

Ninth Thesis

Concerning Perseverance, and the Possibility of Falling from Grace¹

This gift and inward grace of God is sufficient to work out salvation,² but when people resist it, it can and does become their condemnation. Moreover, after it has done part of its work in their hearts³ to purify them and sanctify them toward further perfection, people may still fall from grace through disobedience, “turn it into reckless desires”⁴ and “make a shipwreck of faith,”⁵ and “after having tasted the heavenly gift, and having been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, again fall away.”⁶ Nevertheless, in this life one may attain a level of growth and stability in the Truth, from which there cannot be a total apostasy.⁷

Source: Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002) p. 223;

¹ Latin: *amittendi gratia*, “rejecting grace” “losing grace” “letting grace go”

² Latin: *ad perficiendam salutem*, “perfecting salvation” “accomplishing salvation”

³ Latin: *in quorum cordibus nonnihil operata est* “has done some work in their hearts”

⁴ Jude 1:4

⁵ I Timothy 1:19 RB

⁶ Hebrews 6:4-6 RB

⁷ The influence of the Calvinist doctrine of perseverance is reflected in an anecdote about Oliver Cromwell on his deathbed. He asked a minister if it is possible to fall from grace; the minister answered that it is not possible. Then Cromwell said, “Then I am safe, because I know that I was once in grace.” *History of Oliver Cromwell and the English Commonwealth: From the Execution of Charles the First to the Death of Cromwell*, M. Guizot, (London: Richard Bentley, 1854) Vol. 2 pp. 401-402

and Roberti Barclaii, *Teologiae verè Christianae apologia*,
facsimile (Amsterdam: Jacob Claus, 1676) p. 166.