

## Second London Baptist Confession Chapter 17: Perseverance of the Saints

### I. The Singular Fact of Perseverance (Par. 1)

-Proper Subjects: *“Those God has accepted in the Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect can neither totally nor finally fall from a state of grace.”* (John 10:27-29)

-Basic Substance: Essence: *“They will certainly persevere in grace...”* (Rom. 8:4; 1 Thess. 1:10); Duration: *“...to the end...”* (Matt. 24:13); Termination: *“...and be eternally saved.”* (Heb. 10:39); Certainty: *“They will certainly persevere...”* (Heb. 3:14)

-Divine Source: *“...because the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable. Therefore, He still brings about and nourishes in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit that lead to immortality.”* (Rom. 11:29; Phil. 1:6)

-Apparent Subversion: Storms and Floods: *“Even though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet these things will never be able to move the elect from the foundation and rock to which they are anchored by faith.”*; Loss of the Sense of the Love of God: *“The felt sight of the light and love of God may be clouded and obscured from them for a time through their unbelief and the temptations of Satan.”* (Is. 50:10); Only Apparent: *“Yet God is still the same; they will certainly be kept by the power of God for salvation, where they will enjoy their purchased possession. For they are engraved on the palms of His hands, and their names have been written in the book of life from all eternity.”*

### II. The Several Grounds of Perseverance (Par. 2)

-Negatively: *“This perseverance of the saints does not depend on their own free will.”* (Phil. 2:12, 13)

-Positively: God’s Decree: *“This perseverance of the saints does not depend on their own free will but on the unchangeableness of the decree of election, which flows from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father.”* (Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:4, 5; 2 Thess. 2:13); Christ’s Work: *“It is based on the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and union with Him...”* (Rom. 5:9, 10; Eph. 1:4; Heb. 7:25; 9:12, 24); God’s Oath: *“It is based on...the oath of God...”* (Heb. 6:16-20); The Spirit’s Work: *“It is based on...the abiding of His Spirit, the seed of God within them...”* (Regeneration: 1 John 3:9; the Gift of the Spirit: Eph. 1:13, 14); God’s Covenant: *“It is based on...the nature of the covenant of grace.”* (Jer. 31:31, 32)

-Practical Result: *“The certainty and infallibility of their perseverance is based on all these things.”*

### III. The Seeming Obstruction of Perseverance (Par. 3)

-Various Causes of Backsliding: *“They may fall into grievous sins and continue in them for a time, due to the temptation of Satan and the world, the strength of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of means of their preservation.”*

-Tragic Fruits of Backsliding: Displeasing God: *“In so doing, they incur God’s displeasure and grieve His Holy Spirit.”*; Weakening Their graces and Comforts: *“...their graces and comforts become impaired...”*; Hardening Their Hearts/Wounding Their Consciences: *“...their hearts are hardened and their consciences wounded...”*; Causing Others to Stumble: *“...they hurt and scandalize others...”*; Experiencing Temporal Judgments: *“...and bring temporary judgments on themselves.”*

-Positive Resolution of Backsliding: *“Nevertheless, they will renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.”*

### IV. Some Practical Observations Concerning Perseverance

-Objection: *“This doctrine will make people careless.”*

-There is an important difference between ‘perseverance’ and ‘preservation’ (Matt. 24:13; 1 Pet. 1:5).

-No one has any warrant to think that God is preserving him unless he is persevering in faith and obedience (Heb. 12:14).

-Don’t have such a prevailing view of God’s sovereignty that you fail to take seriously the warnings against apostasy.

-Be encouraged by God’s faithfulness and commitment to save all His elect.