This is very clear in the Parable of the Sower. Here only the soil which brings forth the fruit, is the portrayal of saving faith. Here it is clearly seen that a distinguishing mark of true saving faith is a perseverance which brings forth fruit.

Matthew 13:18-23 - 18 "Hear then the parable of the sower. 19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. 20 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. 22 "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 23 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

NASB

Another way to say this is that perseverance is the distinguishing mark of true saving faith. It is clear in Scripture that when one falls away from the fellowship of believers to pursue a life of sin and unbelief, and does not bring forth the fruits of righteousness and obedience that they have committed Apostasy.

What then is Apostasy?
Apostasy is generally defined as the determined, willful rejection of Christ and His teachings by a professing Christian. John Murray wisely states about this condition…

"It is in fact possible to give all the outward signs of faith in Christ and obedience to Him, to witness for a time a good confession and show great zeal for Christ and His kingdom and then lose all interest and become indifferent, if not hostile, to the claims of Christ and of His kingdom."

This condition is clearly seen in Scripture. Even Israel was at certain points in their history clearly portrayed as having forsaken and rejected God. In Jesus teaching it is clearly what is portrayed in the rocky places in the Parable of the Sower….

Matthew 13:20-21 - 20 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

John Murray comments on this… “Some people appear to be converted, they boil over with enthusiasm for a little while, and then suddenly cool off. They disappear from the fellowship of the saints. Others do not show the same enthusiasm; their attachment to the faith of Christ has never been one of very pronounced character. But in the course of time it becomes precariously tenuous and finally the tie is completely broken, they walk no more in the path of the righteous.”

Let us not underestimate the lengths and heights to which a temporary faith may carry those who have it. Consider Judas and his fellowship with our Lord and His disciples, how in fact none of the disciples even knew that the whole time Judas had a in genuine faith and was secretly stealing from the money bag. His lack of perseverance in the end showed his true condition and he was lost. He was a mere professor, not a true believer. This matter is also mentioned by Peter and portrayed by the writer to the Hebrews in the form of a warning not to do it.

2 Peter 2:20-22 - 20 For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire." NASB

Hebrews 6:4-6 - 4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame. NASB

John Murray again wisely concludes….. “The Scripture itself, therefore, leads us to the conclusion that it is possible to have a very uplifting, ennobling, reforming and exhilarating experience of the power and truth of the Gospel, to come into such close contact with the supernatural forces which are operative in God’s kingdom of grace
that these forces produce effects in us which to human observation are hardly distinguishable from those produced by God’s regenerating and sanctifying grace and yet be not partakers of Christ and heirs of eternal life.”

It is clear then and therefore that those who “fall away” in a pattern of continual sin and break fellowship with the Church were never truly “born again.” It is apparent to us that many people will confess Christ with their tongues but deny Him with their life. We may have known someone who supposedly believed and followed Christ, but at some point became disillusioned and turned there back on Christ, falling into a life of self-will and sin again. If God’s Spirit has regenerated us and lives within us, we will bear the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Good trees bear good fruit and bad trees bear bad fruit. If we have truly believed, there will be a sanctifying power at work in our lives, which will be evident and we will, by God’s good grace, persevere to the end and be saved. We will not shrink back and be destroyed.

Hebrews 10:39 - 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul. NASB

1 John and Saving Faith
A true Christian has been “born of God”, because God has decided to give Him life, and that life is eternal by nature. When we have been “born again”, we have become new creations with an eternal destiny. You cannot turn from genuine faith, because you are kept by Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Bible never teaches that someone who is genuinely saved, can reject or disengage themselves from Christ. Someone who apostatizes must have had at one time an orthodox and essential profession, but not a genuine new birth. But as John explains of the apostates or antichrists;

1 John 2:18-19 - 18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us. NASB

If one were "born of God" he could not continue to sin. A proper understanding of salvation issues from the book of first John alone, shines light as clear as a sunbeam on these issues.

1 John 3:6-10 - 6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. NASB

When an apostate continues in his sin, he shows the reality of his eternal state and divine calling. When one continues in righteousness and truth, their works are the proof positive of saving faith.

1 John 2:29 - 29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him. NASB

When an apostate breaks fellowship with Christians, and begins to live in continual patterns of sin, they show themselves to be children of the devil.

1 John 3:10 - 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. NASB

John makes it crystal clear that the distinguishing mark of true faith is the fruit or product that comes from it. When the product of one’s life is a continual pattern of sin, they manifest that the true nature of their faith is only profession and not the fruit of being “born of God.”

1 John 4:7-9 - 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. NASB

Those who have been born of the divine will, (John 1:13), persevere. Not because they persist in their own spiritual fervor, but because Christ the good Shepherd knows His sheep, and He will lose none that the Father has given Him, but will raise them up at the last day (John 6:39). 

1 John 5:18-19 - 18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him. NASB
These truths do not negate our responsibility to continue to have faith and obedience, rather they require it

It is important that we do not become complacent by the understanding that our salvation is secure. The scripture warns us over and over again to pursue our faith in Christ. It is filled with exhortations and admonishments to keep our lives free from sin, to be holy and to live after the pattern we were given by Christ. Those who are born of God will persevere till the end and will bear the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. We must therefore be diligent to assure ourselves that we belong to Christ by our willing obedience.

2 Peter 1:10-11 - 10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, NIV

2 Tim 2:19 - 19 Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness." NIV

Heb 6:11-12 - 11 We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. 12 We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. NIV

The Westminster Confession on Perseverance

CHAPTER XVII.

Of The Perseverance of the Saints.

I. They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

II. This perseverance of the saints depends, not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

III. Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their perseverance, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and prevalency others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.