, the new life in Christ is a life beyond the reach of death: an everlasting life that does not perish. Therefore the believer's perseverance in grace is assured.

John 6:53-54, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." By faith we eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ in a spiritual manner: we become partakers of His own life. This life, Christ says, is eternal; and therefore, whoever has this life eternal, Christ will most surely raise them up in glory at the last day. So once again, the believer's final blessedness is assured.

John 10:28, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." Christ here states very clearly that those who possess the eternal life He gives will never perish. And to reinforce His declaration, He adds that no one will snatch His believing people out of His hand. Their safety is certain. They have a life that is eternal; they will never perish; they will never be snatched out of Christ's hand. If any true believer can be lost after all this, Christ has been playing a mere word-game with us. Everything He says here points the same lesson. The believer's endurance is assured.

If I am in Christ by faith, then, I have a new life that will never be destroyed. It is eternal life, everlasting life. Therefore my perseverance to the end is a God-given property of the life that was bestowed on me in conversion.

Finally, *perseverance is a thing made secure by Christ's High Priestly intercession in heaven.* Let us consider the High Priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ in John 17. Christ prays to His heavenly Father in v.12, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

While He was here in the flesh, Christ kept His believing disciples so perfectly that not one of them was lost, apart from the son of perdition, Judas Iscariot, who all along was a hypocrite and not a true believer. The others, the Lord's true disciples, were tempted, they were tested, they were made to stumble, they sinned - but none of them was lost. Christ kept them. The same victorious, efficacious preservation is extended to all believers in every age. None of those given by the Father to Christ in conversion will be lost. They are preserved by His intercession for them in heaven, of which the prayer in John 17 is a token. Verse 15: "I pray that You should keep them from the evil one." Verse 17: "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." Verse 24: "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me." As Christ kept His true disciples on earth and not one of them was lost, so by these all-prevailing High Priestly prayers in heaven Christ keeps His true disciples now, and again not one of them will ever be lost.

Here, then, in addition to Ephesians 1:14 and the Spirit as a pledge or guarantee, are four types of passage in the Bible that press home the encouraging truth of Perseverance on our minds and hearts. Perseverance is the inevitable consequence of election, the fruit of God's sovereignty in conversion, the

God-given property of the life that is bestowed in conversion, and a thing made secure by Christ's High Priestly intercession in heaven.

Every Christian, then, as part of his spiritual birthright, can join in the song of Augustus Toplady:

The work which His goodness began
 The arm of His strength will complete;
His promise is Yea and Amen,
 And never was forfeited yet.
Things future, nor things that are now,
 Not all things below nor above,
Can make Him His purpose forego,
 Or sever my soul from His love.

Now let us consider two possible objections to the doctrine of Perseverance. First, if we believe in Perseverance, will it not make us lazy and complacent? Will we not become careless and indifferent about our spiritual life, because God will preserve us, so it doesn't really matter what we do? Perhaps the doctrine of Perseverance has been perverted and abused in this way by some. But a moment's reflection will reveal the monstrosity of the abuse.

What does Perseverance mean? That when God gives true saving faith to a man, God sustains that faith to the end. But we know from the Bible that true saving faith is living faith. It purifies the heart (Acts 15:9). It receives the promise of the Spirit (Galatians 3:14). It works by love (Galatians 5:6). It brings Christ to dwell within (Ephesians 3:17). It is a shield that quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one (Ephesians 6:16). It overcomes the world (1 John 5:4). If I am a true

Christian, this is my faith, and in this faith I will persevere.

So if I say I have faith, but my professed faith is not purifying my heart, not receiving the promise of the Spirit, not working by love, not bringing Christ to dwell in me, not quenching the fiery darts of the wicked one, and not overcoming the world, I cannot claim the comfort of Perseverance. Before I can enjoy the assurance that I will persevere in the faith, I must first have faith, and not merely say I have faith.

But the man who has a true, living faith in Christ, and knows that God will sustain his faith, will not thereby become careless and indifferent. Let me suggest an illustration. Suppose a man were climbing a difficult mountain, and God said to him, "I will bless your efforts with success." Would the man become careless and indifferent? Surely God's promise would energise and galvanise him all the more. After all, it is the man's efforts God has promised to bless, not the man's indifference.

Likewise God has promised to bless and preserve my faith - not my complacency or laziness, but my faith. Therefore a proper grasp of the doctrine of Perseverance will inspire and fortify us in our life of faith, not drain it of energy. Despite all the obstacles thrown in my path by the world, the flesh, and Satan, I will carry on believing, carry on looking to Christ, carry on putting faith to work in the business of life. And one of my motives for so doing is the doctrine of Perseverance. I know that God has pledged Himself to be with me and sustain me by His almighty grace in my life of faith. What greater encouragement could I have to keep going? God is with me - who can be against me? Far from undermining spiritual endeavour, the doctrine of Perseverance, rightly understood,

promotes it.

The second objection has to do with the question of falling away. Does the Bible not warn us as Christians against the sin of apostasy? And therefore is it not a real possibility? Further, does the Bible not exhort us to persevere? What is the point of exhorting us to persevere, if our perseverance is guaranteed by divine grace? Do these exhortations not prove that we might fail to persevere, and that we need ourselves to make sure that we endure to the end? And finally, what of people - perhaps people we have known personally - who seemed every inch a true Christian, but then made shipwreck of their faith, turned their backs on Christ, and gave themselves over to sin? How can we square these things with the doctrine of Perseverance?

Let us first consider the biblical warnings and exhortations. We should quite readily acknowledge that these are found in Scripture. For example, **Hebrews 3:12**, “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” That is a warning against apostasy. Or **Colossians 1:21-23**, “And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight - if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel.” That is an exhortation to endure. Do these warnings and exhortations contradict the doctrine of Perseverance?

Surely not. The Reformed view is that it is by means of these warnings and exhortations that God motivates the true believer to persevere. God works through means. God sovereignly purposes the conversion of His elect; but how does He convert

them? He makes known to them the Gospel, and by means of the Gospel brings them to faith. God sovereignly purposes the sanctification of believers; but how does He sanctify them? He teaches them His commands - "if you love Me, keep My commands" - and by means of the commandments guides them into the path of holiness. And it is no different with perseverance. God sovereignly purposes that His people shall persevere; but He uses means to that end. And it is by means of the warnings and exhortations that God moves His people to persevere. The Holy Spirit blesses the warnings and exhortations to our hearts, and thereby keeps us in the faith.

So there is no contradiction between the doctrine of Perseverance, and the warnings and exhortations of Scripture. As I listen to God's warnings against departing from Him, His Spirit blesses and applies those warnings to me, and as a result I fear to depart from God; and so I am kept. As I listen to God's exhortations to continue in the faith, His Spirit blesses and applies those exhortations to me, and as a result I continue in the faith; and so I am kept.

What about people who seemed to be true and godly Christians, but who fell away? I would suggest that the New Testament gives us a principle of interpretation here in a key text, **1 John 2:19**, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us." John is here describing people who were once in communion with the apostolic church, but then left it, embracing deadly heresies. What is John's verdict on these people? That they had been truly saved but now had lost their salvation? No. He says that though they began with us in the bosom of the faithful church, they were not truly of

us; for if they had been, they would have continued with us. Their departure into deadly heresy reveals that, in reality, they never were of us. John Gill comments:

“if their hearts had been right with God, they would have remained steadfast to Him, His Gospel, truths, and ordinances, and faithful with His saints; for such who are truly regenerate are born of an incorruptible seed, and such who are truly God’s elect cannot possibly fall into such errors and heresies as these did, and be finally deceived, as they were. The defection and apostasy of these persons were permitted by God, that it might appear they had never received the grace of God in truth; and their going out was in such a manner, that it was a certain argument that they were not of the elect.”

That is our key for understanding those who seem to be Christians but make shipwreck of their faith. To paraphrase 1 John 2:19, “These people left our churches because they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left us, it proved that they never truly belonged to us.” There are real Christians, and there are seeming Christians. And a seeming Christian can look just like a real Christian. Only the eye of God can tell the difference with infallible certainty. The reality of the real Christian’s faith is shown in his perseverance; the hollowness of the seeming Christian’s faith is shown in his apostasy. Judas Iscariot seemed to be a real disciple of Christ in the eyes of the other disciples; only Christ knew what Judas truly was. It was not until Judas’s apostasy that the other disciples knew what was really in his heart. But none of this means that Judas lost his salvation. It means that he was never truly saved, but only put on an outward façade of being saved - a façade that could not stand up to the storms of temptation.

In striking contrast to Judas, we have Peter. Peter too fell, as Judas fell. As Judas betrayed his Master, so Peter denied him. Yet there was a universe of difference. The fall of Judas exposed the emptiness of his profession of faith; the fall of Peter was the fall of a true believer who did not fall beyond recovery. Perseverance does not mean I will never fall; but it does mean that falling, I will rise again. Judas fell away and died in sin; Peter fell, but did not fall away - his faith arose from the fall.

Christ's word to Peter in **Luke 22:31-32** illustrates this: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Satan sifted the disciples like wheat; he sifted Peter. And poor Peter was sifted down to the bottom of his soul. What a fall he had!

But why did Peter not fall away as Judas did? Because Peter, as one of the elect of God, was enfolded in the all-powerful intercessory prayer of Christ. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Peter's faith went into temporary eclipse; it was submerged under the waves of temptation; but it did not finally fail. He repented. He came to his senses. He returned to his Master with bitter tears, and was accepted. Was his recovery due to himself and his own free will? No, it was due to the almighty prayer of his Saviour. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

This is the protection we need, and this is the protection granted not just to Peter, but to every believer. If you are a Christian, and if you feel how powerful and insidious and unrelenting is temptation, how weak and shallow your own

spiritual resources, how almost desperate and unavailing are your struggles against indwelling sin, take courage and comfort here. Christ has prayed for you that your faith fail not. There lies the security of the true believer, and his guarantee of perseverance.

One last word to those who are not yet Christians. Sometimes a person hesitates to come to Christ, because he fears that he will not be able to keep up a Christian life. He thinks he is bound to fall back into his old ways. So what is the point of coming to Christ? Surely the doctrine of Perseverance is the biblical answer to that fear. When you entrust yourself to Christ for salvation, He does not leave you to your own resources. You are united with Christ by His indwelling Spirit. And just as Christ Himself persevered to the end in His earthly life, so now that He is in you, He will make you a partaker of His own perseverance. He who was obedient unto death will make you obedient unto death by His almighty Spirit who dwells in you. You have nothing to fear. He who saves you in the first moment of your salvation, will go on saving you, and save you to the uttermost. As the promise of **Hebrews 7:25** says, “He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” Why fear, then, why hesitate to commit yourself to Him? Come, and you will find that the salvation thus begun in time will last for eternity.

The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose
He will not, He cannot desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
He'll never, no never, no never forsake.

May God instil that song into all our hearts, for our comfort

and the glory of His grace.