

***Answer to Gill (1754)***<sup>1</sup>

[Baker list, #207]

**Editorial Introduction:**

In 1751 John Wesley published *Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints*. This sparked a rebuttal from John Gill titled *The Doctrine of the Saint's Final Perseverance Asserted and Vindicated; in answer to a late pamphlet called Serious Thoughts on that Subject* (1752). John Wesley responded to Gill in *Predestination Calmly Considered* (1752), §§69–78.

In 1754 a second answer to Gill was published by “the Revd. Mr. Wesley,” in the form of three hymns excerpted from *Hymns on Love* (1742). It is unclear whether it was John or Charles Wesley who prepared this excerpt, but no significant textual changes were introduced.

This response was never reprinted.

**Editions:**

[Charles?] Wesley. *An Answer to All which the Revd. Dr. Gill has Printed on the Final Perseverance of the Saints*. London: sold at the Foundery, 1754.

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<sup>1</sup>This document was produced by the Duke Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition under the editorial direction of Randy L. Maddox, with the diligent assistance of Aileen F. Maddox. Last updated: Dec. 3, 2007.

**An Answer  
To all which  
The Reverend Dr. Gill, etc.<sup>2</sup>**

1        O take away the stone,  
          Jesu, the bar remove,  
The accursed thing to me unknown,  
          That stops thy streaming love:  
          Thy grace is always free,  
          Thou waitest to be good,  
And still thy Spirit grieves for me,  
          And speaks thy sprinkled blood.

2        Ah! Do not let me trust  
          In gifts and graces past,  
But lay my spirit in the dust,  
          And stop my mouth at last.  
          What thou for me hast done,  
          I can no longer plead;  
Thy truth and faithfulness I own,  
          If now thou strike me dead.

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<sup>2</sup>The first 23 stanzas reprise Hymn #3 in *Hymns on God's Love* (1742); stanzas 24–35 are a reprint of Hymn #4, and the last three stanzas are drawn from Hymn #5 (sts. 1, 3 & 9).

- 3        Surely I once believed,  
          And felt my sins forgiven,  
Thy faithful record I received,  
          That thou hast purchased heaven  
          For me, and all mankind,  
          Who from their sins would part;  
The peace of God I once could find,  
          The witness in my heart.
- 4        But soon the subtle fiend  
          Beguiled my simple mind,  
Darkness with light he knew to blend,  
          Falsehood and truth he joined;  
          Pride (he remembered well)  
          Had cast him from the skies:  
By pride the first transgressor fell,  
          And lost his paradise.
- 5        Armed with this fiery dart  
          The enemy drew nigh,  
And preached to my unsettled heart  
          His bold presumptuous lie;  
          “You are secure of heaven,”  
          (The tempter softly says)  
“*You are elect*, and once forgiven  
          Can never fall from grace.
- 6        “You never can receive  
          The grace of God in vain:  
The gift, be sure, he did not give  
          To take it back again;  
          He cannot take it back,  
          Whether you use, or no  
His grace; you cannot shipwreck make  
          Of faith, or let it go.

- 7            “You never can forget  
              Your God, or leave him now,  
Or once look back, if you have set  
              Your hand unto the plow:  
              You never can deny  
              The Lord who you hath bought,  
Nor can your God his own *pass by*,  
              Though you receive him not.
- 8            “God is unchangeable,  
              And therefore so are you;  
And therefore they can never fail  
              Who once his goodness knew;  
              In part perhaps you may,  
              You cannot wholly fall,  
Cannot become a castaway  
              Like *non-elected* Paul.
- 9            “Though you continue not,  
              Yet God remains the same,  
Out of his book he cannot blot  
              Your everlasting name:  
              Cut off you shall not be,  
              You never shall remove,  
Secure from all eternity  
              In his *electing love*.
- 10           “If God the seed did sow,  
              He sowed it not in vain,  
It cannot to perfection grow,  
              But it must still remain:  
              Nor cares, nor sins can choke,  
              Or make the grace depart,  
Nor can it be by Satan took  
              Out of your careless heart.

- 11        “You must forever live,  
              If of the chosen race;  
If God did but one talent give  
              Of special, saving grace,  
              You cannot bury it;  
              He never can reprove,  
Or cast you out into the pit  
              For trampling on his love.
- 12        “God sees in you no sin;  
              On his decree depend;  
You who did in the Sp’rit begin,  
              In flesh can never end:  
              You never can reject  
              His mercies, or abuse,  
His great salvation none neglect,  
              And death and evil choose.
- 13        “If once the sp’rit unclean  
              Out of his house is gone,  
He never more can enter in,  
              Or seize you for his own;  
              You need not dread the fate  
              Of reprobates accurst,  
Or tremble lest your last estate  
              Be worsen than the first.
- 14        “Surely the righteous man  
              Can never more draw back,  
He his own mercies never can  
              With his good works forsake;  
              That he should sink to hell  
              In his iniquity,  
God *may suppose it possible,*  
              *But it can never be.*

- 15        “His threat’nings all are vain,  
              You fancy him sincere,  
But spare yourself the needless pain,  
              And cast away your fear.  
              He speaks with this intent  
              To frighten you from ill  
With sufferings, which he only meant  
              The reprobate should feel.
- 16        “He only meant to warn  
              The damned, devoted race,  
Back from his ways lest they should turn  
              Who never knew his ways;  
              He only cautions all  
              Who never came to God  
Not to depart from God, or fall  
              From grace, who never stood.
- 17        “His threat’nings are a jest,  
              Or not designed for you;  
He only means them for the rest,  
              And they shall find them true,  
              Who slight his mercy’s call,  
              Which they could ne’er embrace:  
He warns th’ apostates not to fall  
              From common (*damning*) grace.
- 18        “’Gainst those that faithless prove  
              He shuts his mercy’s door,  
And whom he never once did love  
              Threatens to love no more;  
              From them he doth revoke  
              The grace they did not share,  
And blot the names out of his book  
              That ne’er were written there.

- 19        “But you may rest secure,  
              And safely take your ease,  
If you are once in grace, be sure  
              You always are in grace:  
              Cast all your fears away,  
              My son, be of good cheer,  
Nor mind what Paul or Peter say,  
              For you *must* persevere.
- 20        “And did they fright the child,  
              And tell it, it might fall?  
Might be of its reward beguiled,  
              And sin, and forfeit all:  
              Might to its vomit turn,  
              And wallow in the mire,  
And perish in its sins, and burn  
              In everlasting fire!
- 21        “What naughty men be they  
              To take the children’s bread,  
Their carnal confidence to slay,  
              And force them to take heed!  
              With humble useless doubt  
              The fearful babes they fill,  
Compelled with trembling to work out  
              Their own salvation still.
- 22        “Ah poor misguided soul!  
              And did they make it weep!  
Come, let me in my bosom lull,  
              Thy sorrows all to sleep:  
              Thine eyes in safety close,  
              Secure from all alarms,  
And take thine undisturbed repose,  
              And rest within my arms.

- 23        “They shall not vex it so,  
              By bidding it take heed;  
You need not as a bulrush go,  
              Still bowing down your head:  
              Your griefs and fears reject,  
              My *other* gospel own,  
Only believe yourself elect,  
              And all the work is done.”
- 24        ’Twas thus the subtle foe  
              Beguiled my foolish heart,  
While weak in faith I did not know  
              His false ensnaring art:  
              I listened to a lie  
              Which nature liked so well,  
Believed the soothing fiend that I  
              Could never fall—and fell.
- 25        The tempter now withdrew,  
              And left me free from care,  
His own advantage well he knew;  
              My soul was in his snare:  
              Secure, and lulled in ease,  
              Sin vexed me now no more,  
My sorrows end, my trouble cease,  
              And all my pangs are o’er.
- 26        Freed from the inward cross,  
              Of all corruption full,  
A prophet of smooth things I was  
              To my own wretched soul;  
              Unchanged and unrenewed,  
              Yet still I could not fall:  
Daubed with untempered mortar stood  
              The tottering, whited wall.

- 27        My wound I slightly healed,  
            And quieted my grief,  
With all the false assurance filled  
            Of damning unbelief;  
            One of the happy sect,  
            Who scoff at mourners poor,  
That will not dream themselves elect,  
            Till they have made it sure.
- 28        How happier far was I,  
            From grief and scruple free,  
Who could from all conviction fly  
            To God's *supposed* decree!  
            O what a settled peace,  
            What comfort did I prove,  
And hug me in my sins, and bless  
            His sweet electing love!
- 29        What if I sinned *sometimes*  
            In this *imperfect* state,  
It was not like the damning crimes  
            Of a lost reprobate;  
            Sin was not sin in *me*,  
            God doth not blame his own,  
Doth not behold iniquity  
            In any chosen one.
- 30        What if I *fouly* fell,  
            I *finally* could not;  
His grace is irresistible,  
            And back I *must* be brought:  
            What if in sin I lived,  
            The firm decree is past,  
I *must* be at my death received,  
            I *must* be saved at last.

- 31       How could my folly dare  
          Satan and sin to slight?  
The judgments of my God were far  
          Above out of my sight:  
          His wrath was not for me,  
          And therefore I defied  
Mine enemies, from danger free,  
          In self-electing pride.
- 32       Not all his threatened woes  
          My stubborn heart could move;  
His threat'nings only were for those  
          Who never knew his love:  
          He cannot take away  
          His covenanted grace,  
Though I rebel, and disobey,  
          And mock him to his face.
- 33       He cannot me pass by,  
          Or utterly reject,  
Or judge his people, or deny  
          To save his own elect;  
          He swore to bring me in  
          To heaven; 'twere perjury  
For God to punish me for sin,  
          For God to pass by me.
- 34       'Twas thus my wretched heart  
          Abused his patient grace,  
Provoked his mercy to depart,  
          His justice to take place:  
          Unconscious of its state,  
          In death my soul abode,  
Nor groaned beneath its guilty weight,  
          Nor knew its fall from God.

- 35        I could not be restored,  
            By pard'ning grace renewed,  
While trampling on his written word  
            Self-confident I stood:  
            He only saves the lost,  
            Which I could never be,  
I never *could* be damned, but *must*  
            Be saved by his decree.
- 36        O my offended God,  
            If now at last I see  
That I have trampled on thy blood,  
            And done despite to thee,  
            If I begin to wake  
            Out of my deadly sleep,  
Into thy arms of mercy take,  
            And there forever keep.
- 37        I can no longer trust  
            In my abuse of grace,  
I own thee merciful and just,  
            If banished from thy face:  
            Though once I surely knew,  
            And felt my sins forgiven,  
Faithful I own thee, Lord, and true,  
            If now shut out from heaven.
- 38        But O! Forbid it, Lord,  
            Nor drive me from thy face,  
While self-condemned, and self-abhorred,  
            I humbly sue for grace:  
            For thy own mercy's sake  
            My guilty soul release,  
And now my pardon give me back,  
            And bid me die in peace.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Line in *Hymns on God's Love* (1742): "And give me back my peace."