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JOHN OWEN ON APOSTASY

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Why John Owen, the Puritan?

Puritans – you know, those people with long white hair, wearing black and white outfits with some type of white ruffle around their neck, perhaps wearing a goofy looking cap, always making large families, and living in villages all by themselves as they tried to reform the Church of England... at least, that's what may come to mind for some people. However, truthfully it seems that there has never been another group of individuals in history that can quite compare to the Puritans, who, spanning for over 200 years, knew the Scriptures, loved the Scriptures, and lived them out as they did. Their work ethic makes many of those today who are in seminaries, ministries, and even those in the pulpit, look lazy. The lives of the Puritans confirmed them as believers that were sold on a purifying doctrine and worship to the Christ. This they took extremely seriously as they continued to bring about the Reformation that Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin had started so fervently. With the intentions that the Puritans had – that is, for the Scriptures to spread to all of mankind – they did not take apostasy lightly. John Owen explains the problem of apostasy best when he addresses the reader to *The Nature and Causes of Apostasy from the Gospel*.¹ He states,

“Religion is the same that it ever was, only it suffers by them that make profession of it. What disadvantage it falls under in the world, they must at length answer for those in whose misbelief and practice it is corrupted. And no man can express greater enmity unto or malice against the gospel, that he that's should assert or maintain that the faith, profession, lives, ways, and walkings of the generality of Christians are a just representation of its truth and holiness.”²

¹ For those of who would like to read John Owen on apostasy, there is a much easier abridged version. Owen, John. *Apostasy from the Gospel*. The Treasures of John Owen for Today's Readers. Abridged and made easy to read by R.J.K. Law. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1992.)

² John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 3.

If one would want to further study the topic of apostasy, it is always best to look at those who have gone before them and written reliable material on the subject. There are a number of different men such as Samuel Eyles Pierce, A. W. Pink, Horatius Bonar, Gardiner Spring, and today's Richard Phillips, that have written thorough pieces and dealt with the topic correctly, and are well worth the time to read.³ As for the Puritans' writings on the topic, one may easily go in a number of different directions. It would be good to take the time to look at Thomas Brooks, Ebenezer Erskine, Thomas Boston, and Richard Sibbes.⁴ However, when delving into the topic of apostasy it is most important to spend some time on the greatest work done on it by the "Master" of it himself: John Owen. In the seventh volume of his works (printed by Banner of Truth Trust), Owen has a massive 259 pages dealing with apostasy.

Today in the 21st century John Owen⁵ is known for a number of different topics and areas like, *Mortification of Sin*, *Biblical Theology*, *Communion with God*, *The Glory of*

³ For these men's work done on apostasy Cf. Samuel Eyles Pierce, *Sermon XXIV in An Exposition of 1 John*, reprinted by Particular Baptist Press, www.pbpress.org; A. W. Pink, *An Exposition of Hebrews*. (Baker: Grand Rapids, 1954), p. 285-97; Horatius Bonar, "Light and Truth: Bible Thoughts and Themes" in *The Life and Works of Horatius Bonar CD*, Lux Publications, www.horatiusbonar.com; Gardiner Spring, *The Attraction of the Cross*. (Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, 1983), p. 216-231; Richard Phillips, *Hebrews: Reformed Expository Commentary*, (P&R Publishing: Phillipsburg, 2006), p. 185-96.

⁴ For the Puritans' work done on *apostasy* Cf. Thomas Brooks, *The Works of Thomas Brooks*. Vol. 1, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, 1980), p. 1-178; Ebenezer Erskine, *The Whole Works of the Late Rev. Ebenezer Erskine*. Vol. 1 (Free Presbyterian Publications: Glasgow, 2001), p. 24-38; Thomas Boston, *Complete Works of Thomas Boston*. (Tentmaker: Staff, 2002), Vol. 9, p. 500-7; Vol. 10, p. 145-77; Richard Sibbes. *Works of Richard Sibbes: The Returning Backslider*. Vol. 2, ed. Alexander B. Grosart, (Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, 2001), p. 250-435.

⁵ For John Owen's overall primary sources: John Owen, [The Works of John Owen](#), ed. William Goold. 24 vols. Edinburgh and London: Johnstone and Hunter, 1850-53; vols. 1-16 reprint ed., (London: Banner of Truth, 1965); John Owen, [The Works of John on CD-Rom](#). (Ages Software.) For the rest of his primary sources Cf. David Clarkson, *A Funeral Sermon on Dr. John Owen*. In *The Works of John Owen, D.D.* ed. Thomas Russell. Vol. 1. (London: for Richard Baynes, 1826), p. 411-422; Kelly M. Kopic, and Justin Taylor. *Overcoming Sin and Temptation*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006); Millington, Edward, ed. [Bibliotheca Oweniana, sive Catalogus librorum... Rev. Doct. Vir. D. Joan. Oweni...](#) (London, 1684); John Owen, [Biblical Theology](#). Transl. Stephen (Wescott. Soli Deo Gloria, 1997); John Owen "Preface." *Patrick Gillespie. The Ark of the Covenant Opened; or a Treatise of the Covenant of Redemption Between God and Christ as the Foundation of the Covenant of Grace*. (London, 1677); John Owen, "[Preface](#)." Samuel Petto. *The Difference Between the Old and New Covenant Stated and Explained: With an Exposition of the Covenant of Grace in the Principal Concernments of It*. (London, 1674); John Owen, "Preface." Theophilus Gale. *The True Idea of Jansenisme: Both Historick and Dogmatick*. (London, 1669); John Owen, "Preface." *George Kendall. Fur Pro Tribunali*. (London, 1657); John Owen, "Preface." *William Benn. Soul Prosperity, in Several Sermons*. (London, 1683); John Owen, "Preface." *William Eyre. Vindiciae Justificationis Gratuitae*. (London, 1654); John Owen, *The Works of John Owen, D.D.* ed. Thomas Russell. 21 vols. (London: for Richard Baynes, 1826); John Owen, [The Correspondence of John Owen \(1616-1683\)](#). With an account of his life and work. Edited by Peter Toon Forward by Rev. Dr.

Christ, The Holy Spirit, his seven-volume work on the book of Hebrews, and his sixteen-volume set of works. Additionally, people may often think of Justin Taylor's⁶ passion for Owen's works, namely, *Communion with the Triune God* and *Overcoming Sin and Temptation*. On top of all that, Owen is also known to be the cause of almost every seminarian's complaint, "I cannot read his lengthy sentences!" No matter how many degrees one has, what seminary one graduated from, or how brilliant one is, it is always hard to grasp the long-winded mind and thought of John Owen brought forth through the ink of his pen. But that is exactly why this chapter is being written – so that you, the reader, will get a review of the often-overlooked writing on apostasy that Owen did, and how then to relate that to any man living today.

With that said, there is not much of an introduction needed in describing John Owen.⁷ A man of Welsh decent, born in the town of Stadhampton, Oxfordshire, and a student of Queen's College, he was born and raised a Puritan. John Owen was a husband, father, and, most of all, a man of God who spent his whole life studying the Scriptures. He lost 10 of his 11 children at birth, and later his 11th to drinking herself to death. John Owen knew suffering – that is for certain. The importance of John Owen's sufferings in this matter (Apostasy) is to see how easily Owen himself could have turned hard-hearted

Geoffrey F. Nuttall, M.A.; John Owen, *Evangelical Theology: A Translation of the Sixth Book of Dr. Owen's Latin Work Entitled Theologoumena*, Translated by John Craig (Edinburgh, 1837).

⁶ Justin Taylor's site, done along with Joshua Sowin, on John Owen is <http://www.johnowen.org/>.

⁷ For the best biographies that I believe to be done on John Owen see: Anthony Wood, *Life of John Owen*. In Athenae Oxonienses, ed. Philip Bliss. (London, 1820.); William Orme, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Dr John Owen*, in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. T. Russell, vol. 1, (1826.) For other biographies on John Owen Cf. Anonymous Life. *The Life of the Late Reverend and Learned John Owen, D.D. In Seventeen Sermons Preach'd by the Reverend Dr. John Owen: with the Dedications at Large*. (Together with the Doctors Life, 2 vols. London, 1720.); John Asty, *Memoirs of the Life of John Owen, in A Complete Collection of the Sermons of the Reverend and Learned John Owen D.D.* (London: John Clark, 1721.); Richard L Greaves. *Owen, John (1616-1683)*, in *H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 42, p. 221-231; **Kapic, Kelly M, John Owen (1616-1683). In Historical Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters, edited by Donald K. McKim. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, forthcoming**; James Mofatt, *Introductory Sketch: The Life of Owen, in The Golden Book of John Owen*, 1904; J.M. Rigg, *Owen, John. Dictionary of National Biography*. Edited by Leslie Stephen. Vol. XLII. (London, 1896.) p. 424-428; Thomas Russell, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of John Owen, D.D.* (London: for Richard Baynes, 1826.); Alan Spence. *John Owen (1616-1683). In The Dictionary of Historical Theology*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), p. 412-414; Andrew Thomson, *Life of Dr Owen. In The Works of John Owen*, ed. Goold., vol. 1; Peter Toon, *God's Statesman: The Life and Work of John Owen, Pastor, Educator, Theologian*. (Paternoster, 1971.); Carl R. Trueman, Owen, John. Pages 494-98 in *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals*. Edited by Timothy Larsen, David William Bebbington, and Mark Allan Noll. Downers Grove: (InterVarsity, 2003.)

toward the gospel and become an apostate. However, he never lost sight of his victor, Jesus Christ. He took his work, ministry, and study very seriously – living out his faith in Christ.⁸

When one speaks or hears about the Puritans, it is hard to not think or have at least one mention of the most popular one: John Owen. The church, throughout her life, has been given a number of gifted and talented individuals with minds like nothing else, and which are even more powerfully seen when they use it while suffering for the kingdom of Christ – as John Owen did. Owen’s work can still be used today for all who may be dealing with apostasy or an apostate, as many living in this postmodern culture claim the title of “Christian” but show no fruit or sign and are then branded “Apostate!” For that very reason, the *Nature and Causes of Apostasy from the Gospel* should not be overlooked when dealing with Owen’s works. In the world we live in today, Owen’s tremendous work on apostasy brings much aid in helping one see the importance of the power of apostasy and how to deal with those that have become apostates.

Learning From John Owen’s work on Apostasy

Often times, people overlook those who lived before them and have deeply studied the Scriptures. Some think with culture change – times passing away – what one

⁸ For deeper study on John Owen’s theology, ministry and his work, I recommend at the top of the list: Sinclair B. Ferguson, [*John Owen on the Christian Life*](#). (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987.); Carl R. Trueman, [*The Claims of Truth: John Owen’s Trinitarian Theology*](#). (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998.); Kelly M. Kopic, [*Communion with God: Relations Between the Divine and the Human in the Theology of John Owen*](#) (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007); Robert W. Oliver, [*John Owen: The Man and His Theology*](#). (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R / Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2002.); Peter Barraclough, *John Owen, 1616-1683*. (London: Independent Press, 1961.) For further in-depth study on particular areas within John Owen’s work Cf. A. C. Clifford, [*Atonement and Justification: English Evangelical Theology 1640-1790, An Evaluation*](#). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.); Richard Daniels, [*The Christology of John Owen*](#). (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Reformed Heritage Books, 2004.); Randall C. Gleason, [*John Calvin and John Owen on Mortification*](#). (New York: Peter Lang, 1995.); Francis Lee, *John Owen Resbyterianized* (Edmonton: Still Waters Revival Books, 2000.); Glynn Lloyd, *John Owen: Commonwealth Puritan*. (Pontypridd: Modern Welsh Publications Ltd., 1972.); Kopic, Kelly and Justin Taylor, ed. [*Overcoming Sin and Temptation*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006.); Jon D. Payne, [*John Owen on the Lord’s Supper*](#). (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2004.); Sebastian Rehnman, [*Divine Discourse: The Theological Methodology of John Owen. Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought*](#). (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.)

had said hundreds of years ago is not needed or not “good enough” for today’s times. People even say that what may have been true then is not true now. That is exactly why John Owen’s work⁹ is a “must read” for our culture, as Christianity continues through the paths of time that tries to consume those who are a part of it.

For the one who is solid in their walk and is living a life that is pleasing to the Lord according to His law, this is particularly important in mainly two ways. *First*, in times where the world is progressing, it is vital to know the truths of the Word and have proper doctrine that is in obedience to what God has intended for His people through His Word given to them. *Secondly*, in a culture where people call themselves “believers” by their own standard and own beliefs – and not that of what God has intended – one must be able to discern what is and is not the true mark of a believer who lives out the Scriptures in accordance with them, practicing them in obedience.

John Owen wrote 13 different sections focusing on the nature and causes of apostasy. To deal with them all here could easily lead to a book in itself; maybe even multiple volumes on each area. However, this short chapter’s aim is to bring out the main points of John Owen’s work on apostasy and show the importance of the truths of it today.

Thesis – Will be John Owens own thesis from taken from each individual section.

Outline – Will be an outline showing the importance of John Owens points tin each chapter in dealing with apostasy.

Summary – Will be a brief summary giving a rundown over each individual chapter.

I. The nature of apostasy from the gospel declared, in an exposition of Hebrews 6:4-6

Theses:

“Intending an inquiry into the nature, causes, and occasions of the present defection that is in the world from the truth, holiness, and worship of the gospel, I shall lay the foundation of my whole discourse in an exposition of that passage in the Epistle of Paul the apostle unto the Hebrews, wherein he gives an account both of the nature of apostasy and of the punishment due unto apostates; for as this will lead us naturally unto what

is designed, so an endeavor to free the context from the difficulties wherewith it is generally supposed to be attended, and to explain the mind of the Holy Ghost therein, may be neither unacceptable nor unuseful.”¹⁰

Summary:

In his first chapter, John Owen gives an introduction to the background and history of the *Nature and Cause of Apostasy* from Hebrews 6:4-6. Out of all 13 chapters, this is the longest and the one with the most substance due to its framework which it lays out for the continuing 12 chapters. He begins with giving the context and the description of how apostates had once been touched by the gospel, but leaving it in this way they could never come back to constitutional rights of the gospel. Owen then gives the characteristics, obedience, and faithfulness that one is to live by as a believer, and continues on to the rights, privileges, and blessings that the believer is to have – including illumination, a tasting of the gospel, receiving the Holy Spirit, receiving the Word of God, and being able to stand against the powers of the world.

Owen then begins dealing with the text of Hebrews 6:4-6 itself, detailing a number of areas that are often mentioned in debate, such as: are these *true believers*, *spiritual privileges*, and if they *fall away*. Here Owen works with exactly what this text says of apostasy and how it is impossible to bring one back from it to repentance. He focuses on three major areas in this section: all events depend on God, things are impossible because of who God is, and, things are possible and impossible with God who appoints all things to happen. In these sections Owen deals with both issues of how it is possible for one to come back to the gospel after leaving it, and how one cannot come back to the gospel, both emphasizing God being in control over all things for His

¹⁰ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 11.

reasoning only. Lastly, Owen ends with an explanation about the fact that if man alone tries to bring the one who has left the gospel back to it, no matter what man may do, it is impossible. He points out that one cannot “renew” another back to right relationship with God, unless God Himself has done the work of the gospel inside the one who had tasted it. Owen finishes with 2 final thoughts: to continue always to preach the gospel and make that gospel clear to all men, and how man alone cannot come to repentance of his apostasy.

Outline:

- I. The Nature of Apostasy (Exegesis of Hebrews 6:4-6)
 - A. The History of Apostasy
 - B. Exegesis of Hebrews 6:4-6
 - 1. Context of the Passage
 - 2. Apostasy Described
 - 1. Characteristics of Salvation
 - 2. Believers Follow in Obedience
 - 3. Believers Live by Faithfulness of God
 - C. The Great Privileges
 - 1. Having Spiritual Illumination
 - 2. Tasting the Heavenly Gift
 - 3. Partakers of the Holy Spirit
 - 4. Tasting the Word
 - 5. Powers Over the Coming Age of this World
 - D. Apostasy and the Text of Hebrew 6:4-6
 - 1. All Future Events Depend Alone on God
 - 2. Some May never Return to the Gospel
 - 3. The True Believer Should Help to Renew Those who Fall
 - E. Bringing Apostasy to Repentance
 - 1. Preaching the Gospel Clear
 - 2. Renewing Fallen Individuals to the Gospel

II. Partial apostasy from the gospel- pretences of the Church of Rome against the charge of this evil examined and rejected

Theses:

“Apostasy from the gospel is either total or partial. Of the former we have treated in a high and signal instance. When men willfully and maliciously

(for they cannot do it willfully but they must do it maliciously) renounce Jesus Christ as a seducer and malefactor, going over in their suffrage unto the Jews, by whom he was crucified, they enter into that part of hell and darkness which properly constitutes this sin.”¹¹

Summary:

In chapter two John Owen deals with the idea of “partial apostasy.” This addresses how believers continue their lives claiming to be in Christ, but not leading a life of obedience to the gospel. Here Owen shows how tradition and man’s own reasoning often lead to people calling themselves believers of the gospel, but lose its value in everyday living, and as a result, fall into the deep waters of sin. Namely, Owen is speaking of the Roman Catholic Church and their claims as believers while still using their own means to justify one’s sin. Owen describes the privileges that Rome says they have in the gospel, then comes back to this in a defense of how Rome has ruined Christianity and discusses the wickedness that has been committed by the Catholic Church. From there Owen deals with the issue of how the Roman Catholic Church uses unity – specifically, being unified under one catholic pope – and how they “allow” one to be forgiven by man’s means, which in the end ultimately results in creating apostasy. Owen then looks at the truth that the believer of the gospel is truly united under Christ alone, and that is where true forgiveness is given. Owen ends with the responses that Rome gives to his representation of them. Here he reveals the truth that lies under Rome’s means of unity and that their creating apostates from the truth that is bedded in the gospel does nothing but rob Christ.

Outline:

II. Partial Apostasy

¹¹ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 52.

- A. Christ Suffers Still
- B. The Claim of the Roman Catholic Church
 - 1. The Special Privileges of Rome
 - 2. The Seriousness of Rome
 - 3. The Unity of Rome
- C. Replies of Rome
 - 1. The Spirit of Rome
 - 2. The Truth of Rome

III. Apostasy from the Mystery, Truth, or Doctrine of the Gospel- Proneness of persons and churches thereunto- Proved by all sorts of instances

Theses:

“There are three things in the gospel which are as the essentially constitutive parts of it: — 1. The mystery of its doctrine, which is the object of faith; 2. The holiness of its precepts, which are the matter of our obedience; and, 3. The purity of its institutions of worship, which is the trial of our faith and obedience as to their profession.”¹²

Summary:

John Owen begins chapter three with defining the gospel in his thesis, as mentioned above, in three parts:

- 1. The mystery of its doctrine, which is the object of faith;
- 2. The holiness of its precepts, which are the matter of our obedience; and,
- 3. The purity of its institutions of worship, which is the trial of our faith and obedience as to their profession.¹³

Owen uses these three statements to build a foundation for the rest of his chapter on explaining what it exactly means for one to fall away from the truth that lies in the gospel. Making this clear, he states from Titus 1:16, “Men may profess the truth, and yet not yield obedience unto it.”¹⁴ Owen is giving the biblical point that the gospel calls the believer to a life that is sold 100% to the gospel and lives for the sake of God’s name and

¹² John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 60.

¹³ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 60.

¹⁴ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 60.

not merely their own desires. Halfway through this chapter he moves into the reasoning of why people become apostates – leaving the truth of the gospel. He shows in profound depth that in Scripture there are four warnings that are given:

1. “Men from among themselves speaking perverse things.”
2. “Grievous wolves entering in, not sparing the flock.”
3. Weariness, and “not enduring of sound doctrine,” but turning the mind unto fables, and from the truth.
4. A gradual, secret, mysterious work of a general apostasy in the whole visible church.¹⁵

From here Owen expounds upon each section looking at how the Spirit placed these four truths in the history of the church time and time again. Ending this chapter, he shows how the Reformation had brought about a time of serious measure that gave the Scriptures a renewal in the minds of the church. It brought a great love and cherishing of the gospel and living for it, for a lifetime. However, Owen reminds his readers that there are wolves like those before the Reformation who are still today seeking to take believers away from the gospel and lead many into apostasy.

Outline:

- III. Apostasy Leaving the Truth
 - A. What Makes the Gospel, The Gospel?
 - B. Four Warnings Given by the Holy Spirit
 - 1. Warning for the Sheep
 - 2. Warning for the Wolves
 - 3. Warning for the One Who is Tired of Hearing Doctrine
 - 4. Warning for the Apostasy in the Church

IV. The reasons and causes of apostasy from the truth or doctrines of the gospel, and the inclination of all sorts of persons thereunto in all ages, inquired into and declared

Theses:

¹⁵ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 68-72.

“The reasons and causes of apostasy from the truth or doctrine of the gospel, and the inclination of all sorts of persons thereunto in all ages, inquired into and declared — Uncured enmity in the minds of many against spiritual things, and the effects of it in a wicked conversation, the first cause of apostasy.”¹⁶

Summary:

Chapter four begins with Owen giving detailed reasoning that lies behind apostasy and how one leaves the gospel. This chapter reveals how one forsakes the gospel after having previously claimed to be a believer. Owen shows from Scripture a number of different areas in which man forsakes the gospel, brought about by reasoning in their own minds that leads them to work for themselves and not for the obedience of the gospel. In this, Owen looks at the fact that man’s nature falls in line with that which the natural revelation shows him... that man often doesn’t see the importance of special revelation, and because of this, they easily doubt the gospel which had once enlightened them. Here Owen gives examples of this from the Old Testament (with dealing with Israel), and from the Roman Catholic Church.

However, this area of sin that Owen talks about – that which causes apostasy – is not where he leaves the chapter. He then goes further and gives his opinion of how one can refrain from becoming an apostate. Owen explains how one is to place the gospel at the very center of the heart, keeping it always close to the mind, in order to keep from falling away into apostasy. Moving forward in this, Owen shows that when this is done, the heart will see the true knowledge of the gospel, which results in falling in love with the gospel truly, and not just momentarily or for an undetermined span of time.

¹⁶ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 79.

Owen ends this chapter by pointing out a number of important things. First, he gives two areas in which the Church of Rome continues to make apostates: by their force and by their accommodation of religion to appeal to many. He then gives two examples of ways that apostates live: continuing to deny God and continuing to indulge in their own sinful lust.

Outline:

- IV. Why Apostasy Happens
 - A. Apostasy in the Old Testament
 - B. The Reasoning for Apostasy
 - C. The Truth Given to Men
 - 1. Natural Revelation
 - 2. Supernatural Revelation
 - D. Examples of Apostasy
 - 1. The Example of the Jews
 - 2. The Example of the Church
 - E. Preventing Apostasy
 - 1. By the Truth of the Gospel
 - 2. By the Gospel reaching the Heart
 - F. How Rome Continues to Press Forward
 - 1. By Force
 - 2. By Accommodation
 - 1. Denying God
 - 2. Denying Sin

V. Darkness and ignorance another cause of apostasy

Theses:

“THE second spring or cause of defection from the gospel in any kind, is that spiritual darkness and ignorance which abides in the minds of men under the profession of the truth. The gospel may fall under a double consideration: First, Of the things themselves that are contained, revealed, and proposed therein; — these are the material objects of our faith. Secondly, With respect unto the doctrinal way of their declaration.”¹⁷

Summary:

¹⁷ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 102.

Owen's initial focus in chapter five is to show what it is exactly that the individual does that brings him to apostasy. In doing so, he shows the purpose of God revealing Himself to mankind so that they can renew themselves into the image of God and not that of their own sinful nature. Owen then moves into the truths of the gospel that bring comfort to the believer: 1. Being Chosen, and 2. Being Preserved. However, without the Spirit – and therefore only having head knowledge of these things – often (actually, in most cases) this all brings out what Owen calls skepticism. Halfway through this chapter Owen digs into the core of the issue, being that the reason of apostasy is man's ignorance due to having no experience of the actual gospel doctrines in their heart. For this very reason man easily can fall away from the gospel – that which they had thought they knew, but have never been saved by. It is hard to discern things in the world when the “new nature” of a believer is only in the head and has not shaped and formed the person's heart. The conclusion of this chapter is where John Owen then shows that it is the Holy Spirit that does this very work of placing the gospel in the center of one's life, heart, and of living, which keeps them from falling away from it.

Outline:

- V. Spiritual Darkness Causes Apostasy
 - A. The Purpose of the Gospel
 - 1. To See God's Glory
 - 2. To Know Gods Glory
 - B. No Spirit Leads to the lack of Knowing Truth
 - 1. Truths to Comfort Believers
 - 2. God has Chose His People
 - 3. The Natural Mind Leads to False Religion
 - 4. The Truth Leads to Right Religion
 - C. Man's Ignorance
 - 1. Head Knowledge of the Word
 - 2. Gospel Gives True Knowledge of Word

VI. Pride and vanity of the mind, sloth and negligence, love of the world, causes of apostasy- The work of Satan and judgments of God in this matter

Theses:

“The innate pride and vanity of the minds of men is another means whereby they are disposed and inclined unto an apostasy from the profession of evangelical truth.”¹⁸

Summary:

In the sixth chapter of Owen’s work, he delves into the topic of man’s own flesh and mind and how that causes apostasy. Here Owen goes through the way man’s thought process happens, and deals with a number of areas in which the nature of man’s mind hinders the person from seeing the truth of the gospel. He makes this clear when he states in the beginning of the chapter:

He mind of man is naturally lifted up with high thoughts in itself and of itself. . . In all things the mind of man would be its own measure, guide, and rule, continually teeming with these two evils: — 1. It exalts imaginations of its own, which it loves, applauds, dotes on, and adheres unto. . . . 2. It makes itself the sole and absolute judge of what is divinely proposed unto it, whether it be true or false, good or evil, to be received or rejected, without desire or expectation of any supernatural guidance or assistance; and whatever is unsuited unto its own prejudicate imaginations, it is ready to scorn and despise.¹⁹

Owen’s purpose throughout this chapter is to reveal to the reader how man’s mind is unable to judge and discern the difference between what is truthful in the gospel, and their own line of thinking in which they have taught themselves to be so-called “correct.” He then shows how the corruption of the mind happens, and the process that the unbeliever goes through when they corrupt their mind by their own self. Doing this, he moves to three more areas of how man thinks: 1. Dealing with how *man’s mind* is limited without the Spirit of Truth, 2. Man’s reasoning behind its corruption and total depravity,

¹⁸ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 123.

¹⁹ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 123-4.

and 3. Man's making of their own doctrines in order to justify their continual living in sin.²⁰

From there, Owen's second half of chapter six shows the issue of how man's mind without the Spirit will try to make his own assurance. Here Owen deals with how man will tell themselves a number of different lies in order to make themselves feel secure in their own flesh. This shows the false hope and the false reasoning behind man's mind when working without the Spirit (as he discussed previously in the chapter). Lastly, Owen touches on two different areas which can contribute to feeding man's mind with constant lies: 1. Wordiness, and 2. Satan. However, Owen does not leave his chapter without showing the Sovereignty of God and the Supremacy of Christ being infinitely superior to that of man's sin. After dealing with two heart-breaking realities that trap man into continual sin, he emphasizes that God is not conquered by these realities. Finishing this thought, he shows the sovereignty of God in the truth that although He will allow those apostates to continue in their lives, His justice reigns supremely among all of creation and will have the final word when all is said and done.

Outline:

- VI. The Flesh of Man Causes Apostasy
 - A. Man's Thought of Himself
 - 1. Man's Mind
 - 2. Man's Limitedness
 - 3. Man's Reason for Depravity
 - 4. Man's Making for Doctrine
 - B. False Assurance
 - 1. Neglecting of the Spirit
 - 2. False Security
 - C. Love of the World
 - D. Satan Drawing Men into Apostasy

²⁰ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 135-6.

E. God's Final Victory

VII. Instance of a peculiar defection from the truth of the gospel; With the reasons of it

Theses:

“Besides the reasons insisted on, which have a general influence into all apostasies from the doctrine or mystery of the gospel, each especial defection in every kind hath reasons and causes peculiarly suited unto its rise and furtherance... And every age giveth us, in one place or another, renewed evidence, that, — where either secular interest or weariness of the truth, through the love of the present world and hatred of holiness or strict evangelical obedience, doth give a propensity unto a declension from any doctrines of the gospel unto persons whose grandeur and outward advantages are sufficient to attract a compliance from the minds of men under the power of ambition, or any importunate desire of earthly things, — multitudes of all sorts suppose there is nothing left for them but to crowd who shall come nearest the leaders in the apostasy. And it is not seldom that, meeting with new temptations, they outrun both them and themselves also into such extremes as at first they designed not; for hence it is that so many do even at present issue their recessions from the truth, under the conduct of those “ignes fatui” or erratic exhalations of countenance and favor, in the undesigned bogs of Popery on the one hand, or Socinianism on the other.”²¹

Summary:

Chapter seven shows the gospel as the center of belief. Simply put into five main sections, Owen gives a number of doctrines that he is convinced are impossible to ignore, or not believe, by anyone who calls themselves a believer of the gospel. Owen deals with the person (namely Rome) who makes less of the need of Christ as their priest and mediator in order to lift man's religion higher. He takes the time to show how Christ's work and victory over sin is a necessity in order to receive the great grace of God to wash away sins. Halfway through this chapter is found the greatest gospel truth, as Owen takes the time to explain that the ignorance of man often forgets the importance of the righteousness of God. Given here are three key thoughts of living a gospel-centered life,

²¹ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 144-5.

which are important for one to continue in obedience everyday so as not to fall into apostasy:

1. Owen gives a section describing exactly what God's righteousness is.
2. How the Law of God requires righteousness from man.
3. Then how the righteousness of Christ is provided in the gospel because of the work of Jesus Christ.

Owen then ends with a brief section on the importance of knowing the Scriptures so that one does not fall away from these truths that lie in it.²²

Outline:

- VII. Apostasy from the Truths of the Gospel
 - A. Ignorance of the Need of Christ
 - B. Ignorance of Christ Work
 - C. Ignorance of Christ Grace over Sin
 - D. Ignorance of God's Righteousness
 - 1. The Law Requires
 - 2. The Gospel Gives
 - E. Ignorance of Knowing the Scriptures

VIII. Apostasy from the Holiness of the Gospel; The Occasion and Cause of It- Of that which is gradual, on the pretence of somewhat else in its room

Theses:

“There is... a falling away from the gospel with respect unto the holiness of its precepts, which are to be the matter, as they are the rule, of our obedience... yea, an apostasy from the holiness of the gospel is, on many accounts, more dreadful and dangerous than a partial apostasy from its truth; for as it is more spreading and catholic than that is, and of less observation or esteem, so it is usually more irrecoverable, most men under it being greatly hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”²³

Summary:

In chapter eight Owen deals with how man does not follow the commands that the gospel makes clear, which then results in apostasy. In several sections, Owen begins the

²² John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 153-9.

²³ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 159.

chapter with explaining the dangers that lie in apostasy when one leaves the gospel. He makes his case with showing, first, how the gospel calls one to live a life of holiness, and secondly, how living a life of holiness is a requirement of the gospel. Owen then discusses several topics: the forms in which apostasy can occur, different areas of the Roman Catholic Church, issues in human morality, and how man tries to make himself perfect in order to live for the gospel, but falls without the Spirit of truth of the gospel. He uses these points to show the way that man lives in order to tell themselves that they are in right standing with the gospel, and yet fall short of what it requires. That is why once again Owen ends with gospel- gleaming truths that bring the believer to read the importance of the gospel and what it requires in the heart and in the life of ones who claims to know it. To finish, Owen brings forth three areas that are required by the one who confesses to believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ:

1. The gospel requires maintaining a life of holiness in the world.
2. The gospel requires maintaining a continual life that lives out holiness.
3. The gospel requires maintaining a life that fights for holiness in the world.²⁴

Outline:

- VIII. Apostasy from the Commands of the Gospel
 - A. The Dangers of Apostasy from the Gospel
 - 1. Living for the Gospel leads to Holiness
 - 2. Holiness is Required From the Gospel
 - B. Two Forms of Apostasy
 - C. Apostasy in the Church of Rome
 - D. Apostasy from Morality
 - E. Apostasy from Perfectionism
 - F. Holiness Required from the Gospel
 - 1. Not Loving the World
 - 2. Habitual Obedience
 - 3. Leaving the Gospel, becomes closer to the World

²⁴ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 177-82.

IX. Apostasy into Profaneness and Sensuality of Life- The causes and occasions of it- Defects in public teachers and guides in religion

Theses:

That which yet remaineth to be considered under this head of backsliding from the commands of the gospel and the obedience required of them is of a worse kind and of a more pernicious consequence; and this is that open apostasy into profaneness and sensuality of life which the generality of them who are called Christians are in most places of the world visibly fallen into.²⁵

Summary:

Chapter nine is different from the previous chapters (which have dealt with the issues of apostates, the causes and reasoning, believers fighting against apostasy, etc), as he now focuses on dealing with the actual minister and men in the church offices that fall into apostasy. Owen begins the chapter by looking at the ministry of the church for the gospel. Throughout this section, Owen shows the importance of the purity of the church and its fight against those who fall into apostasy. He does this by focusing on the duties that lie in the ministry of one who lives the life of work for the gospel. Owen's focus is placed upon remaining pure in that which the gospel portrays. He makes the case that the purity of the gospel is the root of the church in its teaching and preaching, revealing those that fall from this, who often then fall into apostasy. This is seen in how preachers and teachers of the Word sometimes end up not teaching the whole counsel of God, and as well, often fall away from prayer in personal ministry. This is where the minister can fall when not preaching all of the truth, as that only leads to ignorant teaching that creates more apostates. Owen says it best as he makes the point that the most powerful revival and bringing people back to the gospel comes with the preaching of the whole truth as it

²⁵ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 182.

is represented in the Scriptures, and not picking and choosing what one wants to use. This is seen at the end of this chapter when Owen states:

It cannot with any modesty be denied but that by reason of these and the like miscarriages in the spiritual guides of the people, the generality of Christians have been either led or suffered insensibly to fall into the present apostasy. When God shall be pleased to give unto the people who are called by his name, in a more abundant manner, “pastors after his own heart, to feed them with knowledge and understanding;” when he shall revive and increase a holy, humble, zealous, self-denying, powerful ministry, by a more plentiful effusion of his Spirit from above; then, and not until then, may we hope to see the pristine glory and beauty of our religion restored unto its primitive state and condition... And to suppose that it can be done any other way, that the world of professed Christians shall be recovered unto holy obedience by any other means but the ministerial dispensation of the word, is to render it a thing altogether useless. Here, then, must begin the cure of that lethargy in sin that the world is fallen into, — namely, in the renovation of a powerful evangelical ministry, or the due discharge of that office by them that are called thereunto or possess the place of it, if ever it be effected unto any purpose in this world.²⁶

Outline:

- IX. Apostasy in Ministry
 - A. The Ministry of the Church for the Gospel
 - B. The Ministry and its Duties
 - 1. Keeping the Gospel Pure
 - 2. Keeping the Gospel the Root of the Church
 - 3. Keeping the Gospel the center of Preaching

X. Other causes and occasions of the decay of holiness

Theses:

“Multitudes are led into and countenanced in the ways of sin and profaneness, freely indulging unto their lusts and corrupt affections, by a false appropriation of justifying names and titles unto them, in ways of sin and wickedness.”²⁷

Summary:

In this chapter John Owen deals with a number of additional reasons that may – and will – cause apostasy. He begins with giving several biblical examples from the

²⁶ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 195-6.

²⁷ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 196.

books of Jeremiah, Matthew and Revelation. From there, he gives examples from the Roman Catholic Church, and then examples stemming from the highest positions in the ministry of the church that can cause apostasy. Owen then moves into looking at causes of apostasy that believers will deal with in living for the sake of the gospel. He focuses on these areas because of difficult issues that believers were dealing with in his time, namely the Roman Catholic Church. He shows in these examples that those who persecute the true bride of Christ are apostates. Owen then spends time detailing the number of areas in which a person is supported in their life of apostasy. He explains each point of support, and how it hinders the person from coming to the truth of the gospel. The truths he discusses are:

1. Apostasy is supported by those who continue to persecute the church for believing and living for the gospel.
2. Apostasy is supported by the nature of the human man continuing in sin, keeping them from the gospel.
3. Apostasy is supported by those who make mistakes in the Christian life, falling away from the gospel.
4. Apostasy is supported by Satan himself keeping those who are in sin from the grace of the gospel.
5. Apostasy is supported by those who in Christendom make divisions in the church and make the gospel look useless to the life of a believer.²⁸

Outline:

- X. Further Causes of Apostasy
 - A. Biblical Examples of Apostasy
 - B. Romanish Examples of Apostasy
 - C. Highest Positions of Ministry Can Cause Apostasy
 - D. Apostates Persecute the Church
 - E. Apostasy Supported by Human Sin
 - F. Apostasy Supported by Mistakes of Christianity
 - G. Apostasy Supported by Satan
 - H. Apostasy Supported by Useless Christians
 - I. Summary of Apostasy

²⁸ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 203-17.

XI. Apostasy from evangelical worship

Theses:

“That which was proposed to be considered in the last place is that apostasy which is in the world from the purity of the worship of the gospel as appointed by Jesus Christ; and herein principally did consist that great defection foretold by our apostle, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12, which is also prophesied of in the Revelation, and did accordingly come to pass.”²⁹

Summary:

Although the shortest chapter in length in John Owen’s work on apostasy, chapter eleven is by no means lacking in thought-provoking content. This chapter deals with an area that does not first come to mind when mentioning apostasy. Owen works here in dealing with apostasy from the point of view of evangelical worship – going over the doctrines of the sacraments (the doctrine of baptism and much focus on the Lord’s Supper). He brings forth the issue of mystical beliefs in the practice of worship and how often apostates tend to misuse them. In this small section discussing worship, Owen focuses on two areas in particular: first, the worship that takes place in the sacraments, and secondly, how worship is corrupted in the sacraments.

Outline:

- XI. Apostasy from Worship
 - A. Call for the Worship of God
 - 1. Worship in the Sacraments
 - 2. Worship Corrupted in the Sacraments

XII. Inference from the forgoing discourses- The present danger of all sorts of persons, in the prevalency of apostasy from the truth and decays in the practice of evangelical

Theses:

²⁹ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 217.

“The last part of this discourse is designed for cautions unto those who yet stand, or think they stand, with respect unto that general defection from the gospel whose causes and occasions we have thus far inquired into.”³⁰

Summary:

Apostasy is easily spread from one to another like a disease that carries tremendous judgment. In chapter twelve John Owen deals with the dangers of how apostasy can easily spread among those who are working and living in the gospel. Owen begins with a biblical reminder of what exactly apostasy is. In the first half of this chapter, he discusses and sets forth what he describes as the six warnings of dangers that harm the church. These are:

1. Apostasy is a worldly-mindedness
2. Apostasy is a great danger
3. Apostasy consumes man
4. Apostasy is deceitful
5. Apostasy consumes the soul
6. Apostasy will have no Savior³¹

In the second portion of this chapter, Owen then moves on to detail exactly what the danger signs can be that tell what apostasy is.³² In the process of going over these, he gives seven dangers of apostasy and then shows how they affect the person’s view of Christ. After this, Owen completes this section by looking at the power of sin; specifically its power over man as it creates what we call apostasy. Similar to other chapters, Owen gives the negative and then the positive – here giving the three powers that sin has over man, then the victory that man has over sin.³³ Owen ends this section by once again proclaiming the hope of the gospel – Jesus Christ – and how in Him alone man has power over sin.

³⁰ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 222.

³¹ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 224-31.

³² John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 231-4.

³³ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 238-9.

Outline:

- XII. Apostasy Widespread
 - A. A Biblical Reminder Apostasy
 - B. Apostasy is a Worldliness mindset
 - C. Apostasy is a Great Danger
 - D. Apostasy Consumes Man
 - E. Apostasy is Deceitful
 - F. Apostasy Consumes the Soul
 - G. Apostasy Will Have No Savior
 - H. The Seven Dangers Signs of Apostasy
 - I. The Powers of Sin
 - 1. The Three Powers
 - 2. The Power Over Sin

XIII. Directions to avoid the power of a prevailing apostasy

Theses:

“UNTO the warnings given in the precedent chapter some directions may be added, perhaps not unuseful unto them who would be preserved from the occasions, causes, and danger, of the apostasy thus far inquired into; for although, as hath been declared, a watchful attendance unto all gospel duties, and a vigorous exercise of all gospel graces in general, are required unto our preservation, yet there are some things which have an especial respect unto the present state of the causes and circumstances of the evil insisted on, which ought in an especial manner to be remembered.”³⁴

Summary:

Chapter thirteen is the last in John Owen’s great work (quite possibly being the greatest work on apostasy in existence). In his closing arguments on apostasy, Owen ends with quite a lengthy section in dealing with how to avoid apostasy. He doesn’t have several major points in this chapter, but rather focuses on one major point: Defending the believer of the gospel against apostasy. In this he gives a number of sub-points that look at how one who confesses the belief of the gospel is to continue living a life that honors

³⁴ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 241.

and lives out the gospel in obedience. Below is listed the areas that John Owen discusses in this chapter:

1. Defend from the temptations of apostasy by using *prayer*
2. Defend from the temptations of apostasy by the believer's *faith*
3. Defend from the temptations of apostasy by having a *heart* for the gospel
4. Defend from the temptations of apostasy by being aware of those who may be in the *church* to deceive it
5. Defend from the temptations of apostasy of certain types of *worship*
6. Defend from the temptations of apostasy for the sake of the *gospel*
7. Defend from the temptations of apostasy against national *sins*
8. Defend from the temptations of apostasy by having a mindset against sin³⁵

Outline:

- XIII. How to Avoid Apostasy
 - A. The Believers Defense Against Apostasy
 1. Defend from Temptations by Prayer
 2. Defend from Temptations by Faith
 3. Defend from Temptations by the Heart
 4. Defend from Temptations that May Linger in the Church
 5. Defend from Temptations of Certain Types of Worship
 6. Defend for the Sake of the Gospel
 7. Defend from Nationalized Sins
 8. Defend the Mind from Sin

Conclusion:

This final chapter fits exactly into John Owen's goal, which is to make those who are believers of the true gospel aware that there are dangers everywhere – even among believers – that try to take hold of the human soul and cast them into a life which only leads to hell. The point of this chapter is for the reader to see the significance in John Owen's tremendous work on apostasy and for it to stir up thoughts and attention on the issue today. This work should be read even today in the postmodern world. With movements coming and going, and theology seeming to change endlessly, the true believer of the gospel must know the dangers that are around him. Going to John Owen's

³⁵ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 243-58.

work about today's issues like this is by no means out-dated. The culture today may look different, however, the same apostasy issues that John Owen dealt with in the 17th century is still dealt with today in the 21st century by the believer – and maybe even more so!

During his time, John Owen saw that the loss of the gospel had started to seep into the church – the true believing church of God. He shares this when he states in his work:

The doctrine of the gospel (as to its peculiar nature, the causes, motives, and ends of it) was generally lost, partly through the horrible ignorance of some, and partly through the pernicious errors of others, whose duty it was to have preserved it. And how impossible it is to maintain the life and power of obedience when this spring of it is dried up or corrupted, when this root is withered and decayed, is not hard to apprehend. Sometimes truth is lost first in a church, and then holiness, and sometimes the decay or hatred of holiness is the cause of the loss of truth; but where either is rejected, the other will not abide, as we have declared. And so it fell out in that fatal apostasy; these evils promoted and furthered each other.³⁶

He saw what needed to be addressed during his time, and it is something that must be constantly addressed throughout all times of the church; to those that claim to know Christ, love the gospel, say with their lips that they are believers, but show no signs of living accordingly to the Scripture and following the commands of the Word of God.

In a day where more people tend to say, “I believe in God,” we also see those same people fall into apostasy. More drunkards, more slanderers, more gluttony, more prideful and boastful individuals, more adulterers, more lustful addicts, more coveters of material possessions, and more ear-entertainers of the Bible say today that they “know Christ” and yet have no sign at all of the truth of the good news of Jesus Christ.

³⁶ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 199.

If anything at all, two things should be taken from Owen's works here, and they are as follows: First the believer should live a life that is according to the Word of God so that they are seen as image-bearers of God. And secondly, those that do know the gospel are not to let such filth and such corrupt beings dismantle the church one by one. In the time and culture in which we live today, believers must stand for truth firmly in a society that is decaying rapidly. Owen speaks in great length of these types of people in the church that claim the gospel as this:

The church never lost finally either truth or holiness by the violent persecutions of its avowed enemies. But I speak not of the outrages committed on the flock of Christ by wolves in their own skins, but by such as have got on sheep's clothing; for these things, in whomsoever they are, proceed from the uncured, wolfish nature in persons on whom the gospel hath not obtained its promised efficacy, Isaiah 11:6-9. It is professing Christians persecuting one another, about some differences among themselves concerning their apprehensions of spiritual things and practice of divine worship, that I intend. And this hath been so great, especially in the latter ages of the church, that it is questionable whether there hath not greater effusion of the blood of Christians, ruin of families, and devastation of nations, been made by them who have professed the same religion in general, than by all the Pagans in the world since the first promulgation of it. He that shall impartially read the Gospel will not be able to discern how it was possible that any such things should ever fall out among those who pretend to avow it as their rule and guide in any measure; for the whole design and all the rules of it are so expressly contradictory unto any such practice, as that no man who had not learned the contrary from the event could possibly conjecture that any persons could ever fall into it without an antecedent renunciation of the gospel itself.³⁷

As believers today, we must be more sound than even those in John Owen's day. For there is far greater numbers of apostates than ever before working against the church, and even in the church.

There is no greater work to sit down and go through on the area of apostasy than that of John Owen's *The Nature and Causes of Apostasy*. It is arguably the greatest work of Owen himself, and unfortunately can often be overlooked. However, breaking it down in the above areas, showing Owen's theses of each chapter, explaining the points which

³⁷ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust: London, 1965), p. 203.

he was getting across, providing an outline of each chapter to help search and see his main points, and the summaries of each chapter, should aid anyone that wants to look at specific areas of this work with ease. Enjoy!

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