

Give until it feels good.

PERSEVERANCE

by David West
Cross, S.C.

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;" (John 8:31).

When one continues in the faith, this is evidence that he is a child of God. There are those who think that if you don't continue to work, you will become lost. The Arminian thinks you have to work to stay saved, but this is not so. We are to work because we are saved. Our salvation does not depend on our works, but the "works for salvation" crowd thinks so. They think you have to help Christ save you and then you have to work to stay saved. In one way or another the majority of professing religions believe in works for salvation.

Persevere has this meaning: will continue on in a thing, not



David West

willing to give up no matter what the difficulty, in spite of any and all opposition. Again persevere means to persist, to endure, to be unrelenting in what we believe, to be steadfast in what we believe. We are steadfast in purpose. Those who believe in the security of the children of God will not give up no matter what gets in their way. All the difficulties and all the hardships only make them have a greater desire to keep on keeping on. The saint persists in the faith not because of what he will get out of it in a monetary way, but because he loves the Lord and loves what he is doing. We do not stubbornly continue on in the doctrines of grace because we are afraid we will lose our salvation. This is not it at all. The reason that we are persistent in our stand for the truth is our love for the truth. When faced with opposition or difficulty, we continue firmly and steadily. We know that it is taught in God's Word. The Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist people know these doctrines for which we stand are right and therefore we are not afraid.

The text for this message says very plainly, "That if ye continue in my word," meaning this would be proof not in order to get to be a disciple, but evidence of this truth. There are many kindred Scriptures in the Bible and I will not be able to

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"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them"—Isaiah 8:20.

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FIVE GOLDEN LINKS WHICH MAKE OUR SALVATION ETERNAL

by John R. Gilpin
(Now in Glory)

"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" (Rom. 8:29, 30).

I like to think of our text as a great chain of five golden links, fastened in eternity past, stretched through time, and anchored in eternity to come, each link magnifying God.

Out there in eternity past, beloved, God foreknew us and God elected us, and likewise, in time, God called us and God justified us, and out in eternity yet to come, someday God is going to glorify the last one of the

crowd that He foreknew and predestinated unto salvation in eternity past.



John R. Gilpin
(Now in Glory)

I. The first link is God's FOREKNOWLEDGE "For whom he did foreknow" (Rom. 8:29).

I am glad for a God like that — a God that I can present to you. I am so happy that I can say that my God, before the foundation of the world, foreknew you and me.

You say, "What's the meaning of the word 'foreknow'?" Ordinarily, the Arminians say that God looked down the avenues of time and saw who was going to believe, and therefore God elected them unto salvation. Since He knew who was going to believe, He just might as well accommodate Himself, and He therefore elected them unto salvation. This is what all Arminians teach.

What a sorry election that would be! This is undoubtedly the biggest farce of religion I know of — to talk about God foreseeing who was going to believe, and therefore, deciding it would be a good idea to elect them to salvation. I will tell you what the word 'foreknow' means: If you will go back to the book of Genesis it says that Adam "knew his wife," Eve, and she conceived. The word 'foreknow' has in it the same

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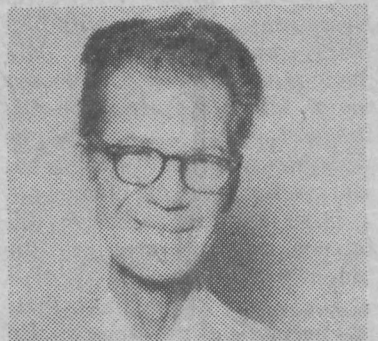
THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF JESUS CHRIST

by Bill Dudley
Winston Salem, N.C.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4).

The earth will be renewed. As there has been a regeneration of

the soul, a regeneration of the body, so there will be a



Bill Dudley

regeneration of the earth. In the old creation, God began with the earth, then the body of man,

and afterward the soul. In the new creation. He begins with the soul, refashions the body, and then the earth. The earth will be made new, beautiful, clean, and holy. It will be lifted into the central place in the universe. Already our solar system is sweeping, astronomers tell us, with accelerated speed, toward that starless "empty place" in the north, of which Job spake — ages before telescopes and space ships were known — so accurately and scientifically correct.

Jesus Christ will return to the Mount Olives from which He

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

A BLUE RIBBON CHRISTIAN

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: That ye may remember, and do all my

commandments, and be holy unto your God. I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord your God" (Num. 15:37-41).

There is a divinely given and instructive order in the first three books of the Bible. In Genesis, we have God's election of a people; in Exodus, we have their redemption; in Leviticus, we have the God-ordained holiness of His chosen and redeemed ones. In Numbers we have the divinely directed life, walk, and warfare of God's people. This ribbon of blue is very

appropriately placed in this book, for God's people are to have the mark of separation upon them in their lives before the world.

The Bible teaches the doctrine of varying rewards for the saved children of God. I know there are a few who make sport of this doctrine, but they show their spiritual ignorance thereby. The Bible is so clear upon this point that there is no excuse for anyone being in doubt about it. There are differences in the lives and actions of professed Christians which

(Continued on Page 2 Column 1)

THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY

by John Alber
Farmers Branch, Tex.

For many years now, man has been trying to prove to himself and the rest of the world that he is "an alright person." They now have their "Doctors and Clinics" that blame our behaviour on "Mental Illness" and seem to forget what the Bible has to say about sin and the results of man's sins. In our day and age a person can be found not guilty for any crime by pleading insanity at the time and, then, go scott free. Is it not time that we recognize what the Bible says?

The Bible teaches that all men are born a sinner. They do not have to be taught how to sin, but naturally begin doing so immediately. No one is without sin. "For ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). The Greek word for sin has several different meanings and thus should be



John Alber

considered because it will give to us a clearer picture of the problem. A word study of sin would reveal the following information:

First, it means "Missing the mark," as when a soldier who hurls his spear misses his mark. Many would say, I am not responsible for what Adam did or anyone else for that matter, but in Romans 5:12, the sin spoken of there is spoken as active and means that his (Adam's) sin is the act of every member of the human race.

Second, it means "Wilful disobedience" and Romans 3:23 indicates this very idea clearly. Third, it means "To fall" and has the general idea of deviating from the right path as found in

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BLUE

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we would not want to make indicative of whether or not they are saved. Yet, these differences are very marked and vital. The Bible doctrine of rewards solves this dilemma of differences in truly saved people. The Bible teaches the eternal security of the truly saved — yes, it does. Praise God! There are those who say that this doctrine will encourage sin. The doctrine of rewards is an inspired doctrine which is designed to encourage more dedicated living and service by the truly saved. There are other doctrines doing this, but this teaching of rewards is one of them.

Now, we are all acquainted with the blue ribbon given for first place in many endeavors. I want us to consider the matter of being a Blue Ribbon Christian. Of gaining first place in the matter of rewards for serving the Lord. Let me say one blessed thing. In human contests, there can only be one blue ribbon winner. Paul tells us, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize..." (I Cor. 9:24). But, praise the Lord! Every believer can come in first, every one receiving the blue ribbon. Winning the blue ribbon from the Lord does not depend upon talents, or upon being in the right place at the right time; but upon being faithful in that place and service God gives one to do. Yes, you can be a Blue Ribbon Christian — you can win the first place prize.

The Lord is concerned with all the details of the lives of His people. Being saved should enter into and influence every part of your daily life. Being a Blue Ribbon Christian does not just relate to on Sunday and in Church; rather it does relate to every day, every part, every detail of one's life. Let us notice how this is set forth in the Old Testament. There we learn that God gave His people directions as to the clothes they were to wear. My text is one example of

this. He instructs them as to the food they should and should not eat; and though many such restrictions have been removed, the fact itself is unchanged — witness the continuing Bible testimony against gluttony. The Lord instructed His people as to the proper way of carrying out agriculture — how to plow and plant, etc. He gave detailed instructions to His people as to the proper conduct of business — using honest weights and measures — providing for the poor of the land. His instructions to His people directed their recreation, their social life, and certainly their political activities. One cannot study the Old Testament without realizing that the Lord was interested in and gave commandments concerning all the details of the lives of His people.



JOE WILSON

Even though many of these restrictions have been removed and many instructions do not now apply, still God expects and instructs His people of today that their being saved is to influence every detail and aspect of daily life. Oh, my brother Christian, "...ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19-20). And, "...whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31).

Romans, chapters 12-14, set forth many detailed instructions as to different phases of the lives of the chosen, redeemed, and justified ones. Ephesians, chapters 4-6, tell of God's instructions as to the individual life, the married life, the devotional life, the employment of the chosen and predestinated people of God. This truth continues through every dispensation — God is interested in the details of the lives of His people. We are not at liberty to do as we please about any part of our lives. Not just on Sunday and in Church are we to act like true Christians; but on every day and in every place, we are to be living and continual testimonies to and for the Lord.

Now, let us notice a historical exposition, as to my text, concerning the ribbon of blue. The Israelite is here commanded by God to have a ribbon of blue upon the lower border of his garments. Everywhere he went, this distinctive mark was to be upon him. He was not at liberty to wear it or leave it off at his discretion. He could not change the color of that ribbon as it pleased him. At all times and in every place, the Israelite was to be thus marked as belonging to God. Where his garment came closest to the defilements of earth, he was to wear the color of heaven. His earthly life was to be influenced by his heavenly character. When he looked upon this blue ribbon he was to remember: 1. That he used to go a whoring after other gods, but was to do that no longer; 2. That he was not to walk after his own heart and his own eyes; 3. That

the Lord had brought him out of the land of Egypt; 4. That the Lord was his God; 5. That he was to remember the commandments of the Lord and do them; 6. That he was to be holy unto the Lord. Oh, how much was wrapped up in this ribbon of blue! What would it mean to the individual and to the nation if every Israelite would do that which was signified by the ribbon of blue! What are some significant lessons from this, and how can they apply to us today? Understand that we are not, in this age, required to wear the ribbon of blue upon the borders of our garments. However, that for which this ribbon of blue stood is still as obligatory as ever upon the children of God. Let us look at three lessons we can and should learn from this.

There should be a difference between the people of God and others. This is the first and foremost lesson. This is true in every age, and incumbent upon every saved person. You are to be different. You are not to walk as other Gentiles walk. You are to come out from the world and be separate saith the Lord your God. You are not to dress like the world, live like the world, talk like the world, or smell like the world. Oh, what a wide field of application does this open to the Bible preacher. My brother, God has made a difference between you and the unsaved: in election, in redemption, in effectual calling, and in your eternal dwelling place. You should see to it that there is a difference in your life and conduct comfortable to this difference that God has made.

The Christian should dress modestly, decently and becomingly. The Christian woman should not make up like a clown or a Las Vegas show-girl, but as becomes a child of God. The believer should be a good employer or employee. He should be a good parent, a good child, a good student. Everything about the child of God should bear the distinguishing mark of belonging to God. If there is no difference between you and the one who does not claim to be saved, you are not saved. If there is not a large and an extensive difference, you will never win the blue ribbon prize.

The desire to be like others has been one of the major sins of God's people in every age. Israel demanded a king so they could be like the nations around them. The desire to be like those around them was a cancer that ate at the vitals of the spiritual life of Israel, and destroyed their testimony for the Lord. When the three Hebrew children manifested their difference by standing tall, strong, brave, and true; while all around them bowed to the golden image — it was then that they had an effective testimony for the Lord. The loss of spiritual power — so evident in our lives and churches today, and the loss of testimony and influence by the children of God may be traced to their awful conformity of the world. It is the transformed, not the conformed, life that has power with God and with man.

A second lesson we can learn from this Old Testament teaching concerning the ribbon of blue is that the difference between God's people and the world should be clearly seen. Yonder comes an Israelite. How can you tell? See, he has a ribbon of blue on the border of his garments. Everyone can see that. The difference stands out clear and plain. The ribbon of

blue testifies that here comes a worshipper of the Lord, one who is obedient to His commandments. One who lives a heavenly life where his life comes closest to the earth. "...they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). The fact that one has been with Jesus should be clearly seen in his life before the world. What? One has been with Jesus, one has been saved by His precious blood, one has had sweet fellowship with the Lord, and it leaves no mark upon him? Absurd! Impossible! Through communion with the Lord, Moses's face was made to shine. It was as Jesus prayed that He was transfigured before the disciples. As Stephen looked up into heaven, his face shown as if it had been that of an angel. Communion with the Lord will leave its mark upon one, and that mark will be seen by the world; and though the world is steeped in spiritual ignorance, still they will be able to interpret that the marked one has been with Jesus. Brethren, our telling others about Jesus is having no influence upon them, and part of the reason for this is that they cannot see that we have been with Jesus.

I am not an advocate of so-called secret discipleship. If there can be such, it is a terrible sin against God and man. However, I am made to wonder if there can be such a thing for any length of time. If it does not show, are you sure you are saved? How could you be sure if it does not show. Our children have "show and tell" days in school. They show something and tell about it. That is what

we need in the world today. Every day for a child of God should be "show and tell" day. He should show Jesus Christ in his daily life, and tell others about Him. But "telling" about Jesus without "showing" Jesus in the life is a poor and ineffective imitation of what true Christianity is all about.

The third lesson we can learn from this Old Testament Scripture about the ribbon of blue is that the difference between the child of God and the world should be of a heavenly character. Blue is the color of heaven. Blue was the color of the ribbon which the Israelite wore upon the borders of his garment. Where the garment came closest to the earth, there was the color of heaven. Brethren, there should be the flavor of heaven in the earthly life of the child of God. Look at a very important Scripture:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3).

Our salvation came from heaven. Our salvation is going to take us to heaven. Our salvation should influence our earthly life with a heavenly character. We should remember that our citizenship is in heaven. We are a heaven-born and heaven-bound people. Let us be a heaven-touched and heaven-characterized people. This heavenly character should show in that we are interested in heavenly things. We should talk

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FROM THE EDITOR

CHURCHES SHOWING RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER. Of course, I am referring to true churches. A church must have the proper history (origin), practices, and doctrines to qualify for this designation. Only Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Missionary Baptist Churches can meet these requirements.

However, we must also respect the rights of other churches, even though we do not recognize them as true churches. In our present society, such have the right to exist without persecution of any kind, and we must recognize that there are truly saved people in organizations we do not recognize as true churches.

I am, however, speaking of proper respect between true churches. If we will practice what we preach as to church truth, we will always show this proper respect. We must recognize the right of true churches to differ with us on some things and still be churches. We must understand, and practice, that no church has any authority whatsoever over another church.

One church should not criticize or interfere with how another church conducts its business. Of course, each church has the right to do as she sees fit in this, and to publicly state her position. But if other churches do it differently, that is their business. For instance, I believe adamantly that every member of the church has the right to vote in church business. I preach this publicly. However, I would not unchurch a church which practices differently on this, nor seek to cause them any difficulty over this. One church should be careful as to criticizing another church over anything. Let us preach and practice as we see fit, as we believe the Bible teaches; and let other churches do likewise; and let us all show proper respect for one another in all these matters.

One church should not seek to get members of other churches to transfer their membership. That is, apart from unusual and justifiable circumstances. I am not at all opposed to proselyting members from false churches to my church. I have done that, and honored God when I can get a member to leave a false church and join my church. If a true church is off on some important matters, and a member is dissatisfied there because of such, I would take said member into my church, but would not make strong, repeated efforts to proselyte such. As I said, apart from unusual and justifiable circumstances, one should be very careful as to proselyting.

A church should not take a member from another true church without asking that church for a letter; and should be very careful, sure, and correct before taking said member when the other church will not grant a letter. It would require very unusual circumstances to justify receiving a member from another church without a letter.

One church should never, never, never, in any way, interfere in the internal affairs of another church. Each church is totally independent of every other church.

Each church has complete, sole, and total authority over her own business. No church has any right to interfere with or get involved in the business affairs of another church.

Dear brethren, let us practice what we preach about the church. Let us always show proper respect for other true churches of the Lord.



QUESTION: — Who taught the only "school" mentioned in the Bible?

ANSWER: — Tyrannus, in Acts 19:9. "...disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus."

BLUE

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about heavenly things. We should show our heavenly character in manifesting a lack of over-interest in and concern about earthly things. See that child of God and that child of the world. Both of them are just as interested in money, cars, clothes, houses — the one as much as the other. They talk alike. They dress alike. They go to the same places of entertainment. Look hard at those two. You cannot see any difference in them, can you? What is wrong with that child of God, that you can not tell him from the child of the world? Well, either he is not truly saved, or he has lost his ribbon of blue. We should manifest our heavenly character by living a life with the cleanliness of heaven about it. Yes, my brother, the blue ribbon means that: 1. There should be a difference between the saved and unsaved. 2. It should be a clearly seen difference. 3. It should be a difference of a heavenly character.

In the work of the Lord today, there are many, many needs. One could write a book on these needs, and it would be a large book. However, I know of no greater need today in the work of the Lord than for the children of God to put on this ribbon of blue. To remember that they have been saved from sin and hell. To remember that they are not to live as they once did. To remember that they belong to the Lord. That they are to be holy unto the Lord. To remember that they are to remember and do the commandments of the Lord. One of the greatest needs of our churches today is for members who will just go out in the world — the home, school, on the job, wherever; and just live like a child of God ought to live. This lack of living right is destroying the power and influence the churches should have in the world today. I call for missionaries today. I call for missionaries who will be full-time missionaries. I call for missionaries who will just live like children of God at all times and in all places. Will you, my brother, be such a missionary? Will you start this today?

Now remember that the Bible teaches the doctrine of rewards. Remember that there is going to be a judgment seat of Christ for the truly saved children of God. We are all going to stand there to receive rewards or suffer the loss of reward. Oh, that we would live today as we will then wish we had lived. What would such mean to you, to your church, to those around you? Would you not like to win first prize? Would you like to win a blue ribbon — first place? You can! Every child of God can. Every child of God can come in

first in the Christian race. Is not this a wonderful fact! You may not have the talents that others have. You may not have the opportunities that others have. But you can still win the blue ribbon. The way to win the blue ribbon at the judgment seat of Christ is to be a Blue Ribbon Christian in this life. That is, to have and manifest a heavenly difference in your life from that of the unsaved. Oh, that the dear Lord would move upon our hearts that we would all begin to be Blue Ribbon Christians!

REIGN

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left this earth two thousand years ago. The Mount will split in twain at the touch of His blessed feet. One half of the mountain will remove to the north; the other to the south. There will be a very great valley formed where the nations will gather for judgment.

The Jews will be gathered from every quarter of the globe and will fall down and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. That fountain which was opened on Calvary many years ago, will be effectually applied by the Holy Spirit to the vast majority of the nation Israel, and "a nation will be born in a day." He will forgive His people their sins. Filled with joy and gladness; this regenerated, repentant, believing, and saved people will cry aloud, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is our Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

At the head of the redeemed nation, amid the gaze of the encircling heavenly host, in the fellowship of the saints of all ages, in company with His Bride taken from true Baptist churches; He will enter in kingly triumph into the city of Jerusalem. Then the cry will go forth, "Lift up your heads, or ye gates; and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory?" Oh! the resounding answer of the vast multitudes, like the voice of many waters will answer, "The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. He is the king of glory." What a glorious day 'twill be when the rightful King enters into Jerusalem and begins the wonderful and glorious Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ!

The atmospheric heavens that now surround the earth are full of dust, bacteria, and every germ of disease and death. With a word the Son of God will cause them to roll away, and in their place shall be a new atmosphere which, like a crystal river, shall pour its waves of life around the far-flung circumference of the earth. The curse which God put upon the earth in Genesis 3:17-19 because of Adam's sin, shall be removed, and the ground will be the blessing to man that it was before sin entered the world. Oh, all the earth will be like the garden of Eden!

The animal kingdom will share in the blessedness of the Millennial Reign of Christ. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fating together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the

weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:6-9). You might ask, "How shall we interpret this?" Just read it and believe it, brother. It means exactly what it says. Mysticizing Amillennialists will rob this of all real meaning, but we who believe the Bible will just take it as God gives it and rejoice in the hope thereof.

Longevity of life will be restored in the Millennium. It will be as it was in Genesis 5. Adam lived 930 years, Seth 912, Enoch 905, Jared 962, and Lamech 777. Methuselah, the oldest man who ever lived, lived 969 years. Can you imagine the good that could be done by a godly life in such a long period of time? How much knowledge one would have. How one would grow in grace in such a lengthy life. This will be restored to mankind. We know this because of Isaiah 65:20, "There shall be no more an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old..." In other words, one a hundred years old will be considered but a child. There will be a population explosion to fill the earth which had been almost emptied by the Tribulation. Though some of those born during this time will remain lost and join Satan in his final rebellion, the vast majority will be saved and will live to the glory of God.

The reign of Jesus Christ is a part of that Day of the Lord which begins following the rapture and ends with the White Throne Judgment. Man has had his day. God will have His day. It will be a glorious day for all who share therein. Jesus will reign over all the earth as the Son of Man, the second Adam. He will reign as the greater — yea, the greatest — Son of David. He will reign as the Son of Abraham. His reign will be connected thusly with some of the great covenants of the Old Testament. God made a covenant with Abraham. He made a covenant with David. In fulfillment of those covenants, Jesus Christ will reign over regenerated and restored Israel in the land of Palestine and from thence over all the earth.

There will be peace over all the earth for a thousand years during the reign of Jesus Christ. This earth has been ravaged by war almost from its beginning. What historian can list all the wars which have taken place? What historian can tell us of the broken and bruised bodies, the heartbroken parents and wives, the orphaned boys and girls — all caused by war? How many rivers of human blood — shed by the hands of other humans — has been drunk by the thirsty earth? Will it always be thus? No, no, a thousand times no! The Bible tells us that the Prince of Peace will reign over all the earth, and that in His days there will be abundance of peace, and that of the increase of His government and of peace shall be no end. No war! No war! No war! This glad condition will not be brought about by the politicians of this world, but by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who will reign with Christ during this time? Revelation 20:4-6 tells us, it will be the raised and/or raptured, glorified saints of God. Those washed in the precious blood of Christ, and experiencing salvation prior

to the beginning of that reign will live and reign with Him a thousand years, except for those who enter the Millennium in their natural bodies. The saved of the Old Testament will reign with Him. The saved of this age will reign with Him. Surely, His bride will reign with Him in a special way. Yes, the meek shall inherit the earth along with the Meek and Lowly Jesus. Some Pre-millennialists are now teaching that the Old Testament saints will not be raised at the rapture, but following the Tribulation. I cannot agree with this, but even so, all of them will be raised and will reign with Jesus Christ.

Each individual among the saved will reign with Christ according to that one's faithfulness in this life. How important it is for us to be true to the Lord in our daily life and service. We are campaigning for that political office which we will hold during the Millennium. Men spend millions of dollars in an effort to be elected to a four year office on this earth. Should we not spend and be spent that we might have a glorious position when we live and reign upon the earth with Him for a thousand years?

Those who are clean, loyal, faithful members of true Baptist churches of Jesus Christ will reign with Him in a special way as His bride. What a glorious reward will this be for a few years of faithfulness down here! The saved and glorified saints of God will reign in every aspect of political government in the Millennium. They will also participate in the glorious religious festivities of that glad time. The believers shall be kings and priests — ruling and worshipping. I would urge upon each reader to be sure you are saved, then be sure you are in a true church; and then be faithful to your Lord in life and service in and through that church. Your future position in the Millennium is at stake.

I am a Pre-tribulational, Pre-millennialist without apology. I stand in the prophetic line with many men of the past and present. There were many who believed prophetic truth, and who helped to teach me much. However, many of the prophetic giants of the past were not sound on the doctrines of Sovereign Grace, and even more of them were not sound on Church Truth. I praise my wonderful God that He has also been pleased to teach me the truth about His church as well as prophecy. I learned prophetic truth many years ago. I learned Sovereign Grace truth some time later. It was not until just recently that the dear Lord effectually taught me church truth. I was, for many years, without Scriptural baptism and Scriptural church membership. I praise the Lord that I have now had Scriptural baptism and am now a member of a true church. I hope the Lord will use me in this way. Please pray for me. May God bless you all!

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meaning as Adam knowing his wife. In other words, before the foundation of the world, you and I were begotten in the mind of Almighty God to the extent that God foreknew us. This was before the foundation of the world. Is there any room for boasting in any man, who is saved? Is there any room for an individual, tonight, to take credit

for his salvation, in view of the fact that God looked down and saw you and me as worms in the dust before the foundation of the world, and God foreknew us. Thus, He begat us unto salvation before the foundation of the world.

II. The second link of this text is Predestination.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate" (Rom. 8:29).

Predestination and election! What words are these! So seldom are they heard today in the average church that they sound as though we had borrowed a phrase from some dead language of the past. Predestination! What a marvelous doctrine, though little taught today! Why, before the foundation of the world, God chose some to salvation.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16).

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

"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" (II Thess. 2:13).

God has through the ages worked on the basis of election. God chose Abel, and rejected Cain. God chose Shem as the line through which the Messiah must come; at the same time He rejected Ham and Japheth. God chose Isaac and rejected Ishmael. God chose Jacob and rejected Esau.

"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory" (Rom. 9:13, 20-23).

God chose the Jews for His people as a nation. Read Genesis 12:1-3. The Egyptians were far wiser. The Chaldeans were more ancient. Yet God chose Israel. Why?

"For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me" (Isa. 45:4).

There are many objections offered by the carnal man to the doctrine of predestination. Often do we hear it said that it is so mysterious. I am ready to grant that it is beyond the power of man to understand it. However, there are many things which we can never grasp. I cannot understand why God permitted sin. I cannot understand the many inequalities of the human race. I cannot understand the procreation of life. I cannot understand how

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The Baptist Examiner Forum

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER — P.O. BOX 71 — ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0071

Should a church save up large amounts of money: or should they operate on faith and empty the treasury each month by extra giving?

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II Corinthians 11:8: "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service."

This verse, as well as others, teaches us that the early churches worked together in the support of missionaries. This means that at least some of the money of churches, besides the one sending the missionary out, helped in financial support of Paul and others. I feel this is a very worthwhile use of a church's money. Our church counts it a great privilege and pleasure to help in the support of Brother Fred Halliman and The Baptist Examiner. By this, we have a part in the afore mentioned mission programs.

Before answering this question, I wish to state again; (last issue) that what other churches do is none of my business. I would not try to tell other churches what they should or should not do. However, since the question is asked, I will gladly give my opinion.

First, should the church save up large amounts of money? This becomes an opinionated question from the start. What I might consider a large amount of money, someone else would not. If the money is for a definite purpose, such as a building fund, then I see nothing wrong with saving a large amount of money. I do feel that the church's first responsibility is to take care of their pastor. I do oppose a church saving a large sum of money, while the pastor is living on a small salary. Before a church begins to support foreign missions, they should first support their pastor with a good income. I do not understand why some people expect their pastors to live in near poverty. If the pastor is properly taken care of and some given to missions, then saving a large sum of money for a definite purpose would be all right. If there is no reason for saving a large sum of money, then don't. If you have a building and other major facilities taken care of, then I do not understand why a church would want to save a lot of money. The Lord's money should be used in the Lord's work. It is not for the purpose of sitting and drawing interest. If your church has a large amount of money saved, and nothing to do with it, we here in Gladwin will be glad to take it and put it towards a church building.

Now to answer the second question. Should a church empty the treasury each month and live on faith. I think the answer to this is somewhere in between

the two extremes. I would not want to save up a large sum of money, neither would I like to empty the treasury every month. It is good if possible to keep some money on hand in the case of an emergency. Some years back, several of the men here in Gladwin were on strike. It was good to have a little extra money on hand for this and other such occasions.

May God give all wisdom as to how best to spend the Lord's money for His glory.

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Faith is not given to supplant sound reasoning and logic, but to supplement the believer's native intelligence. By God-given faith the Holy Scriptures are received as infallible, and worthy of all acceptance, but it takes Holy Spirit guided reasoning to comprehend the Word of God. The believer's inability to understand what the Scriptures teach on a certain subject should not serve to diminish his faith in the Divine inspiration of the Bible, for he knows the supreme intellect apart from Holy Spirit illumination is utterly unable to contribute in the least toward spiritual discernment (I Cor. 2:14). Divine revelation does not mean the Holy Spirit works independent of the intellect, but that the intellect is made supernaturally aware of the mind of God in the matter (Matt. 16:17). I believe in Divine predestination, however, the same God who eternally determined to save my unworthy soul from the flames of hell, also predestinated me to have enough sense to avoid the handling of poisonous snakes, and the drinking of strychnine.

"Should a church save up large sums of money?" This question may be answered either in the affirmative or the negative, depending on the circumstances or end in view. If a church has a building program, or saving for missionary transportation cost to a foreign field, etc., then the churches so involved may have what is considered large sums of money on hand. But if a church has large and unneeded sums of money perpetually on hand while worthy causes suffer, would, I believe, be guilty of ill stewardship. Most N.T. churches of my acquaintance do not have the problem of excessive dollars; on the contrary, they have difficulty meeting their immediate budget.

I certainly would not deem it a lack of faith on the part of a church to carry fire insurance on their building, or to build a retirement fund for their pastor, nor would I question the wisdom of a church which carried a calculated emergency fund.

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"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

This was addressed to individuals, yet it could apply to churches as well. The commission Christ gave to His church was to "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). For the church to do this it takes money and if large amounts are laid up by a church, then that church is not carrying out her commission to her greatest ability. This does not mean that the treasury is to be emptied each month no more than we as individuals are to spend all as it comes in. There may be a building project or some other undertaking for which a church needs to save. Then there is "Life's little emergencies" which arise from time to time. The roof leaks, the sewer stops up and has to be dug up, a new baptistry is needed, and then the church's missionaries are sometimes faced with unexpected expenses. The church needs to be prepared for those things that come up, if at all possible. But as for keeping large amounts just to lay up treasure is against what Jesus taught.

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This is another question that has no scriptural precedence and will not take a great amount of space to answer.

If a church has a reason for saving money, such as a building fund or keeping money for a projected mission work, then it should be saved. Some churches keep back a certain amount for emergency reasons, which is fine if that is the desire of the entire church. Most churches, however, use the money as the Lord provides it and have very little in savings.

It is up to the church to decide how it wants to do regarding the offerings received. I would say, however, that it would be wrong for a church to save a lot of money and not have any mission program for the church. I would

rather meet in an old building as to have a new big one and not have any mission work to support.

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God saves. I cannot understand why the hogs, cows, geese and sheep eat grass and yet it produces bristles, hair, feathers and wool on the back of each respectively. I can only bow before God to hear Him say:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8, 9).

Again there is the objection concerning the doctrine of election that God is unjust. May I remind you that salvation isn't a matter of justice but of grace: "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8). If we received justice we would all spend eternity in Hell. It is also objected, why preach because God has elected some to be saved. We are to preach because God commanded us to do so.

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Preaching is the means God uses for the saving of His elect. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21).

Since I do not know who the elect are, it is my duty to preach the gospel to all as though each man were one of God's elect and then wait on God to do the saving.

Another objection to the doctrine of election is based upon the verse "whosoever will." I think I can best explain this with a simple illustration. As I stand outside a door, I see inscribed over it the words, "Whosoever will may enter." This would mean me. That is, if I have the desire to enter. We will assume that I do, and upon walking through the door, I turn around and read the inscription above the door on the inside, as follows:

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (I Peter 1:2). Thus I see the truth. The message to me as a sinner is the message of whosoever will, and the message to me now that I am saved, is that my experience is because I was one of the elect of God. In other words, the only reason why I entered, was because God made me willing, God called me. God gave me repentance, God gave me faith, and thus I became a child of God. No man would ever be one of the "whosoever wills" unless he had been elected unto salvation by God.

III. The third link in this chain is that of God's calling.

"Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called" (Rom. 8:30).

In a general sense God calls every one. "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). However, there is an effectual call which only the elect hear. Through His goodness God calls sinners to Him. "Or despiseth thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4). Likewise He uses the Bible.

"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?" (Ezek. 33:11).

Sometimes He uses our troubles to call us. I once conducted a funeral of a little babe that had left its baby clothes to live with God. After we had heaped up the little mound, the grief-stricken father of the little babe said, "Tell me, pastor, will I ever see my darling baby again?" God had thus given that little grave a voice and it was calling that hardened man to repentance.

There are some Scriptures that I wish to cite relative to the fact that God calls us. This is one of the most abundantly taught truths in all of God's book. Notice with me these references:

"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our GOD SHALL CALL" (Acts 2:39).

"Among whom are ye also THE CALLED of Jesus Christ: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, CALLED TO BE SAINTS" (Rom. 1:6, 7).

"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, CALLED TO BE SAINTS, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and ours" (I Cor. 1:2).

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and CALLED ME by His grace" (Gal. 1:15).

"That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath CALLED YOU unto His kingdom and glory" (I Thes. 2:12).

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto THOU ART ALSO CALLED, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (I Tim. 6:12).

IV. The fourth link of this chain is Justification.

"Whom he called them he also justified" (Rom. 8:30).

What Job was grasping at and desirous to know, we learn through the New Testament Scriptures.

"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28).

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16).

You have noticed that my text says, "And whom He called, them He also justified." Do you know what I am tonight? I'm not a sinner on parole. I am a sinner: justified by the grace of God. Do you know what it means to be justified by the grace of God?

Let me tell you a little story. A friend of mine a few years ago, who was a pastor of a convention church, had an old father who was living in Florida. He was living with his daughter. The daughter called her brother

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in Ashland one day, and said their father was quite sick, and quite low, and if he wanted to see him, he had better come to see him at once, and when this son — this Baptist preacher — got to Florida, to visit his father, his father said, "Son, I am so glad you came. I am glad you came while I had an opportunity to talk to you. You know I had a great experience yesterday. Right here in this room, the Lord Jesus Christ came and stood, and He said, 'It's time for you to go now. I have come to get you,' and I shrank back, and said, 'Oh, no, Lord, I am too bad. I have lived too bad a life. I'm not ready to go,' and He said, 'You've never committed one single sin in all your life,' and I shrank back more than ever when I heard Him say that. It scared me when the Lord Jesus told me I had never committed one single sin. And he said, 'You know, Son, I argued with Him, but I could not convince Him that I was a sinner. I could never convince Jesus that I'd ever sinned one time.'"

The man who has been saved by grace is just as if he'd never sinned. He's come to the place that when God sees him, God doesn't see him a dirty, filthy, depraved sinner that he is. God sees him as a man who is justified — just as if he had never sinned one single time in his whole life.

Isn't it wonderful tonight to know that it was God who foreknew you; it was God who predestinated you; it was God who called you; and it was God who justified you? As such, you are marked up in His sight as though you had never sinned one single time in all your life. Why did He do it? Because He took your sins and put them all on the Lord Jesus Christ, and then He took the righteousness of Jesus Christ and put it on you so that when God sees Jesus, He sees Him clothed in your sins, and when He sees you, He sees you clothed in the righteousness of the Son of God.

You talk about a happy man, when I talk about justification, I am more than thrilled. I've done a lot of trading in my life. I am a natural born trader. I've had 1,000 pocket knives, more or less. I've traded horses, hound dogs — anything and everything. I love to trade. But do you know the best trade I ever made? I'll tell you what it was, and I didn't propose it. I didn't have a thing to do with it. The best trade I ever made was the day I traded my sin to Jesus Christ, and God's righteousness was put over on me. In other words, God treated Jesus Christ at Calvary just exactly like Gilpin ought to have been treated, and now God treats Gilpin just like Jesus should have been treated. I am a sinner justified. I am not on parole. I am not on probation. I am justified in the sight of God.

Several years ago in my town, there were three boys who got into trouble. They were not sent to the penitentiary as they were not quite 16. They would have gone to reform school for a month or so and then to the "pen" for four or five years. I was interested in those boys, and I went to the judge, and asked that he probate those boys into my custody, that I would look after them, and try to help them for the next few years. When the case came up for trial, the judge instructed the jury to

find those three boys guilty of stealing and instructed them to sentence those boys to two years in the penitentiary. Then he called me up, and I stood beside those three boys, and he told them he was going to suspend the sentence that he had passed upon them, and that he would put them into my custody. You know, he even went so far as to tell those boys if they ever came back in that court before him again, before they could begin to serve out a new sentence, they would have to serve out their old sentence. He was holding their old sentence in abeyance, and if they came back within the next five years, they would have to serve out this sentence before they could begin their new one.

You know, two of those boys turned out to be two of the finest, most upstanding citizens that I know, and the other one in less than 60 days was back in court again, and when that boy went to the penitentiary, he had to serve out the old sentence before he could begin the new one.

Do you see the difference between a sinner that is justified and one that is on parole? Tonight the Methodists, the Campbellites, the Arminians, the Holy Rollers, and the falling-from-grace crowd — they preach that sinners are on parole and probation. Thank God for a God that has sinners that are justified, and you and I are justified sinners in the sight of God tonight. Justification is just the opposite of condemnation. Each of us who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ are justified sinners. We are not sinners paroled but we are sinners justified. The fact and fear of condemnation is gone.

V. The fifth link of this glorious chain is Glorification. "And whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. 8:30).

In eternity past God foreknew us and elected us unto salvation. In time God calls and justifies those whom He has foreknown and elected. But in eternity to come He will glorify all those whom He foreknew and elected in eternity past and called and justified in time. Glorification! What a wonderful doctrine! All fleshly nature and habits will be gone from the body of each of the redeemed. There will be nothing to tempt nor clog.

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:21).

"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 3:2).

One of these days, I am really going to be glorified. That is, all the physical and spiritual "warts" and blemishes will be removed, and I will be made to be like the Lord Jesus Christ. All my life, I have had a habit of a slight frown — especially when I preach. I can't help it. It is just a part of me. In addition, I would never win any contest as the most handsome man. My wife has always said even before we were married, that I was the ugliest man she ever saw. A few times, I have seen somebody that I thought was more ugly and I called him to her attention, but she has always insisted that I am the ugliest person she has ever seen. She isn't joking

either. She'd argue with you about the matter, and through the years she has gotten me to believe the same thing.

Several years ago a wealthy friend of mine called attention to this frown and some more of the physical imperfections of my face and volunteered to take care of all the expense if I would just go to a face surgeon and have my "face lifted." Well, that would be wonderful to go into the hospital as I ordinarily look, and come out with a brand new face. The only objection is: My friends wouldn't know me. Then again I have heard it said that sometimes even having one's face lifted doesn't always prove a success, and one could look worse than he did before. In my case, that would be tragic, so I just thanked my friend for his kindness and declined the proposal of being beautified by a face surgeon. You know, some of these days I am going to be much different to what I am now. I am going to look far better than I do today, for then I am going to be glorified. God is going to make me to look exactly like the Lord Jesus Christ, and I am looking forward with joy to that day.

What a marvelous text is this which we have been considering — foreknowledge, election, calling, justification, and glorification. How can all this come to pass and who is it that brings it to pass? It is none other than the LORD GOD. Thus we are compelled to say that salvation in every respect is an act of God. There is no room for human effort, no place for priestly meditation, no room for good works on the part of man, nor is there any place for religious ordinances and services.

Long years ago a disobedient prophet named Jonah went to school in the belly of a whale where he learned what we choose to call, "whale belly theology." When he had graduated and hung up his sheepskin, he just knew one text, "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9). May God grant that you, too, might learn that salvation is all of God, and may you trust His Son now as your Saviour for time and eternity.

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Hebrews 6:6. Fourth, it means "To disregard" or "To refuse to hear" as found in Matthew 18:17. Fifth, it means to not "Be in conformity" with the standards of God. Sixth, it means "To show irreverence" as found in Jude 15. Seventh, it means "Lawlessness" as found in I John 3:4. Eighth, it means "To be in ignorance of the facts" as in I Timothy 1:13. Ninth, the idea of "Being hopeless, profitless, and inherently evil" as found in I Corinthians 5:13.

It does not take one long to see that the Doctrine of Sin teaches the Depravity of Man. If the Bible is in perfect harmony (and it is), then the "Word Study" must show the true meaning of Man's Depravity.

I have been very careful as a Pastor to speak out against a "Minister" of God and, yet, I sometime wonder who some of these "ministers" are really serving. They may have the title of Reverend in front of their name, claim to be a true spokesman for God and, yet, their Doctrine is just opposite of what the Bible teaches. It seems to me that we can not call just any man a

"True Servant of God" and, especially, when he denies the plain teachings of the Word of God. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

Paul, also, has some very strong words concerning those who have perverted the Gospel. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that we have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8-9). Sunday morning is full of the "Devil's" preachers on the air. They twist and turn and change the precious Word of God and people are sucked into their program and think that they are "Born Again."

What does the Bible teach regarding the Depravity of Man? Genesis 6:5 indicates very strongly that man is depraved in mind. Jeremiah has informed us that our heart is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). The Apostle Paul and John would teach us that our affections are averse to God (Rom. 8:7; John 3:19). Again, Paul would show to us that our conscience is defiled (Titus 1:15). King David, Jeremiah the Prophet and the Apostle Paul are in agreement when they show us that man's speech betrays him and shows that his true nature comes out when they say man speaks lies (Psa. 58:3; Jer. 8:6; Rom. 3:13). The Prophet Isaiah tells us that man is sick from the top of his head to the bottom of his foot (Isa. 1:5, 6). The Psalmist informs us that we are born a sinner and that we go astray as soon as we are born (Psa. 51:5; 58:3).

The Word of God does not paint a very pretty picture of man and his true nature. But the Law of Moses makes it even worse, for the Law can only condemn — it never gives life. The Law gives God's perfect requirements and, then, the New Testament informs us that when you break just one part, you are guilty of breaking the whole Law (James 2:10). In fact, the Law was to serve as a schoolmaster to bring us (The Elect) to Christ (Gal. 3:24). If man would take a hard long look at himself in the mirror of the Law, he would have to admit that he has not kept the demands of the Law or that he never could. The flesh was not, and is not able to fulfill the just demands of the Law (Rom. 8:3). The Law only proves that no man can please God by trying to keep the Law.

Thus, we must conclude, because man is a sinner by birth, nature and practice, that: (1) The Law separates him from God; (2) The Law cannot remove the curse of condemnation; (3) The Law demands perfect obedience and, therefore, could never justify him; (4) The Law could not give eternal life.

We do not have to stop here, for the Bible has a lot more to say about the Depravity of Man. Again, the desires of man is to have his own way — "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). The Apostle Paul teaches that man is "DEAD" in trespasses and sins

— "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1) — and that the natural man willingly walks in the path of Satan and ignorance, — "Wherein 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" (Eph. 2:2). If it were not for the work of the Holy Spirit, no flesh would ever be saved, because "The flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:33). Furthermore, the Bible teaches that the natural man loves the darkness of evil over the Light of God, — "And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). The Old Testament Prophet asked the question, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" (Jer. 13:3), and the answer to Jeremiah's question is NO.

What does the Doctrine of the Depravity of Man mean? Several things. First, it obviously means that no good remains in man by nature — see Romans 7:18 — "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." Second, even more damaging to our pride, but we can not even subject ourselves to God or even please Him — see Romans 8:7, 8 — "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Third, the Bible indicates that we are spiritually dead — unable to help ourselves — (Eph. 2:1). Fourth, the Apostle Paul teaches that the Natural Man — the Unsaved person — cannot and will not comprehend spiritual truth — I Cor. 2:14 — "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Fifth, because the natural man cannot and will not come to God, the Spirit of God must quicken the Elect and thus turn him from sin to God in Repentance and Faith.

You and I must rejoice in that the Father hath commanded the Lord Jesus Christ to lose nothing that the Father has given to the Eternal Son of God. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus informs us that God will draw the elect unto Himself: that He might raise him up at the last day (John 6:37, 38, 39, 44).

We can say no more than the Scriptures allow us to say: "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9). "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" (Eph. 2:8, 9). "According as he (God) hath chosen us (the Elect) in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). "He (God) hath made us (Elect) accepted" (Eph. 1:6). Salvation began with God before the foundation of the world and He secures it for us in His good time. Praise God, for it is He Whom we owe it all to.

May God bless and challenge you to study His Word and find the truth!

PERSEVERANCE

(Continued from Page 1)

use all of them, but will use enough of them to show that for the elect of God to persevere in the faith is a Bible doctrine. Such Scriptures as Luke 9:62, "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Those who look back are not fit for the kingdom of God. The faith of the elect keeps him in the way, he holds on to the plow, he holds in his way, he has an unction from on high. Job 17:9 says, "The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." This means that he continues in the faith. He is faithful to and in his work, because he knows it is of God.

Now, why is it that Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptists believe in perseverance? Is it because they have more natural courage than others? No, this is not the reason. Let us notice the Scriptures and see what they have to say concerning the doctrine of perseverance. There must be some reason outside ourselves that makes us have the desire to never give up. In I John 2: 27-28, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." To "abide with" means that we remain with, continue with Christ. We stand fast with, we reside with Christ. Now, in standing with Christ in his doctrines, we will not be ashamed when He comes. Isn't this a good reason to persist in the faith? I surely would like to have the announcement from Christ, "Well done thou good and faithful servant." We read again in I John 3:9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The saints of God do not love sin. They have it. They have more sin than they want at the very best they can do. Then some will say, "if I believed that doctrine, if I believed that a person could never be lost, in once saved always saved, then I would go out and get my fill of sin." Well, if a person did that, he would love sin and would not love God. That would be evidence that he loved sin more than anything if he wanted his fill of it. He who is born of God knows the truth of God's Word, is sick of sin. He hates it and he surely will not want to sin. Therefore, he remains with Christ and abides with him.

I John 5:18 teaches us this same truth. Satan cannot get to the elect of God because the Word of God surrounds him. God has built an hedge around him. And this hedge is strong because God built it. As the children of God work in His vineyard they are not afraid to work long and hard, because they know that God watches over them. They know that they

are in the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ and the hand of God and that Satan cannot make even one tiny little dent in the hedge that God has built around His children.

The binding of the real believer to Christ is seen by their continuing to persevere in the faith. This distinguishes them from the mere professor. The real believer will abide in Christ. He is attached to Christ and it is shown by his persistence. The people that are elected to eternal salvation by a sovereign and gracious God will stubbornly fight for the faith by the grace of God. They will continue in grace and will not give up. They will continue in the faith once delivered to the saints and, as in Jude 3, they will earnestly contend.

Then there are some that go out. They leave, give up and leave the work to others. They will not steadfastly hold on or continue because they are working in their own strength. They are not working in the strength of the Lord. They think that salvation depends on what they do and not what the Lord has done. Therefore, they go out and leave the work, but the faithful remain. I John 2:19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would not doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." The people who are the elect of God: who have been effectually called by the marvelous, matchless grace of God and the Son; drawn by the Holy Spirit of God (and they will all come, John 6:37); these will never go out. They will never leave. They will keep up the good work. Those who persevere in the faith are those who have something for which to fight and to encourage them not to quit the battle. The elect of God have the comforting of the Holy Spirit, so that when difficulty arises, they will not give up and they have exceeding joy even in tribulation. This is what the Scripture means in I John 2:20, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Here is the comforting of the Spirit Christ told the disciples He and God the Father would send when He went away. The trials of the saints of God become so severe sometimes, until if it were not for the presence of the Spirit of God, they could not continue to persevere in the faith. They would give up. Those that are mere professors will become offended because of persecution and quit the fight. The real believer will stand the test and be willing to bear whatever comes upon him. He will withstand the fiery darts of the wicked one, for he knows that God has made a way of escape for him. I Cor. 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

The saints of God will, like the Apostle Paul when he had all kinds of trials, say, "none of these things move me." Acts 20:23-24, "Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy,

and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." The bonds and afflictions that the Holy Spirit spoke of concerning Paul, I believe, referred to those named by Paul in I Corinthians 4:11-13. Just read these words, "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; And labour working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." And also, nearly everything or anything you could imagine came on Paul by way of trials and afflictions (II Cor. 11:23-28). I'll not take the space to give these Scripture verses, but you turn to them and read them.

Then I call your attention to the fact that God made a Covenant with his people. Jeremiah 32:40, "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." This covenant is an everlasting covenant. God will never break His covenant. He will never go back on what He has done. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. He will never take back those gifts He has given to them. God is not a covenant-breaking God. The people of God know this. The elect of God know that God will forgive them when they sin. They know that God will heal all their backslidings. Though man may break his covenant, yet God will not break His. He is a covenant-keeping God. Deut. 7:9, "Know therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." Also, let us read Psalm 89:34-37, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah." Also, let us read Hebrews 13:20. His covenant is everlasting and sealed with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." This covenant was made between the Father and the Son before the world began (Rev. 13:8). The elect of God were included in it. Ephesians 1:4, "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." John 6:37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Now therefore this, because of the things mentioned above concerning the covenant of God and the elect of God included in this covenant, makes them have a desire to keep in the faith, continue in grace and will in the face of any and all trials and tribulations stand for the truths

written in the Word of God. We are not quitters. We are not the kind of people that give up and leave the work to someone else. We know that the work of God will continue and we know that it is our duty to contend for the faith with all sincerity. We also know that if we do not contend for the faith, that God will chastise us. And we know, still farther, that God will see that His purpose is carried out, if not through us, from some other quarter.

Now for further proof of the truth of the doctrine of perseverance and that we are secure in the grace of God and the Lord Jesus Christ and sealed by the Spirit of God. Eph. 1:13, John 10:28. We will persevere in the grace of God because of His love. The Lord loves His sheep. He gave His life for the sheep and He gave them eternal life, John 10:11,28. And because of this great love wherewith He loved us we will, then, without any fear of the world, give our life in service unto Him who died for us. We give our life because we love Him and we know that He loved us before we loved Him (I John 4:19).

Then, let us notice still further why the love of God will cause us to persevere in grace and faith. We read in II Cor. 5:14, "For the love of Christ constraineth us;..." Now just what does the Scripture mean when it says "The love of Christ constraineth us"? It means that we are held in close bounds by the love of Christ so that we are moved to serve Him, whereas we would not otherwise. We feel that we are obliged to and we want to be His servants. To constrain means that Christ's love to us and for us has an impelling power over us. Again, we are compelled to serve Christ because we are bound together with Christ with the bond of love, so that this compelling is not against our will. It is not that we are working for Christ and rebellious as we do it, but what we do, we do gladly, willingly and ready heart and mind. We do this because of the great power and influence of the love of God. And for the love of Christ to constrain us means that His love overwhelms us and therefore we are moved to honor and adore His great and matchless name. We can understand just what is meant by the constraining love of Christ when we read in Matthew 14:22, when it is said Christ constrained His disciples to get into the ship. He did not herd them up and push them into the ship, but rather He showed them why it was necessary and important that they get into the ship and go to the other side. They got into the ship willingly because they understood that it was the Master's bidding and it was important to obey Him. They were moved to do so because of love.

In Luke 24 we read of two of Christ's disciples returning to Emmaus from Jerusalem. Christ joined them in the way and, as they traveled, spoke to them concerning the crucifixion; however, they did not recognize Him as they walked. When they reached the city Christ made as though He would have gone further, but they constrained Him. They gave Him reason why He should turn in and abide with them. It was toward evening and the day was far spent and He went in to tarry with them.

This the love of God does for us and to us. We are moved by the warmth of it. It affects our heart. It warms our cold heart

and we are delighted to serve Him. His love causes our souls to rejoice and we shout the praise of God in song and teaching and preaching the great and precious truths of God's Word. The everlasting love of Christ and of God keeps us firm in the faith. The love of Christ constrains us and we are drawn by it. Jeremiah said, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3).

Then another proof of the truth of this doctrine is the prayer of Christ for believers while here on earth. John 17:12, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in the name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled." When Christ prayed for His people His prayer was always answered. John 11:41-42. Christ interceded for the saints where He sits at the right hand of the Father. The Spirit now intercedes for them according to the will of God. This gives the elect of God strength and encouragement. While the world is against us we know that God is for us. We know this and it gives us the greatest desire to continue the fight for the truth. We are not afraid of the world. We are not afraid of the men who teach false doctrines and speak terrible things against the truth. These false teachers speak evil against the doctrines of God's grace. They speak against the doctrines of God's eternal sovereign election of His people to everlasting salvation. They speak evil of the effectual call and the sovereignty of God. They speak against the doctrine of predestination and all those precious truths for which we stand. This does not cause us to move or back off one degree. We will strive faithfully to the end. All the religions in the world may be against us, but this will not cause the elect of God to fail. We will stand firm in the face of all this.

Another scripture which teaches the doctrine of perseverance is found in I Peter 1:5, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." The saints are kept from the power of sin and the dominion of sin. That is, sin will not get the best of them. Sin will not rule over them and they will not come under the power of sin. Also, they are kept from Satan. They are kept from the fiery darts of the wicked one. The keeping of the saints, then, is in the hand of God and not in the hand of man.

The final perseverance of the saints is seen in the attributes of God. All those things that are attributive to God, such as His holiness, His mercy, His grace, His goodness, His truthfulness, His power, His faithfulness, His justice and His love. All of which work in perfect harmony for the elect of God. God's grace and mercy are upon them that fear Him and this is from everlasting to everlasting. The goodness and mercy of the Lord will follow the saints of God all the days of their life. If this be true, and it is, then we shall stand firm in the faith till the last day or in death. And we know that we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

(Continued on Page 7 Column 1)

PERSEVERANCE

(Continued from Page 6)

It is by grace that we are saved, Eph 2:8. It is by grace that we are kept saved for we are kept by the power of God. We are not saved by works. If we were, then grace would be no more grace. Romans 11:6. We will fight the good fight of faith as good soldiers of Jesus Christ because we know that He is able to keep us.

Let us look at another scripture concerning the perseverance of the saints. John 3:16, "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." All the wicked of all time and all the demons of Satan and Satan himself cannot cause the elect to perish. The saints of God have the consolation that they will never perish and knowing this gives them a great desire to contend for the faith. If God be for us who can be against us? That is, there is no one against us with any effect. Those that rise up against God and His people do not move them at all. They are powerless in all their efforts to destroy God's people for they will never perish. Those who rise against us cannot overcome us or conquer us for we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Romans 8:37-39, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, Nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The elect will persevere in the faith and grace of God, because their salvation is secure in Christ Jesus. Let us say with the Apostle Paul, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).

May God Bless You!

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Fifth Commandment by Medford Caudill Goshen, Ind.

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12).

The first four commandments give us our duties as concerns our relationship to God. The next six show us a proper relationship to other men. The fifth commandment begins this group by showing us our duties to those who are closer to us than any others, our parents.

The family is the oldest divine institution on the face of this earth. The family was organized by God. The Bible is very clear as to how a family is to live together. It is clear on the responsibility that each family member has, as well as their privileges. And the love they are to have towards one another.

A father is responsible to God for his family. He is to provide for them (I Timothy 5:8), teach them the Word of God (Genesis 18:19), discipline his children (Proverbs 19:18), while abstain-

ing from provoking them (Ephesians 6:4).

A mother has certain God-given responsibilities. She is to love her husband (I Corinthians 7:3), keep the home (Titus 2:4, 5), submit herself to her husband (Ephesians 5:22), and teach her children the Scripture (I Timothy 1:5).

Parents, however, are not the only family members with responsibilities, children have responsibilities, also. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3). Obedience to parents is man-



Medford Caudill

datory. When daddy says jump you ought to say, "how high?" The family prepares a child to live in society. If you don't obey societies rules and regulations you will one day wind up in jail. I dare say there is not any one in any prison in this country who did not get started on the road to crime by disobeying their parents.

Honouring your parents, however, goes beyond simple obedience. To truly honour your parents you must love them. Your parents have done more for you than you could ever think about. How many times when you were a babe did your mother get out of bed because of your crying, or just to check to see if you were all right? How much of your father's paycheck went to buy you food and clothing and many other things which you really didn't need but wanted to have. Your parents have sacrificed a big chunk of their lives to raise you. They have given you love and attention and you ought to return it to them.

"The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out, and the young eagles shall eat it" (Proverbs 30:17). There is a great curse on those who dishonour their parents. For those who do honour them there is a great blessing. The sixth chapter of Ephesians tells us that this is the first commandment with promise. That promise is, "that thy days may be long upon the land." If you want to live a long and happy life honour your father and mother.

What if your parents aren't saved? If that is the case you have all the more reason to honour them. Just as a believing wife may lead her lost husband to the Lord by submitting herself to him and witnessing by her life, so believing children witness to their parents by honouring them. If your parents are lost, pray for them and give them the gospel. Why is it that we neglect telling the good news to those nearest to us when we freely speak of Christ many times to total strangers? Salvation does not pass through a blood line. You are not saved by

your parents belief, and they are not saved because you believe. If your parents are lost give them the gospel.

How long are we to honour our parents? As long as they live. The Bible does not say to only honour your father and mother until you are old enough to leave home and be on your own. You need to honour your parents forever.

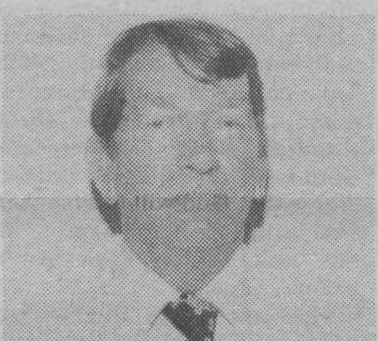
In closing let me ask a few questions. How long has it been since you told your parents you appreciate them? How long has it been since you asked your father's advice? How long has it been since you sent your mother a card or flowers? How long has it been since you spent some time with your parents? How long has it been since you said, "I love you dad," or, "I love you mom"?

DEFINITIONS

by Ray Hiatt

HOLINESS

"Holiness" is the most interpreted theme in the Bible. It has ever been so. The Pharisees weren't the first or the last to make private regulations of holiness and enforce them on their neighbors with pains and penalties. "Be ye holy, for I am holy," saith the Lord, and this sounds simple enough. It is, until men deify private prejudices into religious pronouncements.



Ray Hiatt

Just what is holiness, in the definition of the word? Its simplest meaning is, "to be set aside," i.e., to be sanctified. There is nothing confusing in this, but bloody wars have been fought for the right to complicate it. To be "set aside" is to walk differently in relation to the world we live in. Not the world Paul lived in, or Moses lived — the world we live in. Holiness is relative to the world that assails us, for this is what we are "set aside" from. The Bible catalogues certain sins such as murder, theft, adultery, drunkenness, and such like, and there is little debate over these. It is over other things, NOT SPECIFICALLY WRITTEN, which the blood-letting is over.

Dr. Francis Schaeffer has said so ably, "The Christian is to resist the spirit of the world. But we must understand that the world spirit does not always take the same form. So the Christian must resist the world in the form it takes in his own generation. If he does not do this, he is not resisting the spirit of the world at all." Well said! If we do not use some discernment we will expend our energies fighting the dead soldiers of antiquity without benefit to either ourselves or the kingdom of God. Satan's goal is unvarying, BUT HIS METHODS AND FORM OF ATTACK ARE MOLDED TO DIFFERENT TIMES AND SEASONS. This is not "situation ethics," but simple truth.

What is a holy act or an unholy act? Everyone knows, do they not? Well, at least everyone has

an opinion. How should a Christian act, dress, speak, work, live, socialize, fellowship, spend his money or advance his life for Christ? On those things clearly specified in the Bible there is little quarrel. But, what of those things not specifically mentioned which buffet us daily? Who makes the determination as to whether a Christian comforts himself in a sanctified way when it touches those things God has not seen fit to catalogue specifically? Who is the authorized expert? Simple. His church.

I am not embarrassed to say that I have a loftier concept of church authority than many. This is not egotism, as I hope to show. We live in a different world from our Brother Paul's. It is just as wicked and deadly, but it takes a different form, and we must oppose the form it presents to us each day. In this respect the church, led by the Spirit and the Word, has a much overlooked authority to make determinations and to act.

There is a general expression used in II Thessalonians 3:6, "disorderly," which grants the church great leeway in making and enforcing determinations as to a Christian's walk. "Disorderly" has a military connotation which means, "out of step." If a saint is "out of step" with his church in the 3rd century in India or the 18th century in Scotland, he is "disorderly."

Churches are weak or strong at various stages of their growth. Some Baptist churches enforce extremely high standards, while others scarcely survive. Corinth was weak, Philippi was strong, yet they (and all churches of Christ), have the authority to determine what is "disorderly," as it affects them in their time and under their conditions of life. For this reason, church discipline is so very important and the common respect due to a church's disciplinary procedures is so vitally important as well. Churches cannot add to the Word of God, of course, nor can they violate Scripture. Yet, regardless of their strength or weakness, regardless of their stage of growth, they have legitimate administrative authority to regulate those things which pertain to their membership. Those things clearly written are clearly enforced, but so many things are so specifically written and the church must deal with them effectively.

Israel, as a nation, was designed to function in one land and under certain static conditions. Not so, the churches of Christ. They are designed to function in many lands, various climes, different cultures, many civilizations, under different governments and economies and in many and varied vicissitudes. The church must deal with "disorderliness" in all these circumstances.

For example: a Baptist church determines that a member's mode of dress is "disorderly" and withdraws fellowship under disciplinary procedures. Another Baptist church is weaker and seems not to much care how her members dress. The weaker church should nevertheless respect the action of her sister church. The churches of Christ must function as they are, not as we would idealistically want them to be.

Is it "unholy" to attend movies, smoke, watch television, attend football games, play golf or play billiards? None of these things are mentioned specifically in Scripture. Just

Missionary To New Guinea Eld. Fred T. Halliman



FRED T. HALLIMAN

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Write Brother Halliman frequently. His address is: ELDER FRED T. HALLIMAN, Sovereign Grace Baptist Mission, P.O. Box 19, Koroba, via Mendi, Papua, New Guinea.

what is "modest apparel"? How long can a man's hair be before it is "long"? Should a Christian wear shorts, jewelry or makeup? I have opinions (learned ones I trust), but my opinions are not the determining criteria. I am guided by the church of which I am a member as well as the Spirit and the Word. It is largely the church which must make determinations on matters like the above, led by the Spirit, and in the time and conditions in which she exists.

By assigning certain responsibility to the church I am not relieving the individual Christian of his responsibility to live a godly life before God and to be personally answerable for his actions. Yet, a member of Christ's church cannot function in a totally individual capacity for he has surrendered himself to the discipline of Christ's church. A saint outside a Baptist church has as much responsibility to live godly and is equally answerable, but he is denied the aid of the church in his daily walk. Church discipline is not the enemy of the Christian as is sometimes thought, but his friend. By the wise and benevolent council of the church, he is enabled to live a better and more godly life. Outside the church he has the Word and the Spirit to direct him in holiness. Yet, his life is beset by many complexities which shall inhibit him. Within Christ's church, he is yet not perfect, but is more able to function in a godly way. Christ's church is a haven, a place of refuge where he can find succor, understanding, comradeship and a most personal guidance.

I could wish that all churches were strong, but they are not. They go through stages of growth, degeneration, joy and sorrow. They are living bodies, prey to all the ills of the world. They make mistakes. They transgress in judgment, but Christ shall correct them or abolish them as He deems wise. Yet, while they are His churches

(Continued on Page 8 Column 1)

A man may take, but only that which God gives a man is really his.

TUNE IN TO THE CALL TO CALVARY

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LORD, I BELIEVE; HELP THOU MINE UNBELIEF

by Roy W. Snell
Charleston, WV

If one who has been quickened and enlightened by the Holy Spirit and has been edified by the Word and profited from experience should attempt to catalogue and categorize those fleshly acts which grieve our Lord, they would find them to be legion. Even as the unclean spirits in Mark 5:9. However, it remains that for every act of murder, adultery, fornication, theft, envy, greed, lust, all those actions for which the sons of Adam are capable, and even prone to engage in, there must be a root cause.

Seeing that man, since Adam, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ in His human manifestation, has been the extended product of Adam's loins and the blood corrupted by the original sin in the garden now flows in all of our veins, no one is exempt from that curse which the Lord placed upon all creation and all of His creatures. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

The most difficult thing for mankind to accept, even among our professing Baptists, is that absolute verity found in Jonah 2:9: "Salvation is of the Lord." Except that our Lord takes the sole initiative, and exercises that prerogative which is His alone, then Adam's entire

progeny is doomed to remain under the curse of original sin forever. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him..." (John 6:44).

Those aforementioned sins and transgressions, and a veritable myriad of other, are not the cause of the curse — they are the direct results of it. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners..." (Romans 5:19). Our sovereign Lord, in perfect righteousness and justice, could have "concluded them all in unbelief" and passed over the lot of us, even as He "spared not the angels that sinned" (II Peter 2:4). Had this been the case, then every man of us would have perished in his sins, that rebellion which humanly speaking, every one of us would choose without coercion to persist in. "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecc. 7:20).

What then is this root cause which makes man the transgressor all his days and against the laws of an omnipotent and sovereign Lord? It can be summed up in one word and that is 'unbelief.' Webster's best says that unbelief is incredulity; skepticism; the absence of belief, especially in matters of religious faith and doctrines. A close study of the Word, by a completely honest look into our own hearts and by observing others at times, we can see together, both faith and unbelief, at least in a measure, can be present even in the elect.

However, there are degrees of unbelief, beginning with the

evil heart of unbelief (Hebrews 3:12), which is a deliberate and willful rejection of revealed truth. Thomas did not fit this category. Peter, brash and impetuous enough to attempt to walk on water, did not believe strongly enough to be able to continue. Remember the father of the child with a dumb spirit? When Jesus asked him if he could believe he replied; "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). Our precious namesake, John the Baptist, filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, and a man sent from God, was blessed with the privilege of baptizing his Saviour. He publicly declared Him "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Later, in prison and facing brutal sure death, he was caused to doubt if that one to whom he had ministered the baptism was actually the Son of God. That measure of saving faith and yet, unbelief existing within one of our Lord's most choice saints. Remember Zacharias? (Luke 1:20).

Except that our Lord was pleased to: "Predestinate us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will — and to the praise of the glory of his grace" (Ephesians 1:5-6), then that unbelief would surely damn our immortal souls. But thanks be to God; "The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Galatians 3:22). Take careful note that the promise of faith is "given" to a specified group of recipients. Both faith (the ability to believe) and repentance are gifts from God to an elect number — no one else will ever desire to believe, savingly.

How then does this wicked heart of unbelief manifest itself in the convictions of mankind? One might admit to a Supreme Being and yet deny Creation, holding to the evolution of the

creature, and thus making God a liar. Another, while consenting to a ruling Force out there somewhere will declare Adam and Eve to be simply mythological characters, nonexistent except in the fertile mind of some ancient writer. Countless religious people, yea even some who consider themselves Christians, will accept no part of the doctrine of original sin. The miracles of the Bible are dismissed as being only a "symbolic" eaching of this or that. The method of spiritualizing or symbolizing some literal truths of God's Word is a convenient copout to avoid the fact that He can override or disannul manmade laws with His own supernatural powers.

To the non-elect or even to the as yet unquickened child, the parting of the Red Sea, the sun standing still or moving backwards, raising the dead, turning water into wine, the virgin birth of our Lord, the resurrection from the tomb, all can be utter foolishness. In fact, those of us who accept these matters without question are often regarded as having only "one oar in the water." Or they declare that our elevator does not go all the way to the top. From the human side of the coin our detractors not only voluntarily "choose" to disbelieve the record which God has provided for us, they enjoy scoffing at those of us who do stake our eternal destinies on the credibility of God's word. Take note, again, that I said from the "human" side the non-elect "choose" to go on in unbelief. No one twists their arms, no outward force or coercion is brought to bear upon them to force them into infidelity. This, then, is man's responsibility in the matter and is that which will effect his non-defense in that great day of our Lord. Our Lord's absolute sovereignty in choosing and quickening His elect is the other side of the same coin — and the balanced teaching of the whole counsel of God must include both His elective choice of a pre-determined number, as well as the personal responsibility of every creature. Can I fully grasp the implications of it all? I cannot, yet I covet that which He is pleased to reveal to me. The rest I take to Deuteronomy 29:29 and the first sentence therein; "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God."

Then what of that troublesome residue of unbelief which can plague the elect on some occasions, and on some matters. What man, being painfully honest, can truthfully declare that he has never had a doubt of some kind, even of his own standing in the Lord? The writer Traill warns that we should beware of that one who claims perfect assurance at all times. Do you recall that there will be some who had plenty of "assurance," yet Jesus has told them: "I never knew you" (Matt. 7:23).

Beloved, search yourself whether you be in the faith — and make your calling and election sure. When those things and matters arise which you cannot understand or grasp within the light which has been given you, then go to your closet and tell your Father, specifically, about your problem. Be it a question, a doubt, some incredulity, skepticism or a measure of unbelief, tell Him all. He treasures an honest heart far more than he is concerned with a muddled mind. I speak from experience.

I would hold that it is a

measure of unbelief which keeps the precious truth of God's absolute sovereignty from the hearts and minds of many, even of saved individuals. In this respect it would behoove some of us to be more understanding and tolerant of a person who declares that he knows and loves the Lord, yet he has no appetite for our beloved doctrines of grace. Babies are first helpless and wholly dependent on others; they learn to sit before they crawl, and to crawl before they walk. They exist mainly upon milk for a period before they can digest solid food or meat. I know of no one who has any statistics on the matter, but I would surmise that by far the greater number of those quickened by the Holy Ghost have precious little knowledge of election, pre-destination, foreknowledge, and grace plus nothing — at the time of their actual salvation. In a definite sense that knowledge is too profound for a mere babe in the faith. Some do claim to grasp it immediately — and some proceed to pervert this precious truth and to badly abuse and misuse and apply our cherished verities. Others, like myself, seemingly God waits until He knows that we are ready to believe and receive his gracious doctrine, before he in His sovereign omnipotence will intrust us with Jonah 2:9, and all of its implications. Bear in mind, also, my brother, that when our Lord graced this earth with his presence he had an inner circle among his followers, some even among the elect who were permitted closer association and deeper revelation than were the rank and file among the disciples. (Read Bride and wedding guests here if you please — you're welcome). Can it be that He yet has a number, although saved individuals, who are not yet, and possibly will not be, initiated into that company of the inner circle?

I had an old friend, a much loved country preacher who was wont to get a gleam in his eye and tell his listeners; "You don't need to believe all that I believe in order to get to heaven — but if you do your journey from here to there will be far more delightful and satisfying and fulfilling." Amen, Brother.

A closing word of intended comfort to that young Christian, under fire from the enemy. When that super saint jumps up and down and says bless God forever, I have been saved for forty years and never doubted for a moment, just remember that possibly our omnipotent Lord could not trust the gentleman with the hedge down, even momentarily. She providentially shields that one from the fiery darts which He permits us for our edifying and refining.

Let's Study The Lord's Church



By E. G. COOK

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DEFINITIONS

(Continued from Page 7)

He has granted unto them responsibility in certain areas of discernment and determination.

So then, what is "holiness." I cannot give it a final, comprehensive definition. What of those things the Bible does not mention specifically? Who can say? Our Lord can say, through His Word, through His Spirit and through the ministry of determination that He has given to His church.

APPRECIATED LETTERS

These are wonderful sermons. Please send Wednesday sermons. Most of our spiritual food is derived from these tapes. In Christ. Name withheld.

So appreciated your tapes... would like Wednesday night messages. Your tapes are a blessing to us. May God bless you in your ministry. Praying for you.

Carl and Phyllis Johnson,
Hot Springs, Ariz.

...I hope this finds you and Katie well. I am blessed by The Baptist Examiner more and more each issue. I hate to think where I would be spiritually if it were not for the Examiner. God's blessings upon you, yours, and the church.

Chester Powell,
Warren, Oh.

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