

LESSON 11

MAN'S CONTINUING LIFE IN CHRIST

Introduction

Although new subjects are introduced, this lesson is actually a continuation of the emphasis in Lesson 10.

Sanctification is an act of God which takes place at conversion. It is also a continuing practice involving Christian growth. Growth results from man's appropriating the power of God through faith and submitting his life to the will of God. Success in Christian growth and service depends on man's availability and God's power. The mistake is often made in thinking that spiritual progress depends on man's ability and performance. Christians must make themselves available as ministers (servants), but accomplishments in spiritual ministry depend on the power of the indwelling Spirit.

The place of human effort in Christian service is often misunderstood. Man is not to be passive but active as a servant of Christ; however, the success of Christian ministry does not depend on the skill of human performance. Spiritual ministry is the work of Christ through the life of the Christian; it is not a Christian doing work for God in his own efforts. Christ works in us when we make our lives available to Him. Man can do some things for Christ in the realm of the material—for example, ministering to the physical needs of man. In spiritual ministry, however, it is Christ who forgives sins and bestows new life in the experience of regeneration.

The problem of properly relating human effort and divine power is evident in the doctrines of moral perfection, antinomianism, the security of the believer, and Christian service. Some denominations emphasize perfectionism while others stress antinomianism. Some have a doctrine of security of believers while others believe that it is possible to fall from grace. For some, the redemption of the world is so completely God's work that man has no responsibility or part in it. For others, God is not active in the world; therefore, changes in the world must be brought about by human efforts. Extreme Calvinists hold the view that if God wants to save the world, He will do it without our help. Those who emphasize the Social Gospel take the position that the improvement of politics and society depends on the Church's organizing its members to apply force to social and political issues. What position should one take in living the Christian life?

*When does sanctification take place? \_\_\_\_\_*

*Sanctification is also a continuing process involving C \_\_\_\_\_ g \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(at conversion, Christian growth)*

*Which of the two statements below (a or b) is true concerning the source of man's spiritual ministry? \_\_\_\_\_*

- a. A Christian does work for God by his own efforts.*
- b. Christ works through a Christian.*

*(b)*

*The doctrines of moral perfection, antinomianism, the security of the believer, and Christian service all give evidence of the problem of properly relating \_\_\_\_\_ effort and \_\_\_\_\_ power.*

*(human, divine)*

## The Question of Moral Perfection

Moral perfection is related to the doctrine of sanctification. It is the belief held by some that Christians may attain sinless perfection in this life. Others contend that perfection is attainable only in the future life.

Early Church views of perfection.—The Rabbis made three ethical divisions based on the degree to which the individual kept the Law: perfect, ordinary, and deficient morality. Their concepts influenced the twofold standard of perfection later held by the early Church as reflected in the Didache and by Cyprian and Ambrose. The Didache (ca. A. D. 120) emphasized two ways of the Christian life: (1) If one can, he must live perfectly; (2) but if he cannot be perfect, he must do his best on a lower moral level. The perfect demand came to be applicable to the clergy and monastic groups, and the lower standard was required for laymen. The twofold standard caused holiness and sinfulness to be understood quantitatively. The Church discovered that it was sinning; therefore, a doctrine had to be developed to make room in the Church for sin.

The Church has continued to struggle with the problem of holiness derived from sanctification and sinfulness derived from the old human nature. As the quantitative concept of sin developed, sins were divided into the categories of venial and mortal. Venial sins were not so serious and could be forgiven. Church members were permitted to commit these sins but not mortal sins.

Mediaeval views of perfection.—Monasticism arose to enable man to achieve perfection. Celibacy and asceticism came to be exalted. Men withdrew from the world to avoid contamination by the world. On the other hand, Augustine maintained that grace is necessary for perfection and that sinlessness is impossible on earth. Perfection can be realized only in the future life. Thomas Aquinas distinguished between beginning, progressing, and perfect Christians. Beginners and those progressing were to exclude mortal sins which oppose the love of God and hinder the soul from turning entirely to God. Those who would be perfect entered monasteries in which ascetic practices were a means to an end.

Reformation views of perfection.—Lutheranism rejected asceticism and emphasized that perfection of ethical conduct was evidenced in the love of one's neighbour. No distinction was made between clerical and lay perfection. Calvinism emphasized the imperfection of the utmost holiness possible on earth, but the rise of pietism renewed the emphasis in Protestantism of seeking absolute perfection.

*List the two ways of the Christian life, according to the Didache.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

*The perfection level came to be applied to the \_\_\_\_\_ and the lower moral level to \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(1. perfection, if possible; 2. if not possible, do his best on a lower moral level; clergy, laymen)*

*According to Thomas Aquinas, moral standards were on different levels for \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ Christians.*

*(beginning, progressing, perfect)*

*Reformation views did not distinguish between standards for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ perfection.*

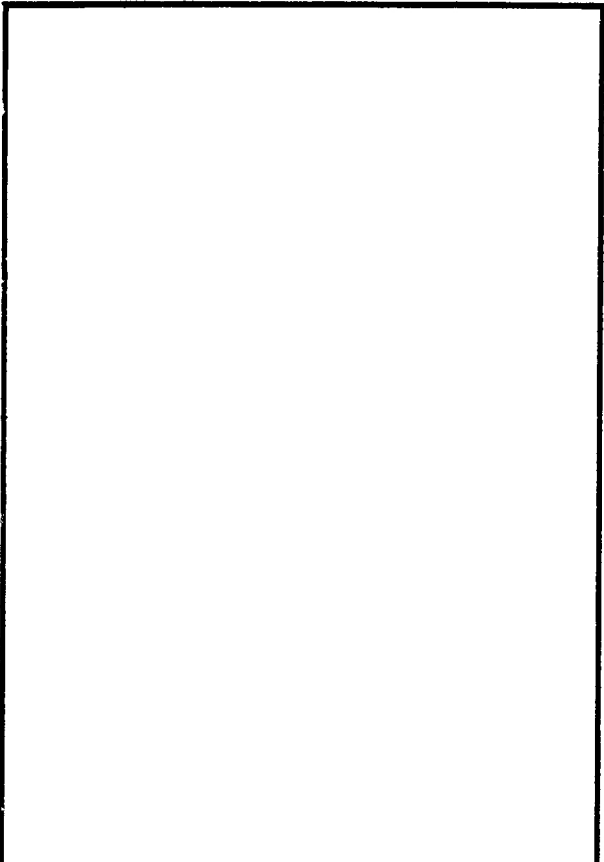
*(clerical, lay)*

Modern views of perfection.—Roman Catholics teach that some who are justified may avoid all sins by a special privilege of God. Their obedience may go beyond the demands of the law. Wesleyan Arminians teach a perfection which is not absolute but relative, that is, "according to the special economy introduced by the atonement, in which the heart, being sanctified, fulfils the law by love." John Wesley taught that the highest perfection can be attained by man while the soul dwells in the body by repression of unholy thoughts and desires, the eradication of unchristian dispositions, and the maturity of grace and holiness. Following Wesley, the Methodist Church does not hold to an absolute and sinless perfection but to a freedom from sin, from evil desires and tempers, and from pride. The Full Gospel, Pentecostal, and Holiness churches hold that sanctification is a second work of grace. Another group teaches that at justification, the body of death and sin is crucified and removed, and the heart of the person is united and subjected to truth so that it does not obey any suggestion or temptation of the devil. The life is delivered from actual sinning and transgressing the Law of God and in that respect it becomes perfect. C.G. Finney taught that virtue and sin, which are contradictory in nature, are based on voluntary action, thus they cannot coexist in the soul. The provisions of the Gospel are such that, when they are fully embraced, they enable the believer to lead a life of uninterrupted obedience—a life of perfection.

Old Testament words for perfection.—*Salem* and *tamin* are frequently used in the Old Testament to signify religious perfection. They are more appropriately translated 'complete' or 'whole' rather than 'perfect' in many Scriptures (cf. Deut. 25:15; 27:6 and Lev. 3:9; 23:15). The words suggest an approach to the ideal condition. They can mean absolute perfection when referring to God, but their meaning is not the same when referring to man or animals. Sacrificial animals were required to be 'perfect', that is, without blemish. Wherever they are used with reference to the conduct of men, they mean 'upright' or 'blameless'.

New Testament Scriptures.—Several New Testament words are translated 'perfect'. The *artios* (perfect, complete) Christian is to be "completely equipped" (2 Tim. 3:17). A person is perfect who has the necessary spiritual equipment and uses it properly. Another word used in 2 Corinthians 13:9 and 11, *katartisis*, has a similar meaning.

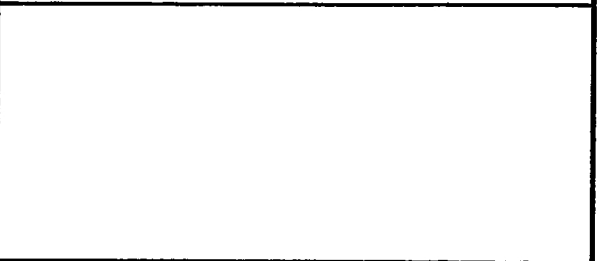
*Teleios* and its derivatives denote perfection. It should be translated 'maturity' or 'full grown' when it is used in contrast to 'children' or 'babes'. In Matthew 5:48, Jesus was contrasting the requirements of Kingdom citizens to the attainments of the Pharisees who claimed to be perfect. The goal of the Kingdom citizen is the absolute perfection of the heavenly Father. This requirement does not mean that man



Draw lines to match the statements with reference to the meanings of words used in the Old Testament for religious perfection.

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| a. Absolute perfection                    | 1. refers to man or animals. |
| b. Upright, blameless, or without blemish | 2. refers to God.            |

(a.-2, b.-1)



The goal of a Christian is the \_\_\_\_\_ of his heavenly Father.

(absolute perfection)

himself attains perfection. Kingdom citizens attain perfection through the work of Christ the King rather than through their own accomplishments: "For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14--RSV). Absolute perfection belongs only to God.

Perfectionist views are based largely on Matthew 5:48: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Other Scriptures used to support the doctrine are:

Be ye holy; for I am holy (1 Pet. 1:16);

Let us go on unto perfection (Heb. 6:1);

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded (Phil. 3:15);

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 (1 John 3:9).

Scriptures denying perfectionism.—If the above Scriptures setting forth perfection were considered alone, it would be possible to subscribe to the view of perfectionists. Serious objections to the view are created by such Scriptures as:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8);

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (Rom. 7:23-24)

Doctrines opposing perfectionism.—Paul's doctrines of the carnal nature of man and the power of sin which attempts to control man deny the view of sinless perfection. The old man of sin is not destroyed when man is justified. He is only dethroned, but he constantly struggles to regain control of the life of the believer. The Christian's hope does not reside within his own strength to defy the power of sin but in the power of the indwelling Christ who controls him for righteousness. To live under Christ's control is the life of faith which means constant surrender to God's will. When a person is not completely yielded to God's will but follows his own selfish desires, he is guilty of sin. The life of sin, however, is not the pattern of his new life in Christ.

First John 1:8, 10 is addressed to Christians and is a warning to those who claim to be sinless. The

Place a check by the phrase which makes this sentence correct:

Perfection for Kingdom citizens comes  
\_\_\_ through their accomplishments.  
\_\_\_ through the work of Christ.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

On which Scripture are perfectionist views mainly based? \_\_\_\_\_

List two other Scriptures which support perfectionism. \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Two Scriptures which deny the perfectionist views are: \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Two Biblical doctrines which oppose perfection are the c \_\_\_\_\_ n \_\_\_\_\_ of man and the power of s \_\_\_\_\_.

(carnal nature, sin)

writer used the first person plural (we) to include himself among those who would be deceived if they claim to be sinless. His real hope is expressed in verse 9 where he pointed out that if the Christian confesses his sin, the blood of Christ keeps on cleansing him of all unrighteousness. In 1 John 2:1-2, the writer stated that he had not written about continuous forgiveness in order to encourage the "little children" to continue in sin. On the other hand, a Christian is not hopeless if he does sin, for his representative (lawyer, advocate) is with the Father to make propitiation (atonement—His blood keeps on cleansing us) for his sins.

First John 3:9 uses the Greek present tense of the verb which emphasizes continuous action. The statement means that the person who keeps on sinning does not have the seed of God abiding in him. The seed of God is the Spirit of God indwelling the heart of the believer to guide his life in righteousness. If the person continually sins, there is evidence that the Spirit does not control him, but he is controlled by the devil (v. 8). The verse does not deny that a Christian occasionally sins, but it does deny that the pattern of his life is characterized by sin. If it is interpreted to mean that a Christian never sins, it is in conflict with 1 John 1:8-10. The explanation that 1 John 1:8-10 does not apply to Christians is erroneous.

The atonement provided by Christ is adequate for man's sinful condition in this life. He must live a life of continual confession as long as he is in the flesh. Christ's intercessory work at the right hand of the Father is adequate to take care of man's sins in order that he may be presented holy and without blemish before the Father (cf. Eph. 1:4).

### Antinomianism

The view that sanctification is accomplished through Christ's atonement rather than man's sinless performance has led some to deny the need of keeping the Law. The doctrine that moral law is made void through faith and that faith alone is necessary for salvation is referred to as antinomianism (against the law). The term is not in the Bible, but the Bible does reflect that the doctrine had developed early in Biblical times. Perhaps James was attacking this false doctrine when he stated, "What doth it profit . . . though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" (James 2:14) Paul also implied in Romans 6:1f. that the heresy was a dangerous threat: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" The statement that the Law is fulfilled

The interpretation of 1 John 3:9 is that the person who keeps on sinning is controlled by the \_\_\_\_\_ and not by God's \_\_\_\_\_.

With reference to 1 John 3:9, write the words does deny or does not deny in the blanks.

The verse \_\_\_\_\_ that a Christian sins occasionally, but it \_\_\_\_\_ that his life is characterized by continual sin.

(devil, Spirit, does not deny, does deny)

What is the literal meaning of antinomianism? \_\_\_\_\_

Antinomianism teaches that moral law is made void through \_\_\_\_\_ and that \_\_\_\_\_ alone is necessary for \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

in one precept of love to God has encouraged many over-enthusiastic devotees to believe that they do not need to regard the Commandments.

Gnostics objected to the Mosaic Law, holding that it applied to the flesh which they held in contempt. Some thought it their duty to practise asceticism, but others concluded that the body does not affect the spirit; therefore, the flesh could break the Law by indulging in sin without affecting spiritual growth. Evidence of antinomianism appears in 1 Corinthians 5. The members of the Church were puffed up and did not mourn over the incestuous person in their midst. Apparently they approved of the abominable union of the guilty parties.

A sect in the mediaeval period maintained that no sin is imputed to those constituted in love. The spirit in man, which is God, is not affected by the flesh and cannot sin. Man becomes so completely identified with God that his flesh does not affect his spirit.

Paul used three illustrations to expose the absurdity of antinomianism. First, he pointed out that repentance meant death to sin, and the lifting from baptismal waters symbolized the resurrection to a new life. The old sinful nature of man was crucified through repentance; therefore, it is no longer alive to control the person for sin. Because of man's death to sin, it is absurd to propose continuance in sin because of grace.

Paul's second illustration concerned the relation of slaves and masters. Non-Christians are under the control of sin, but through faith they can come under the control of a new master. Since Christ is the new Master, He orders them to a life of righteousness rather than sin. As slaves, Christians obey their Master (Rom. 6:16-23).

Paul's third illustration is that of marriage. He pointed out that according to the Law, a person is no longer bound in marriage after the companion dies. Death brings about release from the marriage law. In repentance and faith, the Christian has died to the old way of justification by works; therefore, he is released from the Law as a means of salvation (Rom. 7:1-6).

Antinomianism is based on an inadequate understanding of Paul's use of law and his concept of justification. Paul did not mean by law simply ethical conduct according to the Commandments. He never stated that it was permissible for a person to worship other gods, to fail to worship, or to commit murder and adultery. In fact, he specifically stated that whoever was guilty of idolatry, murder, adultery, and such wrong deeds would not inherit the Kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19ff.). This statement came immediately after he had said, "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye

After reading the last paragraph on page 179 and this paragraph, list three Scriptures which give evidence of antinomianism in New Testament times.

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(Compare your answer with the text.)

Paul said that it was absurd to believe that a man continued in \_\_\_\_\_ since he died to sin in \_\_\_\_\_.

(sin, repentance)

Christians are slaves of a new \_\_\_\_\_ who orders them to a life of righteousness.

(master)

Christians are not bound to the old way of justification by \_\_\_\_\_.

(works)

are not under the law." To be led of the Spirit is not contradictory to keeping the Law. The Law expresses God's moral nature, and the Spirit upholds it. Paul meant that salvation could not be earned by the Law simply because men fail to keep it.

At one time in his own experience as a Pharisee, Paul had claimed to keep the Law. He eventually recognized that he was failing and was actually condemned by the Law he boasted of keeping. Law which he had depended on for life actually became his judge which condemned him to death. Paul acknowledged that it is spiritual but he was carnal, "sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14). His failure to keep the Law made it inadequate as a means of salvation, but it did not mean that the Law was bad or should be ignored. It simply does not have the power to redeem one from sin. The Law was given by God and it expresses His moral nature.

Paul pointed out that the inadequacy of the Law was not in its weakness but in the weakness of the flesh (Rom. 8:3). In order to be accepted by God, the righteousness of the Law must be fulfilled (Rom. 8:4). The only possible way it can be kept is through the indwelling Spirit who empowers man and guides him in moral activities.

It should be remembered that Paul was a Pharisee who understood the Law to be more than the Ten Commandments. The Pharisees had given detailed legal interpretations to the Commandments to the extent that life was restricted and without freedom. Some of the legal interpretations of the Commandments were meaningless and even contradictory to the spirit of the Commandments. For example, rules concerning the keeping of the Sabbath were so negative and restricting that a person must focus full attention on keeping the rules, thus no time was left for the worship of God. The Law of the Sabbath was given in order that man would focus attention on his relationship to God. Multiplied rules for avoiding work on the Sabbath became so burdensome that attention was shifted from God to the rules. When Paul taught that the Law would not save, he meant that the strictest observance of all the rules of the Pharisees would not establish a redemptive relationship with God. Through life in the Spirit, he found liberty, not to indulge in the breaking of the Law, but a true power and guide for keeping it.

In recent years, situation ethics has reacted strongly to puritan ethics, which has been criticized for being too legalistic. The modern trend is to emphasize love which is to be applied to a given situation. Situation ethics rejects absolute standards of morality and proposes that a man should act in a given situation according to the environmental circumstances. He is instructed to 'love' and do what

*Is this statement true or false?*

*To be led by the Spirit is contradictory to keeping the Law. \_\_\_\_\_*

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

*The only possible way of man's fulfilling the Law is through the indwelling \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(Spirit)*

*The ethical system which rejects absolute standards and proposes that a man act in a given situation according to environmental circumstances is called \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

he wishes. This teaching (philosophy) is a more miserable failure than extreme legalism. It fails to recognize the inherent sinful nature of man. Without laws to restrict him, man rationalizes and justifies his desires in the name of Christian love. It is true that the legalistic Pharisees did the same thing. They twisted laws to justify their wrong actions. The interpretation and application of Christian love can be treated in like manner and are being grossly abused in the so-called 'new morality'.

Man's ethics must be guided by life in the Spirit which is not contradictory to law but enables man to keep the Law. If man is controlled by his carnal desires rather than by the Spirit of God, he finds ways to twist the Law in justifying his sinful actions. If man is not controlled by his carnal desires but by the Spirit, he is guided to right actions and empowered by the indwelling Christ to perform the will of God.

Individual Responsibility in Christian Living

Scriptures are numerous which make man responsible for his conduct whether he lives for God or Satan. The Sermon on the Mount does not hesitate to lay upon man the full responsibility for his living the godly life. Man who is angry with his brother is guilty and shall be brought to judgement. He is also condemned for acts of stealing, adultery, and breaking oaths. Man cannot claim immunity from punishment for having broken the Law on the basis that he is sinful in nature.

Paul emphasized that man is not to conform to the ways of the world (cf. Rom. 12). He is responsible for putting into practice the teachings of Christ. He is even accountable for the idle words which he speaks. Every man shall give account of himself to God (Rom. 14:12).

Paul indicated that the man in Christ should have a new interest in things which are above instead of things which are in the earth (cf. Col. 3:1ff.). Affection for earthly things has died in repentance and the new life is hid with Christ in God. The Christian is responsible for putting to death his earthly inclinations of immoral and passionate desires. He is to put on the new man which is in the process of being made new in the likeness of his Creator.

Man is responsible for denying self, taking up his cross, and following Christ. He denies self by confessing he is sinful and by following Christ's will rather than his own desires. Although the Christian is unable in his own strength to deny his selfish desires, the Spirit of Christ gives him victory when he turns to Him in faith and invites the Spirit to control his life. Man is unable to keep the Law because of his carnal

Man controlled by his \_\_\_\_\_  
finds ways to twist the Law in justifying his sinful actions.

Man controlled by the \_\_\_\_\_  
is guided to right actions and empowered by Christ to perform the will of God.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

As you read this paragraph and the next one, list three Scriptures in which Paul emphasized that man is responsible for his conduct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answer with the text.)

nature, but he is responsible for living by faith. The opposite of faith is dependence on self. The man of unbelief is responsible for his sins because he has refused to believe in Christ.

The Christian's Responsibility to Serve

Between His resurrection and ascension, Jesus repeatedly commanded His followers to make disciples and to baptize them as they went into all the world (Matt. 28:18-20). The responsibility of a people for the world was not new nor unique with Christianity. At the time of Abraham's first encounter with God, he was informed that God's blessings included the plan of Abraham's being a blessing to all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:3).

Jesus told His disciples that they had not chosen Him, but He had chosen and ordained them to bring forth fruit (John 15:16). The nature of their fruit is indicated by Jesus' statement that "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). Jesus stated that His mission was "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). The first spiritual responsibility of every Christian is to give witness to those who are without Christ—to make disciples. His second spiritual ministry is to teach them to observe all things which Christ commanded.

In addition to ministering to their souls, Christ met the physical needs of the deprived and suffering. Christ told His disciples to heal the sick, to cleanse the lepers, to raise the dead, and to cast out devils (Matt. 10:8), as well as to preach the arrival of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus stated that Christian conduct is fulfilled in the attitude and acts of love. When a master of Old Testament Law inquired what he must do to inherit eternal life (be acceptable to God), Jesus answered that he was to love God and his neighbour with his total being (cf. Luke 10:25ff.). The lawyer asked what it meant to love his neighbour. In essence, Jesus told him that loving his neighbour meant to share his wealth and life in meeting the needs of persons even though they were of other races or nationalities. The Christian life is best described as a life of giving rather than receiving. Christian love has to be expressed in sacrificial giving in meeting the needs of others.

Christ set the example for Christian service. He went about doing good and so completely gave His life in service to others that He had no house or land to call His own (Matt. 8:20). If Jesus had used His time in accumulating wealth for Himself, He would have made no contribution to His world. Since He so

*In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus commanded His followers to make \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ them.*

*(disciples, baptize)*

*"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" is Jesus' command in \_\_\_\_\_.*

*In Luke 19:10, Jesus stated that His mission was "to \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ that which was \_\_\_\_\_."*

*(John 20:21, seek, save, lost)*

*'To love one's neighbour' means to share \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in meeting the needs of persons regardless of race or nationality.*

*(wealth, life)*

completely gave Himself, even to the point of dying on the cross, He is Saviour of the world. Christians are instructed to take up their crosses and follow Him.

The Security of the Believer

A statement of faith

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and temporal judgements on themselves, yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.<sup>1</sup>

The meaning of the doctrine

Those who follow the Calvinistic emphasis of the sovereignty of God will likely emphasize the divine provision of salvation and man's receiving it as a gift rather than human accomplishment. The doctrines of predestination, atonement, justification, divine grace, and the security of the believer receive special emphasis.

Salvation is God's work which man receives by faith. The doctrine of the security of the believer also emphasizes the divine activity and is a corollary of predestination. The security of the believer means that those whom God has accepted in Christ and sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from the state of grace. The doctrine may be stated from the human perspective as perseverance—those who are truly regenerated will continue in faith and finally will be delivered from sin. The doctrine can also be stated as Christian assurance—it is certain that a regenerated person will be brought to the consummation of salvation. It is obvious from these statements that the doctrine may be defined from a human or a divine perspective. From the human perspective, it is perseverance of faith; from the divine perspective, it is security of the believer by grace. Because of the twofold perspective of the doctrine, it is easy to emphasize one aspect more than the other and thus to misstate it.

<sup>1</sup>"The Baptist Faith and Message," a statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1964.

*The Calvinistic emphasis on the sovereignty of God stresses the following doctrines:*

- p \_\_\_\_\_
- a \_\_\_\_\_
- i \_\_\_\_\_
- d \_\_\_\_\_ g \_\_\_\_\_
- s \_\_\_\_\_ of the
- b \_\_\_\_\_

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

The doctrine of the security of the believer

*teaches that those whom God has accepted in \_\_\_\_\_ and sanctified by His \_\_\_\_\_ will never fall away from the state of \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Perseverance of faith means those who are truly regenerated will continue in \_\_\_\_\_ and finally will be delivered from \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(Christ, Spirit, grace, faith, sin)*

A.H. Strong said that the Scriptures declare that by virtue of the original purpose and continuous operation of God, all who are united to Christ by faith will infallibly continue in the state of grace and will finally attain to everlasting life.<sup>2</sup> He defined perseverance as the human side or aspect of that spiritual process which from the divine side is called sanctification. The doctrine is concerned with the continuing and final stages of salvation. It deals with the question, If the person is regenerated, is it certain that he will be brought to the consummation of salvation? The doctrine does not mean that a person justified by faith is saved in the end regardless whether he continues in faith and righteousness or not. His security is not in spite of his faith but through his faith.

*Is this statement true or false?*

*Assurance that man will continue in faith comes because the power of God through faith keeps man unto salvation. \_\_\_\_\_*

*(true)*

Scriptures teaching security through faith

Predestination is God's predetermined plan to bring men to salvation even though they have sinned. Since God takes the initiative in salvation and is able to turn the unregenerate to Himself, is it not reasonable to believe that God is able to continue to work in the heart of the regenerate? Predestination is the work of God's grace in redeeming sinners; security is the work of God's grace in keeping the saved in faith. In speaking of an inheritance in heaven which does not fade away, Peter stated that believers "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5). Eternal security is by God's power which is appropriated by faith. It is not by human works.

*Predestination is the work of God's grace in \_\_\_\_\_ sinners; security is the work of God's grace in keeping the saved in \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(redeeming, faith)*

Jesus said in His prayer for the disciples that He had kept those whom God had given to Him without losing any except the son of perdition (cf. John 17:12). As He left the disciples in the world, He prayed that the Father would continue to keep them through His own Name (by His authority or power—John 17:11). Jude expressed the belief that Christ is able to keep man from falling and to present him faultless before the presence of his glory (Jude 24). According to John, Jesus stated that eternal life has been given to His sheep, and "they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28f.).

After Paul had shown how salvation is the work of God who predestinates, calls, justifies, and glorifies, he stated that nothing is able to separate man from the love of God (Rom. 8:29-39). Man can be

*According to Paul (Rom. 8:29-39) what is able to separate man from the love of God?*  
\_\_\_\_\_

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

<sup>2</sup>A.H. Strong, Systematic Theology, Vol. 3: Doctrine of Salvation (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1909), p. 881.

sure that God is for him because He gave His own Son to die for him. Since God is ultimate in power, why should man fear an adversary of lesser power? Paul enumerated the possible powers which would attempt to separate man from the love of God, and he concluded that nothing in heaven or on earth, whether physical or spiritual, will be able to separate man from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord.

The question is not whether a person who has been saved but no longer desires to be saved can lose his salvation. The question is positive—Will those who have been regenerated ever be overcome by the power of Satan and be returned to the bondage of sin? The Scriptures answer that victory rests with those who are in Christ. Christ has overcome the power of evil, thus man will not be overpowered and returned to the bondage of sin.

Scriptures teaching the need of perseverance

In His final instructions to His disciples, Jesus warned them against being deceived by false messiahs. He described tribulation which would be in store for them and stated, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13). Even though Romans 1:17 is frequently translated, "He who through faith is just shall live," this Scripture emphasizes the necessity of continuing in faith for eternal life.

Other passages which show that persevering faith is necessary are 1 Corinthians 15:2; Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21. There are also a number of passages which imply that perseverance in faith and godly character are evidence of regeneration. In John 8:31, Jesus said to the Jews who believed on Him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." The writer of Hebrews especially emphasized that persevering faith is evidence of regeneration: "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (3:6).

Scriptures which imply the possibility of losing salvation

Some who had associated with the Church to which John wrote his First Epistle left the congregation. John stated that their departure was not an indication they lost salvation but a revelation of the fact that they had never been a saved part of the fellowship (1 John 2:19). Judas seems to have been in a similar situation.

*Place a check by the question below which is dealt with in the doctrine of the security of the believer.*

- 1. Will those who have been regenerated ever be overcome by Satan and sin?
- 2. Can a person who has been saved but no longer desires to be saved lose his salvation?

(1)

*The need for perseverance is taught in Matthew 24:13, "But he that shall \_\_\_\_\_ unto the end, the same shall be saved."*

*(endure)*

*The need for perseverance is taught also in: John 8:31—"If ye \_\_\_\_\_ in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Hebrews 3:6—" . . . if we \_\_\_\_\_ the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end."*

*(continue, hold fast)*

The writer to the Hebrews pointed out that "if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Heb. 10:26). The sacrificial system in the Old Testament made provision for the sins of the covenant people; however, if one's sins put him outside the covenant relationship with God, there was no atonement possible. The writer of Hebrews is not stating that any sin will proscribe salvation but only that which puts one outside the atonement in Christ. Unbelief in Christ is the one sin which excludes a person from the New Covenant. A similar thought is presented in Hebrews 6:4-6. The writer sets forth the hypothetical situation as a warning that if one who has been enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, and been born of the Spirit should fall away from his faith in Christ, he cannot be renewed again unto repentance. The author implies that it is possible to lose one's salvation if one turns from belief in Christ. The doctrine of the security of the believer does not deny that fact. It denies the proposition that one who has been saved will lose his faith and thus be lost again.

Hebrews 6:4-6 gives a fearful warning to those who believe that one is in danger of falling from grace. These verses specifically state that if one loses his salvation, he cannot be saved a second time. Roman Catholics who teach that salvation is lost through mortal sins and restored through penance need to look at this Scripture again and see that it states that such a doctrine is impossible. Those who hold to the doctrine of falling from grace should also take notice of the meaning of these verses. The writer of Hebrews states, however, that he does not expect those who have repented to fall away, but he expects better things of them (v. 9).

Paul told the Galatians, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). Pressure was brought upon the Galatians by Judaizers concerning the keeping of the Law. Throughout the Epistle, Paul pointed out that salvation by the works of the Law is dependence upon man's accomplishments, but salvation by faith is dependence on God's accomplishment through the death of Christ. If the Galatians turned from a dependence on Christ by faith to a dependence on self through the Law, they would no longer have security by grace. Paul's statement also points up the fact that security is not apart from faith but through faith.

The interpretation of the doctrine

The security of the believer is not a mechanical doctrine which states that a man who has been saved will be saved regardless of what he does. Neither is it correct to say that a saved person cannot be lost.

The one sin which excludes a person from Christ's atonement and the New Covenant is \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.

(unbelief, Christ)

The situation pointed out in Hebrews 6:4-9 is h \_\_\_\_\_, for the writer states he does not expect those who have repented to turn from f \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ.

(hypothetical, faith)

Salvation by works is dependence on \_\_\_\_\_ accomplishments.

Salvation by faith is dependence on \_\_\_\_\_ accomplishment.

(man's, God's)

The Bible does teach that a saved person is secure because he will not renounce faith in Christ.

The emphases of the doctrine are on man's persevering faith and God's securing grace. The teaching of the Bible is that God who has brought man to saving faith is able to keep man in faith by the Holy Spirit. When the sinner is saved, his repentance and faith are in response to God's convicting work by the Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit who works in the heart of the unregenerate continues to work in the heart of the regenerate person, guiding him in the new life. The person continues to make his own decisions; he does not become a robot. However, by faith he has yielded his life to the control of the Spirit. Possibly a person who has become a partaker of the Holy Spirit could renounce faith in Christ, but he will not. Through the influence of the indwelling Christ, he continues to choose the life of faith and victory through the power of God. The seed of God abides within him (1 John 3:9), and he is sealed by the Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 4:30).

The doctrine does not mean that a Christian is always fully controlled by Christ and thus lives perfectly. The salvation which Christ provided through His death is adequate, however, for Christians who continue in this life with sinful natures. Christ entered man's experience and knows his temptations. As Redeemer, He died on the cross to forgive man's past sins and He was resurrected from death to secure man's full redemption. The resurrected Christ abides at the right hand of the Father making intercession for His people. The writer of Hebrews was confident that the salvation Christ provides is to the uttermost because He continues to make intercession for them (Heb. 7:25). John had the same concept. He recognized that if a Christian claimed to be free from sin, he was untruthful. If a Christian confesses his sin, Christ forgives him and His blood keeps on cleansing him (1 John 1:8-10). John encouraged his "spiritual children" by informing them that "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1-2). As an advocate, Jesus is man's representative before the Father who takes care of man's debt of sin. This doctrine does not encourage Christians ("little children") to sin. God's grace evokes gratitude, and the love of Christ expressed through the cross controls the Christian (cf. 2 Cor. 5:14).

Those who believe that salvation depends on man's works are in constant fear of losing it because they know their own inadequacies. Those who believe that salvation depends on God's gracious gift in Christ which is appropriated through faith have assurance. Their confidence is in God's power rather than in

Fill in the blanks with these words to show the certainty that a Christian will continue in faith:

saved	work
faith	life
Holy Spirit	heart
sinner	repentance

When the \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_, his \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are in response to God's convicting work by the \_\_\_\_\_. The same Holy Spirit continues to \_\_\_\_\_ in his \_\_\_\_\_, guiding him in the new \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answers with the text. THEN READ THE COMPLETED STATEMENTS AGAIN CAREFULLY.)

Circle the letter before those who have assurance of salvation.

- Those who believe that salvation depends on man's works.
- Those who believe that salvation depends on God's gracious gift.

(Circle b)

their own ability. God does not save man in spite of his faith but through it. Faith is trusting God for that which man cannot accomplish for himself. Faith is believing that God will do what He has promised. Faith is laying hold of God's promises. The Bible does not promise that God will save those who have set their hearts against Him in unbelief. It does promise that God will save those who believe in Christ and He will not suffer them to be tempted and drawn away by Satan. The man who has tasted of the heavenly gift and has become a partaker of the Holy Spirit will continue in faith (dependence on God), and God will not fail to do what He has promised.

*FAITH IS*  
*trusting \_\_\_\_\_ for what \_\_\_\_\_ cannot*  
*accomplish for himself;*  
*believing \_\_\_\_\_ will do what He has*  
*\_\_\_\_\_;*  
*laying hold of \_\_\_\_\_ promises.*

*(God, man, God, promised, God's)*

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. What is the source of the spiritual ministry? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. What are the two ways of the Christian life emphasized in the Didache? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. What distinction did Aquinas make in levels of morality? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
4. What do the Old Testament words frequently translated 'perfect' actually mean when referring to man or animals? \_\_\_\_\_
5. According to the New Testament, how do Kingdom citizens attain perfection? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. List three Scriptures which appear to teach perfectionism and two which deny it. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_. Scriptures denying perfectionism are \_\_\_\_\_
7. Name two Biblical doctrines which oppose perfectionism. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the meaning of 1 John 3:9? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is antinomianism? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

10. List three Scriptures which reflect antinomianism in New Testament times. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Give three illustrations Paul used to expose the absurdity of antinomianism. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. How does life in the Spirit relate to the Law? \_\_\_\_\_
13. What is situation ethics? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. List three Scriptures which teach that man is responsible for his earthly conduct. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. Describe the Christian's primary responsibility of service and name three Scriptures to support it. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. What does it mean to love one's neighbour? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
17. Explain the doctrine of the security of the believer. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. State the doctrine of perseverance of faith. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
19. What assurance is there that man will continue in faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
20. With what question does the doctrine of security deal? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
21. Give three Biblical statements which teach the need of perseverance. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
22. Explain Hebrews 10:10-29. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

23. Explain Hebrews 6:4-9. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
24. Why is it certain that a Christian will continue in faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
25. How can the Christian have assurance even though he sins? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Supplementary activity (Level 2):

1. Read pages 338-348 in Christian Doctrine by Shirley C. Guthrie.
2. What is the relation of the Christian to the world?
3. According to Guthrie, how does a Christian express "holiness which is against the world"?
4. Describe the holiness Jesus commanded with regard to the use of money, the use of force, family responsibilities, and personal piety.

Advanced activity (Level 3):

1. Read pages 247-268 in The Gospel of Redemption by W.T. Conner.
2. Give the negative and positive statements of Conner concerning the meaning of perseverance.
3. Explain how one's concept of salvation and the new life of regeneration affect his view of perseverance.
4. Name the objections to the doctrine of perseverance and briefly answer each.
5. What are the foes of growth?
6. What is the difference in the means and the condition of growth?

Seminar Discussion

1. What is the place of human effort in Christian service?
2. What is meant by perfection and how is a Christian to obtain it?
3. What are the origin and beliefs of antinomianism?
4. What is the relation of Christian responsibility and divine grace in Christian growth and service?
5. Do you believe that you can fall from grace? Support your answer with Scripture.