

The fourth term is called Irresistible Grace. That term again needs explanation. It is not a good term because it can give a false idea, though not nearly as bad as the earlier terms. Certainly everyone resists grace. Everyone tries to escape from God and to follow his own wicked ways. God pursues us with love. He sends instruments to bring the truth to us, to win us to himself. He brings experiences into our lives and we resist, we try to resist Him but His grace seizes us and brings us salvation.

The term, in the sense that no man can resist it is of course true. But it can give a false idea.

Then the fifth of these terms to make an acrostic is Perseverance of the Saints. This was a good term a couple a hundred years ago. Because the word perseverance in those days--you might say I persevered in Hatfield, but that means I've continued to be in Hatfield. It did not have the meaning which it has today. But today the perseverance of the saints means these saints they push on, they push on and they continue to the end and so they are saved! No human being has in himself the strength or power that he can depend on himself to persevere. In present day language the word does not fit.

The word final perseverance as given in the Oxford Dictionary is perhaps better, but I don't think the word perseverance in the modern sense is what belongs there at all. It is God who perseveres. Jesus died so that all who believe on him might receive eternal life. Eternal life is life that is eternal! You can't receive life that is eternal and then lose it! It wouldn't be eternal in the first place if you could lose it. Jesus died in order that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but should have eternal life. If you have truly believed in Christ you belong to Him forever.

When I was a young fellow I had great difficulty with this. I had known many who had seemed to be wonderful Christians; individuals who had preached the gospel and had seemingly been effectively used of God and then had fallen into sin and had denied everything they had stood for before and we come across so many instances of that sort of thing, that we find it very hard to understand. But the Bible assures us that God will not desert the one who has truly believed in Christ. So I came to the conclusion that the one who truly believes in Christ and will search his heart will know whether he has been sincere in this. But many don't search their hearts. Many say a few words, go through a form, they like the way certain people live and they follow their example and say the words they say, but they are not truly Christians. They may preach the Word of God with power and people may be saved through what they give, but they may be doing it in order to advance themselves and seem to be accomplishing something in this life. I cannot tell whether a person is saved or not.

When I was ordained I was asked in church history: Do you believe that the conversion of Constantine was genuine? AAnd