

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication  
Copyright 1998 Holiness Data Ministry

Duplication of this CD by any means is forbidden, and  
copies of individual files must be made in accordance with  
the restrictions stated in the B4Ucopy.txt file on this CD.

**FALLING FROM GRACE**  
**By Charles Franklin Wimberly**

Twenty-Six Reasons  
Why the Possibility of Apostasy  
Is Taught in the Word of God

Printed Book: No Date -- No Copyright

\* \* \* \* \*

Digital Edition 09/18/98  
By Holiness Data Ministry

\* \* \* \* \*

There are a number of terms by which this doctrine and its antitheses are known: Apostasy, Final Perseverance, Once in Grace Always in Grace, etc. These expressions are theological terms, and are also familiar even among the common people. The doctrine is one of the vital points around which Arminianism and Calvinism have fought for centuries. Calvinism says, once the soul is converted, regenerated, adopted into the family of God, through Grace, that this relation can never be forfeited; as it is retained through the power and majesty of Grace, and is not predicated upon conduct, good or bad. In order that the reader may get a clear statement of this doctrine firsthand, and not by hearsay, we quote an extract from a sermon, delivered before a state gathering, of a church which makes this tenet prominent in all their public deliverances.

"Good works cannot save a man nor damn a soul," he said. "He that believeth on the Son, whatever else he does or does not, has everlasting life and never will be lost. Two men, one a sinner, the other a Christian, may commit a wrong and get killed. The one dies and goes to hell; the other goes to heaven. The Christian loses only his reward, for his life was hid in Christ Jesus and could not be plucked from him. Our character, conduct or life has nothing to do with our salvation. The saved man will want to do right and if he unwittingly falls into sin, he will repent of it, but that has nothing to do with salvation. 'I say unto you that he that believeth on him hath everlasting life.' There is no judgment for the Christian; only judgment is for the sinner. The very moment I believe, all the judgment for my sin is transferred from the future to the past and there is no judgment for me."

Once in Grace, always in Grace," is one of the shibboleths of ultra Calvinism. Arminianism says that sonship sustains the relation of a covenant, and, as such, can stand only as

both parties keep the covenant inviolate; that a son of God, through the New Birth, may experience all the blessings of the Atonement, even that of purity of heart; then forfeit it all through transgression. Apostasy and Falling from Grace are synonymous terms and are used interchangeably.

Just how such an interpretation could have become so prominent in religious polemics is hard to understand, but it towers up as one of the big fundamentals of Calvinism. The theological war between these two branches of teaching has been long and bitter. But of the "Five Points" of difference, all but this one have gone down before the Gibraltar logic of Arminianism. This one still remains, unabashed, bold, vociferous, even in the face of unequivocal statements from the Word of God, in the face of observation, and human experience.

The writer was in conversation with an ardent advocate of this very wholesome doctrine; whereupon, this presumptuous enthusiast declared: "I know that I am as sure of heaven, as if I were there. I have been converted, and I don't care what I may, or may not do -- even murder -- I am sustained by Grace and not by my own effort or will." To this hilarious speech, I replied: "My brother, I will give you \$100 if you will find me one Scripture which teaches what you have just said, beyond a shadow of a doubt; one that teaches it so clearly that I can see it. I shall be delighted to pay over that amount of money for the assurance it would give me. I want a 'thus saith the Lord' and you can get the money." It is needless to say that the money was not called for.

We do not hesitate to say, with all sincerity, and in the fear of God, that this doctrine is utterly without Scriptural foundation, and harmful in the extreme, just as any other perversion of God's word is harmful. We are persuaded that the continual emphasis placed upon this teaching by ministers of the Gospel has done incalculable harm. In the subsequent pages we propose to give twenty-six reasons why the Possibility of Apostasy -- or falling from Grace as a possibility -- is sustained in the Bible. We hear the sarcastic remark: "Why, they believe in falling from Grace." We deny this absolutely; we do not believe in falling from Grace, but we believe in the possibility. Transgression is just as sure to be punished or pardoned, as God's government is established in justice and righteousness; "the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

We therefore offer the following reasons for the faith that is within us:

1. Men are not machines -- they are personalities; free to act and think as they choose. All the rewards and punishments -- in this life, and in the life to come -- are vitally connected with the doctrine of Free Moral Agency -- Free Intellectual Agency, as well. Men are undoubtedly free; and if they are not -- then, the whole system of human divine government is wrong and should be revised. If they are free at any time, they are free all the time; they are accountable at any time, they are accountable at all times. If the wrath of God rests on men at any time, on account of sin, then it must, of necessity and justice, rest on them at all times. Transgression of a law at one time, is the same in character, as at any other time. Adultery after conversion is the same in character as before conversion; theft does not change in character, because the thief has once known God. By what hocus-pocus conjuring may a sin be culpable before conversion, and then be free from condemnation after conversion? If sin after conversion does not produce guilt -- then Free Agency is destroyed. The two propositions are at extremes, and cannot be reconciled by any sane law of reasoning; it does not require logic to see the absurdity of such a plea -- all that is required -- just

common sense. If men are free -- their acts are the result of free choice. If men cannot forfeit their relation with God by sin, it can only be so because responsibility is not involved.

2. If "once in grace, always in grace," is the Bible teaching, and if the truly regenerated cannot be lost, then God's attitude to sin, must of necessity, be changed. All must agree that sin defiles the soul before conversion; then the defilement is actually greater after conversion, as their spiritual eyes are open to the nature of sin, in a manner not possible before. If sin after conversion does not forfeit the relation of sonship; then God's attitude to sin is changed. This would destroy the Immutability of God. His attitude to sin must ever remain the same; else He is a changeable Being. God is holy; God is justice, and when He palliates and winks at men's transgressions -- committed in anger -- lust -- or covetousness -- He is no longer the Immutable God, which the Bible emphatically teaches us that He is.

3. If we teach the doctrine; "once in grace, always in grace" -- that those in grace are no longer under the law, but under grace; and this law of unqualified mercy is the law to which they are amenable, the standard of life of necessity is lowered. The ideals of Christian character tumble far below the standard set up by the world -- not to mention the standard taught in the Word of God. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself, also, to walk even as he walked."

That scripture places the standard on a high and holy plane -- even that which was occupied by the Master Himself. "He that abideth in him, sinneth not," says John. From Genesis to Revelation, there is an eternal condemnation and denunciation of sin, anywhere; the standard is not lowered by divine authority; transgression of law escapes the penalty nowhere. God even spared not His angels that kept not their first estate; then He will surely not spare His enlightened children, who know better. When we teach to the contrary, the standard of living is lowered; hence the doctrine is wrong -- false -- and contradicts the whole sweep of Bible teachings.

4. If sin after conversion does not involve guilt, therefore, not punishable, then God is a respecter of persons. Sin before conversion renders us guilty and punishable; one sin unpardoned and unpunished would wreck the moral government of God. If sin is so bitterly condemned at one period of a free moral agent's life, and condoned at another, God is a respecter of persons and partial. The Bible most emphatically teaches that He is not. Sin is sin, anywhere, and the supposed difference of character, by whom it is committed, does not change the polluting effects. By what law, or by what system of ethics or justice, shall it be punished in the sinner and go unpunished, when committed by those who profess to follow the One who came to save us from sin?

5. If converted men can commit sin at all, and not lose their standing before God; then they can commit any sin in the Decalogue: murder, adultery, arson, etc. If this is a Bible doctrine, it should be heralded from the housetops -- and indeed, it is being done in some circles; but what of the consequences: every door of temptation is wide-open to all of God's people. If one Christian can sin, and remain in God's favor, then all of them may do the same. If a pastor of a church should be guilty of gross immorality, and this gospel was reached by him, and believed by his parishioners, they must not cast him out, to be consistent. He would have a perfect right to demand that they leave him unmolested as their spiritual shepherd. Dear reader, the suggestion of such a thing is revolting. Sin is so subtle, and so alluring, that every door of temptation should be closed and locked; the stay-chains of our moral power are sure to break, if in the face of a fierce

temptation, we believe there will be no condemnation before God. Away with such religious poison!

6. The doctrine of Impossibility of Apostasy places a false, unreasonable, and an unscriptural meaning to benefits of Grace; a meaning which cannot be sustained by a single passage in the Word of God, if reasonably interpreted. To say that God's children can no longer be judged by the law, but by Grace, gives it a meaning which is strained and distorted. By grace we are saved -- but it is through faith, and faith must be preceded by repentance. The sinner: guilty, lost, undone -- seeks pardon, and gets it; that is Grace -- unmerited favor. This grace, acting in exactly the same way, continues to abound to usward. That is the "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound," of which we sing; but we have no right or authority to place such an extravagant meaning on grace, that it will palliate and condone sin. It is unreasonable, unscriptural -- false!

7. Impossibility of Apostasy is unquestionably the most dangerous doctrine taught and believed by the followers of Jesus Christ. Purgatory, priestly absolution, masses for the dead -- the grossest dogmas of Rome, are not to be compared with it. Rome's dogmas are too absurd for consideration by spiritually enlightened people; but this doctrine has a luscious, toothsome fascination about it, that hides the hemlock in the glass of nectar. Three reasons why it is dangerous:

1. It flatly contradicts the Word of God: "The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die," rings out clear and strong from almost every page in Holy Writ. 2. It sets at naught the spirit of careful, prayerful watchfulness -- so forcibly enjoined upon us by the Master. It takes away the necessity for watchfulness; there is no danger, or risk in hot watching. 3. It restrains the impulse to repent deeply and pungently, after a sin has been committed. Why repent? There is no law broken -- it is the law of grace. Hence, multitudes may become hopelessly backslidden by holding to this dangerous heresy.

8. "Once in grace, always in grace," does violence to reason and common sense. While our religion is one of faith, there is no feature of it that does not appeal to the soundest reason and common sense. All the warnings and commands in the Bible are based upon the highest system of ethics and justice known to man. When we examine this doctrine in the light of the whole teaching of the Bible; and viewed from every reasonable angle, whereby an observation can be made, it sweeps away reason and common sense, and should be rejected.

9. If those who sin after conversion are immune from the condemnation of God and the penalties which the same sin would entail upon others -- the true ethics of rewards and punishments are destroyed. A reward -- if one at all -- is for the merit only. Rewards, promotions, and praise, that are not predicated on true merit -- merit that has been justly demonstrated -- is not merit at all -- but favoritism? Let us illustrate: a father is the teacher of pupils in school; among the students are his own children. This man has certain rules which he has established for the government and discipline of the school; these rules must be obeyed; any violation entails punishment, and the teacher rigidly enforces this administration. Finally, one of his own children breaks the rules, with every feature of willful disobedience. What happens? The father very graciously suspends the penalty, and the child goes unpunished. Such a procedure would provoke universal disapprobation from the public -- parents of the other children; and it would result in a

revolt among the pupils -- and justly so. In like manner God cannot pass over the willful sins of His children. If one can go unpunished; then the vilest may, and the principles or rewards and punishments are flagrantly set aside.

10. If it is true, that Christians may sin, and do so without losing their standing with God; there must of necessity be a weakness, somewhere in the Atonement, or a violent disregard for its efficacy. We reject it utterly from the standpoint of the Atonement -- as it renders the ultimate and uttermost power of the Blood as useless and unnecessary. Why have a Saviour at all? Why have an Atonement -- if it cannot save us from sin; and it does not matter whether the delivery from sin is complete or not? He came to destroy the works of the devil, and to save His people from their sins. If, after they are saved -- they continue in sin, the ultimate and uttermost power of the Blood is unnecessary. Why should He make intercession for us, if it is not to keep us from falling? Such a doctrine is a burning libel on the Blood of Jesus Christ, which John says, cleanseth from all sin.

11. If sin of any character, committed by anyone, under any circumstances, can remain without pardon or punishment -- and that is what happens, if converted people can sin without condemnation; then the moral and righteous government of God breaks down. Sin cannot be committed without defilement; then defiled souls may enter heaven, which would also wreck God's throne. Arminianism believes that when converted people commit sin, they must do their first works over by repentance and faith, before they can be restored to divine favor again.

12. We are taught in the Word, that God's relation with men is that of a Covenant; it was so from the beginning, and has not changed today. God called it a "Covenant keeping God," and as such, there are at least two parties involved; it would not be a Covenant if one party assumed all the obligations. The Old Testament should read "The Old Covenant," and the "New Covenant" for the New Testament. When godly people broke their part of the Old Covenant they became the slaves and servants of the enemy. We have never found a single exception to this, until they had repented, and God came to their rescue. Our relation to God has never ceased to be a Covenant; any other view is nothing less than absurd.

13. Those who hold to this doctrine are forced by consistency, in order to be within reason and logic, to one of two conclusions. (a) That sin may be committed and remain unpardoned; or (b) that when a Christian sins, it is the body, and not the soul involved by the transgression. Sin remains only in the body, and the soul is not defiled. The first horn of the dilemma, as stated before, destroys God's righteous government; the second is the old First Century Gnosticism out on twentieth century dress parade; the last one is physiologically, psychologically, biologically, theologically, and judicially false.

14. We will now take up a few examples. Thus far we have been discussing this from the standpoint of reason, and have said but little touching Bible proofs. We will confine the remainder of this question to the Bible teachings. Our first example is King Saul. God called this big, humble young man to be king over His people; and after he was anointed, God gave him a new heart (1 Sam. 10:9) and honored him in every way. We shall not follow up the history of Saul; but he became a transgressor, and confesses that "God hears me no more" (1 Sam. 28:15).

We find in another place where the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit came upon him (1 Sam. 16:14). Here was a man whom God had changed and blessed; then afterwards, the Lord leaves him because of sin. On the night before he committed suicide, this man, who once was the humble servant of God, goes down into a cave and listens to the conjurations [incantations] of an old hag; and again confesses that God had departed from him. 1 Sam. 28:15-20. Here is an unmistakable case of apostasy.

15. We notice in the next place, the case of Amaziah. He also was a king under the direction of God, and ruling in righteousness; but the Book says he turned away from the Lord, and worshipped the god of Seir. Whereupon, the wrath of God was kindled against him, ending in his destruction (2 Chron. 25:14, 15, 27). We ask the reader to examine these references, and verify the statements herein set forth. We are taking the simple records of the Bible; these mean something, or nothing.

16. We now come to the example of Judas. He was chosen of the Master to have an honored place in the Apostolic College; the Master ordained him to preach the kingdom of God, and perform miracles. He did both. The Master told them all, at one time, that their names were written in heaven (Luke 10:20). Two times it was recorded -- or rather, two of the gospels say, that Satan entered the heart of Judas (Luke 22:3, John 13:27). Now, they tell us that Judas was a devil from the beginning; but how could this be? For Satan would have been in all the time; the above references prove that he was not a devil. Jesus knew men's hearts, and to say that He selected, ordained, and commissioned a devil to preach, is an insult to the Son of God. But, listen, we are told that from this ministry and apostleship, Judas fell, through transgression. See Acts 1:25. This puts an end to all the arguments, so far as Judas is concerned. Another clear case of apostasy.

17. Then, there is the example of Hymenaeus and Alexander. Of these characters we know nothing, except Paul's brief statement. He had been exhorting Timothy to war a good warfare; holding on to the faith, not as some who had failed to do so, and had made shipwreck of themselves. He then mentions these two parties as having done the very thing he warns Timothy not to do. They once had the faith, and a good conscience, but let them go for the pleasures of this present world. Paul said he had turned them over to Satan. 1 Tim. 1:18-20.

18. We shall now take up the testimony of the various writers of the Bible. We will begin with Isaiah, the greatest of the major prophets. We find in the first chapter a strong exhortation for the people who had gone away from the Lord to return, and He would restore them. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." All through Isaiah, the wonderful promises are conditional; the conditions were: They must return unto serving Him, and keep His commandments; not one promise, but is based upon a condition. He declares that Israel shall be restored with judgment, and not grace. Hear Isaiah's testimony, relative to this doctrine: "And they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed" Isa. 1:28. This could not have meant the heathen, for they had never been followers of the Lord.

19. Ezekiel's Testimony. Nothing in all the Bible is so clear-cut and conclusive. We give three references. "Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him

warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood which I will require at thy hand" Ezek. 3:20.

"But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die" Ezek. 18:24.

"Therefore, thou son of man, say to the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression. . . . neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth" Ezek. 33:12. "But," says one, "this is the Old Testament -- that was under the law; we are now under Grace." But Jesus said that not "One jot or tittle of His word should pass away, until it was fulfilled," or exemplified. God could not afford to be more severe with His people then, with little light, than now, with more light.

20. The testimony of Jesus. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man he walketh in dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return to my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first" Luke 11:24-26.

"They on the rock are they, which when they hear receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while they believe, but in the time of temptation fall away" Luke 8:13. The Master had but little to say, but what He did say cannot be gainsaid.

21. The Testimony of John. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" John 6:66. 1 John 3:15 says very plainly, "that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Now, if any sin which a man might commit, does not forfeit his standing with God, no sin will do it -- even murder; but John says, that if he murders, even in his mind -- in hate -- eternal life does not abide in him. The thought is, that he might have had eternal life, but it will not abide where there is the spirit of murder. John says again: "Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not" 1 John 3:6. To remain in grace, we cannot commit sin; when a sin is committed, or if we should sin -- we at once sin out, until we repent and put that sin under the blood. We must agree with John, that to remain in grace, no sin can be committed. But, thank God, there is a wonderful provision: "if we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." We must take one or the other of these propositions, or else rule out John's testimony. We prefer to believe John.

22. The Testimony of Peter. "For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" II Peter 1:8-11. Once more: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" II Peter 3:17. These clear statements

need no comment; the words themselves give all the strength necessary to substantiate the truth of our contention, and the fallacy of our good friends who take the opposite view.

23. The Testimony of Jude. "I will therefore, put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" Jude 5, 6. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" Jude 24. Here are three straight-edges on this subject; each one clinches the proposition, as much as language can do it. He is able to keep us from falling; but why put such a promise there, if there were no danger of falling? The bugle clarion is loud and clear, that if we sin, after knowing God, we forfeit our standing before Him, until we repent.

24. The Testimony of Hebrews. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" Heb. 3:12-24. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of 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" Heb. 6:4-6. "For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." A better rendering of this last reference, is that if we continue "to sin on and on, wilfully," etc., we may repent of our sins, for a while; but we reach a place, where there will be no chance for us even to repent. All these teach us that there is no such thing as a corner on grace; whatever we do, we must do it unto the end. Besides the above, there are a number of places in Hebrews, where the word lest is used, each one of them which is most significant; do certain things -- lest something befall us. "Lest we let them slip," "Lest we come short," etc. These are so plain, that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

25. The Testimony of Paul. We have left the old War Horse of the Gospel to last, except that of Revelation, which should be our closing proofs. We will give three statements from Paul. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" 1 Cor. 9:27. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" 1 Tim. 4:1. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing" 2 Tim. 4:7, 8. Paul predicted his receiving the crown at the last day, upon the fact that he fought, and kept, and finished; thus it will be with us all.

26. The Testimony of Revelation. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place,



except thou repent" Rev. 2:4, 5. Hear this remarkable text: "Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Crowns are laid up for us, after we have done as Paul -- fought, kept, and finished; then there will be a chance, that our crown may be given to another. Again: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot his name out of the book of life; but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" Rev. 3:5. Then, the Laodiceans were told that because of their lukewarmness, neither hot nor cold, that He would spew them out of His mouth, because they were unfit for use of any kind. Rev. 3:15, 16. This was spoken to a church; a church that had grown cold and indifferent, and the Spirit warns this church of the sure destiny awaiting it, because it had forsaken the Lord, and had become proud and rich. Where could a more severe utterance be found, than to be spewed out of His mouth? What remains for us to do, in the face of such overwhelming testimony and reason? First, we must abandon this dangerous doctrine, and pray without ceasing, in the fight that is before us. "Seeing we are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us -- looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith."

\* \* \* \* \*

THE END