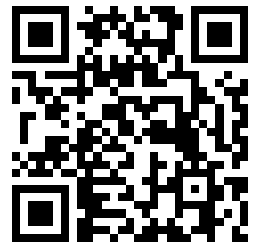

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THE WICKLOW TRACTS, No. III.

27.
A LETTER TO "C. H. M.,"
47, MOUNTJOY STREET, DUBLIN,

ON HIS

TWO-FACED DOCTRINE

OF



"FINAL PERSEVERANCE."

BY JOHN HUGHES.

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WICKLOW.

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THE WICKLOW TRACTS.

SIR,

You are the Editor of a Magazine entitled "Things New and Old," which is in general circulation. I feel bound to expose the pernicious doctrine concerning "Final Perseverance" conveyed in that publication,—the more especially as the same mischievous doctrine, under various modifications, infects to a lamentable extent the pulpit and the religious literature of the day. For this purpose I now select a Paper contained in the Numbers for June and July, 1862.

You reply to "S. A. D.," proposing to "do three things"—

1. "To establish the doctrine of Final Perseverance,—or, in other words, the eternal security of all Christ's members."
2. "To answer the questions given, and which you take to be those usually or frequently put by opposers of the doctrine."
3. To expound the texts quoted, and in which your correspondent seems to find *considerable* difficulty."

I. In stating your first point you shift your ground. There is no question at all in dispute about "the eternal security of all Christ's members," as such:—that is, as believers. But your "doctrine of Final Perseverance" is intended "to establish," sometimes one and sometimes the other of the two following mutually contradictory propositions. First, *It is Divinely secured that all who once believed shall continue to believe.* Or, secondly, *All Christ's members "have their standing in Him" in such wise that they must persevere whether they continue to believe or not.*

Here, then, is a two-faced doctrine. Sometimes your assertions require your doctrine to be understood in this way,—*All the "Sheep and Lambs" are predestinated to believe.* "All," you assert, "who belong to the 'us' of Romans viii, the 'sheep' of John x, and the 'church' of Matt. xvi., are as safe as Christ can make them, and this we conceive to be the sum and substance of final perseverance." Very well; the "us"—the "sheep"—the "church"—consist of *believers*; and your doctrine is that all these, secure in an "unconditional, everlasting salvation," are kept, not "by the power of God *through faith*," as the gra-

cious condition of security ; but by the power of God *in faith* unconditionally. Thus you confound the Divinely specified condition of salvation and of perseverance with salvation and perseverance themselves.

Having characteristically "established" your point by sheer assertion, so far ; you proceed to accommodate a number of texts which teach the security of believers, to the theory that *necessitates faith itself in "the elect."* You, of course, say nothing directly about the *non-elect*. You intimate, indeed, that they are required to "have faith in God ;" but, as they have *not the grace of faith*, the demand must be on the Pelagian principle. Towards "the elect" you show a smiling Calvinian face ; towards the non-elect a frowning Pelagian one. Meantime no individual can tell, until his course is for ever run, whether he is decreed to have faith unconditionally in order to perseverance, or required to believe without "grace" in order to condemnation.

But sometimes your assertions make it necessary to understand you in the other sense,—*All the "Sheep and Lambs" are predestinated to salvation whether they continue to believe or not.* You tell "S. A. D.," "It is not a question of *my perseverance*, but of *the perseverance of the Holy Trinity.*" "It is Christ's ability, not ours ; it is Christ's faithfulness, not ours ; it is Christ's final perseverance, not ours." "Believers may stumble and break down in their course, but allowing the widest possible margin for these things, the precious doctrine remains untouched on its own divine and eternal foundation." "The believer may fall, but he will be lifted up : he may be overtaken, but he will be restored : he may wander, but he will be brought back." According to this aspect of your doctrine, the "wicked person" at Corinth was "persevering" as well while he "had his father's wife" as when he repented and was restored. "It was not *his* perseverance, it was *Christ's.*" True, you tell us, "If we find a person living in sin, and yet talking about his assurance, we look on him as an Antinomian and not a saved person at all." But we have every reason to believe that the sentiments concerning his "assurance," of this "wicked person," were those of the Corinthian professors in general before St. Paul wrote to them. They were "puffed up," and kept this man in the church. Yet were they one and all "persevering" not a whit the less, while "wicked," or living in complicity with wickedness !" Sir, this is crying "peace when there is no peace ;"—only it is crying it *in a circle*. You prove your doctrine by the event ; and you prove the event by your doctrine. Had that "wicked person," and

those who were not grieved at his wickedness, *never repented*, they would have shown themselves "counterfeits;" but, inasmuch as they *did repent*, the doctrine of "final perseverance" is true. Miserable comfort this!

II. In answering the questions given by "S. A. D." you give up your double-faced doctrine under both its aspects. But you take to one or other of those aspects again, notwithstanding, just as either suits your present purpose.

1. Your correspondent's first question is put very obscurely,— "Will a believer be saved, no matter into what course of sin he may fall, and die in?" The natural construction is,—Will a believer be saved who dies in sin? Taking it thus you do not directly answer the question at all. You take it as if it meant—Will a believer who falls into sin be saved from his fall before he dies? Supposing, however, this to be the question, you so say and unsay in your reply that it is hard to

Catch ere he change the Proteus of the minute.

The following are your points in such "answers" as you give

1. "A believer may fall." 2. The salvation of every believer "includes not only full deliverance from the future consequences of sin but from the present power and practice thereof." I confess I cannot make these statements tally. If the salvation of every believer be both an "eternal security" from the "future consequences of sin," and a "full deliverance from its present power and practice," does not such a state of *sinless perfection* preclude the possibility of "falling" altogether? I know it is *sinless perfection* by the fiction of imputation you teach; and not *christian perfection* in the scriptural sense. Yet even this fails to make you consistent with yourself. But, 3, you tell us, If a believer *do fall*, neither himself nor any one else can have "assurance that he is a saved person at all"—at least until he is "lifted up."

It is not my business, Sir, to reconcile you with yourself. But I am bound to put the best construction I can on your general drift. Suppose it, then, to be this,—*Sin* and *faith* cannot be in active operation at the same "present" moment of time in the same individual. But a "believer may fall into sin" and "lose his assurance of salvation" for a time. Consequently, "*once a believer always a believer*" falls to the ground, and your doctrine, under the face that all "true believers" will, shall, *continue to believe*, is given up. You allege that while a professor is in a fallen state he is not a believer, "If one," say you, "does not abide in the doctrine of Christ he has got nothing." Again,—

"Let slip the truth as to Christ and you have no security as to any thing." He who "falls" surely "lets slip the truth as to Christ" and ceases "to abide in his doctrine." While in a fallen state he has "no assurance that he is a saved person at all." But you say "he will inevitably be brought back." To what? Is it to faith? Certainly not, *if he must continue to believe*. He cannot be "brought back" to that from which he never could "fall."

The other face is that "*true believers*" are in a saved state while they are in unbelief. But you have the grace to assert that this is "modern antinomianism." Thus you surrender this aspect of your doctrine also—for the moment. Sir, I congratulate you on your facile inconsistency. Your real theory is Calvin's;—Certain persons, long before they had a being, were unconditionally set apart—elected—to be so "sealed unto the day of redemption" *that nothing could ever break that seal*. Satan cannot break it. True. Man cannot break it. True. God will not—cannot—arbitrarily break it. True. *The sealed persons themselves* cannot break it, even by incest, murder, or adultery. Stop! Is not this the "modern antinomianism" you at once teach and denounce? It is. The only question that remains to be solved is—How may an "elect" adulterer, murderer, or otherwise "wicked person," know his "election" while in a fallen state? How shall he distinguish himself from a non-elect sinner? To avoid the "antinomianism" of referring him to *past experience* you send him to reason in a circle. He proves his *election* by his *repentance*, and then can prove his *repentance* by his *election*.

Besides, your theory compels you to the absurdity of ranking *believers themselves* among the "creatures" who shall not be able to separate *themselves* from the love of God. Thus you violate the precision of language as well as the proportion of faith. The word "who" is a relative pronoun in the nominative case, and stands for all those *extrinsic* "creatures" which the apostle enumerates as having a malignant tendency or purpose to "separate" the believer. The word "us" is a personal pronoun in the objective case, and sets believers before themselves as the objects of an attack, by those "creatures," frustrated by "Christ Jesus our Lord." Because, then, no extrinsic enemy shall be able to pluck them out of *his* hand who keeps them through faith, *believers* are urged and encouraged to "keep themselves in the love of God." He who "fails to keep the faith" is not "separated" by any extrinsic thing merely: he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed,—as Adam was in Eden. He thus "separates him-

self," and, if he persist, shall perish. "The just shall live by faith, but if ~~he~~ draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." "Brethren, if any of *you* do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall *save a soul from death*."

2. The second question of your correspondent is,—“Will the Holy Spirit dwell in a heart where evil and unholy thoughts are indulged?”

You answer in the same *circular* way. Believers are to be “exhorted to purity.” But, *as believers*, they cannot be impure. Yet alas! they may: for “there is a human side likewise.” “To talk of having the Spirit while this human side prevails is Nicolaitanism.” “We should never be satisfied with anything lower than ‘keeping ourselves.’” Notwithstanding, though a believer neglect to “keep himself,” Christ has him still in indefeasible keeping. Having stated all these contradictory things as an answer to the question, you, in conclusion, fall foul of your own doctrine,—namely, that the “believer” is “kept” whether he “keep himself” or not—by calling it “modern Antinomianism.” How vain your protest against yourself! Surely the Corinthian “indulged unholy thoughts;” and yet, according to your doctrine, under *both* its aspects, the Holy Spirit never left him, *as a Spirit of adoption*. He was “a child of God *by faith in Christ Jesus*” all through; or else he was a child of God all through *his period of unbelief*.

3. The third question is, “If final perseverance be true then will not people say they may live as they like?”

You reply by asking,—“How does a true Christian like to live?” This is no answer. The question is not about the likings of a true Christian, but about the tendency of a certain doctrine. If that doctrine be—*The “elect” are secure in any case*, it is a plain answer in the affirmative. But you shrink from this, and take refuge in the other aspect—*once a true Christian always a true Christian*. This postulate you teach as a *doctrine* while you are compelled to give it up as a *fact*. You ask,—“What should I think of my son if he were to say, ‘Once a son always a son, and therefore I may proceed to smash my father’s windows, and do all sorts of mischief?’” What should I think? Why, that he was a disobedient son; and I might possibly *disinherit him*. Sons *have* “smashed their father’s windows.” This is *fact*. And men “once in grace” have afterwards done even as David. This also is *fact*.

Your doctrine now takes *three faces*. Here they are,—Face

the first,—I shall view my son, not as “under government but as under grace.”—I quote your own distinction—and never disinherit him, though he “smash all my windows.”

Face the second,—The fact of his “smashing my windows” demonstrates that he *never was my son*.

Face the third,—A true son of mine *never could or would “smash my windows.”*

You play with these three conflicting aspects as it suits you; somewhat as a juggler plays with three balls. But with which of them will less decided Christians be likeliest to play? Not the third; for it contradicts consubstantial and general fact. Not the second; for it affords no comfort. The first, then, is the preferential aspect. But it is “modern Antinomianism,” your self being judge.

As you are fond of this mode of *circular proof*; and as you connect it, in another part of your “answer,” with a different analogy, I pause to show its fallaciousness and danger a little farther: You quote, in proof of your doctrine, Eph. v. 30; “For we are members of his body, and of his flesh, and of his bones.” The context shows that the object of the Apostle is to induce “husbands to love their wives, as Christ loved the church.” But regardless of the context, and *violating the very nature of analogy*, you make the one here used “go on all fours” that it may carry your theory. Thus humiliated, it leaves you, as in the other instance, with the three vicious alternatives,—

1. A husband will love his wife unchangeably, though she become unfaithful, or—

2. If a wife prove unfaithful it proves that her supposed husband never married her, or—

3. No real wife will or can prove unfaithful.

Your assertion that the question is not “about the final perseverance of the saints; but about the final perseverance of Christ,” leads to the same repulsive absurdities. Put it thus,—It is false doctrine to hold that *your leg* shall not persevere to the end of a certain journey, when you *yourself* will inevitably go the whole way. Your leg is a part of yourself; and the believer is, *in the same gross sense*, a part of Christ. True, a literal leg may be amputated, if it become diseased,—a leg does not prove itself no leg by becoming diseased,—and a leg, a real leg, is capable of mortal disease. But a “member of Christ” never can be cut off; or its amputation proves it was but a pretended member; or it never can become diseased at all.

You quote, to prove this sort of "standing in Christ," Heb. vii. 25. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost," &c. This text has nothing to do with "final perseverance" in *your sense*. Ability to save, in the absolute and abstract sense; and ability to save, according to conditions enjoined on fallen and guilty, but redeemed man, are quite different things. "God will have all men to be saved" by faith in Him "who gave himself a ransom for all." Yet *all men will not be saved*. And God will have all who believe to "continue in the faith." Yet *all will not persevere*. Salvation is, by the grace and will of God, *conditional*. On the condition of "hearing and learning of the Father,"—of penitently believing in God—and then,—as thus "drawn and given to the Son"—of penitently believing in Christ, God keeps all his people. Faith itself is the gift of God. But every gift must be according to its own nature. It is of the essential nature of faith that it should be the act—the habit—of a free and accountable being. The gift is God's: the use of that gift is man's. We can go no farther into the *philosophy* of the matter without leaving revealed truth behind us, or else violently driving it before us. Do you think, Sir, you honour God by torturing His Word to make it speak according to your *philosophy*? If "final perseverance" in *your sense*, or *senses*, be not true, then "the Enemy prevails over the Holy and Blessed Trinity!"

Sir, the Scriptures have decided this question. We accept your own "fundamental principle of interpretation," and on it reject your "doctrine." "One passage of scripture cannot contradict another." "By what is plain and unmistakable we interpret what is obscure." "Thus guided, we find a beautiful and demonstrated harmony." *Justification by faith*, and therefore neither by *works* nor by "sovereignty," is plainly taught in the Bible. So, with equal plainness, is the *possibility* of total and final "drawing back," and consequent "perdition." The opposite question never should have been raised. Deference to clearly revealed truth ought to have prevented such dishonour to the Revealer. By express declarations: by prophetic statements: by exhortations and warnings founded on this awful possibility: by typical and real examples in "those who came out of Egypt," and in "the angels that sinned:" by encouragements deriving all their propriety and stimulus from this dread contingency: by arguments and promises all irrelevant or forceless unless this possibility be assumed: by the nature and scope of language and the very value of words to convey a meaning:—

by all these various ways the question is settled in the Bible. So it remained settled for centuries after Christ. So it would remain still but for "oppositions of science, falsely so called."

III. Your third point is, "To expound the texts quoted," &c. The first text is—2 Peter ii. 1. You found a good argument for the doctrine of "Eternal Punishment" in Number 53, on the doctrine of the universal redemption of mankind by Christ. "All," say you, "who die in the rejection of God's infinite provision for the forgiveness of sins will have to endure the consequences throughout eternity." In the paper now under consideration you teach general redemption too. "The Lord has claims on those who 'deny him' founded not only in creation but in redemption."

What, then, is the *saving* benefit of redemption that ever could come to those who "deny the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction?" According to you, *not any*. The atonement, you tell us, "gives Christ power over them," but gives *them* no power to believe in him. And so He who "*bought* them," but never intended to *save* them, will doubly "destroy" them for "denying him both as Creator and Redeemer!" O Sir! You tell us, moreover, that "the salvation of those whom Christ has purchased with his own blood" is unconditionally certain. With what, then, did he purchase the power of unconditionally "destroying" the rest?

You say "if it were written that those 'false teachers' denied the Lord that *quickened* them, it would be indeed a difficulty." The next text you "expound," Sir, says so much. It is 2 Pet. ii. 20—22. Your "exposition" is *below* the real state of those treated of; but *above* the attainments of unregenerate and unassisted humanity. It is only thus you can evade the force of the passage. Surely unassisted and unregenerate man cannot "escape the pollutions of the world" by the mere "diffusion of scriptural knowledge and evangelical light." He can "escape" only by being *quickened*:—by a vital "knowledge of Christ." If man can "escape" by any means short of that assigned by St. Peter in the text, then is man *not totally fallen*. Here, then, you become, to evade the force of truth, a *Pelagian*.

And what if, "after having escaped," such a man should *not* be "again entangled and overcome?" Would he, being of the non-elect, be damned for "escaping?" You tell us, indeed, that the escape of such an one can be but temporary. He has *no grace*; and the force of nature can no farther go. Better it could not go so far: for his temporary escape will only plunge him deeper than if he were unable to escape at all!

To "escape" is to get clean away. Yet you inform us that an "escape" is no evidence of "*the* grand result of regeneration." What, then, is the evidence? And what is it "to make sure work of it?"

As the foregoing observations apply, substantially, to Matt. xii. 45, I pass it by.

In your "exposition" of 2 John, 8, 9, you lay down this *conditional* doctrine—"If one does not *abide* in the doctrine of Christ he has got nothing." So then the *condition* of security is,—to "abide in the doctrine of Christ." We must "watch and pray" in order to "escape." Having thus broadly asserted the responsibility of Christians you immediately deny it by again asserting that "all depends on Christ, nothing on ourselves." By this you do not mean that "without him we can do nothing," and that, therefore, we must "abide in him." You simply mean *absolute and unconditional predestination of individuals, by mere sovereignty to "final perseverance."* This is *ultra-Calvinism*.

Sir, the *cause* of our perseverance is the grace of Christ. But that grace is bestowed on the condition of obedient faith. He is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Something, then, depends on ourselves; not without grace, or previous to grace, ^{but} by "the grace of God that bringeth salvation." It depends on us to "work out our own salvation, *because* it is God that worketh in us." Supposing, however, that our security of perseverance *did* depend on the Divine Sovereignty; not on our faith, we must not only have the "righteousness of Christ" imputed to us to relieve us from responsibility, but the *foreknowledge of Christ* to relieve us from uncertainty. I may well ask, almost in your own words,—"Whether is watchfulness better promoted by placing our feet upon the rock"—Christ—by hearing his voice and following him, while he momentarily gives us eternal life, or "on the shifting sand" of a "final perseverance" that leaves us without any certainty at all?

Your exposition of Ezek. xviii. 24—26, is the same in its drift as that of 2 Peter ii. 20—22. The "righteous" person is *legally righteous* only. All his "righteousness" is no evidence to himself or others of "*the* grand result of regeneration." He is only "under government." If he "turn away—commit iniquity—and die in it," he shall die eternally. But as he who shall find himself in hell at the last, never, according to you, could have *begun* to go heavenward, it is plain he never could have "*persevered*" in the right way. And so you coolly tell us that this "Old Testament Scripture"—and another adduced by "S. A. D.;"

2 Chron. xv. 2—"being entirely governmental, have nothing whatever to do with final perseverance." It is well that God gives such a "righteous" person more comfort than you do. "Walking down here," as you represent him, "in the place of responsibility and danger;" and not "looked at as associated with Christ above, in the place of inalienable privilege and eternal security," still we learn from a higher authority than "C. H. M." that, if *he persevere* "he shall surely live." Sir, the very object of Ezek. xviii. is set at nought by your exposition. That object is—to fix "responsibility" on every person, as placed under the reign of grace.

Your real doctrine, stripped of mere verbiage, and made self-consistent, is this. Neither "the righteousness" nor "the wickedness" of an individual have anything to do with "final perseverance." "Faithful discipleship" and "effective testimony," you say, are pleasant and proper characteristics of "a child;" but his "sonship" is not at all dependent on "these things."

This brings me naturally to your "exposition" of Rev. iii. 11. It is astonishing. The text is,—"*Behold: I come quickly, hold fast that thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*" This message of encouragement was, in its primary intention, sent to the faithful "angel of the church in Philadelphia." Its secondary address was to individual believers everywhere. You thus "expound" it,—"*Two things are here to be considered, namely, first, that it is an address to an assembly; and, secondly, it does not say, 'That no man take thy life.' A servant may lose his reward; but a child can never lose his eternal life. Sonship is one thing; discipleship is quite another. Security in Christ is one thing; testimony for Christ is quite another. If our security were dependent on our testimony—our sonship on our discipleship, where should we be? I make no comment on this 'exposition.' Seriously to refute either the absurdity of a corporate crown; or the flat contradiction of all Scripture to which your 'doctrine' compels you, would be trifling. We may be 'sons' while we are not 'disciples;'—children of God while we are even 'denying the Lord that bought us!'*" Your stealthy transition from the corporate sense put on the passage to the individual application of it, is just in your style. An "assembly" may lose its collective "crown." Then the "assembly" becomes a "servant" who may "lose his reward." Finally the same "assembly" becomes "a child," secure of his "eternal life" whether he "serve," or refuse "to endure chastening."

You add to what I have quoted above,—“True, the more I know my security and enjoy my sonship, the more effective will be my testimony and the more faithful my discipleship.” True, Sir: but the question is not about the effect of a *stronger or weaker exercise of faith*. It is whether *unbelief*, amounting to denial and rebellion, has any effect on a member of Christ. The text supplies the answer. None but “an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ” can have a title to “a crown.” That crown is a “crown of glory,” “reserved in heaven for them who are kept by the power of God *through faith* unto salvation.” It is therefore identical with “eternal life” in its consummation in heaven. The “angel” of the Philadelphian church is exhorted to “hold fast”—to *persevere*—and the motive given him is,—lest he lose “eternal life.”

According to you the Day of Judgment is merely appointed for the manifestation of a certain number who never were or could be “children of wrath, even as others;” and of another certain number who never were or could be anything else.

It is a great truth that our justification, both as to the *act* and the *state*, is of grace *by faith*. The correlative blessing of the freely justified is regeneration, both as to the *act* and the *state*. We are thus, as believers, “endued with power from on high.” *The use of this power*, derived by faith only, and freely bestowed on the believer, is “perseverance.” The *persistent use of it* is “final perseverance.” See 2 Peter i. 1—11; and iii. 17, 18.

The incidental question, May we hope for pardon again if we sin after justification? is answered in 1 John ii. 1, 2; but it is answered in quite another way than your doctrine implies or states. You found a reply to such a question on the false doctrine that the satisfaction made by Christ means not *solely* his “obedience unto death,” by which “he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world;” but *also* his performance, as *the proxy of a certain number*, of an obedience to the law from which they are therefore excused. You teach that Christ’s atonement on the cross was not simply a satisfaction to Divine justice on the ground of which “God might be *just* and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus,” but rather the payment of a debt which would make it *unjust* in God not to justify those thus discharged from guilt *past, present, and to come*. “The elect” becoming thus incapable of *guilt*, “the righteousness of Christ” is imputed to them, to render them righteous and sinless by a legal fiction.

Differing, however, from other "Calvinists," you teach that the very attribute of righteousness in Christ, and not his active obedience only, while on earth, is that which is imputed to his members. I know you vary from yourself; but this doctrine of imputation is your harbour when you are not "at sea."

As the question, at present, is not about justification; but about the perseverance of the justified, I shall not do more than indicate one deadly effect of your Antinomian error. I am told you deny it in your preaching; but I have to do only with what is in print. The effect of your theory is—to put regeneration before all repentance and faith. Repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ are necessary effects of a previous salvation wrought in the elect only, and utterly put beyond the reach of all the rest. This is pure Calvinism; but you push it to Antinomianism by teaching that while repentance and faith are necessary effects, in respect to God's sovereignty, as the cause of them where they actually exist; they are totally unnecessary in respect to "the security of the elect in Christ."

Now if penitent faith is not the gracious condition of salvation all through,—if it is not that condition by which we "stand," and possess and show "the fruits of the Spirit;"—if, on the contrary, "the elect" are unconditionally accepted by a previous and eternal election to faith, and repentance and faith are merely means by which their eternal election is made known; then the relation of "the elect" to God is not changed by penitent faith. They never were "children of wrath." Nor is their relation to God changed, should penitent faith be absent. They never can be "children of wrath."

As to all the texts you quote to prove Christ's ability; and all those adduced to prove the security of believers, they are, as will now be seen, entirely beside the question. Your play on the phrase "eternal life," as opposed to "temporary or conditional life," is irrelevant. It is also sophistical. The sophistry lies in the adroit use of two adjectives, as if they had the same meaning. Sir, all that is "conditional" is not "temporary" in its nature. That a life, eternal in its nature, is conditional in its tenure while we walk by faith, is plain from all scripture. The promise of "eternal life," and of complete security from all extrinsic foes, is to "the sheep who hear the Shepherd's voice, and follow him," and "who flee from strangers." Exactly agreeing with this is 1 John ii. 24—26. "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath pro-

mised us, even *eternal life*. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." "Little children," adds the Apostle, "let no man deceive you,"—that is, into the persuasion that you can "abide in Christ" and "sin;"—"he that doeth righteousness is righteous."

Let me, in conclusion, state again your doctrine under its two faces.

Face the first,—*It is divinely secured that all who once believe shall continue to believe.*

Face the second,—*All Christ's members have such a "standing in him" that they must persevere whether they continue to believe or not.*

This last face is your favourite "viewing point." "If," say you, "I make *self* my point of view, and look from thence at the subject of final perseverance, I shall be sure to get a false view altogether, inasmuch as it then becomes a question of *my* perseverance, and any thing of *mine* must necessarily be doubtful. But if I make Christ my viewing point, and look at the subject from thence, I shall be sure to have a correct view, inasmuch as it then becomes a question of *Christ's* perseverance, and I am quite sure that He *must* persevere."

Surely "S. A. D." ought to be satisfied with this clear distinction of "viewing points." In plain English, your doctrine amounts to this,—*The elect must persevere whether they persevere or not.*

Those who teach your doctrine of "perseverance" are many. A deep sense of responsibility compels me to lift my voice against so dangerous an error. It is not an error that the careless unbeliever is likely to take up. But simple souls who are not yet established in grace are peculiarly susceptible of it. To these the teachers of your "final perseverance" often say that those who deny the "precious doctrine" hold and teach the *probability* of final apostacy. This is a calumny. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." The "fear that hath torment" he knows not. Even the unfaithful child is not lightly "given up." But in proportion as we "dwell in God" we hear the solemn utterance from the throne of grace, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema Maramatha."

