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'And grace will lead me home.'
Perseverance of believers as divine gift and human responsibility

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SUMMARY

The doctrine of perseverance is an unfashionable one for systematic theologians. Moltmann's work is really only on the history of the development of the doctrine among the Reformed. A historical survey allows four theses about Perseverance to be made. Perseverance is part of sanctification which arises at the same moment as justification and is not the believer's addition to the process. There is not so much a duty on believers to live ethically which is separate from the issue of salvation as a need to incorporate perseverance as part of the action of grace of Christ in the believer, realised as that which connects past salvation with future consummation.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Lehre von der Beharrung im Glaubens ist unter systematischen Theologen nicht besonders in Mode. Moltmanns Arbeit bietet die Geschichte der Entwicklung dieser Lehre bei den Reformierten. Der geschichtliche Überblick führt zu vier Thesen. Beharrung ist Teil der Heiligung, die zeitlich mit der Rechtfertigung zusammenfällt und nicht vom Gläubigen hinzugefügt wird. Es geht weniger darum, das ethische Leben des Gläubigen von der Errettung zu trennen, als um die Notwendigkeit, das Beharren als Teil des Wirkens der Gnade Christi im Gläubigen zu integrieren, das die vergangene Errettung mit der zukünftigen Vollendung verbindet.

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RÉSUMÉ

La doctrine de la persévérance des saints n'est plus à la mode pour les théologiens systématiques. L'ouvrage de Moltmann traite en fait de l'histoire du développement de cette doctrine parmi les docteurs réformés. Ce survol historique le conduit à quatre thèses. La persévérance fait partie de la sanctification qui advient au meme moment que la justification et ne constitue pas un additif apporté par le croyant au processus. On ne doit pas considérer la nécessité pour le croyant de vivre en conformité à l'éthique d'une manière qui la sépare de la question du salut; au contraire, il faut considérer la persévérance comme faisant partie intégrante de l'œuvre que Christ accomplit par grâce dans le croyant, et comme faisant le lien entre l'aspect passé du salut et son achèvement futur.

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In 1788 John Wesley started his concise treatise *Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints* with a complaint: 'Many large volumes have been already published on this important subject.'[1] G. C. Berkouwer writing in 1958 affirmed: 'It is gratifying that today, because of fresh reflection on the basic principles of the Reformation, this doctrine is being discussed with more readiness. . . Perhaps we are gaining some perspective on such doctrines as perseverance.'[2]

Despite this optimism very few serious treatises of this subject have been produced in the past 40 years. Interestingly the doctrine of perseverance has been treated more intensively in the area of

biblical theology than in systematic theology. I. H. Marshall's *Kept By the Power of God*[3] reflects in my view some aspects of a Wesleyan perspective and J. Gundry Volf's *Paul & Perseverance*[4] written from the Reformed perspective are the best treatments of the subject in biblical theology to date. R. Shank's *Life in the Son*[5] also belongs to this category but falls below the standard of Marshall's and Gundry Volf's respective works. Avery fine work grounded in biblical theology and suggesting some sound pastoral advice is *The Race Set Before Us* by T. R. Schreiner and A. B. Caneday.[6]

Professor J. Moltmann's *Predestination und Perseveranz*[7] appears to be the only monograph of the history of the doctrine of perseverance and even that is mainly concerned with its development within the Reformed tradition. In the area of systematic theology the doctrine of perseverance has not seen a major treatment within the Reformed tradition since Berkouwer's *Faith and Perseverance*. Question is whether there is another treatise needed in this area so widely treated in the past. We see at least two reasons which justify our embarking on this project. First is that our pastoral experience, as well as our survey of the current writing (or rather the lack of writing) on this subject in theological journals, suggests that Reformed theology may be losing rather than gaining perspective on this doctrine. This retreat is, secondly, enforced by the current advance of the Arminian view on the one hand and of the so-called Partaker's view and the Grace Evangelical Society.

The most recent Arminian treatment is a massive volume of 801 pages written by D. D. Corner, *The Believer's Conditional Security*.[8] On the other end of the spectrum are such works as J. C. Dillow's, *The Reign of the Servant Kings*,[9] M. Eaton's, *A Theology of Encouragement*,[10] several writings of the Westminster Chapel minister R. T. Kendall,[11] and the American *Journal of Grace Evangelical Society*. Except for the doctoral thesis of M. Eaton these are more popular than academic treatises but that only means that they are more widely circulated. These are the challenges to re-enter the field so widely worked on in the past.

1. Historical survey of the doctrine

The first systematic treatment is Augustine's *De dono perseverantiae*[12] written in 428 or 429 within the controversies with Pelagius on grace, original sin, and predestination. Augustine's understand-

ing of the doctrine of perseverance is based on the grace of God. When he speaks about perseverance, he means the gift of God by which the elect persevere in Christ to the end. He believes that God's elect will certainly persevere but the believer cannot infallibly know his election in this earthly life. 'Thus, it is uncertain whether anyone has received this gift so long as he is still living.'[13]

For Augustine the beginning of faith is based on prevenient grace, which operates prior to man's decision, therefore it is given potentially even for those who do not seek it. However, perseverance to the end is based on subsequent grace, which co-operates with man's will after his decision. Therefore perseverance in the faith is given only for those who seek it. This led J. P. Burns to distinguish in Augustine's teaching two operative graces – the grace of conversion and the grace of perseverance.

> Those (Christians) who are predestined to glory receive a second operative grace which effects that repentance for sin and that good action which are necessary for their salvation. Those who are not predestined are not deprived of charity; rather among the temptations of this world they eventually fail and incur condemnation.[14]

Thus the grace of conversion does not imply the grace of perseverance. If we put to late Augustine his existential question, who will be finally saved, his ultimate answer would be, that only God knows. He however is quite certain that all who are and will be saved are saved by God's grace. All subsequent western approaches to the doctrine of perseverance can be traced back to certain stages of Augustine's thought.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) sees predestination as part of God's providence and so man's destination for eternal life is absolutely certain with God but not at all for the man himself.[15] Following sometimes heated debates mainly between Franciscans and Benedictines some major parts of Aquinas' teaching were codified by the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Through fear of spiritual complacency the Council strongly denies the personal confidence of a Christian. '[N]o one can know by that assurance of faith which excludes all falsehood, that he has obtained the grace of God.[16] Chapter 16 states that to those who persevere to the end 'eternal life should be held out, both as a grace promised in his mercy through Jesus Christ to the children of God, and as a reward promised

by God himself, to be faithfully bestowed, on the promise of God himself, for their good works and merits.'[17] The Council distinguishes between the possibility of perseverance (*posse perseverare*) and actual perseverance (*perseverantia actualis*). The latter is not an automatic result of the former.[18] Hence the strong wording of Canon 16 of the same Decree: 'If anyone says with absolute and infallible certitude (unless he shall have learned this by a special revelation) that he will certainly have that great gift of final perseverance: let him be anathema.'[19]

These developments have led us to formulating the first thesis to emerge: *Perseverance is a necessary gift of God but the believers cannot be certain whether it was given to them.*

In accordance with Augustine, Calvin and subsequent Calvinists based their understanding of final perseverance on the doctrine of election. However, unlike the Reformed Pietist, L. Boettner,[20] G. C. Berkouwer thinks that to deduce the perseverance of the saints from divine causality is completely mistaken. 'In such a causal view the only significant things would be the beginning and the final result of the operation of this first cause while the process by which the final result was reached would be reduced to unimportance.'[21] Logically in the order of salvation predestination comes first but our assurance of salvation must start with Christ. Commenting on Jesus' prayer for all the elect [Lk. 22:32] Calvin writes: 'From this we infer that they are out of danger of falling away because the Son of God, asking that their godliness be kept constant, did not suffer a refusal.'[22]

In contention with the Remonstrance, the Calvinist doctrine of perseverance was consolidated by the Synod of Dort (1618-1619). The Fifth head of the Canons, *The Perseverance of the Saints* is most likely the most complete, balanced and pastorally sensitive creed on the doctrine of perseverance of the saints. It starts on a note of humility stating that God delivers the elect 'from the dominion and slavery of sin, though in this life He does not deliver them altogether from the body of sin and from the infirmities of the flesh.'[23] However the Fathers of Dort do not use this statement only to call believers to humility but also to substantiate that 'those who are converted could not persevere in that grace if left to their own strength.'[24] King David and apostle Peter are set as examples of grievous failures. But God even in such cases 'preserves in them the incorruptible seed of regeneration from perishing or being totally lost.'[25] Canons recognise various degrees of assurance, that come from the Word, 'from the testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with our spirit that we are children and heirs of God [Rom. 8:16]; and lastly, from a serious and holy desire to preserve a good conscience and to perform good works.'[26] Believers obtain and may have certain measure of assurance of God's preservation.

This has led us to formulate historically the second thesis: *Perseverance is a necessary gift of God and it is certain for the believer.*

Arminius's understanding of free will is not too far removed from a Roman Catholic understanding of God's grace helping the human will to co-operate with God's grace. 'Provided that they stand prepared for the battle, relying on God's help, Christ preserves them from falling so that it is not possible for them to be either seduced or dragged out of Christ's hands by the powers of evil.'[27] He has tried to explain the co-operation of God's grace and human will in the following example: 'A rich man bestows, on a poor and famishing beggar, alms by which he may be able to maintain himself and his family. Does it cease to be a pure gift, because the beggar extends his hand to receive it?'[28] No, it does not cease to be a gift but the salvation is not entirely by grace. If the divine grace is given, the human will distinguishes those who accept the gospel from those who reject it and thus the power to be saved is placed into human hands. This implicit understanding of conditional predestination traced in Arminius, was made explicit by his later followers.

Not far removed from that is the theology of J. Wesley (1703-1791) who was more explicit on the possibility of apostasy than Arminius. Refusing the certainty of final salvation, assurance of salvation for Wesley means only that 'we are now in a state of salvation.'[29] He speaks of different degrees of assurance.

(1) I believe a few, but very few, Christians have an assurance from God of everlasting salvation. (2) I believe more have such an assurance of being now in the favour of God as excludes all doubt and fear. (3) I believe a consciousness of being in the favour of God is the common privilege of Christians fearing God and working righteousness.[30]

Rejecting the doctrine of unconditional election Wesley rejected also its consequence – the doctrine of final perseverance. His assurance is based 'on

what is to-day.' Moltmann characterises the difference between Arminians and Calvinists as follows: 'While for the Arminians God's arms remain open so that everybody can always return to him, for the Calvinists God's arms have embraced the sinner and would not let him go.'[31]

This view allows us to formulate historically the third thesis of perseverance: *Perseverance is necessary but God does not determine who will finally persevere.*

The desire of the Protestant theologians has been so much to prove that salvation by grace alone does not allow moral carelessness and antinomianism of Christians, that the idea of the impossibility of losing one's salvation remained largely unconsidered until recently. Approximately at the same time and in very different parts of the world (one in South Africa and the other in Northern America) two scholars have arrived to very similar conclusions on the matter. The former is M. Eaton[32] and the latter J. C. Dillow.[33] They reject the doctrine of limited atonement and argue for universal atonement. In variance with both Arminianism and Calvinism they see a non-irresistible link between justification and sanctification. An important feature of their argument is a clear distinction between salvation and the spiritual inheritance of believers. Whereas for Arminians disobedience signifies the loss of salvation and for Calvinists consistent disobedience proves the unreality of salvation, for Eaton and Dillow disobedience results in the loss of inheritance but not in the loss of salvation. This they believe is a doubly encouraging theology since both present and future salvation are sure. At the same time it is also motivating in that, based upon their eternal security, believers may reach for their inheritance.

These views have brought us to formulate the fourth thesis on perseverance: *Perseverance is necessary for obtaining final rewards but not for salvation.*

If we understand that the role of theology is to contextualise the biblical revelation and the church's creeds, in the case of the doctrine of perseverance we believe we can advance a balanced view within a revised ordo salutis.

2. The doctrine of perseverance within a Reformed *ordo salutis*

Reformed theologians attempted to define the ordo salutis in various ways. From the very beginning the particular orders are different. J. Murray discerns a chronological order along with causation and explanation.[34] R. A. Muller defines it as 'a term applied to the temporal order of causes and effects through which the salvation of the sinner is accomplished;' although he recognises that 'the actual arrangement of the several elements of the ordo, i.e., calling, and so on varies from system to system.'[35] Thus Murray arranges the elements of the ordo in the following chronological order:

calling | regeneration | conversion | justification | adoption | sanctification | perseverance | glorification.[36]

L. Berkhof,[37] M. J. Erickson,[38] and G. R. Lewis with B. A. Demarest[39] prefer to discern a logical order of salvation. Thus a logical 'listing of the ordo looks like this: election, verbal calling, effectual calling, belief of the Gospel, repentance from sin, trust in the living Christ, regeneration, justification, reconciliation, sanctification, perseverance and glorification.'[40] Rather than a chronological or logical order, L. R. Reymond derived from the skeletal framework of the *ordo* in Romans 8:29-30 a sequential order of divine acts and divine-human activities with logical (or causal) connection between the several aspects.[41]

Important for our purpose is that he distinguishes sanctification as either definitive or progressive. Definitive sanctification is understood as a divine act by which God makes the believer holy. Progressive sanctification is taken as a divine-human life-long activity that makes the believer more and more holy. If not qualified, the term 'sanctification' is almost commonly understood in this progressive sense within Reformed theology. This may have developed as a guard against the fusion of the concept of sanctification with justification as happened to Augustine and has been carried on by most strands of Catholic theology. There may also be other reasons for the development in which the doctrine of sanctification was given a meaning relatively independent of its biblical concept.

Here D. Peterson's *Possessed by God* is significant. He argues that 'regeneration and sanctification are two different ways of describing Christian initiation or conversion. . . Sanctification has to do with the new status and orientation of those who belong to God and to one another as his people.'[42] Holiness he defines as 'a status or condition which God imparts to those whom he chooses to bring into a special relationship with himself through covenant and redemption.'[43] Seen from a human perspective sanctification is the beginning of the

life of holiness. Both justification and sanctification are different ways of talking about the achievement of the Cross.

With such terminology the Apostle Paul stresses the transformation in our relationship with God that is achieved by the Cross and the implications for our world view and living. Even to such a difficult audience as were the Corinthians, Paul says that they are already the sanctified people of God and need to live this out in different aspects of life. A different method is adopted in Romans where he urges believers who are slaves of righteousness to live under righteousness.[44] If systematic theologians are trying to describe by sanctification the process that is going on in our experience, they are using terminology that expands and develops but also obscures the biblical intention.

Therefore we propose to reserve the terms of justification and sanctification to describe the parallel divine act by which the grace of God gives us a new status and state. Both are achieved by the cross of Christ and both are applied to believers at the beginning of their spiritual life. This however is not to neglect the need of their perseverance in grace. Thus perseverance is not just one element in either chronological or logical order of salvation in the line with calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, sanctification and glorification. The perseverance within the *ordo salutis* is rather an all-embracing relationship in its soteric references between the beginning of the spiritual life and the physical death of the believer. In that sense perseverance is a sub-entity of the union with Christ and includes all that the traditional Reformed dogmatics have understood by progressive sanctification.

This is not just an attempt to introduce a different term (perseverance) to convey the same notion (of progressive sanctification). This view of *ordo salutis* allows us to reserve the biblical meaning of the divine act of consecration for the doctrine of sanctification by which the process of perseverance begins and to develop a doctrine of perseverance that integrates the gift of divine grace and the requirement of the believer's responsibility. J. Moltmann also defines the doctrine of perseverance as 'the gift of persistence in faith and the preservation of believers to the end in temptation and persecution.'[45] The direct link of perseverance to the person and work of Christ within this *ordo salutis* does not allow us to view the believer's life as a collection of discrete fragments of divine preservation and human failures and returns to

faith, but rather as that life which participates in the communion of the Spirit.[46] It prevents us also from isolating faith in Christ the Saviour and obedience to Christ the Lord that the Grace Evangelical Society has done.

3. Perseverance of the believers as *Gabe* and *Aufgabe*

According to our understanding the perseverance of the believer is not only the divine gift of persistence in faith and the preservation of the believer to the end but also the believer's responsibility to believe and to withstand any difficulty. Thus perseverance defined as a gift and responsibility (*Gabe* and *Aufgabe* in German) is well suited to be a doctrine integrating the ethics within itself, too. In that, we follow K. Barth who brought ethics back to be part of dogmatics. For him then Christian ethics is an impossible possibility.

As we have traced the development of the doctrine of perseverance of the believers we have seen that the pendulum of emphasis has always swung either to the side of constancy and effectuality of the divine gift of perseverance or to the side of requirement of human responsibility to persevere. Reformed theology has always been strong on divine sovereignty and effectuality of grace. That is not to say that it separated it from human responsibility, but perseverance has predominantly been understood as a 'continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer,'[47] even to be designated as 'perseverance of God with the Saints.'[48]

The pendulum of the Arminian and Wesleyan emphasis swings towards the side of human freedom and responsibility to persevere. They do not deny that perseverance is the effect of divine grace but it is conditional and thus typically J. Wesley concludes his treatise on perseverance: 'Therefore let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.'[49] Thus there is some truth in the following pointed reflection: 'A Methodist knows he's got religion, but he's afraid he'll lose it. A Presbyterian knows he can't lose it, but he's afraid he hasn't got it.'[50]

Dispensational theology of the Grace Evangelical Society has done away with the paradox by separating the believer's responsibility to persevere from his salvation altogether. They call the classical doctrine 'the Eternal Security' of 'Once Saved, always Saved' and perseverance becomes an ethical category without any direct link to the believer's salvation which is confined exclusively to the moment of the believer's entrusting himself

to Jesus Christ as his Saviour without at the same time submitting to him as his Lord.

Our goal has been to maintain the tension between the divine sovereignty and believer's responsibility. By establishing the doctrine of perseverance within our definition of *ordo salutis*, we have shown that it has a firm place in evangelical soteriology. It has deepened our appreciation of perseverance as divine gift of grace and at the same time alerted our responsibility to persevere in grace until the final consummation of our salvation.

The *Gabe* and *Aufgabe* of perseverance may be distinguished but must not be separated. That in Barth's terms is an impossible possibility. Why is it impossible? Because the perseverance of believers is a perseverance of men; and if there is anything certain about their lives it is that human life is uncertain. There is a great transitoriness and a great number of fluctuations in human life. If we say that Christian perseverance is primarily a confession of faith, we certainly do not mean that it is an unrealistic ideal. On the contrary, Christian perseverance is often painfully real. Perseverance of the believer is Christian, if and only if, it is Christ who perseveres and that is impossible for human beings.

Nevertheless this impossibility becomes possible because we have established the doctrine of perseverance within *ordo salutis*. There is an event that cannot be reversed, a decision that cannot be undone, and a birth that cannot be unborn.[51] Redemption accomplished by Christ was applied to the believer and therefore the confession of perseverance of the fragile human being towers over all his uncertainty. But Christian perseverance remains an impossibility even for the believer. Whereas Christ could exclaim, tete¢lestai, the believers can not. But precisely because perseverance is a possibility of the impossible, they may claim with Apostle Paul: 'However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.'[52] Perseverance of the believer is his worship of God taking place in countless everyday situations of his earthly life.

The tension between perseverance as divine gift and persevering as believer's responsibility is hardly bearable but it must not be diffused. Emphasising the former would lead to spiritual complacency or introspection and emphasising the latter would lead to spiritual legalism. We may distinguish them but we must not separate them because then perseverance would lose its connection with salvation and would only become an optional incentive for spiritual rewards. Thus *Gabe* of perseverance is distinguishable but inseparable from the *Aufgabe* to persevere.

Related to that is the other major contribution of the doctrine of perseverance within thus redefined ordo salutis. It is its strong future orientation. This is not to say that former treatments of this subject have lacked its reference to the future. In fact its future reference is part of the definition of the doctrine of perseverance. M. J. Erickson discusses it together with the doctrine of glorification in the section of *The Completion of Salvation*.[53] There he is interested in the final state of the believer but he provides no exposition of hope that would inform and motivate the believer's perseverance. Although Berkouwer reflects on perseverance in relation to final judgement, inheritance and sealing of the first fruits of the full harvest,[54] his exposition of the doctrine of perseverance is oriented to God's preservation of believers in present actual decisions of faith through admonition, prayer and consolation rather than being oriented to the future.

Nevertheless treatments of perseverance since Reformed orthodoxy were predominantly based on causal effects of election and justification.[55] Thus they were predominantly oriented to the past. Even if they recognised that the Christ event of incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension is inaugurating the new eschatological era, their eschatology is so much realised that there is not very much left for the future to be attained or avoided.

On the other hand J. C. Dillow relates his study of perseverance mainly to the present and future.[56] However he severs the link between salvation and perseverance. Perseverance, for him, is necessary only to maintain a harmonious relationship with God which then leads to glorious inheritance with various rewards in heaven.

J. Moltmann's thorough historical survey of the Reformed doctrine of *de perseverantia sanctorum* arrived at the following conclusion:

> Perseverance of faith is totally dependent on the faithfulness of God who, as the transcendent origin of all events, creates also the historical continuity of events and orders them toward a certain telos. For it is the faithfulness of God which makes the historical connection between promise and fulfilment, between intention

and completion. . . This certainty about the protection and completion of the new being, through the faithfulness of God, provides for believers the freedom to entrust themselves with eschatological hope toward the future of the coming God and his completion of all things. So the perseverantia sanctorum becomes an embodiment of the Christian hope.[57]

Thus the divine τέλος and ἔλπις are enforcing the Christian's ὑπομονή. In fact our redefined ordo salutis allows us to view the doctrine of perseverance anchored in the past, actualised in the present, and oriented to the future. Only in this dynamic is it appropriate to call it also the doctrine of eternal security. It is a security because it is rooted in the sovereignty of divine grace by which he preserves his work until the end. Thus the end is secure but it is not yet consummated. The final judgement still holds up before us either different degrees of glory which are yet to be arrived at or a serious reproach to be avoided. That end will finally terminate our persevering and that end serves as a constant motivation for our persevering.

Even if our doctrine of the perseverance of believers is an expression of the mystery of divine preservation to the end, it finds its application within the historical experience of persevering believers threatened by temptation and marred by sin. We can even affirm that the eschatological imagination is a transforming power energising the perseverance of believers whatever their present circumstances may be.[58] We persevere in the stream of statements we make about tomorrow, about the new millennium, about eternity. The promised future becomes what Moltmann calls *der Stachellix*[59] (goad) of perseverance of the believer who would not be content with the present situation.

The doctrine of perseverance properly understood is eclipsed in the doctrine of atonement. Our final redemption will not be as a direct result or develop out of anything which we do (or do not do) now, and it will occur in spite of anything we do (or do not do) now. But by perseverance in the meanwhile we are being trained for the eternal purposes, for visio dei. The doctrine of perseverance cannot be properly expressed as a system of logical causes and effects but only as a doxology which is not illogical but transcendent. I believe the lyrics of J. Newton's famous hymn capture it well:

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

Notes

1 J. Wesley, 'Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints,' in *Works of John Wesley*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1984, 10.284-298.

2 G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Perseverance*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958, p. 79.

3 I.H. Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God, A Study of Perseverance and Falling Away*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1995.

4 J. Gundry Volf, *Paul & Perseverance, Staying In and Falling Away*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990.

5 R.L. Shank, *Life in the Son*, Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1989.

6 T. R. Schreiner & A. B. Caneday, *The Race Set Before Us; A Biblical Theology of Perseverance & Assurance*, Grand Rapids: IVP, 2001.

7 J. Moltmann, *Prädestination und Perseveranz, Neukirchen*: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961. A brief survey of the history of the doctrine of perseverance is J.J. Davis, 'The Perseverance of the Saints: A History of the Doctrine', in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 34.2 (1991) 213-228.

8 D.D. Corner, *The Believer's Conditional Security*, Washington: Evangelical Outreach, 1997.

9 J.C. Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings, A Study of Eternal Security and the Final Significance of Man*, Miami Springs: Schoetle Publishing, 1992.

10 M. Eaton, *A Theology of Encouragement*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1995.

11 R.T. Kendall, *Once Saved, Always Saved*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984, *When God Says 'Well Done!'* Fearn: Christian Focus, 1993 and Understanding Theology, 2 vols., Fearn: Christian Focus, 1996, 2000. In his doctoral thesis, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997, he mentions the doctrine of perseverance also.

12 A. Augustine, *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 86, trans. by Mourant and Collinge, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992.

13 Ibid., 1.1.

14 J. P. Burns, *The Development of Augustine's Doctrine of Operative Grace*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1980, p. 179.

15 T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 5, Oxford: Blackfriars, 1967, Ia. Q. 23, Art. 6c.

16 N. P. Tanner & G. Alberigo, (eds.), *Decrees of the ecumenical Councils, 2 vols.*, London: Sheed & Ward, 1990, ch. 9, p. 674.

17 Ibid., ch. 16, p. 676-677.

18 A. Stakemeier, *Das Konzil von Trient über die Heilsgewißheit*, Heidelberg: F. H. Kerle Verlag, 1947, p. 178.

19 Canon 16, in Tanner, *Decrees*, p. 680.

20 L. Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1932, p. 182. According to him the Reformed doctrine of perseverance of believers is a logical implication of predestination and efficacious grace.

21 Berkouwer, *Faith and Perseverance*, p. 75.

22 J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, 2 vols.*, ed. by J. T. McNeill, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960, III.XXIV.6.

23 *Canons of Dort*, 5:1.

24 Ibid., 5:3.

25 Ibid., 5:7.

26 Ibid., 5:10.

27 A. S. Wood, ‚The Declaration of Sentiments: The Theological Testament of Arminius’ in *Evangelical Quarterly*, 65.2 (1993) p. 124.

28 J. Arminius, *The Works of James Arminius, 3 vols.*, London: Longman, 1825-1875, 2.52.

29 A. S. Yates, *The Doctrine of Assurance, With Special Reference to John Wesley*, London: The Epworth Press, 1952, p. 61.

30 Ibid., p. 70.

31 Moltmann, *Prädestination*, p. 136.

32 Eaton, *Theology of Encouragement*.

33 Dillow, *Reign of the Servant Kings*.

34 J. Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, Edinburgh: The Banner and Truth Trust, 1961, pp. 79-87.

35 R. A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985, p. 215.

36 Murray, *Redemption*, p. 87. Instead of conversion he prefers faith and repentance. We have arranged the elements in a discrete line because contrary to others he emphasises that ‘we must not think of it as one simple and indivisible act’ (p. 80).

37 L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1979, pp. 416-419.

38 M. J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991, p. 933.

39 G. R. Lewis & B. A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology, vol. 3*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994, pp. 57-58, 82-84, 97-107.

40 Ibid., p. 57.

41 L. R. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998, pp. 704-711.

42 D. Peterson, *Possessed by God; A New Testament theology of sanctification and holiness*, Leicester : Apollos, 1995, p. 63.

43 Ibid., p. 23.

44 Especially in Romans 6.

45 J. Moltmann, ‘Perseverance,’ in A. Richardson & J. Bowden, eds., *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, London: SCM, 1983, pp. 441-442.

46 Berkouwer, *Faith and Perseverance*, p. 236.

47 Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 546.

48 Nicole, R., ‘Perseverance of the Saints,’ in McKim, D. K. ed., *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992, p. 275-276.

49 Wesley, *Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints*, 10.298.

50 Quoted in P. Helm, *Faith with Reason*, Oxford: OUP, 2000, p. 159.

51 Shank argues against the irreversibility of the new birth by emphasising three main differences between spiritual a physical birth but these differences though true, do not substantiate the reversibility of the spiritual birth. See his *Life in the Son*, pp. 89-95.

52 Acts 20:24.

53 Erickson, *Christian Theology*, pp. 985-997.

54 Berkouwer, *Faith and Perseverance*, pp. 203-210.

55 Berkouwer’s work is an exception since one of his purposes is to argue against an *a priori* doctrine of perseverance of the saints caused by divine election.

56 Dillow, *Reign*, pp. 489-608.

57 Moltmann, *Prädestination*, p. 182.

58 Imagination as presentation of the otherwise absent is applied in theology by R. Bauckham and T. Hart, *Hope Against Hope; Christian Eschatology at the Turn of the Millennium*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, esp. pp. 72-173 and T. Hart, ‘Imagination for the Kingdom of God?’ in R. Bauckham, ed., *God Will Be All in All; The Eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann*, Edinbugh: T & T Clark, 1999, pp. 49-76.

lix Moltmann, *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 17.