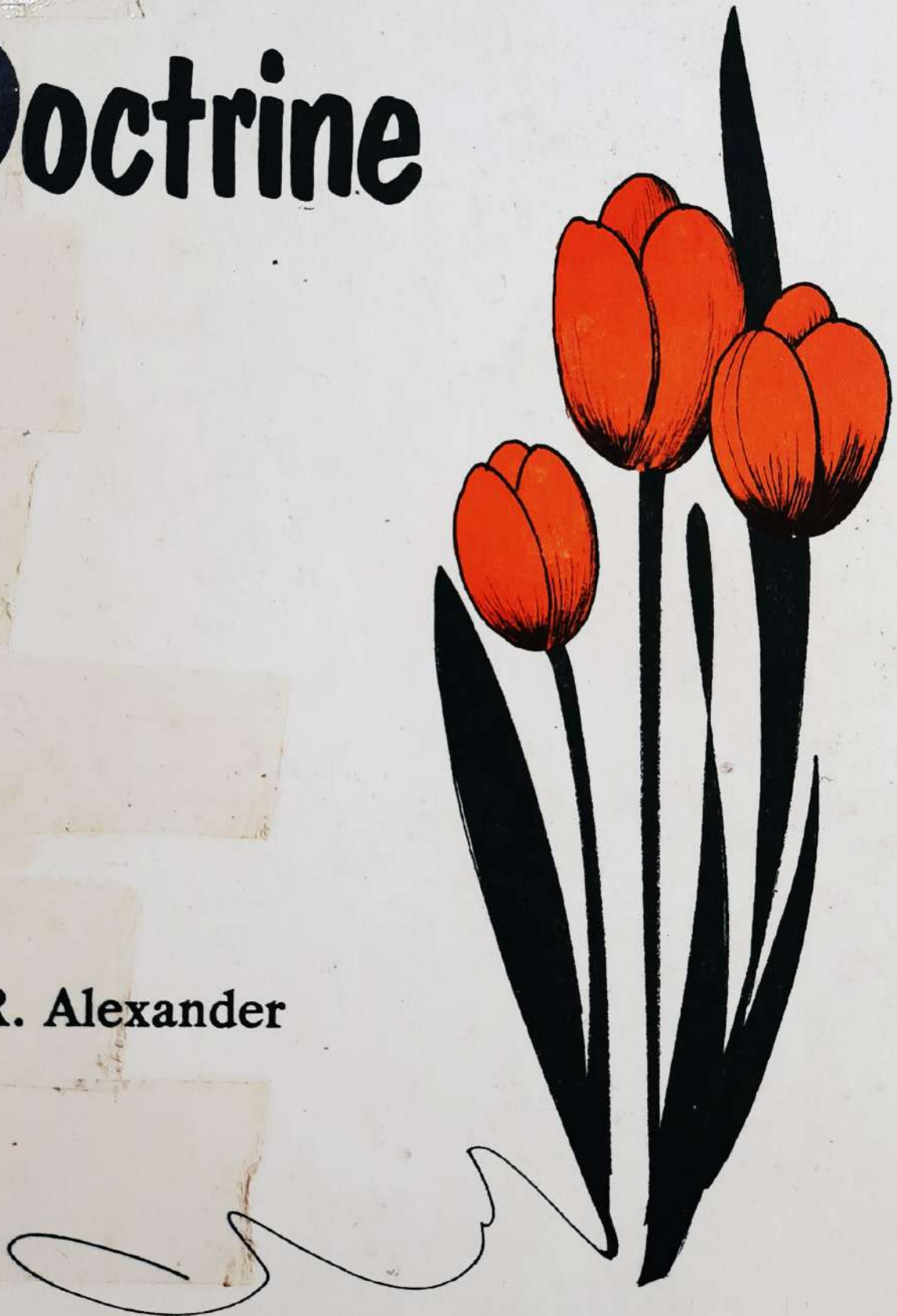


# the Tulip Doctrine

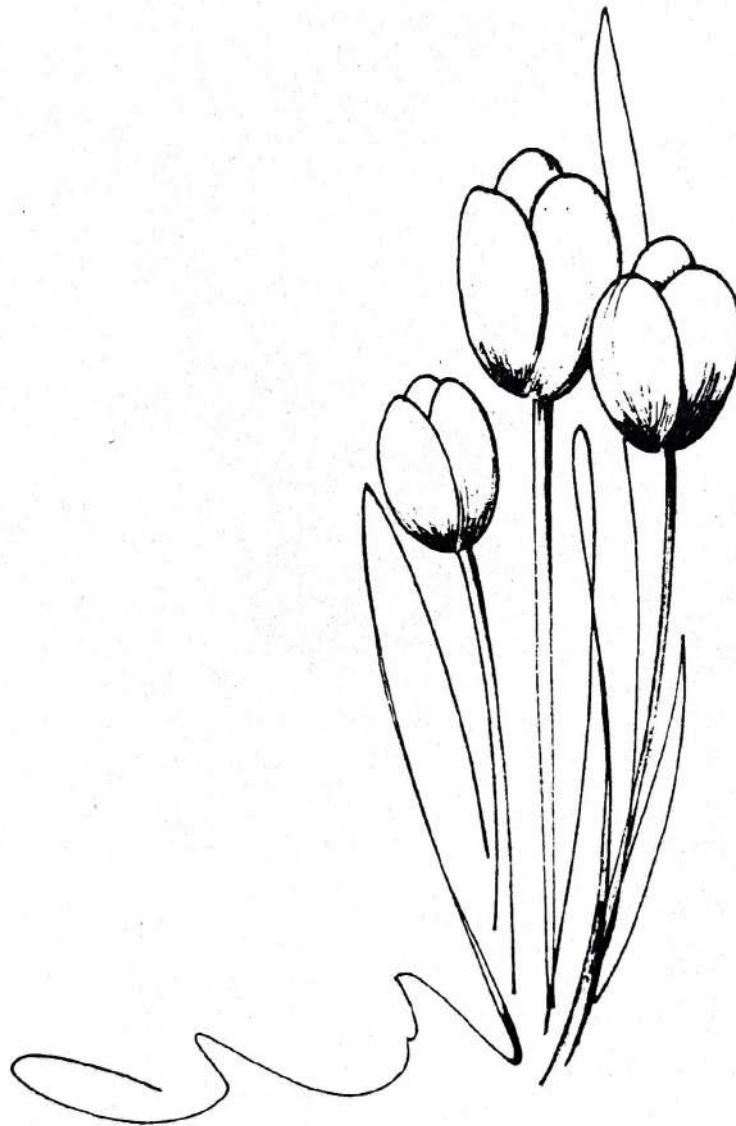
J.R. Alexander



*Roy W. Cullum*

# **THE TULIP DOCTRINE**

**J.R. Alexander**



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The Tulip Doctrine**

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## FORWARD

I have read the manuscript of Dr. Jesse R. Alexander for this book titled *THE TULIP DOCTRINE. THE TULIP DOCTRINE* embraces the "Five Points of Calvinism". Dr. Alexander has been a pastor of Missionary Baptist Church for a number of years and is presently pastor of Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, Overbeck, Ohio. He has served for a number of years as an instructor at Texas Baptist Institute in Henderson, Texas. He has also served as Dean and instructor at the Eastern Baptist Institute and Seminary in Monroe, Ohio for a number of years.

Brother Alexander was brought up in the midst of some who taught a "limited atonement", "unconditional election", and "irresistible grace". He has put much study and effort over the years on the "Five Points of Calvinism". He has boldly and scripturally exposed in this book the errors of Calvinism.

The book should be widely distributed amongst Missionary Baptists everywhere. It will serve as an antidote to the Calvinism that is being advocated by even a few preachers in Missionary Baptist ranks.

Dr. Alexander is a student of the Word. I highly recommend this book to those who wish more light on the "tulip" doctrine of Calvinism.

Vernon L. Barr



## PREFACE

The "TULIP" Doctrine, otherwise called "Five Point Calvinism", is a compilation of five doctrines, the names of which form the acrostic "T-U-L-I-P". Thus, the "T" in the word stands for the doctrine of "Total Hereditary Depravity"; the "U" stands for "Unconditional Election"; the "L" refers to "Limited Atonement"; "I" means "Irresistible Grace"; and "P" stands for "Perseverance of the Saints".

Some of those are true Bible Doctrines and are to be loved and taught earnestly. But some of these doctrines have been developed as a result of men wrestling Scriptures pertaining to their subject matter. There is a kind of intellectual pride that seems to permeate the attitude of a man when he thinks he has gotten hold of profound truths which the average Bible student cannot comprehend. This pride apparently governs the thinking of many men and steers their minds away from the task and scholastic integrity of finding the perfect harmony of all the Scriptures on all Bible subjects. Thus, they are eventually forced to wrest some Scriptures, and perhaps ignore others, in order to bolster their theories.

Missionary Baptists make a grave mistake when they ignore and treat as insignificant and inconsequential the preachments of such systems as Calvinism. It behooves truth loving Baptists to recognize the presence of theological errors, weigh all doctrines carefully in the light of the Scriptures, and to expose fallacies wherever they exist.

Man, in his natural state, is totally depraved. Is man able to respond to God before he is regenerated by the Spirit of God? God elected some members of Adam's race to be recipients of His mercy and salvation. Was that election unconditional, and did it prohibit any man from being saved? Christ died to atone for sins. Did He die for all men, or only for the elect? Salvation is solely by the grace of God. Can a sinner resist God's grace that brings salvation? Every true believer will persevere in his relationship to God. Can a child of God disobey God and get out of fellowship with Him? These are the subjects of discussion in this series of discourses.

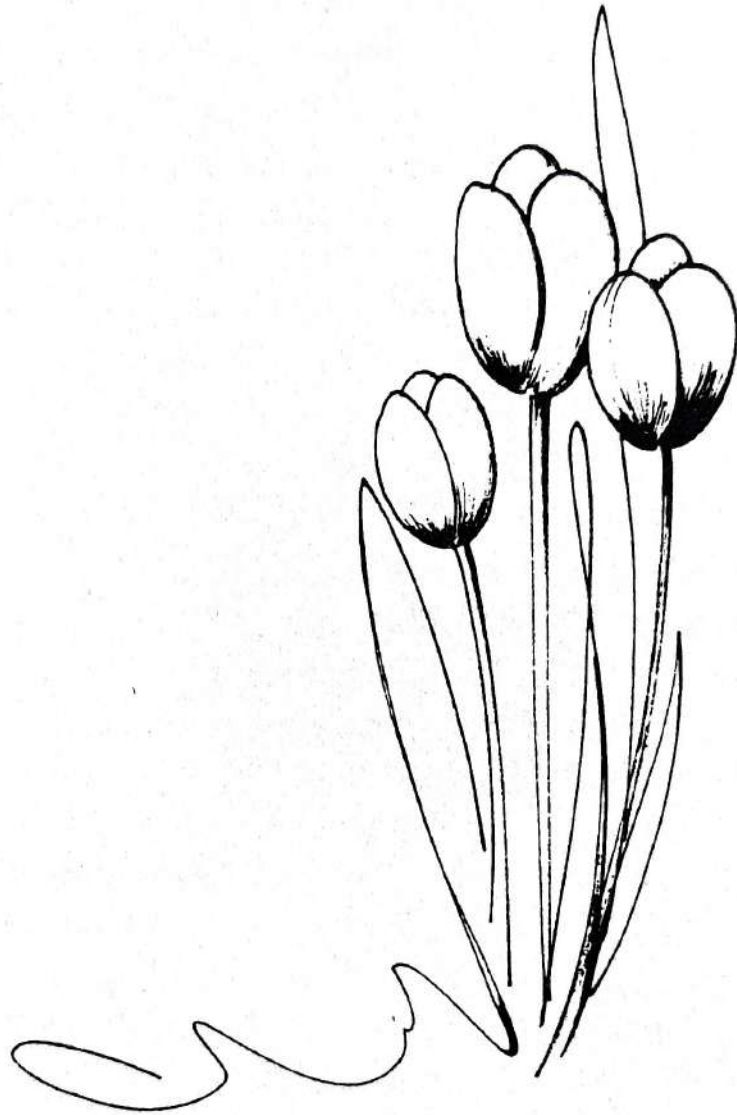
The messages in this volume are the result of a series of sermons preached by the author on the "TULIP" Doctrine in Park Layne Baptist Church, New Carlisle, Ohio, in January, 1974. In the presentation and examination of the doctrines, both in the oral sermons and in the writing of this volume, no attempt has been made to delve into the technicalities of the original Bible languages -- Hebrew and Greek. Rather, the doctrines have been discussed from the layman's vantage point, using primarily the King James version of the Scriptures. Passages from other versions, the American Translation of the New Testament by Edgar J. Goodspeed, Williams' Translation of the New Testament, etc., have been used in order to present more clearly the meaning of certain Scriptures. Also, quotations from some Calvinistic authors and teachers are used.

If Bible students find in this volume any help in their study of the subjects involved, and encouragement to study the Word of God and to seek diligently for the beautiful harmony of all the Scriptures on all Bible subjects, the purpose for the writing will have been fulfilled and the efforts of the author amply rewarded.

J. R. Alexander



# **LECTURE I**



# **TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY**



## **"Total Hereditary Depravity"**

This is a series of five messages that were preached by Dr. J. R. Alexander at a mid-winter Bible conference hosted by the Park Layne Baptist Church in New Carlisle, Ohio. The Pastor there is Brother Jacob Bagby. The date was January 12, 1976. Brother J. R. Alexander was, at that time, the Dean of the Eastern Baptist Institute and Seminary and the Pastor of the Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in Overpeck, Ohio.

There are many people who have an aversion to the word "doctrine". It simply means "teaching". I like the word "doctrine" because it is a Bible Word. I'm here to discuss the TULIP Doctrine. Some of you may not be acquainted with what the TULIP Doctrine is. It's the doctrine of Calvinism. They take the word "TULIP" and make an acrostic out of it, a figure of speech wherein each letter in the word "Tulip" stands for a particular doctrine. The "T", the first letter, represents the doctrine of "Total Hereditary Depravity". The "U" represents "Unconditional Election". The "L" stands for "Limited Atonement". That means that Christ died for only the elect; that he didn't die for all men. The "I" stands for "Irresistable Grace". The letter "P" stands for the doctrine of the "perseverance of the Saints".

I will discuss one of these doctrines each evening. Some of them are Missionary Baptist doctrines and where this is true, I shall emphasize the teaching very strongly. However, I'll endeavor to hold up in the clearest light I know how the errors propagated by the Calvinistic application of these doctrines. The subject for discussion this evening is the doctrine of "Total Hereditary Depravity".

Romans 5:12 is the text I will read concerning the doctrine of "total Hereditary Depravity". A lot of you Missionary Baptists should be able to quote this passage



of scripture from memory: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;"

Now let me, lest I forget it later, point out to you that when the Bible uses the term "sin", many times, especially when it uses it as a noun, it isn't referring to an act, but to the sin principle in nature, and it is that sin nature that I'm going to be discussing as well as the sinful acts of men. Our sinful acts are simply the fruits of our sinful nature. So, the subject before us this evening is "Total Hereditary Depravity". There are very few in nominal christianity who believe this doctrine, but as long as there have been Baptists in this world, and there have been since the days of John the Baptist, Missionary Baptists have believed and taught this doctrine.

The word "depravity" means "corruption, immorality, sinful". When I refer to the natural state of a man, I am talking about his condition or state before he is regenerated in the new birth. The man in his natural state, unregenerated, every aspect of his being, body, mind, spirit, soul, all that you can use to describe his being, is sinful, corrupted with sin. There isn't any part of a man that isn't corrupted with sin. The word "hereditary" means being transmitted from the parents to the offspring in conception and birth. Each individual receives his sinful nature from his parents. Now, if you're not aware of it, you need to be aware of it, that the psychologists of the world today are trying hard to disprove this doctrine. And, more than that, nominal christianity is trying hard to disprove this doctrine. Most psychologists teach today that man is a victim of his own environment and the changes in environment will solve all his problems. The thing they never have explained to the people is how a man who is a victim of his own environment is going to change his environment.

Not only is a man a sinner by nature, but he's a sinner by practice. I'll show you some scriptures that



teach us indisputably that a man is a sinner by nature and by practice. He doesn't sin in order to become a sinner; he sins because he is a sinner. He is born with that nature. In Psalm 51:5, the prophet, David, said: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." I maintain that David is teaching that the conception of a life, the conception of a living human being takes place in a sin nature. That is the law that is called the law of "like begets like". Sinful parents cannot produce a sinless offspring. You can't plant a cocklebur and get a poppy from it. You plant a cocklebur and you're going to get a cocklebur from it. Like begets like.

Psalm 58:3, David says: "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." Now that little baby you are holding in your arms is not a little angel, it never has been and never will be. And you don't have to teach that child to lie. He doesn't have to be ten years old before he learns how to lie. You can put him in his crib and leave him and the first thing you know he's crying to the top of his voice and there's not a thing in the world wrong with him. He just wants some attention; he's just lying. He's born a liar. And the Word says here: "...they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."

Psalm 39, verse 5, David says: "Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee:..." Now listen to this: "...verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Now that didn't say the worst character he could develop. That didn't say the worst state before men, but every man at his best state. That means the best character he can develop; the best moral state he has, is altogether vanity. That means he's worthless. Void of anything that is of value. Psalm 62:9 tells us about the same thing as that scripture. Isaiah 64:6: "But we are all as an unclean thing..." Now let me pause here to tell you the meaning of the language the prophet is using here. Some of you are



aware of the fact that in the old Bible days a disease called leprosy was widespread. When a person discovered he had leprosy, usually it showed up first with little white splotches on the skin, and in due time sores would come up there and ooze with a putrid, horrible corruption that oozed from the sores. They had to keep those sores wrapped with bandages. Under the Mosaic law system, wherever a leper went he had to warn everybody within hearing distance of him, "Unclean! Unclean!" That means "I'm a leper! Don't get near me!" I don't know whether or not any of you have ever worked with sick people. The most horrible stink there is is decaying human flesh. I had a little experience with that. You can imagine how corrupt and how stinking those bandages were that soaked up the corruption from the leper's sores. That's what the prophet is calling filthy rags here. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness...", not the worst things we do, but the best things we do. "...all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;..." They stink to God. "...and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Jeremiah, chapter 13:23 tells how indelible our sin nature is in us. God asked a rhetorical question, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?..." He didn't give an answer to the question because there need not be an answer. The answer is obvious. The Ethiopian's skin is black by nature. And you can wash him with lye soap and he'll still be black. The leopard's skin is spotted by nature. Wash him with anything you have at hand and he'll still have those spots. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jeremiah 13:23). It is the nature and custom and practice of the sinner to do evil.

Jeremiah 17:9 lets us know the kind of heart man has before he is regenerated. "The heart is deceitful above all



things, and desperately wicked;..." Now I know you've heard people, trying to defend a man and his wickedness, say, 'Oh, he's really a good man at heart.' But his heart is his trouble. And the Bible even calls a man a fool who trusts in his own heart (Proverbs 8:26). The heart is the most deceitful thing you have. That's what the Bible says. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;..." (Jeremiah 17:9). That means it'll go to no ends to love wickedness and to do wickedness.

Now I'm going to refer you to some other scriptures and I want you to make note of them. Isaiah, chapter 1, verses 5 and 6, Matthew, chapter 23, verses 27 and 28, which is the chapter where Jesus told those Pharisees that they were like whited sepulchres, that on the outside appeared beautiful to me, but on the inside they were full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matthew 23:28). Mark, chapter 7, verses 20 and 23 relates how the Pharisees critized Jesus and His disciples because Jesus allowed the disciples to eat without first washing their hands. He told them that it isn't what goes into the mouth that defiles the man, but rather, what comes out of the mouth. "And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man, for from within, out of the heart of men, prodeed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Matthew 7:20-23).

Now let's be honest. Many times you have done something wrong and then said 'I didn't mean to do that'. But it happened in your heart before you did it outwardly. That's what Jesus is teaching. Every thought, word, and deed comes from the heart. All these things come from the heart and they defile the man.

Now let us observe some other scriptures. Romans,

chapter 3, verses 9 through 19, paints an ugly picture of man's nature.

"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

Their feet are swift to shed blood:

Destruction and misery are in their ways:

And the way of peace have they not known:

There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 8:6, 7: "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

Romans 7:14-21:

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not: but what I hate, that do I.

If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.



Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."

In this scripture Paul is describing the two natures of a child of God. The flesh (fleshly nature) is altogether sinful, and the regenerated spirit of a child of God is altogether righteous. The flesh and the spirit of a child of God war against each other, and you can count on it, child of God, your flesh is going to give your regenerated spirit trouble as long as you live in this body. Ephesians 2:1-3: "And you hath quickened..." Literally, "Made alive", the word "quickened" means to make alive. "...who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein..."-that is, in that state of death in trespasses and sin- "...in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind: and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." All these scriptures teach very clearly that man is a sinner by nature, and that he derives his sin nature by the fleshly birth.

Not only is man a sinner by nature, but man practices sin and he likes it. Unregenerated man loves sin more than he loves life itself. That is a sad fact but it is a fact. In Job, chapter 15, verses 14 through 16, we read: "What is



man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?"

If man drinks iniquity like water, then he likes it, and he practices it. Psalm 58:3 reads: "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." We begin to practice sin when we are born. And we've been practicing it all our lives because it is our nature to do it. Ecclesiastes 7:20, the wise man, Solomon, said: "There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." I, honestly, cannot comprehend, other than the fact that the Devil leads men in the matters of religion many times, how a man who claims to know the Lord as his Saviour can read such language as this and then claim that man has a little goodness in him. That's beyond me. But the Scripture says: "There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccl. 7:20). Ecclesiastes 8:11 presents a principle that teaches why people commit terrible acts of sin: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily..." That is, because God doesn't kill a man as soon as he sins. "...Therefore, the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to evil." Man thinks he's getting by with it. Now, you ought to know, by growing up, that if a boy intends to do something wrong and he's got one chance in a thousand to get by without getting caught doing it, he will likely do it. Let his daddy tell him, 'Don't you steal that watermelon!', if he thinks there's one chance in a thousand that he'll get by with stealing it, he'll do it.

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore, the heart of the sons of men..." There's the source of our evil thoughts, purposes and deeds. From the heart is the issues of life. Hypocrisy comes from the heart. All that comes out of the mouth



originates in the heart. "...the heart of the sons of men is folly set in them to do evil."

Now look to Jeremiah 13:23 again: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" If he can, "then may you also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." What man is accustomed to doing, he certainly practices. This expression, "accustomed to do evil" shows emphatically that man practices sin naturally and incessantly. Psalm 14:2,3 declares: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." And Romans 3:23 says: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Now, I want to get to the heart of this subject, that is, how man's depravity affects his relationship to God. This is where some grevous errors are made by both Calvinists and "Free-will" Baptists. I do not like the term "free moral agent". Man is not a free moral agent. If you analyze that term, you will find that it means a person can act in the field of morals irrespective of any outside influence. But it is just not possible for any man to be out from under the influence of both God and the Devil as long as he is in this world. I'm going to talk about that influence a little later. You're not going to see a day in your life as a child of God when God is not influencing you and when the Devil is not influencing you. Neither will a lost sinner see a day in his life, as long as his is capable of responding to influence, when he is not influenced by both God and the Devil. I get a little bit amused everytime I think about that woman down in Texas, Madeline Murray O'Hare, who said a few years ago, "I hope to see the time when I can walk down any street in any city in the United States and not see a church or anything that reminds me of God." She'll never do that. But in her statement she unwittingly admitted that there is a God. And He



influences her. Even an athiest has to admit a little truth once in awhile.

Man is by natural birth an alien to God. Let me define this term "alien" for you. It means "stranger". An alien is one who is wholly different in nature, incongruous, a person from another family or race or nation and so on. A foreign born resident of a country in which he does not have the privileges of a citizen. Now an alien to God, an alien sinner, an unregenerated sinner, is a person who has a nature that is totally different from the nature of God. And he does not possess the privileges of a citizen of heaven and of God's kingdom. That's what I mean by an alien sinner. And I believe that definition will stand up in the light of all of the Scriptures.

In the second chapter of Ephesians, verses 11 and 12, Paul wrote to the brethren at the church of Ephesus, who had been saved, and reminded them of what they had been before they were saved, "Wherefore, remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles...", that is, "heathen". A heathen is just a person without God. "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."

They were without God, they had no hope, they had no part in what was called the commonwealth of Israel, citizenship in the community or commonwealth. They had no part in God's covenant kingdom which was manifested in the nation of Israel. Ephesians 4:17-18 further shows their alienation from God, not only from citizenship in God's kingdom, but from the life of God. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from



the life of God..." Now this meant that those Gentiles to whom he referred in verse 17 were strangers to God, cut off from God, had no part with Him; they were alienated, estranged, cut off, from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them. They didn't know God because of the blindness of their hearts.

And in Psalm 58:3, David said, "The wicked are estranged..." When does a sinner become estranged from God? "...from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies". They come into this world alien to God, strangers to God. Not only is man alien to God in the sense that he has a nature that is wholly different from God's nature, and he has no privileges as a citizen of heaven or of God's kingdom, but man in his natural state does not know God.

In John, chapter 17, verse 3, Jesus said to the Father, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Those who do not know God are unregenerated, they are lost, they have no part with Him. John, chapter 15, verse 21, "But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." Jesus was warning his disciples of some persecution and hatred that was going to come to them after He should leave them. He said they will do these things to you because "they know not him that sent me." They don't know God the Father. John 16:3, Jesus said, "And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me."

In Acts, chapter 17, verse 23, it is revealed that when the Apostle Paul came to Mars' Hill he found some people who were worshipping, but they had an inscription over the altar that said "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD". They confessed in that inscription that they did not know Him.

II Thess. 1:6-8 tells of the awful destiny of those who, at the second coming of Christ, do not know God. It reads: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense



tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them, ..." What kind of people? "...that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:" What is going to happen to them? They will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power.

Man in his natural state not only is an alien, a stranger to God and doesn't know God, but he's dead, spiritually dead in trespasses and sin. I hope you understand what the word "death" means. It means separation. There are two kinds of death. One is the physical death and the other is spiritual death. And in both cases, death means separation.

Down in Texas a few years ago after doctors began to transplant hearts from one person to another, there was a man who was beaten to death in a bar. Some doctors took his heart out and transplanted it into another person, and those doctors stated that the man's heart was still beating and functioning when they took it out, but he was dead because his brain would no longer give off brain waves. And the defending attorneys for the people that had beaten him to death argued that those two men didn't kill him, that the doctors killed him when they took his heart out. Now some of you are old enough to remember that there was a time when people thought that when a man quit breathing he was dead. But men have long since learned that that's not true. Then they came to think that when the heart stops beating, then the person is dead. But that's not true. I had a little cousin who was shocked with electricity and for forty-five minutes his heart stopped beating. The doctors had massaged his heart and his heart started functioning again and he lived for several hours. They didn't bring him back to life, he was still alive. And it has been proven that a person can be dead and his heart still be beating for several minutes after he



died. I'm prone to think that the doctors are right in thinking that when the brain no longer gives out brain waves the man is dead. That thing had to be settled in the courts. I don't know whether it's settled yet or not. But one thing I put my foot down on and stand on it with the Word of God, that when the spirit of a man leaves his body, he is dead, and all the miracle workers in this world can't bring him back alive. That's what constitutes physical death, the separation of the soul, the spirit, from the body. Spiritual death means that the spirit of a man is separated from the Spirit of God. And let me tell you, if you're lost, your spirit will never know happiness and will never know satisfaction until it is united with God in the new birth. It's the only way you can ever know satisfaction. Ephesians, chapter 2, verse 1, "And you hath he quickened..." That is, made alive. "...who were dead in trespasses and sins;"

Matthew 8:19-22 records an interesting incident. A man came to Jesus one day and said, "Master I will follow you wherever you go." He said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Verse 21 reads: "And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." Some say he meant, 'let me go and stay with my father, until he dies, then I'll bury him.' Some say that the father may have already been dead and he needed to go and bury him. It doesn't matter which is meant. "But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." Now, it is logically certain that Jesus was not telling this man to let the physically dead bury their dead. You've never seen bodies rise up out of the cemetery and bury another corpse. No, that's not what Jesus meant. He meant, let the spiritually dead bury their dead.

In John 6:53, Jesus said: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Now, He was talking to people who were walking



around, physically alive and active and even giving Him difficulties, opposing Him. In our English language, if we talk about the life of a plant, or the physical life of a man, or the spiritual life we get in salvation, eternal life, we still use the same word "life". But those people didn't do that. They had one word that meant physical life, that was "bios", and they had another word that meant "spiritual life" and that was "zoa". The people to whom Jesus was speaking knew both of those words and they know the kind of life He was talking about. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no (spirit) life in you." They knew what kind of life He was talking about.

In Colossians, chapter 2, verse 13, Paul said, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;" These Scriptures make it very clear that unregenerated man is dead spiritually in his depravity.

Now I'm going to discuss the error of Calvinism, what I believe to be a serious and grave error Calvinism makes concerning the doctrine of total hereditary depravity. Calvinists teach that an alien sinner, being dead in sin and estranged from God, can neither act toward God nor respond to God, that is, the sinner must first be given eternal life, spiritual life, before he can even respond to God. I've met this teaching from the time I was a beginner preacher.

There was an old Hard-shell Baptist preacher, my wife's uncle, a man I loved very much, who used to argue to me like this. He would say, "Remember, that the Bible teaches that a man, an alien sinner, is spiritually dead, and you never saw a dead man in your life that could act." I couldn't answer that. I would see a dead corpse in my mind. I would see a corpse lying in a casket, and he was absolutely helpless to act. And I didn't know what to do with that. The old preacher said to me one day, "I had the



privilege of seeing two babies born, two of my children, and I was glad when I heard them cry, because I knew that at least they were alive." And I couldn't dispute that. And he said that when a sinner cries out to God, it indicates that he is already alive spiritually. God has already given him eternal life.

Another old Hard-shell Baptist preacher was preaching from Deuteronomy 32:9-12, where God used the symbol of a mother eagle bearing her young on her wings, showing God's dealings with Jacob, his leading Jacob. He told how a mother eagle will build her nest high up in the mountains at the edge of a cliff, and when her little eaglets are feathered out, and when they are ready to learn to fly, she will push them out of the nest and over the cliff. He said, you've never heard such screaming in all your life, as that little eaglet does as it is falling toward the rocks and craggs below, which seems to him to be certain destruction; but that is a live eagle that screams. And he argued that when a sinner cries out to God in fear of judgment and destruction, he has already been made alive in his spirit by the Spirit of God.

Calvinism teaches that the new birth, the impartation of eternal spirit life necessarily comes before repentance and faith. I'm going to prove that's not true. They say that a man must be given eternal life, spirit life, before he can come to God, before he repents, before he exercises faith in Christ. They say the fact that he repents and trusts Christ is evidence that God has already given him eternal life. This is Calvinism.

I want to show you that dead men can act. Back there in one of the scriptures I read in Matthew, chapter 8, verse 22, I don't think the Son of God got His language mixed up when He said: "Let the dead bury their dead." The dead act when they bury their dead.

In the Bible narrative of the Prodigal Son, recorded in Luke 15:11-32, Jesus tells about the boy that sent to his father and said, "Give me my part of the estate". And he



took it and went over to a foreign country where he had a good time. He lived it up, so to speak, until he spent all that he had. And he came to learn that nobody would give him anything. And he wound up in a hog pen feeding hogs for a man and trying to sustain himself on what the hogs were eating. And the scripture says: "When he came to himself..." (Luke 15:17) he said, to put it in our words, "What am I doing here? Back there at my father's house there is food to spare and here I am starving. What am I doing down here? I'm going to rise up and go to my father and I will say to him, Father, I've sinned against you and against heaven and I am no more worthy to be called your son. Just make me as one of your hired servants." And he went back to his father. And I think that father was sitting there watching for him to come back. When the boy came, he confessed his sins to his father and said, "Father I have sinned against you and against heaven and I am no more worthy to be called your son." He never did get to say "...just make me as one of your hired servants." His father said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat and be merry." Now the son who was out in the field working, serving his father, came home that night and saw that his father was having a banquet. He asked one of the servants what was going on. He told him his brother had come home and they had killed the fatted calf. It made that boy so angry that he wouldn't even go in. But his father came out to him. The father reasoned with the boy and said, "You've always been with me and all that I have is yours;" and I want you to notice the last verse of chapter 15 of Luke: "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." Remember that though a child of God may get out of fellowship with God, he is never dead to God. His spirit is never separated from God. But this



father said "...for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found."

When the dead son "came to himself", that is, realized his hopeless condition, and realized that there was plenty of food at his father's house, he purposed to go to his father's house and confess his sins. When he came to his father, he acted; but he was dead. That's what the Word says. Yet, he acted. Likewise, when a lost sinner, under the convicting influence of the Holy Spirit, comes to realize his ruined, hopeless condition, he can repent (turn to God) and receive the bread of life that is so bountifully offered by the Lord.

On Sunday morning when I go to church, I usually turn my radio on and I hear a man preaching about what he calls "sovereign grace". He calls it the message of sovereign grace. And he ridicules and condemns the doctrine that teaches that a sinner must receive salvation. Now I believe that all of salvation is by grace. But it is in error to teach that the sinner gets salvation without receiving it. The Word of God shows that not only can a spiritually dead alien sinner act, but he must act in order to obtain eternal spiritual life. In John, chapter 6, verses 48-57, Jesus taught a multitude of people that He was the Bread of Life that came down from heaven. Here is the crux of the whole argument. Verse 53 reads: "Then said Jesus unto them, Verily Verily, I say unto you, Except...", now I want you to notice that word, and you get a dictionary and look it up. It means there is no other way, there is no alternative. "...except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." When you eat food, you literally receive that food into your body. You may sit down at a table where a bountiful meal is spread, and just look at the food and comment its appearance and commend the one who prepared it, but that food will never do you any good unless you eat it. When you eat it, you literally receive it into your body and it is digested and assimilated with your



body tissues and becomes one with your body. When you drink water, the same thing occurs. But eating is an act and drinking is an act. Jesus knew these two acts presented a beautiful symbol of what constitutes saving faith. That is not saving faith that simply recognizes mentally that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I can't remember a time in my life from my youth up that I ever questioned that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I was taught that from my infancy up, and I believed it in my mind. That is a mental consenting faith. But when I was twenty years old, I heard the gospel preached and I came to know that I was lost and condemned and I, in my heart, received Christ. I ate Him spiritually. I drank His blood spiritually. I trusted Him. Christ became one with my spirit, the bread and life of my soul, and in Him my spirit became united with the Spirit God. This is eternal life.

Let me read this again, and you just do a little deduction here. "Except ye eat flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Now if a man who doesn't eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man has no life, but he who does eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood has eternal life, when did he get it? He got it when he ate the flesh of the Son of Man and drank His blood. Now, I don't think our Calvinist friends would argue the doctrine of transubstantiation. I think they believe the eating of flesh and drinking of blood refers to faith. That's the thing Jesus is teaching. Jesus wanted us to know that one must receive the benefits of His broken body and shed blood and when he does that, he gets eternal life.

You can draw the line as narrow as you want to between a spiritually dead sinner and one who has eternal spirit life, but the sinner who has no faith in Christ is spiritually dead. The unbeliever is spiritually dead; he has no eternal life. The believer has eternal life. When did he



get it? He got it at the very instant he received Christ into his heart by faith.

Further proof that a dead sinner acts in order to obtain eternal life is shown in a grand old invitation given in Isaiah 55:1-3. Isaiah represented God as a merchant. Back in the Bible days, before they had neon signs and things that a modern businessman has to attract attention, the merchant would stand in the doorway of his store and cry to the passerby, "Ho! Ho!" That word was to attract attention for them to come in and buy his merchandise. But I tell you that God was the strangest merchant you ever heard of. You never heard of one, especially a Jew, who called to people who didn't have any money and invited them to come in and buy. Listen to God. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." The price has already been paid. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?..." Or literally, food. "...and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" Fleshly religion cannot satisfy the human soul, "...hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Hearing is an act. It is a perceptual act, but it is an act. And God in all of this invitation is talking to one who is spiritually bankrupt, one who has nothing with which to pay for the bread of life. God invites him to come, and coming is an act. God invites him to buy and buying is an act. We are so accustomed to buying things with money that we forget that the word "buy" really means to appropriate to oneself. God invites him to eat and eating is an act. I might buy a loaf of bread and start down the street and somebody might dispute my right of ownership of it, but if I eat it, there is not a law in the world that can take it away from me. It's mine. God



said, "...come ye, buy and eat...incline your ear and come unto me..." But the man is dead. According to the doctrine of Calvinism, the spiritually dead sinner can neither incline his ear to God, not come to God, nor buy (appropriate) the bread and water of life, nor eat it. Yet, God calls upon the lost, dead, alien sinner to "come, buy and eat". Each of these represents a spiritual act the dead sinner must do in order to obtain eternal spirit life.

Another passage of Scripture which shows that a lost, alien, spiritually dead sinner both can and must act in response to God in order to obtain eternal spirit life is John 5:25. Jesus is the speaker here. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." But dead men can't hear. You look at a dead corpse in a casket and talk to him, and he can't hear you. However, Jesus wasn't talking about physically dead people in verse 25. In verses 28 and 29, He referred to dead bodies when He said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming..." Notice that in this statement He didn't say, "and now is". He projected its fulfillment in the future. "...in the which all that are in the graves..." That's dead bodies. "...shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." In verse 25, Jesus is talking about spiritually dead people, "...the hour is coming, AND NOW IS...", present tense. This indicates that the dead were hearing the voice of Jesus at the time He spoke this message. "...when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God;..." The word "hear" is used in two senses in the Bible. One, it means to hear the sound of, and the other it means to give heed to. Here is the real message Jesus conveyed. "...the hour is coming, and now is, when the (Spiritually) dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear (give heed to it) shall live." Now hearing is an act, it is a perceptual act, but it



is an act.

In John, chapter 5, verses 39 and 40, Jesus said to some Pharisees, as the King James version declares, "...search the scriptures." But this is not an imperative sentence and is, therefore, not a command. It is a declarative sentence and simply states a fact. Jesus literally said to those people, "Ye do search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Goodspeed's translation of the New Testament renders it, "You pour over the Scriptures, for you think that you will find eternal life in them, and these very Scriptures testify to me, yet you refuse to come to me for life." In verse 40, the verb "come" is shown by the Greek language to be the infinitive, "to come". Jesus literally said, "And ye will not to come to me that you might have life." A good rendition would be, "And it is your will not to come to me that you might have life." This clearly teaches that the will of a lost, spiritually dead sinner acts in response to God, and that the sinner's will may act so as to choose to come to Christ in order to obtain spirit life, or it may refuse to come to Christ for life.

Now, let us go further. Revelation 22:17 records the last invitation that is worded in the Bible. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take..." The word "take" means "to receive", and the Greek word translated there means to take or receive. "And whosoever will, let him take (receive) the water of life freely." Yes, a sinner must receive eternal life, or he will have no salvation. Since water is used in this Scripture and many others as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, which regenerates (gives life to) the spirit of the spiritually dead, alien sinner (John 6:63) this invitation teaches that a lost sinner must receive the Holy Spirit in regeneration, and hence, must receive



eternal life.

Now, let me make something clear. A man, an alien sinner, being spiritually dead, cannot act toward God, cannot respond to God, and he will never have any desire to be saved as long as God leaves him alone. If God were to leave a man alone, he would never even have a desire to be saved. But the fact is, the Holy Spirit influences every sinner that is capable of responding to influence. That is what we call a "responsible sinner". And herein lies man's choice in salvation. He doesn't have a choice in the matter of the salvation of his soul because he is a free moral agent. Man is not really a free moral agent. One has a choice in the matter of the salvation of the soul because God imposes the choice on him. As long as a person leaves you alone you can neither submit to him nor resist him. But if one brings an influence to bear upon you, then you must respond either by submitting or resisting.

There are two kinds of influence that can be brought to bear. One is what is called "mediate influence". That is influence brought to bear by the use of a medium or instrument. For instance, if I take a hammer and drive a nail into a board, I bring on influence to bear upon the nail. And yet there is no direct contact between my hand and the nail. I have influenced the nail by the use of an instrument. That is "mediate influence". However, if I work without the instrument so as to bring my hand in direct contact with the nail and push it into the board, that would be "immediate influence". "Immediate influence" is influence brought to bear without the use of a medium or instrument.

There are many ways in which God influences men with "mediate influence". One cannot pass a church building without being influenced of God. One cannot pass a cemetery without being influenced of God. As I have driven down the highways, I have seen a number of signs which read "Get right with God". It does not matter



who made the signs and put them beside the highways; it does not matter whether he was saved or lost. A man cannot read such a sign without being influenced of God. The preaching of the Word of God and the gospel message is an instrument in the hands of God to influence men. Everytime God influences a man he must make a choice. He must either submit to God or resist Him. A man could not choose to receive a million dollars if it were not offered to him. But if someone were to offer him a million dollars, then he would have to choose to receive it or to reject it, not because he is a free moral agent, but because the choice would be imposed upon him by the very offer of the money. In the same manner, the very offer of salvation (eternal life) in such invitations as quoted above imposes a choice upon every sinner who hears or reads them.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, God issued an ultimatum, so to speak, as He said, "I'll call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." He set life before them in Jesus Christ and death apart from Jesus Christ. And He does every man this way, who is capable of responding to Him. If God were to leave a man alone he could not even realize the need to be saved.

Jesus stated the principle, as He spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit in conviction. The work of conviction was not a new work which the Holy Spirit was going to begin to do on the day of Pentecost. He had been doing it all down through the history of the human race. Jesus just reiterated it and said that when He should come, He would convict, or reprove, or convince, (He used the word "reprove", in the King James version), the world, the entire inhabited earth, the entire human race, of sin and of righteousness and of judgment-"of sin because they believe not on me; of righteousness because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the



prince of this world is judged.” (John 16:7-11)

When the Holy Spirit influences a sinner through conviction that sinner either submits to the Holy Spirit or resists Him. The Holy Spirit influences the sinner to repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. When he turns in repentance, as the prophet Isaiah said, “Let the wicked forsake his way,...” - the wicked is a lost man. “...and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him turn...” - the King James version says “return” but it should have been translated “turn” - “...let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” (Isaiah 55:7)

The Word of God tells us in Acts 17:30 that God “commandeth all men every where to repent:” - that is an influence that is brought to bear upon every responsible sinner and the sinner who yields to God gets eternal life and forgiveness of sins. In Psalm 34:18, Jesus said, “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.”

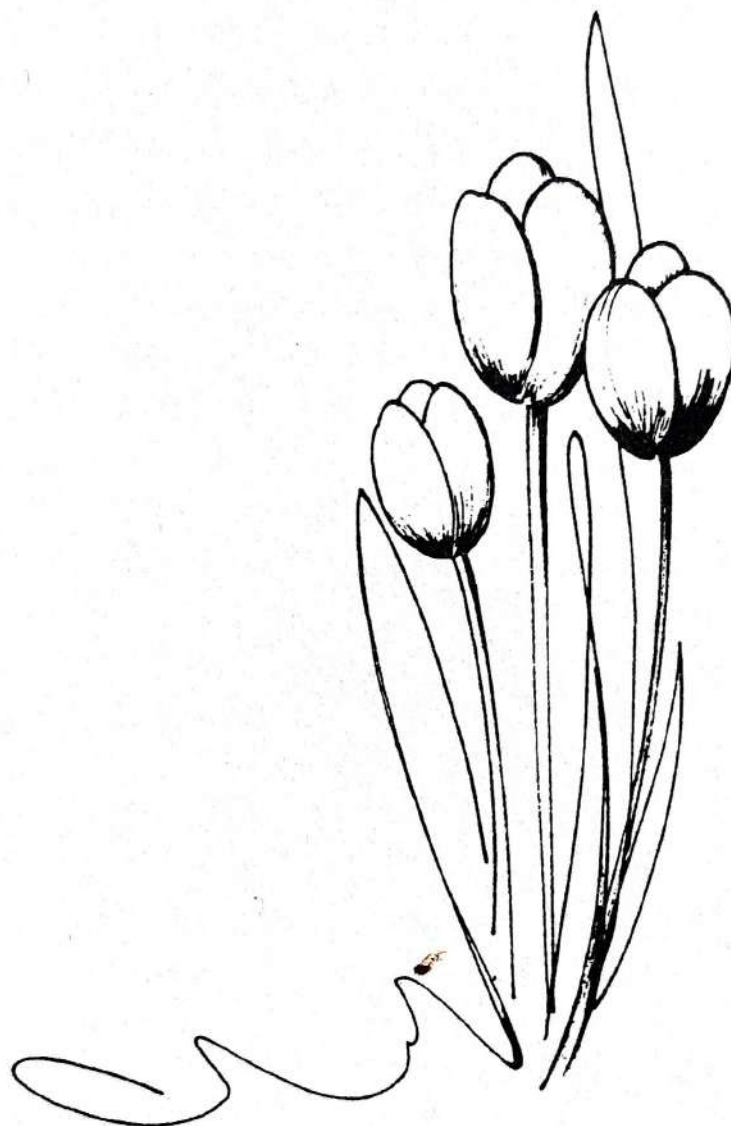
When Paul and Silas were in jail at Philippi, the jailer came in trembling and fell down before them and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30) I know the Calvinist position. And I know that there is more than one kind of salvation. There is a salvation that a child of God is to work out for his life, to save his life from ruin. Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24) That is what it takes to save the life's work of a child of God. But in Acts 16:30, the jailer wanted to know what he must do to get eternal life, to have his soul saved. He wanted to know what it took to be delivered from the condemnation of eternal punishment and saved to eternal life and glory with God. “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And the Apostle Paul said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Verse 31) God had brought an influence to bear upon that jailer. He brought him face to face with death and he knew that if he



died in that condition, he was going to hell, and he didn't want to go there.

These Scriptures and principles prove that a spiritually dead man can act, and he must act in order to receive eternal life. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:53-54) Saving faith is faith that receives Christ, as the Bread of Life.

## LECTURE II



## UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION



## “Unconditional Election”

The theme of this series of messages is what is called the “TULIP” Doctrine or five-points of Calvinism. The “U” in the TULIP acrostic stands for “unconditional election.”

The Scripture reading is Romans 11:1-6:

“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.”

I want you to pay particular attention to verses 5 and 6 under the subject of the “election of grace”: “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

What is “it” that he is talking about? Election. It says in verse 6: “And if by grace, then it (election) is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it

be of works (if election be of works) then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work."

So my subject this evening is election. I am grateful to be able to tell you that the doctrine of election is a Missionary Baptist doctrine. True Missionary Baptists do not want to avoid it and do not try to deny it.

So many times Baptists have leaned over too far in opposing one error and have ended up going into another error. Not only should we oppose error, but we should strive to keep our balance. In all your Bible study, any extreme position you take is wrong not only on this subject, but on all Bible subjects.

Some men embrace Calvinistic teachings, apparently with a kind of pride, believing they have discovered a teaching so profound the average Bible student cannot understand it, and seemingly think of themselves as the "elite" students of the Word. These men, of course, deny that the sinner has anything to do with his being elected to salvation, or with the regeneration of his spirit in the new birth. Others, in retaliation against this error, attribute too much ability to the sinner and detract from the necessity of God's taking the initiative and drawing the sinner and persuading him by the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. This is what is called the free-will doctrine. It is my conviction that both of these positions are in error and should be avoided and exposed.

Some men do not seem to be able to see the harmony between the doctrine that God elected men to salvation and predestinated them to glory and the doctrine that the sinner must, of his own will, choose to receive Christ as his Saviour. In order to hold to one, they reject the other. However, if a Bible student will strive to find the harmony of all the Scriptures on the subject, and will frame his theological thinking to fit all the Scriptures, he will see that both those doctrines are taught in God's Word and that they do beautifully harmonize. Now, it isn't scholarly and it isn't even honest to try to warp the Scriptures to fit



our thinking. It isn't easy for one to say that he has been wrong. It is hard to do it, but it is the honest thing to do when one finds that he has been wrong, to correct the error and get right with the Word of God. We need to change our thinking to fit the Word of God, not to try to change the Word of God to fit our thinking.

The word "elect" simply means to "choose" or "select", and there isn't a person, a responsible person at least, who doesn't practice election in his own life. A lady goes to the grocery store and walks up to the vegetable counter and if she wants to buy some particular vegetable, she doesn't simply start grabbing. She walks up to the tomato bin, and is very careful to select the tomatoes she wants. But I have tried to observe, and I have never seen a sensible housewife walk up there and indiscriminately say, "I'll take this one and I'll take that one and I'll take this one." She always has a basis of choice. She chooses the tomatoes, etc., that have the qualities she desires. There cannot be an intelligent election without a basis of choice. That applies even to God, and God certainly is intelligent. God is infinite in wisdom. An intelligent person sees the particular articles that meet the standards he wants and he elects them and takes them for his own. A man practices election when he goes to the store to buy a suit of clothes. He is selective about the suit he wants to buy. If he is going to buy a car he is selective about that. We practice election every day of our lives. Why, then, should we be opposed to God's election of some men to salvation and rejection of others? The fact that God did choose or elect some people individually to be the recipients of His mercy and salvation cannot and need not be denied. It is a glorious doctrine. And it is altogether in harmony with the doctrine that man must choose Christ.

Calvinists make a grave error in their interpretation and application of the doctrine of election. A quotation from Arthur W. Pink's book entitled "The Sovereignty of God", will briefly and fairly set forth the Calvinistic



teaching on election and reveals the error embraced by those who hold such a position. Referring to Romans 11:5-6, Pink wrote:

“A remnant according to the election of grace.’ Here the cause of election is traced back to its source. The basis upon which God elected this ‘remnant’ was not faith foreseen in them, because a choice founded upon the foresight of good works is just as truly made on the ground of works as any choice can be, and in such a case, it would not be ‘of grace’; for, says the apostle, ‘if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace;’ which means that grace and works are opposites, they have nothing in common, and will no more mingle than oil and water. Thus the idea of inherent good foreseen in those chosen, or anything meritorious performed by them, is rigidly excluded. ‘A remnant according to the election of grace’, signifies an unconditional choice resulting from the sovereign favor of God; in a word, it is absolutely a gratuitous election.” (The Sovereignty of God, by Arthur W. Pink, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1965, Pp. 64-65).

It is not to be denied that the election (choice) of men to salvation is solely and strictly God’s choice, and that election to salvation is strictly of grace and not of works. However, the fallacy of Pink’s statement lies in the fact that he put faith and works in the same category and implied that they are synonymous. Hear his statement carefully: “The basis upon which God elected this remnant was not faith foreseen in them because a choice founded upon the foresight of good works is just as truly made on the ground of works as any source can be.” He is implying that faith and works are one and the same.

Calvinism teaches that God’s choice of men for salvation was made separate and apart from any qualities foreseen in them, and even though God foreknew who



would repent and trust Christ, His foreknowledge of their repentance and faith had nothing to do with His election of them for salvation. They simply say that election involves grace and they give no basis for God's choice. I have listened to them for twenty-five years and I have read their works on this and I have tried to find some statement made by anyone of them that further would define or indicate the basis upon which God made His choice, and never have I found such a statement. They simply say that election is of grace, but then they deny that God's foreknowledge of the repentance and faith of individuals had anything to do with His electing them to salvation, and thus, they leave God in the position of having made the choice without any basis of choice. This is where I part company with Calvinists on the doctrine of election.

Pink says again on page 65 of his book: "...'A remnant according to the election of grace', signifies an unconditional choice resulting from the sovereign favor of God; in a word, it is absolutely a gratuitous election". I do not deny that. It is a gratuitous election. But what the Calvinist teach is that if the sinner's faith had anything to do with it, it could not be of grace. Please keep that in mind.

I'm glad that God elected people to salvation. I'm glad He put the teaching in His Word. And these things I believe the Bible teaches. First, I believe that God did elect some men to salvation. Second, I believe that God's choice or election was made in eternity before the time ages began, as the old timers used to say, "in the council halls of eternity". And third, I believe that God's choice is a sovereign choice. I believe and love with all my heart the Bible doctrine of the sovereignty of Almighty God. But, I have never been able to understand how the Calvinists think that if God elected men on the grounds of His foreknowledge of their faith, it would not be a sovereign choice, and that if God saved a man at the point of faith in



Christ, it would not be sovereign grace. Certainly, it's sovereign grace. Even in His grace God does according to His will and His every act is done in conformity to His absolute holiness, veracity and sovereignty. God is "...just, (righteous) and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus". (Romans 3:26) No one can make God save an unbeliever, and no one can prevent God from saving a believer in Christ. A man may be worthless, filthy, drunkard down in the gutter and not fit to live in society, but if he repents toward God and trusts Jesus Christ there is no power in hell that can keep God from saving him. That is how God's sovereign grace works.

The Calvinists make the mistake, and I count it a grave error, of divorcing God's election of people to salvation from His foreknowledge of their repentance and faith in Christ. Arthur Pink, in his statement quoted above, made faith and works one and the same thing. Now, it is absolutely true that a thing cannot be of works and be by grace. Romans 11:6 tells us this: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work..." And Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us the same thing: "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." If we use a little bit of analysis we can see that this passage is clear enough that salvation *is* by grace but is *not* of works. A thing cannot be by grace and be of works at the same time. But on the other hand, a thing can be by faith and be by grace. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us this: "For by grace are ye saved through faith..." It *is* by grace and it *is* through faith, but it is *NOT* of works lest any man should boast. In that passage of Scripture Paul put faith and works in separate categories that are poles apart. Salvation is by grace through faith. It is not of works. Faith and works are not the same thing. In Romans 4:13-16, the Apostle Paul recounted the promise God



made to Abraham, that Abraham would be the heir of the world. It reads:

“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.”

Now observe verse 16 carefully: “*Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace;* to the end the promise might be sure to all the seek; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,.”

If God’s promise to Abraham was of faith that it might be of grace, why can’t election to salvation be of faith that it might be by grace? The Scriptures will show that it is. Let us now examine some Scriptures concerning the doctrine of election and see what they teach. First, it was done in eternity before the foundation of the world, before the time ages began. Ephesians 1:4: “According as he hath chosen us in him beofre the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” This passage lets us know that God chose men in Christ Jesus. No one should ever expect God to accept a man out of Christ Jesus. Furthermore, Ephesians 1:4 makes it clear that God elected men unto salvation before the foundation of the world, that is, before the world was created. Goodspeed’s translation of the New Testament renders Ephesians 1:4 thusly, “Through him he chose us out before the creation of the world, to be consecrated and above reproach in his sight in love.” Thus far, it is clear that election unto salvation was in Christ, and was done before the world was created. Let us proceed.

Peter declares that election was done according to God's foreknowledge. I Peter 1:1-2 reads:

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asis, and Bithynia,

*Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

Two things are of particular importance in this passage: First, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father..."; second, it is through "sanctification of the Spirit..." Keep those two things in mind. The American Standard version of those verses reads,

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asis, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure".

I like that rendition of it. It makes it clear that election is done according to God's foreknowledge through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

If election was according to foreknowledge, then what did God know about those whom He elected? God foreknew something about them because He had foreknowledge. Foreknowledge means to know beforehand. But Calvinists, many of them, go to such an extreme that they take the position that if God foreknew a thing then He determined it. But, of course, the Scriptures teach that's not true.

Now, if God elected men to salvation according to His foreknowledge, then what did He foreknow about those whom He elected? He foreknew who would repent and



trust Christ. II Thessalonians 2:13-14 declares:

“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

That seems clear enough. If God elected people in eternity before the time ages began, and if He elected them according to His foreknowledge, and if He elected them through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth, then just as surely as we can add these things together, we will come to this conclusion: That God in His foreknowledge, before the time ages began, knew who would, under the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, repent of his sins and trust Jesus Christ. God elected them to salvation. That election is consistent with the doctrine that a sinner must, of his own will, choose to receive Christ, and that election does not prohibit any sinner from being saved. The only thing that prohibits any sinner from being saved is his own obstinate pride and willful rejection of mercy and salvation in Jesus Christ (John 3:14-21, John 5:39-40, Matthew 23:33-37).

God has the sovereign right to choose the believer and to reject the proud unbeliever. And that is exactly what God did in His election of men in eternity before the time ages began. He did not determine who would repent and trust Christ, though He knew who would do it. And according to His foreknowledge He elected those who He knew would repent and trust Christ under the convicting influence of the Holy Spirit, and He rejected those who He knew would reject Jesus Christ. This is sovereign grace.

Furthermore, the fact that election to salvation was not arbitrary and unconditional, that is, that men were not elected to salvation separate and apart from their repentance and faith in Christ, is clearly shown in Paul's



statement in II Timothy 2:10: "Therefore, I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

Goodspeed's translation of the New Testament renders this passage thusly:

"For that reason I am ready to submit to anything for the sake of those whom God has chosen, so that they too may gain the salvation that comes through Christ Jesus and brings eternal glory."

It is a fact that there are two salvations: one is the salvation of the soul that happens in regeneration. That is, the impartation of eternal life and forgiveness of sin. The other is the salvation of the life and works of a child of God by submitting himself to Christ and serving Christ. It takes more than believing in Christ to get that salvation; one must deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow Jesus in order to save his life's work. (Matthew 16:24-27) The salvation spoken of in II Timothy 2:10 is not the salvation of the life of a child of God because Paul says: "...that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." That means he is talking about the salvation of the soul, regeneration, salvation from sin, from eternal punishment in hell of the soul.

If the Calvinist is right when he says that God arbitrarily elected certain people to salvation, and that in time when God gets ready to save one of those elect, that person can no more resist God than a jug can resist a man pouring water into it, then the Apostle Paul was altogether wrong in his belief that his enduring "all things" would be instrumental in causing the elect to obtain salvation in Christ. Paul's enduring all things and preaching the gospel to unregenerated sinners in order that they might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory was worse than vanity, and the apostle who penned these words was grossly deceived if the Calvinist is right in this. According to the Calvinistic teaching, the use of means and instrumentality has



nothing to do with the regeneration of a sinner, but rather, God arbitrarily imparts eternal life to one at His own discretion apart from the use of any means or instrument, and then the gospel is to be preached to the quickened, regenerated person to teach him how to save his life. If this doctrine be true, then Paul was out of order and was guilty of interfering with God's "Sovereign Grace" when he preached the gospel to unregenerated sinners in order that they might obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal life. But this he claimed to do, for he said, "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, *not where Christ was named*, lest I should build upon another man's foundation." (Romans 15:20) Even when Christ commissioned Paul, He sent him to the Gentiles, "To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, *that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*" (Acts 26:18) And Paul declared that God Himself chose the preaching of the gospel as a means of saving believers. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (I Corinthians 1:21) Goodspeed renders it: "For since in God's providence the world with all its wisdom did not come to know God, God chose, through the folly of the gospel message, to save those who had faith in him."

There is a principle that runs like a golden thread throughout the Bible, and is evident in all of God's dealing with men. The principle is this: that in keeping with God's foreknowledge of how men would act and how men would respond to His influence, God responds to sinners as sinners respond to God. This principle would not be found in the Word of God if the Calvinistic doctrine of election were true, that God elected men without any basis of choice, separate and apart from any foreknowledge of their faith in Christ, and that He arbitrarily



regenerates them when he gets ready to do so. The principle is set forth in Isaiah 66:1-4 which states:

“Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, (here’s the kind of man God chooses) even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation as if he offered swine’s blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called none did answer; and when I spake, they did not hear; but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.”

The word “because” signifies a reason. God declared He would choose the delusions of some people, and would bring fears upon them. Why? Was it because God reprobated them to perdition without any offer of salvation? Certainly not! But God’s reason for bringing them to delusions and fears was, “when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear; but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.” God responded to them as they responded to Him.

This principle is also present in Psalm 138:6: “Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off.” The word “lowly” here means “humble”. If God has respect unto the lowly, humble man, then He accepts him, but He



rejects the proud man. This is the same kind of language used to describe God's acceptance of Abel and his offering and His rejection of Cain and his offering. (Genesis 4:4-5)

Luke 14:11 says: "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." God will abase the one that exalts himself. He will abase him because that man lifted himself up, exalted himself. On the other hand, God will exalt the man who humbles himself. And He will exalt him because that man humbles himself.

James 4:6 declares: "But he giveth more grace, Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Now according to the principles of Calvinism, it doesn't make any difference how proud a man is if he is one whom God elected to salvation, when God gets ready to save him, even with his heart full of pride, God just pours eternal life into him, gives him eternal life and then makes him repent and trust Christ. But this Word says that God resists the proud and gives grace unto the humble. Peter says the same thing in I Peter 5:5 when he said: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder, Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." If, then, God resists the proud, it is clear that the proud man is rejected of God. God hates pride (Proverbs 6:16-19) and will never accept nor save a man with pride in his heart. It is the humble man who receives grace; it is the humble man who gets saved.

Psalms 51:17 asserts: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." When a man has a broken heart because of his sins, he will not be rejected of God, nor treated with contempt. God will not treat him lightly. Psalm 32:10 reads: "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about."



God elected men to be the recipients of His mercy and salvation. But there is never any hint in the Word of God of any proud man receiving mercy and salvation. Let the Calvinists find one. Let anyone try to find the record of God pouring out His mercy on a proud, impenitent unbeliever. The proud and unbelieving is rejected of God and condemned (James 4:6, John 3:14), but, "...he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." (Psalm 32:10)

The Calvinist makes an argument on Romans 9:15-16 which reads: "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." So, the Calvinist sticks out his chest and proudly says "See, that's sovereign grace. If God intends to have mercy on a man, He will have mercy. When God gets ready to harden a man, He will harden him." He never goes to the trouble to find out what kind of man God will have mercy on. But the Word tells it clearly. In Isaiah 55:6-7, the Prophet admonished: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Yes, God will have "mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." (Romans 9:18) But upon whom will He have mercy? The wicked man who forsakes his way and turns to the Lord forsaking one's sinful way and turning to the Lord in repentance. Thus, God in His absolute sovereignty will have mercy on the sinner who repents, and "...none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" (Daniel 4:35) But you can't make God have mercy on an impenitent sinner. That is sovereign grace and it is consistent with man's repentance and faith.

The kind of men God hardens is described in Romans



1:21-28:

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened;

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things.

Wherefore, *God also gave them up* to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

*For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections:* For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind,* to do these things which are not convenient."

This described people who had been influenced by God and had been given the truth. But they "changed the truth of God into a lie" and they "did not like to retain God in their knowledge." They wanted nothing to do with God. They would not be persuaded by His entreaty. Because of their own hardness and unyielding resistance, God gave them up — He hardened them further.

Hear God's entreaty and see His response to

impervious sinners. Proverbs 1:23-33 states it clearly:

“Turn you at my reproof: (conviction) behold,  
I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make  
known my words unto you.

Because I have called, and ye refused; I have  
stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and  
would none of my reproof:

I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock  
when your fear cometh;

When your fear cometh as desolation, and  
your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when  
distress and anguish cometh upon you.

Then shall they call upon me, but I will not  
answer;” ...

I repeat the principle before stated, that in keeping with God's foreknowledge of how men would act and respond to His influence, God responds to men as men respond to Him. God convicts, calls and pleads with sinners to turn to Him. Those who refuse and harden their hearts will meet with calamity and destruction because they treated God with contempt. And God shall laugh at them and mock them. He shall let them have their own way: “they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me”: (What did Isaiah say? “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near...” His was not a call to the regenerated man. There never was a time and there never shall be a time when the regenerated man cannot find God. But there is a time when God can be found by an unregenerated man, and there will come a time when He cannot be found by unregenerated men who refuse His call.) “...For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy



them."

But how does God respond to those who heed his call? Verse 33 affirms: "But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

So, God responds to men as men respond to Him. This same principle is found in God's dealing with the nation of Israel whom He blinded and hardened. (Isaiah 6:9-10, Matthew 13:13-15, Acts 28:25-27) Did God blind them and harden them without offering salvation? Matthew 23:33-39 denies such treatment, It reads:

"Ye serpents, ye generations of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, ye shall not see me hence forth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Luke 19:41-42 reads:

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at

least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

God sent prophets to Israel. And what did the prophets preach? Acts 10:43 tells us:

"To him (Christ) give all the prophets witness that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

But how did the nation of Israel respond to the message of the prophets? Paul answers:

"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

But I say, have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation will I anger you.

But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gain saying people." (Romans 10:16-21)

Men try to put the blame on God for their dying in sin and their destruction. God recognizes this. He instructed the prophet Ezekiel:

"Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" (Ezekiel 33:10)

This sounds much like the argument Calvinists make concerning the nonelect — that God, in His sovereignty, determined that they should die in their sins without any



means or offer of salvation. However, God emphatically denies the charge. He swears by His own life that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that He does have pleasure in wicked men turning from their way (repenting) and living. "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11)

Now the Scriptures do tell us that God blinded Israel. Romans 11:7-10 reads: "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, let their table be made a snare, and a trap and a stumbling block, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway." This is a quotation from Psalm 69:22-29. The Septuagint version of Psalm 69:22-28 reads: "Let their table before them be for a snare, and for a recompence and for a stumbling block. Let their eyes be darkened that they should not see; and bow down their back continually. Pour out thy wrath upon them, and let the fury of thine anger take hold on them. Let their habitation be made desolate; and let there be no inhabitant in their tents; because they persecuted him whom thou hast smitten; and they have added to the grief of my wounds. All iniquity to their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and let them not be written with the righteous." This is hard language, but it shows that God responded to impenitent, unbelieving Israel just as they responded to Him. God sent His prophets to them, but they persecuted and killed the prophets. (Matthew 23:34) Finally, God sent His Son to them. Did they receive God's Son? Nay, they rejected



Him (John 1:11), and ill treated Him and turned Him over to the Roman government to be crucified. David makes it clear in Psalm 69:22-28 that the curse of blindness of their spiritual eyes, and God's wrath upon them, so that they should be blotted out of the book of the living and not be written with the righteous, was inflicted upon them, "Because they persecuted him whom thou hast smitten; and they have added to the grief of my wounds." (Psalm 69:26 — Septuagint version) This is obviously a reference to Israel's treatment of the Son of God. And since David wrote those words by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit several hundred years before Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea, it is evident that God foreknew how those wicked Jews would respond to His beloved Son and all His invitations and pleadings, choosing their own way and rejecting God's mercy, and thus, God suffered them to "eat of the fruit of their own wax, and be filled with their own devices." (Proverbs 1:31)

As the end of this age draws near, and iniquity abounds more and more, God will show that His treatment of the Gentile world is just as equitable as that of Israel. The gospel was, in this age, first to be preached to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles. When Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch of Pisidia, they went into the synagogue and Paul preached. The Gentiles asked that the Word be preached to them the next Sabbath. (Acts 13:14-42) The next Sabbath Paul preached to almost the whole city. Acts 13:44-48 records:

"And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting the blaspheming.

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it



from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

This took place during the time in which the gospel program was being turned away from the Jews and to the Gentiles. The Jews had, as a whole, rejected the gospel, but the Gentiles were gladly receiving it. Verse 48 states that, "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

What does this mean? Who ordained them to eternal life? God did, of course. How did God ordain them to eternal life? Was He not being partial? Was He not being a respecter of persons? Why did He not ordain every person who was present on that day to eternal life, especially since He has no pleasure in the wicked dying in their sins, but rather in the wicked turning from their way and living? God, in His foreknowledge, looked down through the annals of time and knew who would be present in Antioch of Pisidia on that Sabbath day when Paul preached the gospel. He knew how every person there would respond to the gospel message. He knew the Jews would put it from them and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life. Not that God did not want them to have eternal life. They themselves did the choosing. They judged themselves unworthy of eternal life by rejecting the gospel message. God did not decree that they should reject the gospel, and thus reject Christ. But knowing that they would do it, God rejected them, and did not ordain or decree that one of those unbelievers should have eternal life. They did not believe because God decreed that they should believe, for He did not do such a thing. Rather, He decreed that they should have eternal life because He



knew they would believe. God has ordained that every one that believes in Christ shall have eternal life. But the Calvinist is hard put to find any record in God's Word of any man being elected to salvation or ordained to eternal life in his unbelief. It cannot be found.

During this dispensation the gospel has been preached to the Gentile world. As the end of the age draws near, because of the working of the "mystery of iniquity", fewer and fewer Gentiles will believe the gospel and receive Christ. The Apostle Paul affirms that God "...will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (I Timothy 2:4) But all men will not be saved, and all men will not come to the knowledge of the truth. Why? Is it because the gospel has not been preached to them? Nay! In his famous dissertation concerning the end of this age Jesus said: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matthew 24:14)

Then is it because men have not been influenced by God and made aware of their sinful condition, their condemnation and need of the Savior? Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would "...reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John 16:8-11) The general attitude and response of men to the Word of God of this age approaches its consummation are spelled out in Paul's warnings to Timothy: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (II Timothy 4:3-4) The apostle warned in his first letter to Timothy, "Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing



spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." (I Timothy 4:1-2)

The Gentile world has had the gospel of salvation presented to it abundantly, together with the convicting work of the Holy Spirit and the invitations of the Word of God to "Whosoever will" to come to Christ and "take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17) How has the Gentile world responded to God's influence? In the early part of the age many believed the Word, heeded the gospel call, and were saved. As the age has progressed, all who have repented and believed on Christ have been graciously saved. There have been periods of great revival and evangelistic reaping. But as this age approaches an end, and seducing spirits work more feverishly to deceive men, the hearts of men generally will become more and more adamant, their consciences becoming "seared with a hot iron" from their repeated resistance against the Holy Spirit, until they become unfeeling toward the Spirit of God. They will "turn away their ears from the truth" and willingly be led by seducing spirits, i.e., demon spirits that deceive men by false doctrines. Now, how will God respond to such men? He is going to give them just what their wicked hearts want. He will let them have their own way. In Paul's warning to the Thessalonians of the coming of the antichrist at the close of this age he wrote:

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

And with all deceivableness of unrighteous-



ness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (II Thessalonians 2:7-12)

Here Paul shows the effect of the deceitful work of the forces of the Antichrist upon "them that perish". And why will they perish? "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." (Vs. 10) Paul asserts that God Himself is going to "send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." He will "pull the wool over their eyes" — blind them, so that they will believe the grand lie of the Antichrist. And God will do this so that "they all might be damned (condemned). (Vs. 11-12) But why will the God of all grace, who is "...good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee" (Psalm 86:5), do such a thing? God has no pleasure in seeing wicked men die in their sins. He wants "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (I Timothy 2:4) Then why will He blind the Gentile world? He will do it "...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." (Vs. 10) They will be justly condemned because they "...believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (Vs. 12) They have desired lies rather than the truth, and God will let them have just what they want.

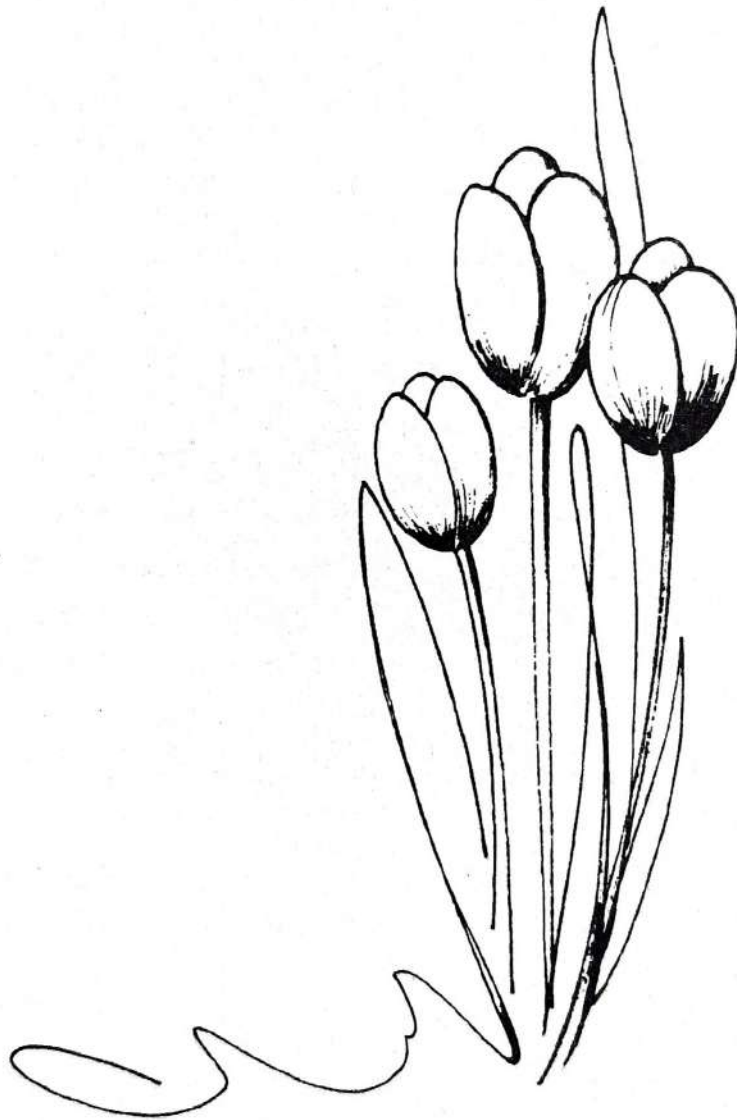
I have dealt at length with the subject in order to show that in all of God's dealings with men in all the time ages, the principle is true that I stated above; that in keeping with God's foreknowledge of how men would act and how men would respond to His influence, God responds to sinners as sinners respond to God. The Bible teaches that God elected men to salvation according to His foreknowledge. (I Peter 1:2) The Bible also teaches that



God's election was done through "sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (II Thessalonians 2:13) The Bible teaches that God calls men to salvation by the gospel. (II Thessalonians 2:14) In His foreknowledge, God knew how every man would respond to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit and the call of the gospel. God has never accepted or saved any sinner whose heart clung to pride and unbelief. On the other hand, He has received and saved every penitent believer in Christ. Hence, the Bible clearly teaches that God, foreknowing all those who would, under the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, repent and trust Christ, elected them to salvation and ordained (decreed) that they should have eternal life. (Acts 13:48)

The basis of His choice is their faith in Christ foreknown to Him. This choice is consistent with the Bible teaching that God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30), and with His universal invitation, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." (Isaiah 45:22)

## **LECTURE III**



**LIMITED ATONEMENT**



## "Limited Atonement"

The subject of this message is Limited Atonement. The first Scripture passage to be read is Romans 5:6-12 and Verse 18. Verses 13-17 are set off in parentheses. Therefore, verse 12 and verse 18 are connected in thought and meaning and should be read together. Romans 5:6-12 reads:

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.

And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"

And then verse 18: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

The next Scripture to be read is II Corinthians 5:18-21. It declares:

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath

given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made righteousness of God in him..."

One other passage, I John Chapter 2, verse 2: "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

There are three words that are of particular importance to this subject. They are very closely related in meaning and are used in the Bible almost synonymously. They are used in a very close relationship. The word "atonement" and the word "reconciliation" and the word "propitiation". The word "atonement" is used only one time in the New Testament and that is in Romans 5:11, and in most versions of the New Testament, the word is translated "reconciliation". Actually, the word "atonement" is an Old Testament word. It comes from a Hebrew word "Kaphar". Spelled in English it is k-a-p-h-a-r. It means "a covering". This word is found in Leviticus 16:2 and is shown as the mercy seat which was the covering on the ark of the testimony. The word "reconciliation" comes from a Greek word "Katallega". Spelled in English it is k-a-t-a-l-l-e-g-a. That word means "restoration to favor". The word "propitiation" comes from a Greek word "hilasmos" which comes from the Greek verb "hilaskomai", and the Greek verb "hilaskomai" means "to appease; to render propitious; to expiate, make an atonement or expiation for; be gracious, show mercy, pardon." A form of this word is used in Luke 18:13, on the occasion when the publican, who was so burdened with



guilt and condemnation cried out, "God be merciful to me, a sinner". He was literally asking for the forgiveness of sin on the ground of the blood atonement made at the mercy seat. And when he did that, God had to save him.

Now the question before us is whether or not the death of Christ was on behalf of all men. Did Christ die for all the members of Adam's race? Or did He die for the elect only? The Calvinist's doctrine of limited atonement teaches that He died only for the elect. It is not questioned that Christ died for the elect. Nobody who believes the Bible questions that. But the question is, did He die for only the elect or for all the human race, all members of Adam's race?

I want to approach this by discussing as my first topic "Universal Condemnation and Universal Justification". This is taught so clearly in the first chapter of Romans. Adam's transgression in the Garden of Eden brought condemnation upon all men — all the human race. That includes infants and people whose bodies have grown to maturity but whose minds are yet the minds of infants, people who are not capable of responding to the influence of the Spirit of God; people who, as we say, do not know right from wrong. The entire human race was brought under condemnation by Adam's transgression. God cannot tolerate or accept sin even in an infant. He had to condemn it. Observe closely the teachings of Romans 5:12: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world,..." The word, "world" here means the inhabited universe — the entire human race. The word "sin" here does not refer to a sinful act but the sin principle, the sinful nature. The sinful acts and our sinful thoughts are the fruits of our sinful nature. It was the sin nature that entered into the world by one man. The sin nature, the sin principle entered into the entire human race. That is what Paul is telling us. That included infants. That is why David could say "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking



lies.” (Psalm 58:3) That is why David could say “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin (with a sin nature) did my mother conceive me.” (Psalm 51:5) “...and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Death is the effect, the result of sin, you see.

Now observe Romans 5:18: “Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation;...” That means just what it says. It means that God judged the entire human race — condemned the entire human race because of the offence of Adam’s transgression. He brought condemnation upon the entire human race. But, thank God, the story doesn’t end there. Listen to it. Verse 18 again: “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

The American Standard Version of the Bible renders Romans 5:18 thusly:

“So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.”

Williams’ translation of the New Testament renders it: “So, as through one offence there resulted condemnation for all men, just so through one act of uprightness, there resulted right standing involving life for all men.”

Goodspeed renders the same passage: “So as one offence meant condemnation for all men, just so one righteous act means acquittal and life for all men.”

It is evident, in the light of such Scriptures as II Corinthians 5:18-21 and Romans 5:10 that the “one righteous act” refers to the act of Christ dying for sinners. Romans 5:10 states: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.” The death of Jesus Christ brought justification upon the entire



human race from the Adamic condemnation. It justified all men from the Adamic transgression, and nobody will go to hell because of the Adamic transgression.

Let us observe two other passages of Scripture that teach this truth. John 1:29 declares: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The word "sin" used here is singular. Not sins plural, but sin singular. What is the sin of the world? It is the Adamic transgression that brought condemnation upon all the members of Adam's race. John the Baptist announced that Jesus is the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world", the Adamic transgression, and justified all the human race from the Adamic transgression. In connection with John's announcement read Paul's words to Timothy in I Timothy 4:10: "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." In what sense is Jesus the Saviour of all men? He is the Saviour of all men in that His death justified all men from the Adamic transgression. It removed that condemnation.

It is very clear that if the Son of God died only for the elect, then one of two things is true about non-elect infants. If those non-elect infants die as infants they go to hell. But, if no infants go to hell, then non-elect infants cannot die, if Jesus died only for the elect. Now, that puts Calvinism in a bad position. I have known a few of them who have tried to get around that dilemma by saying, "Well, God just doesn't let non-elect infants die." Well, if you think your baby is a non-elect infant, then let him go out and get bit by a rattlesnake, or let him run out in front of a big truck. According to Calvinistic doctrine, it couldn't hurt him if he is a non-elect infant. Nothing could kill him since, according to that theory, God just does not allow non-elect infants to die. Of course, such a position does not make sense. But it has to be true if Jesus died only for the elect.



The fact that Jesus, the Lamb of God, took away the sin of the world, as John the Baptist announced, and removed the condemnation of the Adamic transgression from the entire human race, justifying all of Adam's race from that condemnation, thus becoming the Saviour of all men, necessitated the death of Christ on behalf of the entire human race. There is no other sense in which Jesus could be the Saviour of all men in view of the fact that some men will be cast into hell. But, if He did take away the sin of the world, and if the free gift did come upon all men to justification of life, and if He is the Saviour of all men, then clearly Jesus died for all men, else God has justified and saved some on some other ground than the death of Christ.

Furthermore, the fact that Jesus took away the sin of the world and justified all men from the condemnation of the Adamic transgression, puts the condemnation that now exists, the condemnation of unbelief, squarely upon the shoulders of every individual responsible sinner. The only sin that condemns a sinner to hell now is personal unbelief in the name of, or in the saving authority of the only begotten Son of God. Jesus told Nicodemus: "For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." The word "kosmos" is used there again, and means the aggregate of mankind. Now, listen to verse 18: "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already..." Why? Is it because he is born a sinner? No, sir. Because he got drunk? No, sir. Why is he condemned? "...because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:16-18) That is the sin that sends men to hell. And that is the only sin that condemns and sends to hell. Thus, the principle of universal condemnation and universal justification presented in Romans 5:18 proves



that the Son of God died for all men.

The second topic concerning our general subject of atonement, is the doctrine of reconciliation.

The 16th chapter of Leviticus gives the record of the work of the high priest and the day of atonement as they were seen under the Mosaic law system. God had had Aaron annointed to be the high priest in Israel. On a certain day, a day that God has appointed as the day of atonement, the high priest put on his holy priestly garments. He had a breastplate on which was fastened twelve precious stones, with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel engraved on them, and on his shoulders were two stones with the names of six of the tribes of Israel on one, and the names of the other six tribes on the other. (Exodus 28:2-21)

On the day of atonement he had to kill a bullock and go into the Holy of Holies behind the veil and make an atonement for himself and for his family. This Jesus did not have to do. The high priest was a type or picture of Christ as our High Priest. Christ is the only Priest for man and the high priest was a picture of Him making the atonement for us.

After the high priest had judicially made an atonement for himself, which Jesus did not need to do because He had no sin, the high priest was to come out and take two goats. He would present the two goats before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and cast lots upon them. One of them was to be for the Lord and the other was to be for the scapegoat. He was to be left alive and the high priest was to kill the goat that was chose for the Lord, cut its throat, and take the blood from that goat into the Holy of Holies, which was a picture of the throne room of God, behind the veil and sprinkle it seven times upon the mercy seat. That word "mercy seat" and the word "propitiation" are from the same source. When he sprinkled the blood seven times upon the mercy seat, a very bright light, called by



the Jews the Shechinah light, which meant the presence of God, shone between the cherubims which overshadowed the mercy seat. This was a declaration that God was present and that God had accepted the blood of the atonement, judicially under the law, to atone for the sins of the people. Incidentally, the high priest was a representative of all of the Israelites — everyone of them. No one except the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies behind the veil. The high priest had to go in there and he bore the names of all twelve tribes of Israel. He was the representative of every Israelite. Some of them were lost, wicked reprobates. But he was representative of all of them. Before he came out of the Holy of Holies he made an atonement for the Holy of Holies itself. Then he made an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation. Then he made an atonement for the altar and the outer court. Christ died for more than men. He died to redeem all three heavens. He died for the entire kingdom of God. After he came out of the Holy of Holies, he laid his hands upon the head of the scapegoat that was left alive and confessed all of the sins of all of Israel on the head of that scapegoat and that scapegoat was sent away by the hands of a strong man into the wilderness, a land not inhabited, never to return. The word that the Bible uses for the forgiveness of sins or remission of sins means "to send away" and is most beautifully pictured in that scapegoat. And that scapegoat was sent away bearing Israel's sins never to return again.

Look to Leviticus 1:1-5. The first chapter of Leviticus tells of the whole burnt offering, which was one of the offerings each individual Israelite was to offer. The burnt offering, which was an offering made by fire, a sweet savour unto the Lord, was a picture of Christ who, "...hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." (Leviticus 1:9, Ephesians 5:2) Leviticus 1:1-5 reads:

"And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake



unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying,

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock,

If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord.

And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.

And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood around about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

There are two sides of reconciliation. Reconciliation means "to restore to favor". It means to bring two parties into harmony who have been at variance with each other. But there are two sides to it. And both sides are told here. From the divine side, the work of reconciliation is shown in the work of the high priest. He went into that Holy of Holies bearing the sins of all the people and making an atonement for all the people. But here in the first chapter we read about an offering that each individual Jew had to offer of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle. He was to put his hands upon the head of that animal. That signified that the man was claiming the animal as his own personal sacrifice. By putting his hands on the head of the animal he declared "I am appropriating the benefits of the death of this animal to myself. I am not trusting my merits. I am trusting the destiny of my entire being to my substitute." This was a symbol of faith in Christ who was pictured in the animal and his death. When the man laid his hands on the head of his sacrifice,



the Word of God tells us the sacrifice was "...accepted for him to make atonement for him". (Vs. 4)

When we see both of these together, the high priest acting alone, making atonement for the sins of all the people, and the individual Israelite, offering his personal sacrifice of his own voluntary will, claiming it as his substitute and appropriating its death to himself, we can see both sides of what is necessary to complete reconciliation and bring God and a sinner into harmony. The high priest worked by God's orders at God's appointed time and in God's appointed way. The individual Jew had no part in the work of the high priest, but the individual Jew had his own personal responsibility to offer the burnt sacrifice as he was instructed in the first chapter of Leviticus. A Jew could come every day and watch other Jews as they brought their personal sacrifices and laid their hands on them and killed them, but it would not benefit him; and he would not be judicially reconciled to God until he brought his own personal sacrifice and offered it of his own voluntary will as instructed.

What a thorough and beautiful basis this furnishes for a Bible student to have a clear understanding of both sides of the principle of reconciliation. Keep in mind that the full work of reconciliation means to bring two parties into harmony who have been at variance with each other, i.e., who have been enemies. Where an offence has occurred, the offended party has the just right to determine what it will take to remove the offence and be the ground of restoration to friendship and harmony. But both parties must come to agreement. No matter how much one party may love the other and desire reconciliation, the two parties can never be in true harmony until the offence is removed, the offended party satisfied, and the two parties come together on terms that are completely satisfactory to both. God is the offended party. Man is the offender. Sin is the offence. God cannot tolerate sin. God was offended both by the sin nature



passed onto all men through Adam's transgression and by the personal acts of sin of every individual sinner. The offence of sin stood between God and all men, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

In both types and fulfillment God has shown what is the only thing that would satisfy His just claim against men because of their sins, and the only ground upon which peace and harmony could come between Him and any man. Furthermore, it is shown by the Scriptures that what would satisfy God's justice as payment for the sins of one man would satisfy God's justice as payment for the sins of all men. Paul spells it out in II Corinthians 5:18-21:

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Here Paul shows the necessity of both the divine side and the human side of reconciliation. It is clearly shown that the whole world, all mankind, was the object of God's work of reconciliation through Christ and His death. Moreover, after the apostle declared that "...God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" he begged sinners in Christ's stead, "...be ye reconciled to God". If, according to Calvinistic doctrine, Christ died only for the elect, and all the elect are unconditionally redeemed by the blood of Christ and, in time, unconditionally saved, then for Paul



to beg men to be reconciled to God was the height of absurdity and vain jangling. Why ask men to be reconciled to God if they have no choice in the matter? But if, as true Baptists have ever taught, sinner must repent toward God and believe on Jesus Christ in order to be saved then Paul's pleading was well in order and is a worthy example for every representative of Christ to follow.

Christ is the high priest who, by His own blood, made atonement for the sins of all the human race. The sinner had no part in making that atonement. But the sinner has his own personal responsibility of appropriating the atoning death of Christ to himself. A man can believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that Jesus died for the sins of men and that Jesus arose from the dead on the third day; he may give mental consent to each of these truths and he may watch other sinners being saved and acknowledge that it is the right thing to do. But it will do him no good. He will not be reconciled to God, he will not know peace with God until, in his heart, he claims Christ as his own personal atonement for sin and by faith appropriates Christ to himself. Saving faith is not faith which merely believes about Christ and His death and resurrection. Saving faith is faith which appropriates the benefits of the death of Christ to one's self and trusts the welfare and destiny of one's soul to Christ, his substitute. When a sinner does that Christ becomes his personal sacrifice and atonement for sin. Reconciliation is complete between him and God, and he can say with the Apostle Paul, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

When the Publican Jesus told about in Luke 18:9-14 went into the temple to pray he was a vile, condemned sinner and felt the burden of his guilt on his heart. While the Pharisee proudly commended himself to God, the Publican confessed himself to be a sinner and cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner". (Luke 18:13) He was



not asking God to overlook or excuse his sins. He had the mercy seat in view in his mind's eye as the high priest carried the blood into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it on the mercy seat between the cherubims. As God signaled His presence and acceptance of the atoning blood by the shechinah light, the old Publican must have perceived that God was manifesting the only ground upon which He could extend mercy to sinners and forgive sins. Trusting in the atoning work of God's High Priest (Christ), he put his hands on the head of God's Lamb, as it were, claiming Him as his own personal sacrifice, appropriating the death of that Lamb to himself, and asked God for mercy on the ground of the blood atonement. God and the sinner were reconciled and the Publican left the temple justified, fully pardoned and at peace with God.

One of the best definitions of repentance that I ever heard was from an old county boy who said, "Repentance is a sinner taking sides with God against himself." When a proud sinner comes to realize that he is headed for hell, under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and he comes to see how rotten he is and he takes sides with God and says, "God, I deserve to go to hell" and he hates the sin that dwells in him and lays his hand upon the head of the Lamb of God, he and God are in good standing. He is pardoned of all his sins and by the grace of God he is accepted in Christ Jesus. Thus, the doctrine of reconciliation teaches that Christ died for all men.

My third topic is the proposition that some men will go to hell for whom Christ died and to whom salvation has been offered. That proposition could not be true if Christ died for the elect only since all of the elect will certainly be saved. Every man that God elected to salvation will be saved, not because God saved him arbitrarily, but because God knew he would repent under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and trust Christ and God elected him to salvation. God will save every believer. Not a believer in Christ will go to hell. But some men will go to hell for



whom Christ died. The Apostle Peter taught this in II Peter 2:1-2 which reads:

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily (privately, or secretly) shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

Now, in his book titled "The Sovereignty of God," on pages 100-101, Arthur W. Pink stated the following:

"Now all will acknowledge that from the foundation of the world God certainly foreknew and foresaw who would and would not receive Christ as their Saviour, therefore in giving being and birth to those he knew would reject Christ, He necessarily created them unto damnation. All that can be said in reply to this is, No, while God did foreknow these ones would reject Christ, yet He did not decree that they should. But, this is a begging of the real question at issue. God had a definite reason why He created men, a specific purpose why He created this and that individual, and in view of the eternal destination of his creatures, He purposed either that this one should spend eternity in Heaven or that this one should spend eternity in the lake of fire. If then He foresaw that in creating a certain person that that person would despise and reject the Saviour, yet knowing this beforehand He, nevertheless, brought that person into existence, then it is clear He designed and ordained that that person should be eternally lost."

This is Calvinism and Fatalism in its rankest form. But God emphatically denies being the cause of, or having



designed the death and eternal destruction of the wicked. Ezekiel 33:11 reads: "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" If God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, then He certainly did not design nor purpose their death and eternal destruction. The Apostle Peter affirmed that these false prophets **"DENY THE LORD THAT BOUGHT THEM and BRING UPON THEMSELVES SWIFT DESTRUCTION."** If the Lord bought them, then He died for them. And if they bring upon themselves swift destruction, which, in the context of II Peter, chapter 2 indicates destruction in hell, than it is clear that the eternal destruction in hell of wicked men, even these false prophets, is not the result of God's design and purpose, but rather, it is the result of their own obstinate willfull rejection of Christ and His mercy.

This same principle is taught in Hebrews 10:38-39. The writer said: "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." It is inferred in verse 39 that there are some who draw back unto perdition. Now, you can't draw back from someplace or from something to which you haven't been. The writer is inferring that these people have been drawn up to a knowledge of salvation and that they have drawn back from it. They didn't lose any salvation — they didn't get the salvation. They drew back from it and rejected Jesus Christ, and they have drawn back unto perdition. According to both the English dictionary and the meaning of the Greek word used here, the word "perdition" means the eternal loss and ruin of the soul. A child of God can sin and get out of fellowship with God but can never come to perdition. He can get out of fellowship with his Heavenly Father and his Heavenly Father will chasten



him, whip him, but because he is a child of God he can never come to perdition. Paul is talking about some people who have been made aware of their need for salvation and have been made aware of how people are saved. They have been brought to the position in which God imposed a choice on them as He said in Deuteronomy 30:19: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing..." He does this for every responsible sinner. He brings the sinner face to face with the decision of whether he will receive Christ and be saved or reject Him and be lost. That is, draw back unto perdition. Thus, some will go to hell for whom Christ died, and to whom salvation has been offered. Proverbs 1:23-33 offers further proof of this. God comments in verse 23: "Turn you at my reproof..." That means to repent. "...behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known by words unto you." Verse 24: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear commeth;" God reproves all responsible sinners and calls them unto salvation. If they refuse and treat His reproof with contempt, the time will come when God will mock at their calamity, but they bring that calamity upon themselves. These will go to hell for whom Christ died and to whom salvation has been offered.

Luke's record of the parable of the seed and sower, recorded in Luke 8:5-15, presents some interesting evidence of this proposition. The substance of the parable is that a sower went forth to sow, and as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside and the fowls of the air gathered them up so that those seeds did not germinate. Some fell upon stony ground and immediately sprang up because the earth was shallow. But when the heat and sun came out and beat down upon that little plant, it withered because it had no roots, no depth. It couldn't stand any opposition. Then some seeds fell upon thorny ground



where the thorns and the thistles came up with it and choked out the good plants. And some fell upon good ground and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some thirty and some sixty.

The Son of God interpreted the parable for us. He did not leave it to our interpretation. The seed represents the Word. The four different kinds of ground represent four different kinds of people to whom the gospel is preached. The only one of them that remains lost is the kind of person represented in the wayside ground. It is the person represented in the wayside ground with whom we are concerned here. Luke 8:11-12 reads: "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

Now, if the doctrine of Calvinism is true; if Christ died only for the elect, and if the Calvinist is right who teaches that the gospel is to be preached, not to a lost man to win him to Christ for salvation, but only to one who has already been regenerated, then according to the statement of verse 12, the devil snatched the Word of God out of the heart of a regenerated person, one who already had eternal life, and kept that regenerated person from believing and being saved.

On the other hand, if the wayside ground represented a nonelect person to whom the gospel was preached, since, according to Calvinism, Christ did not die for the non-elect, all the believing this man could do could not get him saved, for no man can be saved apart from the death of Christ, but the devil took the Word out of the person's heart "...lest they should believe and be saved". There is a salvation which the wayside ground kind of person could have had by believing the Word sown in his heart. And since there is no salvation apart from the death of Christ, this proves that Christ died for those who shall perish because they did not believe the Word of God sown in



their hearts. He died for those who shall not be saved.

Some Calvinists teach that there is a kind of general call that goes out to all men. But they teach that there is an effectual call that is made only to the elect, and when God makes an effectual call to an elect person, that elect person cannot resist Him. According to that theory, God knows that the people to whom He makes the general call cannot receive it, that is, cannot believe and be saved. That amounts to this. If God has the gospel preached to all sinners who are non-elect, and for whom Christ did not die, and invites them to come to salvation that does not exist, God himself would be the Liar of all liars. And He would be teasing men to come unto salvation that He doesn't even have to offer to them. It is an indisputable doctrine that there is no salvation apart from the death of Christ. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. If Christ did not die for the non-elect, and yet God invites them even with a general call to come to salvation, then His inviting them to come to something that does not exist makes Him a Liar and a Deceiver. But God cannot do such. God cannot either lie or deceive anyone.

Contrariwise, when God invites men to come to salvation, He means it. He means He has salvation to offer them. And since God can offer salvation to sinners only on the ground that Christ died for them, it is clear that God's call to all sinners to come to Him for salvation proves that Christ died for all sinners.

Matthew 23:13-39 records one of the most scathing rebukes Jesus ever spoke to any people. It was spoken to the Pharisees whom He called a generation of vipers, or generation of snakes and hypocrites. verse 33 reads: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

It is certain that Jesus was talking to lost sinners there. God certainly was not calling His children a generation of serpents and vipers. Jesus has never asked



a child of God how he could escape the damnation of hell. He was talking to lost sinners who were headed for hell. And he said to them: "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." (Vs. 34-35)

Observe that Jesus said to the same people whom He called serpents and a generation of vipers, "Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes..." Now what did the prophets preach? Simon Peter told Cornelius and his family, "To him give all the prophets witness that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43) Every prophet God ever called preached the same plan of salvation, that through the name of Christ, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. They preached it in Enoch's day, in Abel's day, and all the way down through the history of the human race. And the prophets of God preached it to the Pharisees, and they rejected it. Now, listen to what Jesus says. In verse 37: "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Now, if God's prophets preached the doctrine to those Pharisees which Peter indicated in Acts 10:43, then either Christ died for those hell-bound Pharisees, or else God mocked them by sending the prophets to them with such a message. But the only time God will mock sinners is after He has withdrawn His gracious offer of mercy and salvation from those who have treated Him with contempt. (Proverbs 1:24-30)

The Apostle Paul declares plainly why men will be



destroyed in hell. II Thessalonians 1:6-9 reads:

“Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power.”

The principle of influence comes into the picture again. You can neither submit to one nor resist one unless He brings some influence to bear upon you. A man can neither obey nor disobey the gospel until it is presented to him. But this Scripture proves that the gospel is presented to all men. And incidentally, the gospel of Jesus Christ never has commanded or instructed men to do good works in order to be saved. It never has instructed men to be baptized in order to be saved. The gospel of Jesus Christ has always instructed men to repent to God and trust Jesus Christ, and when one does that he obeys the gospel. And what's going to happen to people who do not obey the gospel? They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. That means they will go to hell. And the reason they go to hell is because they know not God and they do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The fourth topic is that the Scriptures plainly state that the death of Christ was on behalf of all men and that all men may be saved. John 3:16-17 declares: “For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through him, might be saved.” That need not be any clearer. Hebrews



2:9 tells us "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." It was by sovereign grace that Jesus tasted death for every man. I Timothy 2:1-6 states:

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayer, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men:"

Why pray for a man that's predestined to hell? Why pray for a man that God has arbitrarily reprobated to hell? That wouldn't make any sense, would it? But Paul has admonished that prayers and supplications and intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for ALL men.

"For kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour;

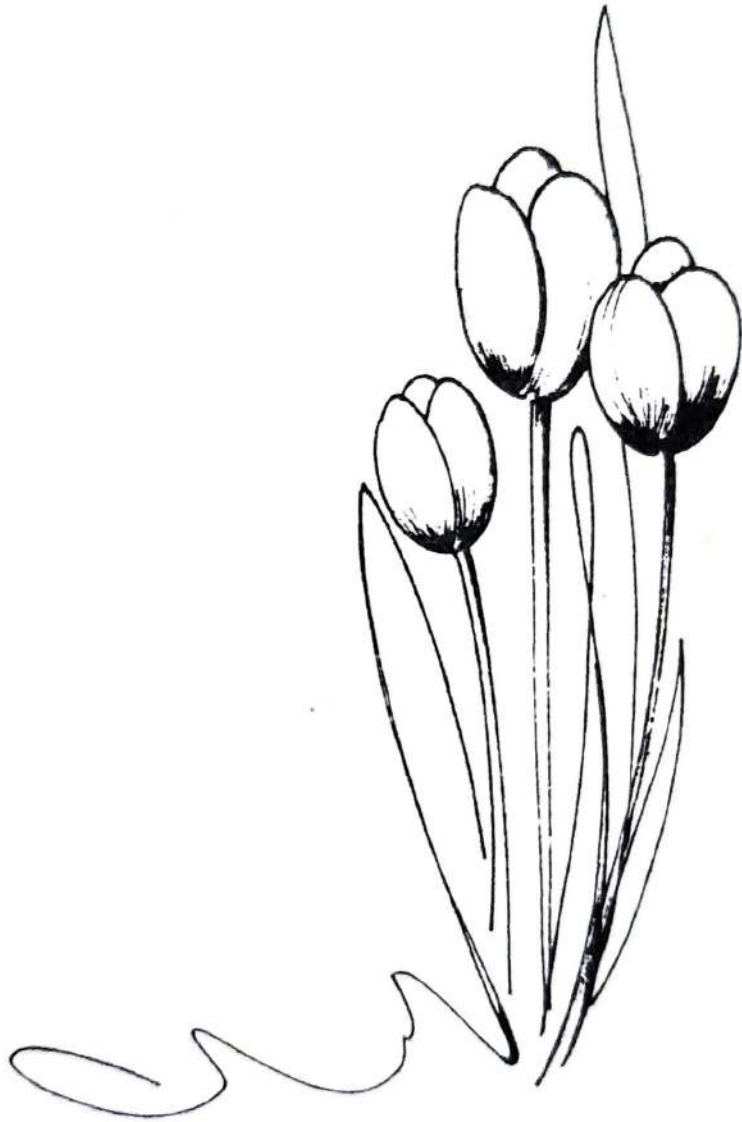
Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth..."

There are two things God wants for every man. He wants every man saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. "...for there is one God, and one mediator...", that's the middleman, the friend of God and the friend of man, "...between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." I am willing for this statement to be tested by any grammarian on God's earth. The antecedent of the pronoun "all" is "men". Christ gave Himself a ransom for all men. Titus 2:11 declares: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." It doesn't mean that all men will be saved but it does mean that the grace of God has offered salvation to all men. In Ezekiel 33:10-11, God says, "Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them how should we then live?..." Israel

is saying it is God's fault that we pine away in our sins and die. God has reprobated us to hell. That's Calvinism. But listen to what God says: "...Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" God is not responsible for the reprobation and the eternal destruction of the sinner. He would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. And the only way God can save us is on the grounds of the death of Christ. He tasted death for every man. He died for the entire human race. Any sinner who will forsake his ways and take sides with God against himself (repent) and come and appropriate to himself in saving faith the benefits of the death of Jesus Christ, God has bound Himself by His own covenant to save that sinner and give him eternal life.



## **LECTURE IV**



**IRRESISTIBLE GRACE**

## “Irresistible Grace”

The subject before us is “Irresistible Grace”. The first Scripture cited is a passage which every Missionary Baptist should commit to memory. Ephesians, Chapter 2, verses 8 through 10: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not on yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good work, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

The doctrine of salvation by grace is so clearly taught throughout the Scriptures that only a fool would deny it. I do not say that lightly. That doctrine is so clear-so indisputably clear-that a man who reads the Bible and denies the doctrine of salvation by grace is a fool.

The issue involved in this message is not, “Is salvation by the grace of God separate and apart from all works of men;” but rather, “Does God save sinners arbitrarily and regardless of the will and choice of the sinner?” Can a sinner resist the grace of God? Can a sinner resist the call to salvation? That is the issue before us. Can a sinner resist the call to salvation? The Calvinist believes he cannot.

My first topic concerns the Calvinistic application of the doctrine of salvation by grace. In the discussion of this topic some things will be repeated that have already been said in previous lessons. This will be profitable because people learn by repetition.

An old hard-shell preacher, whom I loved very dearly, once told me that when God gets ready to save one of His elect, He saves him, and that sinner can no more resist God’s giving him eternal life than a jug can resist a man pouring water into it.

There are some variations among Calvinists on the application of God’s call to salvation, but I will state it in a



general way and as fairly as I know how. Some Calvinists, particularly those who were known as "Two Seed" Calvinists, (there are not many of them left, incidentally) taught that God doesn't even call the nonelect; He doesn't even bother with them, but He simply calls the elect to salvation and they cannot resist. But there is a modified position held among Calvinists today. They have softened their position somewhat. They teach that there are two calls; there is what they call a general call to salvation which is extended to all men, non-elect as well as elect, but that the general call is heard only with the physical ears. According to their teaching the general call refers to such Scriptures as Proverbs 1:23-32. Please read and consider all these verses. In order to conserve time and space, only verses 23-25 are quoted here. Those verses will sufficiently set before us the principle involved. They read, "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof." In the succeeding verses the refusal of the call is discussed and the consequences of it. Calvinists apply this to what they call the "general call" that's received of all men, non-elect as well as elect, but is heard only with the physical ears.

However, if this were true then no sinner, whether elect or non-elect, could turn at God's reproof referred to in this Scripture, since, according to the Calvinist, this general call is heard only with the physical ear, and thus, not being heard by the spiritual ear, is not sufficient to bring the sinner to repentance and faith. I submit to the audience that if the call of Proverbs 1:23-25 is of such a nature, and is extended in such a manner that it cannot be heeded by the sinner so as to result in repentance and faith, then such a call would be as absurd as it would be for a man to command a hog to fly like an eagle, and then



to destroy the hog, knowing that the poor animal heard the call with his physical ear, but was unable to respond to the command. I further submit that the intelligent, omniscient God does not engage in such nonsensical work nor does He trifle with the souls of men. Those referred to in Proverbs 1:24-32 are destroyed because they refuse God's call extended to them and thus resist the grace of God which calls them to salvation.

Matthew 22:14 is so worded that even Calvinists can not deny that more are called than God chooses, because the verses say, "For many are called, but few are chosen." Calvinists are forced to see in this Scripture a call that reaches more people than those who are chosen, so they say it deals with the "general call" that is heard only with the physical ear. Nevertheless, if the parable of Matthew 22:1-14 represents God's grace inviting men to come to His salvation, then some did resist and were destroyed because they refused the call. Luke 16:19-31 presents the narrative of the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus first died, then the rich man died. In hell the rich man lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off with Lazarus in his bosom. Luke 16:24 declares: "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." And then Abraham told him "...Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." (verse 25-26) And when the rich man learned that Lazarus could not come to him, he said to Abraham: "...I pray thee therefore, Father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren: that he may testify unto them, lest they also come to this place of torment." (verse 27-28)



Now, if God arbitrarily elected men to salvation separate and apart from His foreknowledge of their repentance and faith, and if those five brothers were non-elect, and knowing that they could not be saved, it would have been mockery for God to send anyone to testify to them. On the other hand, if they were elected to salvation, they were going to be saved anyway, according to Calvinistic teaching, so why worry about witnessing to them? However, the rich man in hell learned a good, sound Missionary Baptist doctrine. There isn't a sinner in hell who doesn't believe that when a sinner repents, God saves him. But observe what Abraham said to him. "...They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." (verse 29) What did Moses and the prophets preach? Peter told Cornelius's family as he preached Christ to them, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43) Abraham knew that doctrine, because Abraham had believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (Romans 4:3) And he said to the rich man, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Now, listen to the words of the rich man. "...Nay, Father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." (Verse 30) The rich man evidently believed that his lost brothers needed to hear the Gospel in order to repent, and he believed that if they would repent they would be saved. The consistency of God's ordained means of witnessing to the souls of men, the spirits of men, is made perfectly clear by Abraham's replies, "They have Moses and the prophets; Let them hear them," (verse 29) and, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." (Verse 31) If a man would not believe the Gospel of the Son of God, he would not heed the testimony of one if he were to rise from the dead and come back and tell him that hell is real, and that one can only be saved from hell by repenting



toward God and trusting Christ. Of course, Calvinists are forced by their own doctrine to teach that such a witness as was presented by Moses and the prophets in the law age, and is presented today by New Testament churches, only issues a "general call" to sinners and can only be heard by the physical ear. But Abraham did not believe such a doctrine. For he said, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."

In Isaiah Chapter 45, verse 22 God said: "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." There is no way men can limit that call to the elect. Again, Calvinists say that's the "general call" to all men which is only heard with the physical ear. But the call itself implies that "all the ends of the earth," meaning "all men" can hear and heed the call so as to be saved, for God said, "and be ye saved." Inasmuch as spiritual hearing and spiritual heeding of the call is required for one to be saved, it is evident the call of God is directed to the spirits of men, and they are capable, under the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, to heed that call and be saved.

Matthew 11:28 is another Scripture which Calvinists say presents the "general call". It reads, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This is an invitation extended by Jesus Himself. The invitation is given to all those who come to Jesus. Of course, Jesus was not speaking of physical labor, nor of physical rest. Two legitimate applications may be made here: First, Jesus invited those Jews who were laboring hard to measure up to all the demands of the Mosaic law to come to Him. In Him they would have righteousness that would meet every demand of the law. Second, He invited every sinner, Jew and Gentile, who labors under the load of guilt and condemnation to come to Him. When one turns to Jesus and trusts Him, the burden of guilt and condemnation is taken away from his heart and he finds spiritual rest. If this invitation is a



"general call" which can only be heard by the physical ear, since hearing with the physical ear is not sufficient to cause one to come to Christ, then the invitation is entirely futile because according to Calvinism, no one hears it with the spiritual ear, and therefore, no one, not even an elected person, is able by this invitation to come to Christ and receive rest from condemnation in the forgiveness of his sins. How ridiculous!

Mark 16:15, part of Mark's record of the Great Commission reads, "Go ye into all the World, and preach the gospel to every creature." If anyone wishes to discredit Mark 16:15 as a spurious Scripture it makes no difference. He cannot do away with the fact that the Lord commissioned His church to preach the Gospel to all the world. Matthew 28:19 confirms it. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations..." Luke 24:47-48, which is part of Luke's record of the Great Commission, also confirms it, Jesus instructed His disciples that "...repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." Matthew 24:14 declares, "And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." If any man asserts that the preaching of the Gospel is merely a "general call," heard only with the physical ear, he puts himself in direct conflict with the principles and testimony of the Scriptures concerning the effect of the Gospel on the souls of men. Romans 1:16 declares emphatically that the Gospel is "...the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." When, on one occasion, some Jews contradicted and blasphemed the preaching of Paul, "...Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a



light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.” (Acts 13:46-47) Who can fly in the face of these Scriptures and deny the fact that the Gospel message and God’s servants who preach the Gospel are God’s ordained means and instruments of calling lost alien sinners to salvation (II Thessalonians 2:13-14) and the the Gospel call is issued to every responsible sinner of Adam’s race? Does this sound like a “general call” heard only with the physical ear? Certainly not! The Holy Spirit accompanies the preaching of the Gospel (Acts 11:19-21, I Thessalonians 1:5) and is the power that makes the Word of God effective to the hearts of men in His work of conviction (John 16:7-11). And under the preaching of the Gospel, by the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, any alien sinner may turn (repent) to Christ and by heart faith receive Him as Saviour. Those who do not do so resist the Holy Spirit of their own incorrigible wills and bring upon themselves the everlasting destruction that awaits those who “...know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Calvinists sometimes refer to John 12:32 as relating to the “general call”. In this passage Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” Regardless of the old postmillennial view of this Scripture, that the world can be taken for Christ through the preaching of the Gospel, Jesus was not referring to His being lifted up through the preaching of the Gospel, for verse 33 explains, “This said he, signifying what death he should die.” Neither was He referring to all men being drawn to Him in salvation. One only has to think a little to realize the fallacy of the above-stated interpretation. Jesus has been exalted in the preaching of the Gospel down through this age, but all men have not been saved. Though such an interpretation as the above will not hold, we can affirm that just as surely as Jesus was lifted up from the earth on the cross of Golgotha, He will draw all



men to Him in the resurrections and in judgment. This is what Jesus was teaching. Hence, John 12:32 has nothing to do with the call to salvation.

Not only do Calvinists teach the "general call" which they say is extended to all men and heard only with the physical ear, but they also avow an "effectual call" which they claim is something above and beyond the preaching of the Gospel and is made only to those who are called sheep, or elect. Their doctrine is that the "general call" being heard only with the physical ear, has no power on the spirit of a man is therefore not sufficient to awaken the spirit of the sinner so that he may come to Christ. On the other hand, they assert that the "effectual call" which they say the Holy Spirit makes only to the sheep, in addition to the Gospel, cannot be resisted.

For proof of the "effectual call" they refer to such passages of Scripture as John 10:27-30 where Jesus declared, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

"My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." Also John 10:16 is cited, and reads, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

One Calvinist, Warren W. Wiersbe, Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Covington, Kentucky, stated the following in a Bible study outline on "The effectual call". "When the preacher calls upon the sinner to repent and he refuses, this does not mean the sinner is mightier than God. But if the Spirit calls and he resists, then he is mightier than God the Holy Spirit." This is their position. He has fairly stated the position of Calvinism concerning the subject of "Irresistible Grace". That is exactly what they believe.



Further, Calvinists teach that the new birth, the impartation of eternal life, comes before repentance and faith, and that a sinner repents and trusts Christ because he has already been born again; he repents and trusts Christ, not in order to obtain eternal life, but because he already has eternal life. They use such analogies as the little eaglet being pushed out of its nest by the mother eagle. She builds her nest up high in the mountains at the edge of a cliff and when the little eaglets get their feathers on their wings sufficiently to learn to fly, she will push one of them out of the nest and he begins to fall down toward the rocks and craigs below. The eaglet, which has not yet learned to fly, screams in horror at the prospect of certain destruction. But, stoutly argues the Calvinist, it's a live eagle that screams; the very fact he screams proves he is alive. And so, he argues, when you hear a sinner cry to God, that sinner has already been given spirit life; the new birth has already taken place with him.

Another analogy I have heard them use is that of a new born baby crying. An old hard-shell Baptist preacher once told me that he had the privilege of seeing two of his children born. He said, "I was glad when I heard them cry, because I knew that if they cried they were at least alive." And so the Calvinist says that before a sinner can cry to God, God has to give him eternal spirit life, and when God gets ready to give him spirit life, that sinner can no more reject or resist God than a jug can resist a man pouring water into it. This is Calvinism.

We shall now consider the errors of Calvinism on this doctrine of "Irresistable Grace". First, let us observe the errors concerning the calls to salvation, the so-called "general call" and the so-called "effectual call". Let us read the quotation of the Calvinist again. "When the preacher calls upon the sinner to repent, and he refuses, this does not mean the sinner is mightier than God. But if the spirit calls and he resists then he is mightier than God the Holy Spirit."



Please read again Proverbs 1:23-24. "Turn you at my reproof..." That "turn" means to repent. "...behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;" Now, who was it that was doing the calling? Was it the preacher or the Spirit of God doing the calling? If it was the preacher doing the calling, then it was also the preacher doing the reproving (conviction), and it is the preacher who is to pour out his spirit unto the sinner who does turn. But since the preacher can neither pour out his own spirit, nor the Spirit of God unto the penitent sinner, I affirm that it is God who is issuing the call of Proverbs 1:23-24. Furthermore, since the sinner who does not have the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit) does not belong to Christ (Romans 8:9), and is therefore an alien sinner, spiritually dead, it is obvious that the call issued in Proverbs 1:23-24 is made to lost, alien, spiritually dead sinners by the Spirit of God. And those who refused and did not regard that call were they mightier than the Spirit of God? Certainly not!

Consider the call of Matthew 22:14, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Those who were called and were not chosen, whom did they resist? Was it the preacher who called them or was it God who called them? And if it was the Spirit of God who called them, who did they resist?

Isaiah 45:22 records, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Who is doing the calling there? Is that the preacher? Or is that the Spirit of God? He identifies himself as God. And since that call is extended to all the ends of the earth one of two things is true; either all men get saved, or somebody resists that call. But what of those who resist it? Are they sinners who have been born again, and have already been given eternal spirit life, yet they resist the call of God to be saved? Or are they lost, alien,



spiritually dead sinners whom God calls to look unto Him (trust Him) in order to receive eternal spirit life? I affirm the latter to be true. Are they mightier than God? Certainly not!

When the Creator of the heavens and the earth said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28), were those who did not come to Him mightier than He? How foolish!

When Jesus was attending the feast of tabernacles in Jerusalem, those Jews had been observing the feast for a week and, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37-38) Many of them did not come to Him and drink of the Spirit of Life. Since it was Christ Himself doing the calling, were those who did not come to Him mightier than He? No, in no wise!

Let us consider the last invitation recorded in God's Word. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17) Who said that? The Spirit of God. The man who does not take or receive the spirit or water of life, is he mightier than the Holy Spirit who is doing the calling in these passages? No, he is not mightier than God, but he does certainly resist the Spirit of God. We come now to consider some gross inconsistencies of Calvinism and this so-called "general call." So many Scriptures indisputably present the fact that God does call sinners to salvation, and the fact that many who are called do not get saved, that they are forced to surmise the "general call" and assert that it is heard only by the physical ear and has no power on the spirit of a man.

Be it remembered that Calvinists emphatically teach that Christ did not die for the non-elect; He only died for the elect, and yet they have God calling for the non-elect



to come to Him for salvation that does not exist. If Christ did not die for them there is not salvation for them. There is no remission of sins apart from the shed blood of Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 9:22) There is no salvation that even God can offer apart from the death of Christ. (John 3:14-15, Acts 4:12) In all candor and in deep reverence, I say that if almighty God should invite and call men for whom Christ did not die, to come to Him for a salvation that does not exist, it would make Him the liar of all liars. But since it is impossible for God to lie, it is certain that God does have salvation to offer to every sinner whom He calls, even "all the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 45:22)

To the "effectual call" which supposedly is extended only to the "sheep" (elect, according to the Calvinists) is attributed such passages as John 10:27-28 and John 10:16. This call, they avow, cannot be resisted. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:" (John 10:27). He also proclaimed, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice;..." (John 10:16)

Calvinists teach that when God elected men unto salvation in eternity before the time ages began, He gave all the elect to Christ then, and all of the elect belong to Christ now, whether they are regenerated or not. Such passages as John 17:9-10 are cited as proof. In these verses Jesus said, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou has given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." The Calvinistic position that when God elected men to salvation in eternity He gave them all to Christ in a "lump sum" necessarily means that elect sinners who have not been regenerated, hence, do not possess the Holy Spirit, belong to Christ. Of course, this teaching is in conflict with several passages of Scripture.

Paul teaches in Galatians 5:24 that all who belong to Christ have repented. It reads, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and



lusts." The expression "they that are Christ's" simply means "they that belong to Christ." When does one crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts? Since the term "crucify" means "to put to death," and since Paul certainly was not referring to one killing the flesh in physical death, he referred to the spiritual act of dying to the affections and lusts of the fleshly nature, that is, dying to the love of sin. This is repentance. Thus, when one crucifies the flesh he repents. This being true, everyone who belongs to Christ has repented. The opposite of this proposition is also true. They who have not repented do not belong to Christ and are, therefore, not His sheep.

Not only are they who belong to Christ identified as having repented, but they are identified as possessing the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God. Romans 8:9 declares, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Notice carefully the last part. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." This is the strongest way to say that the man who does not have the Holy Spirit (called the Spirit of Christ) dwelling in him does not belong to Christ. He is not one of the "sheep" of Christ until he has been born again, born of the Spirit of God and has the Spirit of God dwelling in him. And so, in John 10:27-28, and John 10:16 when Jesus talked about "my sheep" he was talking about people who were already born again. His sheep do hear His voice. And since His "sheep" are people who have already been saved (born again), the sheep's hearing the voice of Jesus is not in response to the call to salvation, but rather to the call to follow Him because He is the Shepherd of the sheep. He said as it is recorded in John 10:14, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." Then if His sheep know Him they have eternal life, just as Jesus taught in John 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."



Paul wrote to Timothy and said, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (II Timothy 2:19) Compare Paul's statement with the words of the Prophet Nahum who wrote, "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him." (Nahum 1:7)

Putting the above-cited Scriptures together one must admit the following: (1) Christ knows all His sheep (John 10:14, 27); (2) Christ knows all who trust in Him (Nahum 1:7); (3) Christ knows all who belong to Him (II Timothy 2:19); (4) All of Christ's sheep know Him (John 10:14); (5) All those who know Christ have eternal life (John 10:27-28, John 17:3). With these indisputable facts in view the conclusion is unavoidable that Christ's sheep spoken of in John 10:16, 27 etc. are not unregenerated believers in Christ. This most assuredly and effectively ruins the Calvinistic doctrine of an "effectual call" to salvation, which call is extended to elected, but unregenerated sinners, and which call cannot be resisted.

It is admitted, even by Calvinists, that God does extend some kind of call for salvation to all responsible sinners. Accordingly, God verily has salvation to offer them on the ground that Christ died for them. Then if God calls all responsible sinners to real salvation, and that call is extended by grace, since some sinners who are called do not get saved, then the grace of God that calls men to salvation is resisted by some.

In addition to their erroneous teaching concerning the call to salvation, Calvinists make a grave error regarding the relationship of the new birth to repentance and faith. They teach that the new birth necessarily comes before repentance and faith. They use such analogies as the screaming eaglet and the crying baby to show how logical



and sensible their doctrine is. But now let us observe the scriptural consequences of that doctrine.

If the new birth takes place before repentance and faith, then you have a born again child of God in danger of perishing before he repents. Luke 13, verses 3 and 5 warn, "... except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And if the new birth comes ahead of repentance then there is a child of God in danger of perishing until he repents.

If the new birth comes ahead of repentance and faith, you have a child of God who is condemned until he believes. John 3:18 declares, "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." So, if the new birth takes place ahead of faith, then that child of God is condemned until he believes.

If the new birth takes place ahead of repentance and faith then you have a child of God who is under the wrath of God until he believes. John the Baptist preached, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." And so, if the new birth takes place ahead of faith a child of God is under the wrath of God and he is born dead until he believes.

If the new birth takes place before repentance and faith, then the child of God is not at peace with God until he believes. Romans 5:1 reads, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Furthermore, if the new birth comes before repentance and faith, then until the new born child of God believes, he is without hope, he has no promise of security; in short, he has no part in the promises of God for salvation and eternal glory. There is no promise in the Word of God of salvation and eternal glory to anyone apart from faith in Jesus Christ. God never did promise



salvation, the forgiveness of sins, peace, rest, hope, joy or any other spiritual blessing to unbelievers. The unbeliever has no part with God.

However, if one observes that the believer in Christ shall not perish (John 3:14-16), is not condemned and shall not come into condemnation (John 3:14, John 5:24), has been delivered from God's wrath (Romans 5:9, I Thessalonians 1:10) and is at peace with God (Romans 5:1) then it is easy to see that the new birth--the impartation of eternal life--takes place at the point of faith in Jesus Christ.

We now come to examine the error of Calvinism concerning resisting God. In Acts, chapter 7, it is recorded that the deacon, Stephen, the first New Testament martyr, preached the Word to unbelievers. They must have been non-elect because they resisted the message. The message had its influence on them because it bothered them so. It made them angry and they carried Stephen out and started chewing on him, that is, gnashing on him with their teeth. That didn't satisfy them. They carried him out and stoned him to death. Before they stoned him, that brave servant of God said to those recalcitrant Jews who were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." (Acts 7:51) Notice, they were always (continually) resisting the Holy Spirit.

At this point, the principle of influence, which was stated in a previous message, needs to be recalled. I restate it to refresh your memory. There are two kinds of influence that can be brought to bare upon an individual. One is called mediate influence. This is influence that is brought to bare by the use of a medium or an instrument, as if you take a hammer and drive a nail into a board. The power is not in the hammer. It is in the arm that wields it. Anytime an influence is brought to bare by the use of a medium or instrument there is a power of some kind



behind the instrument which uses it and makes it effective. The Gospel of Christ is an instrument used by the Holy Spirit to appeal to the hearts and spirits of men and it is God's ordained instrument to influence sinners toward salvation in Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:16, I Corinthians 1:21, Acts 13:46-47, Luke 16:27-31) The power behind it is the Holy Spirit. Then there is influence called "immediate influence." This is influence that is brought to bare without the use of a medium or instrument. In the case of God's influence upon a lost sinner, it is direct contact between the Spirit of God and the spirit of a man. That influence is brought to bare in the new birth. There is direct contact between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man in the work of regeneration and the impartation of eternal life.

I repeat what I have previously stated to you, that you cannot submit yourself to one, nor can you resist one, as long as he does not bring any influence to bare upon you. But, the very moment someone brings either kind of influence to bare upon you--whether mediate as the issuing of a command or instruction to you, or immediate, as direct physical or spiritual contact--you must respond to the influence by either submitting to it or resisting it. To ignore the influence is to resist it. This principle will hold true all the way through the Word of God. When Stephen saw that those men were resisting the Word of God, he understood that the Spirit of God was influencing them, and he informed them that they were resisting the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit uses many instruments to influence men in His work of conviction. Mrs. Madelyn Murray O'Hare is reported to have said that she hoped to see the day when she could walk down any street in any city in America and not see a church or anything that reminded her of God. She will never see that day in this world. Wherever one goes in this universe, there are objects, incidents or situations that point him to God and cause him to feel a need for God. This is mediate influence used



by the Holy Spirit.

When the Apostle Paul preached the sermon on Mars' Hill, he preached to some people who had put up an altar and put an inscription on it, "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD". (Acts 17:22-23) A man who does not know God is lost, because Jesus said in His intercessory prayer: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent." (John 17:3) Therefore, the people on Mars' Hill were lost, yet Paul preached to them. Notice his words recorded in verses 30 and 31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." When God gives a command to repent, those who do not repent are rejecting the command. Whose command is it? Whom are they resisting: Not the preacher. The preacher doesn't call a sinner to repent. He may read or speak the warning of God's Word, but it is God's command to repent. The man who hears that command read or stated, and does not repent, resists the Spirit of God and not the preacher. The man who hears the Gospel preached and does not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, resists the Spirit of God and not the preacher. The preacher is the message bearer, but it is God's message.

One day, as Jesus sat eating, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. (Matthew 9:10) When the Pharisees saw it they asked His disciples, "Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?" (Verse 11) Notice verses 12 and 13 carefully: "But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth. I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but



sinner to repentance." If Jesus calls sinners to repentance and they do not repent, whom do they resist? They resist Christ. Are they mightier than He? Nay! But they do resist Him.

In Matthew Chapter 10, the record is given of the twelve apostles being sent on their first preaching tour without the bodily presence of Jesus. They were to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and preach to them, "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Verse 6-7) Jesus instructed them, "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city." (Matthew 10:14-15) Then in verse 40, in the same discourse, Jesus told His apostles, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." This simply meant the apostles were spokesmen for Jesus, and whatever response was rendered to their message was rendered to Jesus Himself. But notice! The message was preached to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10:6) Those lost sheep were not of God; that is, they were not regenerated people, for Jesus Himself said, "He that is of God heareth God's words..." (John 8:4-7) Those who did not receive the apostles and their message verily rejected the Christ who sent them. When Jesus had upbraided the Pharisees and called them a generation of vipers (serpents) hypocrites and so on (Matthew 23:13-39), He said to them, "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matthew 23:33) Verses 34-35 record: "Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom



ye slew between the temple and the altar." These must have been non-elect people because God sent His prophets to them and they rejected them. They treated the prophets and the message they preached with contempt. According to Calvinists, if they had been elect people, they could not have resisted. What did the prophets preach to them? "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43) Every prophet God ever called and sent to the people preached that message. But here were some people to whom Jesus had sent prophets, who killed the prophets. And not the Son of God, the Saviour Himself, had come and offered salvation to them. How did they respond to Him? Listen to the words of Jesus as He wept over that city and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37) Isn't the Son of God able to do what He wills to do? This is the Calvinist's cry. Isn't He big enough to do His will? Certainly He is. Didn't Nebuchadnezzar admit to the fourth chapter of Daniel that God "...doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4:35) There is no conflict between that and the words of Jesus here, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Calvinists boast about "sovereign grace" and in their boasting, they misrepresent the grace of God. It is sovereign grace that saves the sinner, but God never purposed to save an impenitent unbeliever. All the power in the world can't make Him save an unbeliever.

On the other hand, God has purposed to save every sinner who, under the convicting influence of the Holy



Spirit, repents and trusts Christ, and there is no power in heaven, earth or hell that can keep Him from saving a penitnant believer. Yes, God is sovereign in the administration of His grace, and in His sovereignty God, "...resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (James 4:6)

Jesus was doing His will as He wept over some people who were resisting Him. And they died and went to hell, not because He reprobated them to hell, but because they would not submit to Him. Read Matthew 23:37 like this: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often was it my will to gather your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing, but it was not your will." This is the sense of it.

While God does influence every responsible sinner, He does not manipulate the will of a man. In John 5:39, Jesus said to some Pharisees, "Ye do search the scriptures," but Jesus literally said to them, "Ye do search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me, and ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Those Pharisees did search the Scriptures, and they thought they possessed eternal life by constantly reading and quoting the Scriptures. The Scriptures testified of Jesus--that He is the Saviour, and that eternal life is in Him. But Jesus said to them, "...ye will not come to me", literally He said, "...ye will not to come to me, that ye might have life." (Verse 40) They exercised their wills. They willed (chose) not to come to Christ that they might have life. What? Couldn't Christ save them? Isn't He big enough to save them against their will? The power of Christ is not in question. One might with equal relevance ask, "could not Christ save the entire human race? Is He not powerful enough to do so, in view of the fact God loved the entire world? (John 3:16) When the Calvinist quips that God did not purpose to save all men, I answer that God did not



purpose to save any impenitent unbeliever. He is just as able to save all men as He is to save one sinner who does not repent and trust Christ. The fact is, that in the covenant of Grace, God never promised salvation--eternal life--remission of sins--to any responsible sinner apart from faith in Jesus Christ.

The Bible doctrine of salvation by grace briefly stated reveals the following facts. It was grace that planned and purposed salvation. Men had nothing to do with the planning and purposing of it. It was grace that brought Christ into the world to fulfill the law that men had broken. It was grace that caused Christ to go to the cross and die to make the atonement, reconciliation, for the sins of the world, and to take away the sin of the world as John says in John 1:29. It is grace that invites men to come to Christ for salvation. It is grace that causes God to bestow mercy and pardon on a sinner when he repents, just as He said in Isaiah 55:7: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." It is grace that gives the eternal life to the penitent believer. It is grace that keeps him safe in Christ and carries him to glory. All of it is by grace. But in the administration of His grace, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. So says the Word of God. (James 4:6) And God is absolutely sovereign in all the administration of His grace.

In Isaiah 45:22 when God said, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else." He meant it. He meant that He really had salvation to offer to all men. God does not mock men. He does not tease men. He does not set a mirage out before them and tease them to come to that. That would make Him a liar. But He cannot lie. He has real salvation to offer. In His sovereign administration of grace, God convicts every responsible sinner of sin, of righteousness and of judgment and makes him aware of his need of the



Saviour. In his work of conviction and His offer of salvation in Jesus Christ, God imposes a choice on the sinner. He must either choose life and salvation in Christ or death and destruction out of Him. It is in this that the sinner must respond to God's influence upon him, and it is in this that the sinner must exercise his will.

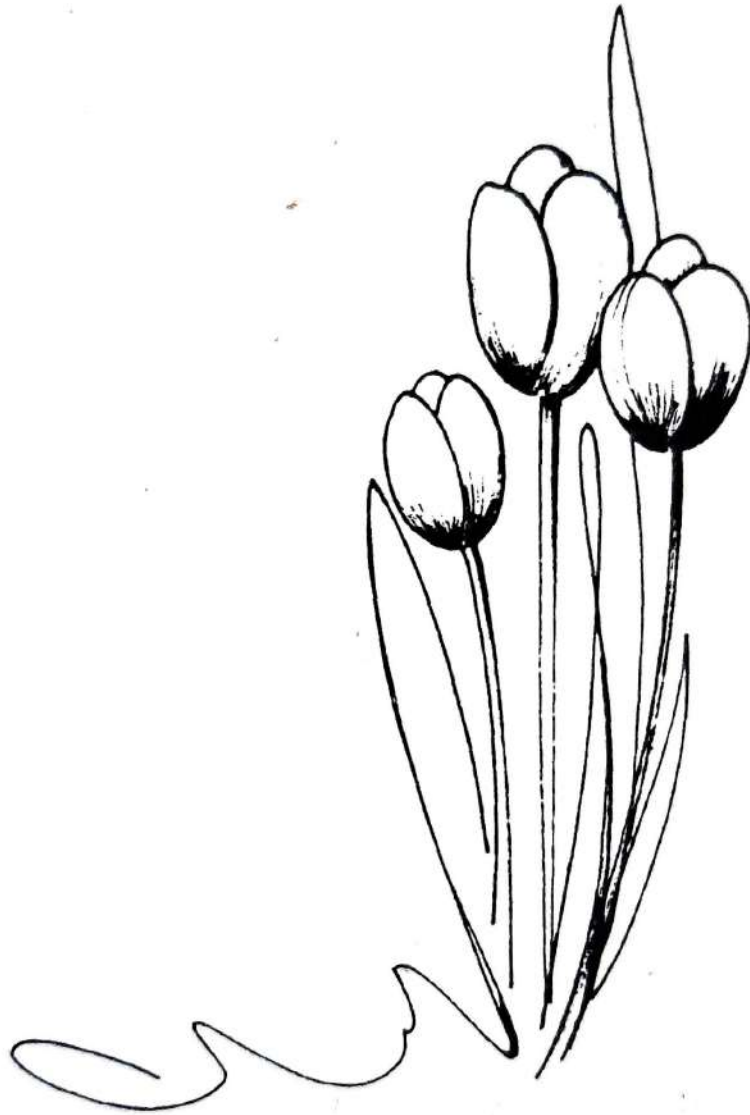
In John chapter 3, Jesus told Nicodemus about the necessity of the new birth. Nicodemus did not understand it. Jesus presented the human side of it. There is a divine side to salvation and there is a human side to it. Jesus did not explain the divine side of it to him. Rather, He said, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12) It is sufficient for the sinner to hear the human side, and this is what Jesus told him: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of man must be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world;..." God did not reprobate anyone to hell without offering him salvation and giving him opportunity to be saved -- "...But that the world through him might be saved." "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:14-18) God meant what he said in Revelation 22:17, "And the spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

But, on the other side of the subject, there is the awful Bible doctrine that those who resist the convicting work of the Holy Spirit and reject Jesus Christ until death, shall suffer eternally in hell. Psalm 9:17 warns, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that



forget God." The Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (II Thessalonians 1:6-9) That meek and lowly Galilean who invited sinners to come to Him for spiritual rest (Matthew 11:28) and who wept over sinners who would not come to Him (Matthew 23:37) shall take vengeance. Who shall be the object of His vengeance? "...Them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." What's going to happen to them? They "...shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power:". (II Thessalonians 1:9) But why are they going to hell? God said to the prophet Ezekiel: "...As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his ways and live: Turn ye from your evil ways: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11) God has not changed His attitude toward sinful men. The Apostle Paul exhorted that prayers and intercessions be made for all men, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus: Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (I Timothy 2:3-6) Then why will men perish in hell? Because they will not come to Christ that they might have life. While this age goes on, the Lord is "...longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9)

## **LECTURE V**



## **PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS**



## "Perseverance Of The Saints"

The next letter in the "TULIP" acrostic is the letter "P". It stands for the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. This is the subject before us at the present. Just as the Bible doctrines of total hereditary depravity, election, atonement, etc., are Missionary Baptist tenets, so also is the Bible doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

The topic "Perseverance of the Saints" is suggested by the word "persevere", which means, "to persist in any enterprise undertaken, in spite of counter influences, opposition, etc." (Webster) The theological meaning of "perseverance" is, "continuance in a state of grace until it is succeeded by a state of glory." (Webster) Hence, the doctrine before us is a very important Bible doctrine and needs to be clearly understood by all Bible students.

I am not at all sure that I know all that Calvinists mean by the doctrine of the perseverance of the Saints, but I intend to expound, to the best of my ability, what the Bible teaches about the perseverance of the Saints. I encourage each child of God to study the subject diligently and to rejoice in its truth. It is, indeed, a most glorious doctrine.

Three passages of Scripture will serve as text verses. In II Thessalonians 3:3, we are told, "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil." Phillipians 1:6 reads, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." II Timothy, 1:12 declares, "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

My first topic is stated from the negative side, "WHAT THIS DOCTRINE DOES NOT MEAN". First, it does not mean that a saved person, a saint, cannot or will



not sin. In I John 1:8-10, John wrote to saved people and said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we made him a liar, and his word is not in us."

This Scripture clearly teaches that a child of God, a saved person, sins. Of course it is the fleshly nature of the saved person that sins. The regenerated spirit of a child of God cannot sin, because he is born of God and possesses God's nature and character. I John 3:9 reads, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, (literally, he does not have the power to sin) because he is born of God." (Parenthesis mine)

Peter was a child of God and he committed the horrible sin of denying that he knew Jesus. Matthew 26:69-75 records, "Now Peter sat without in the palace; and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly."

There are many kinds of sins a person can commit. But I do not know of one a child of God can commit that is worse than denying that he knows the Son of God. Peter did that three times. And Jesus had already announced



that he would do it. Peter thought he was strong enough to be faithful to God, but he had to learn that, "...the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26:41) Through that terrible experience he learned not to depend upon his own strength, but rather upon the grace of the Lord. Indeed, the Lord molded him into an immovable stone and Simon Peter became a great servant of God.

In Samuel, chapter 11, we read about a horrible sin David committed. Now, God called David, "...a man after my own heart." (Acts 13:22) Not that God approved or condoned the sins David committed, but David confessed his sins to God and forsook them and returned to fellowship with God. This is a quality God desires in all his children. David took another man's wife to be his and sent that man to the battlefield with his own death warrant, a note for his superior office to put him into the heat of the battle so he would be sure to be killed. Can a child of God do such a thing? David certainly did it. And since he was a man after God's own heart, he was a child of God.

A child of God can break his fellowship with his Heavenly Father, but he cannot break his relationship with Him. A good analogy of this is found in the narrative of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-32. The son that took his part of the inheritance and went into a foreign country and wasted his substance with riotous living is a good analogy of a child of God out of fellowship with his Father. He came to be in want and was not happy while he was down there. Indeed, he became miserable. But he was still that father's son and he knew it. When he came to himself he resolved "I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." (Luke 15:18-19) Surely, any child of God who disobeys God and gets out of fellowship with Him will become miserable and will be happy until he repents and confesses his sins to God and



gets back into fellowship with Him. But his relation of sonship with God is not broken.

Solomon, the son of David, is another example of a saved person who disobeyed God and brought God's anger upon him. God had commanded the children of Israel not to marry the women of foreign nations because they were worshippers of idol gods, and God warned, "...they will turn away your heart after their gods." (I Kings 11:2) But Solomon did not heed this warning. He "...loved many strange women," and "...clave unto these in love." (I Kings 11:1-2) When he became old, his wives "...turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father." (I Kings 11:4) So the Lord was angry with Solomon and said to him, "...I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in the days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son." (I Kings 11:9-12) Solomon sunked terribly and broke his fellowship with God and brought God's chastisement upon himself. Nevertheless, he was a child of God, and that relationship was not broken.

God does indeed chasten His children for their disobedience. This is irrefutably declared in Hebrews 12:5-11. But observe: this Scripture not only declares that God chastens His children for their disobedience, it also teaches emphatically that all children of God do disobey God, and their chastisement is proof of their sonship with God. Hebrews 12:5-11 states, "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons;..." Mark that! God only chastens his sons. If a person is chastened of God, God deals with him as with a son; "...for what son is he whom the father chasteneth



not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

I am glad God chastens His children. And that chastening is for our profit. It is designed to correct us from our errors and to bring us back into fellowship with God. So, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints does not mean that a child of God cannot sin. It does not mean that he will not sin. It does not mean that he will not get out of fellowship with his father.

Let us now consider what it does mean. First, it means that not everyone who professes faith in Christ is a genuine believer. This needs to be clearly understood. There are two kinds of faith. There is a mental consenting faith that most lost people have. And then there is heart faith, a trust in Christ that is saving faith. I cannot remember a time in my life when I did not believe in my mind that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, that He is the Saviour of men, that He was born of a virgin woman, and died on Calvary's cross for sinners. I cannot remember the time when I did not give mental consent to those truths. I was taught them from the earliest part of my life that I can remember, and so far as I can recall, I never questioned the truth of those teachings. However, that was a mere mental consenting kind of faith which produced no commitment to Christ, nor allegiance to Him, and did not rely upon Him for hope of glory. Hence, it did not get me saved.

When I was twenty years old I heard the Gospel



preached while being convicted very deeply by the Holy Spirit that I was a sinner, justly condemned and without hope. I was convinced by the Gospel that Christ died for me and that I could be saved from the awful punishment of hell on the merits of His death. My heart turned to Christ and with simple trusting faith I committed my soul to Him. This faith produced the joy of peace with God and a conscience that desired to serve God. Mental consenting faith cannot produce in the heart of any man a sense of peace with God nor an earnest desire to serve Him. Heart faith culminating from true repentance produces both.

Let us notice an example of mental consenting faith in Simon the Sorcerer, of whom we read in the eighth chapter of Acts. When Philip went down to Samaria and preached the Gospel, many of the people believed on the Lord. And Acts 8:13 declares, "Then Simon himself believed also..." However, when Peter and John arrived from Jerusalem and the people, after prayer and laying on of the hands, received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17), Simon tried to buy the power to lay his hands on people and cause them to receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:18-19). Then Peter exposed the kind of faith Simon really had. Acts 8:20-21 states, "But Peter said unto him, thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." (Acts 8:20-21) Since Simon's heart was not right in the sight of God his faith was not from a penitent heart; it was not heart faith at all. He only had a mental consenting faith in the things Philip had preached. Such faith never obtains salvation, and never produces peace with God nor a desire to serve God.

Now observe the difference between the kind of faith that merely gives mental consent to the fact of Christ and His death, and heart faith which trusts, relies upon Him. Romans 10:8-10 reveals, "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the



word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

The difference between a superficial, mental consenting kind of faith and a trusting faith which comes from a penitent heart is further revealed in the eighth chapter of John. Jesus had preached to some Jews, and the Scripture declared, "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:30-32) Those Jews claimed to be free already because they were Abraham's seed (verse 33). They only understood physical bondage and freedom. They knew nothing about spiritual bondage and freedom. Jesus said to them, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you." (Verse 37) Now, He had already said to them, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (Verse 31), that is, "If we continue in my word, then are ye truly my disciples." This is in keeping with what Jesus later said to His disciples, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." (John 14:21) It is also in keeping with the words of John, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (I John 2:4) John further said, "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him..." (I John 3:23-24a) If a person believes with only a mental consent to the historical facts concerning Jesus and His death and resurrection, the Word of God will have no place in his



heart. But if one believes in his heart, that is, in his heart trusts in Jesus Christ, the Word of God does have its place in his heart.

The grammar of John 8:30-44 is difficult to follow, but it is evident that, while some of the Jews who heard Jesus did believe on Him in their hearts and were saved, some of them only believed with a mental consenting faith and their hearts were not changed. They were not saved. The true believer, one who has heart faith in Christ, is not condemned (John 3:18), has eternal life (John 3:36), and is born of God (is a child of God) (I John 5:1). Those to whom Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" evidently had only mental consenting faith, for His word had no place in them (Verse 37). They sought to kill Jesus (Verse 37, 40) and Jesus said to them, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44) If they were children of the Devil, then they were certainly not children of God though they had a superficial mental consenting kind of belief in Jesus.

There are apparently many people who, having been reared in at least a nominal Christian climate, and having been exposed to the professions and assertions of their forebears and associates to the truth of the Bible record concerning Christ, readily acquiesce in those Bible teachings. Their faith is the same kind that accepts the records of credible profane history. Such faith can neither produce real commitment to Christ nor appropriate the benefits of His death in atonement for sin. And yet, many of them claim to be Christians and base their hope of escaping hell and being accepted of God upon their consenting belief.

Both Paul and Peter issued grave warnings to those who had professed faith in Christ to make sure that their



faith was real heart trust in Christ, seated in a penitent heart that had felt the contrition of guilt and condemnation. The Apostle Paul warned the Hebrew people who had professed faith in Jesus Christ, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." (Hebrews 3:12)

Some have thought, because Paul addressed them as "brethren," they were definitely saved. But this is not true. One needs to remember that Paul wrote in Romans 9:3, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Paul counted all Israelites his national brethren and had a deep desire in his heart and prayer to God that "...they might be saved." (Romans 10:1)

The exhortation of Hebrews 3:12 was not for the people to hold doggedly to their historical faith concerning Jesus, regardless of whatever doubts and questions might arise in their minds to sway them from constantly following the living God. Nor was it simply an exhortation to 'hold out faithful to the end', with implications that they might, through ceasing to be faithful to God, lose their salvation. The Apostle was admonishing the people to examine their faith as to its KIND, not as to its amount. If they only had a mental concentrating faith their hearts were still evil and they would depart from their profession of faith in the living God. If such were the case, they had not been regenerated, and were empty professors who did not possess Christ. On the other hand, if they had heart faith in Christ, they were really born again and their hope was sound because they possessed Christ in their hearts.

Real heart faith in Christ, faith that is seated in a penitent heart, can never be lost. It is the KIND of faith a person has, not the amount of his faith, that determines whether or not he is really a partaker of Christ, and whether or not his faith will persevere to the end. This is precisely what Paul means when he says, "For we are



made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." (Hebrews 3:14) A good paraphrase of this Scripture would be, "If we have the kind of confidence (faith) that perseveres unto the end, then we have truly been partakers of Christ, that is, we really possess Him in our hearts."

At this point let us consider Hebrews 6:4-9, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,..."

Here the King James version says, "If they shall fall away," but the literal language says, "Having fallen away," "to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers," ...Literally, that part of the earth which bears thorns and briers, "...is rejected and is nigh unto cursing: whose end is to be burned."

Goodspeed's translation of the New Testament renders verses 7-8 thusly: "Ground that drinks in frequent showers and produces vegetation that is of use to those for whom it is cultivated receives God's blessing. But if it yields thorns and thistles, it is thought worthless and almost cursed, and it will finally be burned."

Now observe the analogy. In verses 4-5 Paul refers to those who "...were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come" and he likens them to "...the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it". (Verse 7) Every blessing mentioned in verses 4 and 5 the Hebrew people had received in type and shadow as God had delivered the nation of Israel out of Egyptian



bondage under the blood of the Passover lamb, led them by the cloud (representing the Holy Spirit), taught them by the law and the prophets (they tasted the good word of God), and showed them through the reigns of David and Solomon the "powers of the world (age) to come." But many of them, having received such enlightenment, and by it having been taught that the real fulfillment of all of these blessings in Christ, and having had the Christ. They are likened in Paul's analogy to the ground that receives the rain, and yet brings forth thorns and briers. These are people who receive all the light and influence needed to produce repentance and faith in their hearts, but rather than bearing the good fruits of repentance and faith, they bear the thorns and thistles of self-righteousness and evil works.

But even though Paul spoke in that manner, issuing such grave warnings for them to be sure about the kind of faith they had, to be sure they had repented and trusted Christ, he said, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you," --better things than the thorns and briers of impenitence and rejecting Christ, which result in the person being rejected of God and finally being destroyed (burned) in hell--"and things that accompany salvation," --the work and labor of love which come from a heart of true faith in Christ--"though thus we speak." (Verse 9)

Another passage which warns those who have professed faith in Christ to be sure about their salvation is II Peter 1:10. Here, Peter admonished, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:..." Now what does Peter mean here? Does he mean that a person can call God into question on the matter? Certainly not! Does he mean that one is to add his works and merits to salvation in order to make his salvation secure? NO! He simply meant for the brethren to be sure they were saved. If you want to know that you are one of the elect, just be sure you are saved, make sure that your



faith in Jesus Christ is real heart faith. When one diligently examines his own heart and faith in the light of God's word and makes sure that his faith is seated in a penitent heart, he can be assured that he will never fall, i.e., he can never lose his salvation.

This doctrine does mean that one who has heart faith in Christ, saving faith, can never lose his faith in Christ. This faith will continue though the child of God may become disobedient and rebellious against God. It is faith that persists. A child of God may become rebellious against God, and, like the Prodigal Son, get down into the "hog pen" of sin and become so miserable that he will even come to despair, yet he cannot lose his faith in Jesus Christ.

On the evening when Jesus instituted His Supper in His church He announced to Simon Peter that Satan had asked for permission to sift him as wheat so as to cause him to deny Jesus. Luke 22:31-32 gives the record. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Jesus had often announced to His disciples that He would be delivered into the hands of wicked men who would mock Him, scourge Him and crucify Him; and the third day He would rise again. (Matthew 20:17-19, Mark 10:32-34, Luke 9:43-45) But as Luke explains, "...they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not..." (Luke 9:45) It was in this background of the disciples' ignorance of what would happen to Jesus that Jesus informed them, "...All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." (Matthew 26:31) It was Simon Peter who boasted "...though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." (Matthew 26:33) Satan evidently knew that Peter had been



boasting this in his self-confidence, and he wanted the opportunity to shake Peter up, sift him as wheat, and cause him to be so deeply offended because of Jesus that he would deny any knowledge of Him. But even as Jesus informed Peter of Satan's intentions, He assured him "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not..." (Luke 22:32) If the Father and the Son are in absolute agreement (John 10:30, 14:10, 17:11-22) then the Father heard and granted the Son's petition for Peter and Peter's faith did not fail. He did not lose his faith in Christ even while he outwardly denied that he knew Him. The Father always hears the Son (John 11:42) because the Son always pleases the Father in all He says and does. Therefore, the intercessory prayers the Son makes for believers in Him are always granted. John wrote, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (I John 2:1) Jesus is the advocate, the defending attorney, for all true believers. And just as He prayed for Peter, He prays for all true believers, that their faith fail not.

The perseverance of heart faith in Christ is shown, not only by the intercessory work of Christ on behalf of believers, but also in the very nature of such faith and its object. It is the nature of real faith to believe and trust so long as the object of our faith remains faithful. If, through acquaintance and experience, one comes to have confidence in another person, he does not aimlessly and without cause cast away his confidence. He will hold his confidence until he is convinced that the person he trusts had proved to be untrustworthy. If the trustworthiness and ability of the person who is the object of his faith is not convincingly clear to his own mind, he will likely have doubts and his faith will be weak, but if he is persuaded of the ability and faithfulness of the person he trusts, then his doubts are dispelled and his faith will persevere as long as the ability and faithfulness of the



object of his faith persists.

Thus, the true believer in Christ can never lose his faith in Christ because, "...he is faithful that promised" (Hebrews 10:23b, Hebrews 2:17, and II Thessalonians 3:3), and because, "...he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25)

The essentiality of possessing the right kind of faith shows up again in I Corinthians 15:1-2. Here, Paul stated, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." The expression, "keep in memory" means to have in full and secure possession, to hold fast mentally. A person may 'forget' many historical facts to which he has given mental assent. But heart faith in Jesus Christ is on such a nature that it supersedes all mental assent and holds in full and secure possession the Gospel, "...that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (I Corinthians 15:3-4) What the Gospel promises--salvation, remission of sins, etc., on the ground of the death of Christ--heart faith in Christ claims and appropriates to one's self. Therefore, heart faith possesses and retains the Gospel because it appropriates the benefits of the Gospel. Just as a man who eats a slice of bread and digests it appropriates it to his own body, and therefore, keeps it, possesses it so that it has become one with his body and he can never lose it, so the man who receives (eats) Christ into his spirit does appropriate the Gospel of Christ and its benefits to himself, and thus "keeps", possesses, the Gospel and can never lose it. This is the difference between mental consenting faith and heart faith. Mental consent acknowledges that the bread is good, but does not partake of it. Real faith takes, receives, eats the bread. Mental



consent to the Gospel acknowledges that Christ is the Saviour, that he died for the sins of men, was buried and rose again the third day; but it does not receive Christ and appropriate the benefits of His death and resurrection to one's self. Heart faith receives Christ, claims Him as one's own, possesses Him, and appropriates the benefits of His death and resurrection to one's self. This kind of faith can never be lost.

This is exactly what the writer of the Hebrew letter is teaching in Hebrews 3:14. He asserts, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." To paraphrase this verse, the writer was saying, "If we have the kind of faith (confidence) that remains stedfast in our possession unto the end, then we are truly partakers of Christ, that is, we have truly received Him into our hearts." This Scripture implies that the person who abandons his profession of faith in Christ only had a mental consenting kind of faith to begin with, and was not a real partaker (possessor) of Christ and, was therefore, not saved. Real heart faith in Christ does persevere unto the end.

The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints not only means that the true believer cannot lose his faith in Christ; it also means he can never lose his salvation. He may become disobedient and rebellious against God and break his fellowship with God, but he cannot break his relationship with Him. When a child of God breaks his fellowship with God so that God must wield a chastening hand upon him, he does not cease to be a child of God, for "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" (Hebrews 12:7). He is still a son of God, and therefore saved, even when he must be chastened for his sins.

The intercessory prayer of Jesus recorded in the 17th chapter of John provides the framework for all His intercession for the saints. Jesus prayed, "...Holy Father,



keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (John 17:11). Again, He prayed, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). Still further He prayed, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

As has already been established, every prayer and petition of the Son is granted of the Father, since the Father and the Son are in absolute unity and all the Son does pleases the Father. Therefore, the intercessory work of Jesus for all true believers, revealed in this prayer, guarantees the security and final glory of every true believer in Christ.

Jesus declared His sheep would never perish, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand..." The word "man" isn't there in the original language. "...Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand, My father which gave them me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my father are one" (John 10:27-30).

In II Timothy 1:12, Paul says, "...I know whom I have believed..." Literally, "I know whom I have trusted." "...And am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Committing one's soul to Christ is saving faith. Paul did not depend on his own faithfulness and ability, but upon the Christ to whom he had committed his soul, and he was persuaded that Christ was able to keep his soul safe. Psalm 37:23-24 reads, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord..." Here is the perseverance of the saints. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be



utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand." Jesus said in John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come unto condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." But, one might ask, what if he sins? What if he so sins that he brings shame and reproach upon the very name and cause of Christ? The answer of Christ is that he "shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

This doctrine further means that God is faithful in His work of grace in and for the believer. He makes all things work together for good for them that love God. Romans 8:28 declares, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Sometimes a child of God will experience such traumatic events and circumstances that they seem to mean certain destruction for him. But the final outcome of the life of a child of God is not to be judged by the effect of a few bad experiences. The whole span of his life must be taken into account and all his experiences seen in interrelation with each other before a proper judgment of the value and effect of his experiences can be made. In the field of medicine and chemistry, there are certain drugs which, if taken alone and not counteracted, would mean certain death to a man. But these same drugs, when mixed in proper proportion by the hands of a skilled pharmacist, have a great healing effect on the human body. Likewise, the great Physician of the soul, Jesus Christ, knows what is needed and what is helpful for the welfare of each child of God.

It is a glorious truth that, while Satan is our adversary, and sets traps and snares to hurt and devour us, he cannot touch the life of a child of God until he first gets permission from the Lord to do it. This is seen in Satan's dealings with Job (Job 1:6-12), and in his desire to sift Simon Peter as wheat so as to cause him to deny that he knew Jesus (Luke 22:31-32). Satan had to ask God to



remove the hedge of protection from around Job so he could get to him, and he had to ask Jesus for permission to shake Simon Peter with fear. But in both cases, the Lord put certain restrictions on Satan so that he was not permitted to destroy God's children.

So, it is in the life of every child of God. The Lord knows how far to allow Satan to go in warring against us, leading us into temptations, sins and rebellion. In it all, the great Shepherd of our souls will not permit Satan to do anything to us that He cannot cause to work for our good as He blends our experiences together. The great Physician knows the experiences we need and can tolerate; the joys and the sorrows; the disappointments and the hopes fulfilled; the mountain tops and the deep valleys, and with the skill of infinite wisdom and power He blends all our experiences together in the oil of His love and makes them work all for our good.

Furthermore, the Lord is faithful to establish true believers in Christ. Spiritual stability and strength are not characteristic of carnal human beings, even saved people. Jesus taught His disciples to "watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). All our spiritual strength and stability for service must come from Christ. He informed His servants, "...without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). We are not able, apart from the strengthening grace of Christ, to resist the evil one, nor to avoid or overcome his traps and snares which he so cunningly sets to ruin the servants of God. Apart from the strength of Christ we are not able to cope with our own lusts, nor our fickle emotions and feelings which so often deceive us. And certainly, if He does not help us, we are easy victims of the vicious changeableness of life situations, the raging storms that seem at times to unleash their unrelenting fury against our very souls. Nay, our strength is not in ourselves, and this lesson must be learned, sometimes through much suffering, failure and



grief. The final success and stability of the saints does not depend upon themselves, but upon Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote, "But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil" (II Thessalonians 3:3). Peter accented this when he wrote, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you" (I Peter 5:10). The sufferings of God's children may be meant for their destruction by the Wicked One, but they are designed by the Lord to burn the dross out of our lives and to teach us to find our strength in Him. His grace is sufficient for us, for His strength is made perfect in our weakness (II Corinthians 12:9-10).

Moreover, our Lord is faithful to perform His work of sanctification in the believer. Jesus prayed for this in His intercessory prayer, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). The word "sanctify" means, "to set apart to a sacred purpose or to religious use; consecrate; to free from sin; purify" (Webster). The Greek word "hagiazon", used here, means "to separate, consecrate; cleanse, purify, sanctify; regard or reverence as holy" (The Analytical Greek Lexicon by Harper & Brothers).

The Bible doctrine of sanctification is a grand doctrine. Briefly stated, it means the following: on the part of the child of God, he is to separate himself from the world system and to consecrate his life to the service of God; on the part of Christ in the purpose and will of God, all believers are sanctified, separated from the world, made holy (i.e., not of this world) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Hebrews 10:10). Because of the offering of the body of Christ, believers in Christ are declared to be "not of this world" (John 15:18-19, John 17:14). They are born again, born from above and have been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear



Son (Colossians 1:13). Yet, believers still live in this world, and still have their carnal bodies and minds, etc. A child of God might miserably fail to perform his personal duties of separating himself from the world and consecrating himself to the service of God. He might allow his fleshly nature to rule in his life. Nevertheless, he still belongs to God and ultimately his entire being shall count for God's glory and shall be fitted for God's Kingdom and holy presence. Paul wrote "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phillipians 1:6)

God begins a good work in the believer when He regenerates his spirit in the new birth. He will progressively confirm and strengthen the inner man, ultimately to cause him to be triumphant over the flesh. Paul writes, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (II Corinthians 4:16) And God will faithfully perform His work until, in the resurrection of the body, the work of salvation will be completed and the entire man will be conformed to the image of God's Son. (Romans 8:29) We sometimes give too much attention to the carnal, outward man. We may pamper him. But our own faithfulness does not alter the purpose of God. Our outward man is perishing, but our inward man is being renewed day by day. Paul admonished, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." (Colossians 3:9-10) And the great Apostle prayed thusly for the saints, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." (I Thessalonians 5:23-24)

Let us come to the apex of the whole subject. God is faithful to perform every work necessary finally to perfect



the believer in the glory of Jesus Christ. He has already fixed the destiny of every believer in Christ and He works faithfully to accomplish that end. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: And whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Romans 8:28-30) The language used in verse thirty shows that the glorification of the saints is just as certain as if it had already happened, and affirms that the glory of the saints depends not on their works, but on God's work. God is faithful, who shall perform it.

In the Ephesian letter Paul wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." (Ephesians 1:3-5)

How beautiful! How reassuring! He has predestinated us unto the adoption of children. There are two ways to become a child or son of a Father. One is by birth, the other is by adoption. Now, if one has been saved, if he has been born again, he is a child of God by birth. He is an heir of God by birth. John wrote, "Behold what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:1-2) The new birth made us born children of God and thus, heirs of



God by birth. Paul declared, "The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Romans 8:16-17)

It is our spirits that are born of the spirit of God (John 3:6). The flesh is not born of God, and is therefore not the heir. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." (I Corinthians 15:50) The fleshly man is by nature corrupt, and has nothing in common with the righteous Kingdom of God. He is alienated from God and his Kingdom by his sin. He is a stranger to God. But he has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God. His right to live in the presence of the holy God and to share the Kingdom of God as an heir has been purchased for him by the Son of God. Every believer in Christ, being born of God in his spirit, and thus a child (heir) of God by adoption, that is, his flesh shall be adopted into the family of God and shall inherit the Kingdom by adoption. This is what John meant when he wrote, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power (legal right, privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:11-13) (parenthesis mine) One is not given the legal right or privilege to become a child by birth. But adoption is a legal matter. A father does not adopt his born son, but if a man finds a boy who is not his born son, and through love for him goes through the legality of adopting him, he gives that boy the legal right or privilege to be his son, and the adopted son is just as certainly an heir as the born son.

When a sinner's spirit is born into the family of God at the point of faith in Jesus Christ, his flesh (firstborn) is given the legal right through redemption to become a son



(heir) of God by adoption. For this reason, when the Apostle Paul declared that "...flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" he hastened to add, "behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." (I Corinthians 15:51-53)

It is in that change from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality, in the receiving of our glorified bodies at the resurrection, that our flesh shall receive the standing of an adopted son, and thus become an heir of the Kingdom of God. The fleshly man of every true believer has already been given that legal right (John 1: 11-13), and God has predestinated him to that adoption (Ephesians 1:5). It is for that glorious change and adoption that the regenerated spirit of every believer groans. Paul declared, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **WAITING FOR THE ADOPTION, TO-WIT, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY.**" (Romans 8:22-23) (Caps mine) And again, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the spirit." (II Corinthians 5:1-5)

The "earnest of the spirit" is God's pledge, His guaranty, that He will perfect us in glory and conform us to the glorious image of His Son, to which He has predestinated us. Faithful is God, who shall perform it. This is the perseverance of the saints. Every true believer in Christ can share the perfect assurance of the Patriarch, David, when he said to God, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." (Psalm 73: 24)

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