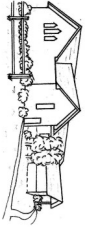


**NORTHWOODS
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**



**4723 GRIFFITH AVENUE
CHEYENNE, WY 82009**

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH. JOHN 4:24

That He who has begun a good work in you
will complete it until the day of Jesus
Christ. Philippians 1:6

Perseverance of the Saints

By
Rich Cesal

The Fifth Head of Doctrine of the Canons of Dort Article 8: The Certainty of This Preservation:

So it is not by their own merits or strength but by God's undeserved mercy that they neither forfeit faith and grace totally nor remain in their downfalls to the end and are lost. With respect to themselves this not only easily could happen, but also undoubtedly would happen; but with respect to God it cannot possibly happen, since his plan cannot be changed, his promise cannot fail, the calling according to his purpose cannot be revoked, the merit of Christ as well as his interceding and preserving cannot be nullified, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit can neither be invalidated nor wiped out.

We come to the last of the five points of Calvinism. The "P" in TULIP stands for *The Perseverance of the Saints*. Now the definition of *perseverance* is: to continue doing something or trying to do something even though it is difficult. The choice of this word could imply incorrectly that we have something to do with our keeping the faith. Some part to play. This is far from the case.

Although there are many verses in Scripture addressing this doctrine, perhaps the most telling is Phil 1:6, "... That He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." So we see that He (the Holy Spirit) who has begun a good work in us (regeneration), He will continue in this (sanctification) until we are

glorified at the second coming of Jesus.

So rather than speak of *perseverance*, I prefer *preservation* instead. The *Preservation of the Saints*. The definition of *preservation* is: to keep (something) safe from harm or loss. This removes any hint that we may have something to do with our persevering to the end.

Spurgeon affirmed, "I think few doctrines more vital than that of the perseverance of the saints, for if ever one child of God did perish, or if I knew it were possible that one could, I should conclude at once that I must, and I suppose each of you would do the same."

Arminius stated that it was possible for a true Christian to fall away from the faith, to be totally backslidden. "That those who are incorporated into Christ by true faith, . . . that they may become capable, through negligence, . . . of turning away from the holy doctrine which was delivered them, . . . by becoming devoid of grace."

The answer to this by the Synod of Dort is as stated above in The Fifth Head of Doctrine, Article 8. The position is that "with respect to God it cannot happen". Here again, the Arminian position defies logic. If God grants justification to a person, whether you believe by unconditional election or not, once God declares a person righteous by the blood of Christ, how could that be revoked? Is God to be a liar? As Paul says, God forbid!

In addition., Jesus says in John 10:28, "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." It no doubt could also be said, *nothing* can snatch them out of His hand.

It can be observed that there are some who would present themselves as regenerate and then fall away. What is the explanation of this? Let's turn to the Parable of the Sower for an answer. Jesus explains, in Mat 13:19-23, that the four conditions of the seed from the sower is seen this way. He explains that the seed is the Word. The seed which falls on good ground really needs no explanation. Those in this situation hear the Word and understand it and are thus able to persevere and not fall away and are fruitful and are protected by the grace of God. Those represented by the seed which falls on the wayside, hear the Word but do not understand it and the "Wicked One comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart." Those represented by the seed that falls on rocky ground hear the Word and receive it with great joy, but they have "no root in themselves" and they "endure for a little while but then when persecution arises they immediately stumble." The seed which falls in amongst the thorns is quite indicative of life. The thorns are the troubles we are faced with and the temptations which come our way. The unrepentant sin in our lives. "The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and those in this situation become unfruitful."

Unfortunately, Scripture does not always present a clear picture of this doctrine. As R. C. Sproul says, "People derive a mixed message from Scripture." In Heb 6:4-6, we have a very controversial statement which seems to say that someone can lose their salvation. But a careful reading of this really shows that this is illustrating the parable of the sower. Those who are said here to fall away are illustrative of the seeds in three of the four examples in the parable. Those are all seeds which heard the Word and showed signs of being regenerated but which become unfruitful or in other words were not genuine converts to Christ.

So, Jesus illustrates the fact that all who show some of the fruitful life but do not really have the grace of God will depart from the Way. In these cases, it appears that the people have fallen away and lost their salvation. But as Jesus points out, they never had salvation in the first place. In Mat 7:20-23, Jesus indicts those who did not show any fruit, "Therefore by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' " So even those who demonstrated powerful spiritual acts, were not necessarily one of God's people. This is a sobering Scripture. Saying the right things does not indicate salvation but only the things of the righteous heart (their fruit) indicates salvation.

But the Scriptures are clear on this point, God cannot go against what He has declared for this would make Him out to be a liar. We know that when a person is regenerated, he immediately is granted justification. This was the main doctrinal dispute with the Roman Catholic Church during the Reformation. To this day, Catholics do not believe that a person is justified immediately upon receiving faith but has to continually strive to do good works to earn their way into heaven.

As stated above from Phil 1:6 what Jesus has started, Jesus will finish and furthermore, Heb 12:2, "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." A true regenerate person cannot fall away for the God given faith will be brought to fruition according to the will of God and His Providence.

The end of the study of TULIP

This concludes the study of TULIP and the Arminian counter positions. These five doctrines formed the basis for the Reformation and thus all Protestantism was based on these. In conclusion, I present the summary remarks of the Synod of Dort. The Synod of Dort which was convened to settle this divisive controversy initiated by the rise of *Arminianism*, had 154 meetings over 6 months starting in 1618. Here then is a summary of their conclusions.

Therefore this Synod of Dort in the name of the Lord pleads with all who devoutly call on the name of our Savior Jesus Christ to form their judgment about the faith of the Reformed churches, not on the basis of false accusations gathered from here or there, or even on the basis of the personal statements of a number of ancient and modern authorities--statements which are also often either quoted out of context or misquoted and twisted to convey a different meaning--but on the basis of the churches' own official confessions and of the present explanation of the orthodox teaching which has been endorsed by the unanimous consent of the members of the whole Synod, one and all.

Moreover, the Synod earnestly warns the false accusers themselves to consider how heavy a judgment of God awaits those who give false testimony against so many churches and their confessions, trouble the consciences of the weak, and seek to prejudice the minds of many against the fellowship of true believers.

Finally, this Synod urges all fellow ministers in the gospel of Christ to deal with this teaching in a godly and reverent manner, in the academic institutions as well as in the churches; to do so, both in their speaking and writing, with a view to the glory of God's name, holiness of life, and the comfort of anxious souls; to think and also speak with Scripture according to the analogy of faith; and, finally, to refrain from all those ways of speaking which go beyond the bounds set for us by the genuine sense of the Holy Scriptures and which could give impertinent sophists a just occasion to scoff at the teaching of the Reformed churches or even to bring false accusations against it.

Jacobus Arminius and his teachings were declared anathemas. His predecessor, Pelagius, was declared an heretic.

John Wesley (1703-91), along with his brother Charles were the founders of the Methodist movement. He embraced Arminian theology and became its most prominent champion. Today, the majority of Methodists remain committed to Arminian theology, and Arminianism itself has become one of the dominant theological systems in the United States, thanks in large part to the influence of John and Charles Wesley.

Denominations leaning at least in part in the Arminian direction include Methodists, Free Will Baptists, Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, General Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, Church of the Nazarene, The Salvation Army, Conservative Mennonites, Old Order Mennonites, Amish and Charismatics. (Wikipedia).

The contemporary evangelical church aptly represented by Billy Graham, is almost totally dedicated to Arminianism. However, the Southern Baptist Convention has been involved in making a comeback from Arminianism to reformed theology. Here is a statement from the SBC website on God's Purpose of Grace: "Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end." Sounds like Calvinism without the details.

The Five Points of Calvinism and the Five Solas were the mainstay of Protestantism for the three hundred years following the Reformation. Calvinism stood strong during this time and is much more than these five points and the five solas. R. C. Sproul has a teaching series on *Foundations* and there are 60 lessons which indicates the extent of the Scriptural teachings on the subjects.

I'm not an historian and so the following chronological order of events are not necessarily accurate and by no means is it complete. In 1859, *The Scofield Reference Bible*, a widely circulated King James study Bible edited and annotated by the American Bible student Cyrus I. Scofield, popularized dispensationalism, a theological system of interpretation of the end times given in Rev 20, and developed by John Nelson Darby in the middle of the 19th century.

In 1859, we also have the publication of Darwin's *Origin of the Species*. This of course was the birth of the Theory of Evolution. The "scientific" attempt to explain creation. Without proof, the scientific community has swallowed Darwin's theory hook, line, and sinker. They ridicule those who hold to an Intelligent Designer and Design for the universe. Darwin's Theory is now the scientific explanation of how life came to be as we know it. Darwin's Theory is presented as scientific fact in all textbooks without educated or scientific discussion. This of course has had an enormous effect on the presentation of the gospel and is partly to blame for the evangelic movement today. If we can doubt creation, we can doubt many other truths given in the Bible.

The first Bible schools in North America were founded by A. B. Simpson (Nyack College in 1882) of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and D. L. Moody (Moody Bible Institute in 1887). Many were established as a conservative reaction against liberal established theological colleges and seminaries. As one historian put it, "It is not a coincidence that the Bible institute movement grew up during the very period when the philosophy of naturalism became prevalent in American education."

The only study Bible available at the time was the Scofield Reference Bible and it easily became the textbook for the Bible studies in these colleges. The Association for Biblical Higher Education asserts that "there are more than 1,200 Bible schools and colleges in the United

States and Canada," and that Bible colleges produce "a large percentage of North American evangelical missionaries and serve as a primary training center for local church leadership." Is it any wonder that the current status of the evangelic church in America is what it is today?

For those who put scientific "truth" above all reasonable discussion, there once was a scientific "truth" which left all scientists with enormous egg on their face. That was the creation of the ether. I point this out as a warning against "scientific truth" without proof.

The ether was invented by scientific minds to explain the fact that here on earth we are able to see the light from the sun. All experiments showed that light traveled by way of a wave motion and thus needed a medium to be able to travel from point A to point B. Thus, there had to be a light conducting medium in space or else the light from the sun could not reach the earth. So they invented the ether which was colorless, odorless, and tasteless. In other words, non-detectable. How convenient. I think it was said that at least 97% of the scientists believed in the ether [a little tongue in cheek humor here].

The **Michelson-Morley experiment** was conducted by two American men, Albert Michelson and Edward Morley at what is now Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1887, which attempted to detect the relative motion of matter through the stationary luminiferous aether ("aether wind") by measuring the velocity of the earth through this ether. They reasoned that if there was an ether, it should be possible to measure the effect of that ether on the motion of light.

Just as boats, one rowing upstream and another going the same distance across the stream, would require different times for the journeys because of the influence of the stream. They split a light beam into two directions which were 90° apart towards mirrors which sent the beams back to the source. Their experimental apparatus is on display at the University. The idea was that the light from the two beams would return at different times because the beams would be influenced by the "current" of the ether. They were amazed that the light beams came back to the source in exactly the same time.

Since it was possible that the earth with respect to the ether was at rest at the time they conducted their experiment, they repeated it 6 months later. Since the earth would now be going in the opposite direction than it was 6 months ago, the earth could not be at rest this time. The results were the same - they showed no effect of any "aether wind" on the earth's movement around the sun and hence the ether was a figment of over-egotistical scientific imagination.

It took nearly 50 years until Albert Einstein provided an explanation for this phenomenon. Einstein demonstrated that light exhibited the properties of matter. That light was made up of particles

having mass and velocity, and hence would not require a medium to transmit it through the universe.

Just a side note, we now have at "least 97%" of the "scientists" telling us that Global Warming is a scientific fact. Another "fact" with no substantial proof being propagated by the scientific community. How do you suppose they will want their egg?

And so, Darwin, Scofield, scientists, the American Bible college movement and the evangelical church have all but completely destroyed the much fought for Biblical beliefs brought about by the Reformation. The Reformation was a movement by God almighty and a return to biblical beliefs which lasted such a long time and continues to be believed today in the reformed churches of the world.

Jesus' parable of the sower demonstrates the spiritual condition of His church. The only seed which yields a large crop is that which "falls on good ground." How sad. Ω



Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6

And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right. 2 Thes 3:13

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 1 Cor 15:1

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. 2 Cor 1:21-22

We are able to persevere only because God works within us, within our free wills. And because God is at work in us, we are certain to persevere. The decrees of God concerning election are immutable. They do not change, because He does not change. All whom He justifies He glorifies. None of the elect has ever been lost. R. C. Sproul

Hymn writer Norman J. Clayton (1903—1992)

Norman Clayton was born on January 22, 1903 in Brooklyn, New York, the ninth of ten children. He was converted at the age of six in the South Brooklyn Gospel Church, where his mother had been a foundation member and he became the church organist by the age of 12. He kept up the role of church organist for the rest of his life.

Clayton's profession was in the building industry, but he also created his own publishing house, Gospel Songs, which was later absorbed into the Rodeheaver Company.

In 1942 he was working with Jack Wyrzten's Word of Life organization, providing music for both the radio broadcasts and crusade meetings.

That same year Clayton wrote his most popular gospel song, words and music, **Now I Belong to Jesus**:

Jesus, my Lord will love me forever,
From Him no power of evil can sever;
He gave His life to ransom my soul,
Now I belong to Him . . .

Another of Norman Clayton's choruses goes . . .

He holds my hand,
Jesus holds my hand.
Safely to Heaven He leads the way,
He is my Keeper from day to day . . .

Another lovely and popular song is "Every Moment of Every Day".

According to Kenneth Osbeck, Norman Clayton "tells how it is his usual practice to write the music first before the words," and that "he feels it is vitally important that every song he writes be biblically based" (101 More Hymn Stories, page 204).

In order to create songs worthy of His Lord, Clayton made it his practice to memorise scripture, so his songs would have a strong Biblical basis. He also found it easiest to write songs for special occasions. Clayton's gospel songs were eminently singable, musically sweet and tender of sentiment.

Clayton's most popular songs reflect his evangelical emphasis, focused on the saving work of Christ and the sweetness of relationship with God through Him. The absence of deeper or more diverse theological issues may have robbed Clayton of a more enduring place in Christian song-writing. By the time of his death churches were beginning their push into more upbeat music and more Charismatic themes. Ω

Important Things

Jesus, my Lord will love me forever,
 From Him no pow'r of evil can sever,
 He gave His life to ransom my soul;
 Now I belong to Him;

Refrain:

Now I belong to Jesus,
 Jesus belongs to me,
 Not for the years of time alone,
 But for eternity.

Once I was lost in sin's degradation,
 Jesus came down to bring me salvation,
 Lifted me up from sorrow and shame,
 Now I belong to Him;

Refrain:

Joy floods my soul for Jesus has saved me,
 Freed me from sin that long had enslaved me
 His precious blood, He came to redeem,
 Now I belong to Him;

Refrain:

Men's Breakfast— October 18 the men of the church will meet at the church for a full cooked breakfast at 8:00 AM. This month Scott Roper will be frying pancakes with several good tasting sides. Judging from the usual attendance at this event an outside observer would assume there are almost no men in the church. Fellowship is an important factor in the life of a church. Come on men, let's see you there.

Nursery Schedule for October

- 5TH - JENNY ROPER
- 12TH - LAURA TWITCHELL
- 19TH - BECKY SHWEN
- 26TH - LYDIA BRUNGARDT

Please trade with someone if you are unable to do nursery duty on the assigned day.



Nursery



- Willis & Mildred Christie 30th
- Dan & Becky Vickery 31st

- Laura Twitchel 6th
- Kenyon Pillivant 14th
- Abigail Sackett 15th
- Hunter Grace Anderson 16th
- Megan Church 18th
- Corey Trujillo 19th
- Kelsie Nelson 22nd
- Draven Vickery 22nd
- Amiee Davison 23rd




- Janet Anderson 27th
- Ken Tunnicliff 29th
- Marilyn Reuer 30th

Report from Your Session

October 2014 Session Report

We had a wonderful conference in September. Dr Beeke was an outstanding speaker. We were both challenged and encouraged. We had a good turn out both from our church and outside our church. Continue to pray for those who came, that the lessons learned would take hold.

Presbytery's fall session is in the beginning of October. Please be in prayer for our denomination and those who will attend - that they will seek the face of God in the things they decide.



The Conference was very well attended. On Friday night for the first session, we had 81 in attendance. On Saturday, we had 84. Fees collected amounted to \$885 and book sales totaled \$300.

This event is beginning to draw the same people every year from outside our area and from other churches in Cheyenne.

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

by Douglas Kelly

Dr. Douglas F. Kelly is Richard Jordan Professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, N.C. and author of *Systematic Theology: Grounded in Scripture and Understood in Light of the Church*.

In my many years as a professor of theology and conference speaker, one of the questions I am most frequently asked is, "Doesn't the Reformed (or Calvinist) tradition teach the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints?" "Yes, it does," I reply. "But how can a Bible-believer teach something like that since Hebrews 6 says that people who once became Christians turned away from faith in Christ and lost their salvation?" is the common response. I have always felt that this is an honest question that deserves an honest answer. Let me devote this brief article to what, I hope, is a fair and biblical response to those who sincerely believe that Hebrews 6 teaches that believers can lose their salvation.

Just before this point in the epistle, the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ has been lifted up as the only way sinners can enter into the eternal rest of God. True faith in Christ's priesthood takes us spiritually into the heavenly places (Heb. 4:14 and Eph. 2:6), even while we are still on earth physically. Eventually our bodies will be raised and taken there as well. The reality of our High Priest bearing us upon His heart into heaven means that as we pray in Jesus' name, we are taken directly to "the throne of grace," where we "obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:14-16). Surely all of God's people will be given the grace they need through the mercy of their High Priest to get them to their final home, where He is.

Thus, for a believer, who is being represented directly by the High Priest, to be lost before he reaches heaven would imply that the High Priest is weak and powerless. Jesus, however, has been given all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). He is the great Shepherd who gives His sheep eternal life, and nothing can pluck them out of the Father's hand (John 10:28-29). The same Lord prayed to the Father in John 17 that the Father would keep those whom He has given the Son (v. 11) and that not one of them would fail to get to heaven to behold their Savior's glory (v. 24).

So then, what does Hebrews 6:4-6 mean? If human language means anything, then these verses teach that some people, who experienced great privileges with the Holy Spirit and Christ Himself, can become apostate, die, and tragically wind up in hell. Five massive

spiritual experiences are attributed to these people in Hebrews 6:4-5: They were once enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, made partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasted the good Word of God, and tasted the powers of the world to come. Yet in spite of such glorious experiences in the very midst of the church, they may fall away so that it is impossible to renew them again to repentance (Heb. 6:6).

What can this be but a sad and solemn illustration of what Jesus taught about the seed that fell on rocky ground, received the word with joy, grew rapidly, but soon dried up because it had no roots (Matt. 13:5-6, 20-21).

As the Holy Spirit ministers in the life of the church, the seeds of truth are spread everywhere. Even unbelievers are profoundly influenced as the Spirit ministers to His people. The Spirit ministers in answer to prayer (Luke 11:13), He ministers in worship, and He ministers in Word and Sacrament. In His work among the sheep, His power is felt by all — even by those who are not sheep but goats.

People who are never born-again by the Holy Spirit can be touched by His tender and mighty power in such a way that causes them to break down and weep. People who never submit to Jesus as Savior and Lord are able to feel the anointed preaching of the eternal Gospel of God. Thus, they have really been enlightened; they have tasted of the powers of the world to come and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit.

Nevertheless, as wonderful as such impressions are, some are never born-again. The feelings and impressions get no deeper than seed on stony ground. There will be superficial growth for a time, and many will express joy that comes as a result of being around the ministry of the Spirit. But, as a seed without roots dries up, the professing faith of the unregenerate vanishes.

It would take a greater mind than my own to comprehend pastorally and psychologically how people can have such spiritual impressions and not believe. Indeed, I have grieved to see it more than once. But as tragic as it is to see, the experiences listed in Hebrews 6 in no way constitute an argument against the perseverance of the saints. Rather, it shows how high some can go in terms of spiritual experiences, without going all the way to a saving knowledge of God in Christ.

What must we say to those who have strayed? It is the same thing that the author of Hebrews says to us: If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firmly unto the end, we can rest assured that we are the house of Christ (Heb. 3:6). If those who have strayed humble themselves in prayer and repentance, they will find a throne of grace and a seat of mercy (Heb. 4:15-16). **Ω**

Have a Need? Contact one of the officers.

Church Office Hours	Tue, Wed, and Thu 8:30 - 4:30
Office Telephone	637-4817
Web Site	northwoodspca.org church@northwoodspca.org
Milan Norgauer, <i>Pastor</i>	635-1865 mnorgauer@gmail.com
Tim Anderson, <i>Elder</i>	286-6625 twa@northwoodspca.org
Brian Church, <i>Elder</i>	221-9966 b.church@outlook.com
Alex Davison, <i>Elder</i>	245-9348 alex@pattondavison.com
Alex Ramig, <i>Elder</i>	638-8927 Alex4tek@aol.com
Rich Cesal, <i>Deacon/Treasurer</i>	637-6195 cheyoming6195@bresnan.net
Dale Vosler, <i>Deacon</i>	632-0133 tuliphill2@gmail.com

If you have a request for the prayer chain contact Branda Church 221-9206 and if not available, Kelleigh Anderson 635-2578.

*For who has known the mind of the LORD?
Or who has become His counselor? Or
who has first given to Him And it shall
be repaid to Him? For of Him and
through Him and to Him are all things,
to whom be glory forever.*

Hallelujah, Amen.