

Chapter 17 of the 1689 Confession of Faith: “Of The Perseverance of the Saints”,
Session # 13, “Perseverance and the World”, Presented by Pastor
Paul Rendall in the Adult Sunday School, on November 12th, 2017.

Paragraph 3 - And though they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of means of their preservation, fall into grievous i)sins, and for a time continue therein j), whereby they incur k)God’s displeasure and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and l)comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, m)hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments n)upon themselves, yet shall they renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.

i) Matthew 26: 70, 72, 74; k) Isaiah 64: 5, 9; Ephesians 4: 30; l) Psalm 51: 10,12;

m) Psalm 32: 3-4; n) 2nd Samuel 12:14; o) Luke 22: 32, 61-62

My Proposition to you this morning is this:

1. The Gift of the Holy Spirit to every believer, and the exercise of their faith in Christ insures that they will persevere throughout their Christian life. Even when they are tempted by the allurements of the world they will persevere until they overcome.

The Christian’s three great enemies are the world, the flesh, and the Devil. These 3 enemies are all overcome by our faith in Christ who has overcome the world on our behalf and who would now have us to overcome these enemies in our experience ourselves.

1st John 5: 4 and 5 – “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.” “And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.” “Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”

We need to realize how important it is that we understand that we have been born again by the Spirit of God in order to overcome the world. The Holy Spirit creates faith within the heart, and this is the only reason that we have the power to overcome the world. But it is even more. The person who does overcome the world is the one who believes in Christ’s name. That is, they exercise their on-going faith not only in what Christ has done for them by His grace, but they exercise their on-going faith in what Christ is presently doing for them, and what He will continue to help them to do all through their Christian life; to keep God’s commandments by faith, to not love the world because of faith, and to overcome the world by faith in Christ.

John Calvin says – “This is the victory as he had said that all who are born of God overcome the world, he also sets forth the way of overcoming it. For it might be still asked, whence comes this victory? He then makes the victory over the world to depend on faith. This passage is remarkable, for though Satan continually repeats his dreadful and horrible onsets, yet the Spirit of God, declaring that we are beyond the reach of danger, removes fear, and animates us to fight with courage. And the past time is more emphatical than the present or the future; for he says, that has overcome, in order that we might feel certain, as though the enemy had been already put to flight. It is, indeed, true, that our warfare continues through life, that our conflicts are daily; nay, that new and various battles are every moment on every side stirred up against us by the enemy; but as God does not arm us only for one day, and as faith is not that of one day, but is the perpetual work of the Holy Spirit, we are already partakers of victory, as though we had already conquered.

This confidence does not, however, introduce indifference, but renders us always anxiously intent on fighting. For the Lord thus bids his people to be certain, while yet he would not have them to be secure; but on the contrary, he declares that they have already overcome, in order that they may fight more courageously and more strenuously. The term world has here a wide meaning, for it includes whatever is

adverse to the Spirit of God: thus, the corruption of our nature is a part of the world; all lusts, all the crafts of Satan, in short, whatever leads us away from God. Having such a force to contend with, we have an immense war to carry on, and we should have been already conquered before coming to the contest, and we should be conquered a hundred times daily, had not God promised to us the victory. But God encourages us to fight by promising us the victory. But as this promise secures to us perpetually the invincible power of God, so, on the other hand, it annihilates all the strength of men. For the Apostle does not teach us here that God only brings some help to us, so that being aided by him, we may be sufficiently able to resist; but he makes victory to depend on faith alone; and faith receives from another that by which it overcomes. They then take away from God what is his own, who sing triumph to their own power.”

Revelation 3: 14-21 – “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: ‘I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked – I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

When we as Christians rest our own power and strength in perseverance upon any worldly wisdom or earthly strategy, and not upon the power and command and example of Christ, we will find ourselves becoming selfish and worldly in our thinking. We will begin to reason like these Laodiceans. We will think that we need nothing immediately from Christ; His Spirit or His grace. We will become lukewarm and indifferent to what we should be doing to keep His commandments by faith. This will lead to Christ’s vomiting us out of His mouth if we do not repent. In other words, we make Him sick if we are worldly. We have become neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, and Christ will spit us out of His mouth. He has tasted of our viewpoint in living our life and it is sickening to Him. He will not do anything with us until we repent. We must receive His counsel in order to persevere and overcome. The sin of the world Christian is that they do not think that they need anything if they are wealthy. They do not know that they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, spiritually speaking. The counsel is to buy gold refined in the fire, which is spiritual riches in the time of trial and testing. To buy something means that there is a cost to keeping Christ’s commandments, but as it says in Psalm 19: 7 – “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” Both of the pictures that follow in Revelation 3: 18 of eye-salve and white garments to clothe the spiritual nakedness with, come from the believer’s seeing their need of Christ’s grace which would teach them the fear of the Lord. By heeding the warnings which Christ gives, and applying the eye-salve of the wisdom which the Spirit brings, we will then taste and see that He is good. We will repent of our worldly attitudes and we will open the door to sit down and dine and have fellowship with Christ. This will enable us to overcome the world and sit down with Christ on His throne when it comes our time to die. Will it not be sweet to our heart and mind to do so?