

A Journey in Grace

Dr. Richard Belcher

A Leader's Study Guide

Dr. Stanford E. Murrell



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Definition of terms

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Cast of Characters

- **Dr. Bloom** Professor of theology at the Baptist college
- **Charley Hester** A fellow student at the Baptist college
- **Terry Lynn Lasitor** The girlfriend of Ira Pointer
- **Dr. Lollar** Professor at the Baptist college and teacher of freshmen courses
- **Ron Masters** A fellow student at the Baptist college
- **Jim Mitchell** Former pastor of a Lime Creek Baptist Church
- **Ira Fife Pointer** A sophomore student at the Baptist college and pastor of a local congregation
- **Todd Shelton** The roommate of Ira Pointer
- **Marvin Simpson** A fellow student at the Baptist college
- **Dr. Sisk** Teacher of church history at the Baptist college

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Chapter 1
Young Man! Are You A Calvinist?

- 1. In what month and year does the story line open?**

Answer. October 1970.

- 2. What type of college is Ira Fife Pointer attending?**

Answer. A Baptist college.

- 3. What position was Ira being considered for in a local assembly?**

Answer. Pastor

- 4. What was the most important question Ira was asked at the initial meeting with the pastoral search committee of Lime Creek Baptist Church?**

Answer. "Young man, are you a Calvinist?"

- 5. Describe Ira's reaction to the question.**

Answer. Ira was completely caught off guard with the question presented to him but did not want to appear foolish or ignorant. Therefore, he responded with the voice of confidence and authority saying, "No sir, absolutely not! I find no authority in Scripture for anyone to be a Calvinist!"

- 6. On his way back to school from meeting with the pastoral search committee Ira suffered a crisis of conscience as he privately reconsidered the question, "Young man, are you a Calvinist?" What did Ira decide to do and why?**

Answer. Ira determined that he was going to find out what a Calvinist was so that the next time someone asked him that question he would be ready to give an appropriate answer.

Chapter 2 Can Anyone Tell Me What A Calvinist Is?

1. **With whom did Ira begin his search for an answer to the question, “What is a Calvinist?” What was the response?**

Answer. After returning to school Ira asked his roommate Todd Shelton, “What is a Calvinist?” Todd’s reply was that a Calvinist was a Presbyterian because the name came from John Calvin, the founder of the Presbyterian denomination. A Calvinist believed in infant baptism—and that was about it according to Todd.

2. **Was Ira satisfied with Todd’s response? Explain.**

Answer. Ira was not satisfied with Todd’s response because if infant baptism was the crux of what defined a Calvinist the question would not have arisen in the pastoral search committee for Ira had explained his position on baptism from a Baptist perspective prior to that question being raised.

3. **To whom did Ira next ask the question?**

Answer. Ira next asked Marvin Simpson about Calvinism. Simpson was a very sweet fellow student at the college who was given to prayer.

4. **How did Marvin Simpson respond when he was asked about the word “Calvinist”?**

Answer. Marvin dismissed the importance of serious theological inquiry and counseled Ira that he would be better off seeking the Lord than doctrinal answers.

5. **Who was the third student Ira posed his question of concern to and what was the response?**

Answer. The third student Ira visited with was Ron Masters who only knew what a Calvinist was from impressions he had gathered from his father. It was Ron’s understanding that Calvinist did not believe in evangelism, missions or even a public invitation for men to come to Christ because of their view on predestination and election.

6. **Who was the fourth fellow student Ira asked about being a Calvinist? What was the response?**

Answer. Charley Hester was a studious fellow student. His response to being a Calvinist was an emphatic, “*Certainly not.*”

7. Why was Charley Hester so emotionally opposed to being a Calvinist?

Answer. Charley believed that Calvinist have a strict view of predestination and election whereby has chosen to save a few people while decreeing the remained of the non elect to an eternal hell thereby robbing man of his personal decision for Christ and taking away freedom of choice. Such a position destroys efforts of evangelism and missions.

8. What acrostic did Charley Hester provide Ira to help summarize the Calvinist position?

Answer. The acrostic is T.U.L.I.P.

9. What does each letter of the acrostic stand for?

Answer. T = Total Depravity
U = Unconditional Election
L = Limited Atonement
I = Irresistible Grace
P = Perseverance of the Saints

Chapter 3
Does Everyone Hate Calvinism?

1. Who was the first professor that Ira asked about being a Calvinist? What was the response?

Answer. Dr. Lollar was the first professor Ira asked about being a Calvinist. The response was one of frustration for Ira because Dr. Lollar would not define his position. He did not like theological terms being applied to him or others.

2. What counsel did Dr. Lollar give Ira?

Answer. Dr. Lollar suggested that Ira simply tell people when he was asked about being a Calvinist that he believes the *Bible* and the *Bible* is the ultimate authority. If the *Bible* teaches it, then he believes it. If the *Bible* does not teach something, then he does not believe it.

3. Why was the counsel of Dr. Lollar inadequate for Ira?

Answer. First, if the meaning of words does not truly communicate how can anyone understand someone else? Further, how can true doctrine be distinguished from false doctrine if theological terms are not used to conveniently summarize a position? Finally, if theological terms cannot be used then no terms can be used including biblical ones such as justification, redemption and sanctification lest someone else have a different definition of that term.

4. Who was the second professor Ira asked about being a Calvinist? What was the response?

Answer. Dr. Sisk, professor of church history, was the second professor Ira asked about Calvinism. Dr. Sisk was willing to help Ira learn all he could about the subject.

5. With what information did Dr. Sisk surprise Ira?

Answer. Dr. Sisk surprised Ira by informing him that some of the greatest Baptist of the past were Calvinist. Not all Calvinist were Presbyterians nor was infant baptism the crux of Calvinism.

6. What books did Dr. Sisk suggest that Ira read?

Answer.

- *Sermons on the Sovereignty of God*, C. H. Spurgeon
- *The Sovereignty of God*, Arthur W. Pink
- *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, Loraine Boettner

7. Who was the third professor Ira visited with about being a Calvinist? What was the response?

Answer. Dr. Bloom was the third professor Ira visited about being a Calvinist. His reaction was an intense hostility towards Calvinism reflected in the quoting of a piece of poetry with bitterness.

*“Einie, meinie, minie, moe,
On to heaven you will go.
Einie, meinie, minie moe,
You will make the fires glow!”*

8. What lessons did Ira learn from visiting with the various professors?

Answer. Ira learned that Calvinism is a very controversial subject and that people, even dignified Bible teachers, can get very upset and emotional when discussing it.

**Chapter 4
Are All Calvinist Hyper?**

1. Who is Jim Mitchell and what type of behavior had he engaged in that caused concern?

Answer. Jim Mitchell was the former pastor of the Lime Creek Baptist Church Ira had been called to. Pastor Mitchell had alienated the people in several ways.

- He had begun to use terms few people understood.
- His sermons became theological lectures.
- He spoke too long.
- He was judgmental.
- He preached like someone from the past using terms like “thee” and “thou”.
- He stopped challenging individuals to come to Christ.

- He stopped giving public invitations.
- His concern was to make people Calvinists not Christians.
- He published long theological definitions in the bulletins from confessions
- He stopped his pastoral visitation.

2. Was Ira concerned about Calvinism transforming a person into something ugly?

Answer. Ira was very much concerned as to the practical effects a theology position has upon a person, and rightly so.

Chapter 5 What Is Total Depravity?

1. How did Ira come to understand and define total depravity?

Answer. Total depravity does not mean that all men are as sinful as they can possibly be at any given moment in their actions and deeds. Rather total depravity speaks of man's nature and potential actions rather than his actions and deeds.

2. Question posed by Dr. Sisk. Why do men never come to the full potential of their sin nature?

Answer. The grace of God restrains the full expression of man's sin nature through government, family, and the preaching of the gospel.

3. Explain why some individuals have such a hard time understanding the term total depravity.

Answer. Individuals look at themselves and see good deeds. They look at others and see good deeds. What is not duly considered or seen is the true nature of every person without Christ.

4. Question posed by Dr. Sisk. How does total depravity relate to the fall of man and his present ability to become a Christian?

Answer. When Adam fell he plunged the whole human race into sin and passed on to his posterity a sinful depraved nature. Because of this depraved nature every person born has a total inability to please God in the area of spiritual things. A person's mind is blind and ignorant of spiritual matters. No one can understand spiritual truths apart from the illumination ministry of the Holy Spirit. The emotions of people are corrupt and bend towards sin rather than God. No one can love God in their own strength or seek after Him. In truth, the natural person desires and seeks to sin.

5. **Question posed by Dr. Sisk** What about the will of man? Was man so corrupted by the fall, and yet his will left uncorrupted?

Answer. The will has also been affected by the fall for the will is not an independent unit of the soul. Because of the fall and because of the corrupt emotions and blind mind influencing the will, God would not be loved, sought or chosen by the natural man.

6. **What three questions would Ira like to ask a Calvinist?**

Answer.

- How should the “*whosoever will*” statements of the Bible be understood?
- If man is not able to come to Christ how can God hold him responsible and judge him eternally for not coming to Christ?
- What is the basis on which God decides who He will bring to Himself and who He will not?

7. **What is the name of the girl for whom Ira has a romantic interest?**

Answer. Terry Lynn Lasitor

Chapter 6 What Is Unconditional Election?

1. **How does Ira define unconditional election?**

Answer. Unconditional election is the act of God whereby He chose a group of people before the foundation of the world to be His own. This group of people is known as the elect.

2. **Question posed by Dr. Sisk.** What was the basis of God’s choice of the elect?

Answer. The basis of God’s choice of the elect was not and is not because of inherent goodness or foreseen faith but His own sovereign will and pleasure.

3. **Question posed by Dr. Sisk.** Would a Calvinist believe that God’s decrees and His sovereignty extends to other areas in life besides the election of a particular soul to salvation?

Answer. God has decreed whatever comes to pass.

4. **Has God decreed sin?**

Answer. According to the Calvinist, God has decreed all things to include sin.

5. What questions and concerns might arise from believing that God had decreed all things including sin?

Answer.

- Is not God unjust if He chooses one person over another with no concern for what is in man?
- Why has God not chosen to save all men?
- Is God the author of sin if we say that He has decreed all things?

Chapter 7
What is Limited Atonement?

1. How does Ira define limited atonement?

Answer. The doctrine of limited atonement teaches that the death of Christ guarantees the salvation of the elect. Since all men are totally depraved, and since God has chosen a people to be His own, God has also provided an atonement for them which guarantees their salvation.

2. According to the Arminian view does the death of Christ secure the salvation of anyone?

Answer. The Arminian view is that the death of Christ only makes salvation possible but does not guarantee the salvation of anyone.

3. Question posed by Dr. Sisk. How does a limited atonement relate to total depravity and unconditional election?

Answer. Limited atonement is the outgrowth of total depravity and unconditional election. If individuals are without hope due to their natural state of depravity then the hope for salvation is found in a sovereign election. On the other hand if no one were elected to salvation then the death of Christ would be meaningless. Christ would not need to die for the non-elect.

4. What would it mean if Christ has died for the non-elect as well as the elect?

Answer. If Christ has died for the non-elect as well as for the elect then there are people in hell for whom Christ died. For them the blood of Christ would have been shed in vain. This is a view the Calvinist cannot accept.

5. Question posed by Dr. Sisk. Does Calvinism put a limitation on the power of the death of Christ?

Answer. The Calvinist would put a limitation on the design or extent of the death of Christ but not on its power. Because Christ is an infinite person His death has infinite power. Had God the Father so decreed for the death of Christ to atone for all sins of all men that would have been done. There is no limit to the power of Christ's death. The limitation is in the design of the death of Christ as set forth by the divine decree of election.

6. What might be a better term for “limited atonement”?

Answer. A “definite” or “particular redemption” better conveys what the third point of Calvinism is trying to express.

7. Question posed by Dr. Sisk. Is there ever a time when a Calvinist would speak of the death of Christ for the non-elect?

Answer. The death of Christ would be sufficient for all men if all believed. Certainly the death of Christ is efficient to the elect.

8. What questions did Ira want to ask a Calvinist about limited atonement?

Answer.

- What is to be said about the verses that seem to teach that Christ died for the sins of all the men of this world (cf. John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9 etc)?
- Why does the death of Christ have to have a particular design?
- Why could not God have given the death of Christ a general design?
- What specific passages in the Bible teach a particular atonement?

Chapter 8

What Is Irresistible Grace

1. When the Spirit of God came to Lime Creek Baptist Church how did it change the life of the congregation?

Answer. When the Lord visited His people they began to pray and confess their sins to God and to those whom they had hurt.

2. How did Ira define Irresistible grace?

Answer. Irresistible grace is a natural outgrowth of the truth of total depravity, unconditional election and a definite redemption. If man is naturally depraved and dependant upon the sovereign will of God in electing grace and if Christ has died for those who are the heirs of salvation then it certainly those for whom Christ has died will come to faith.

3. What questions did Ira want to ask a Calvinist about irresistible grace?

Answer.

- Can a non-elect person be saved if he wants to come to Christ for salvation?
- Does God force a person to be saved simply because they are one of the elect?
- Does the doctrine of irresistible grace hinder evangelism and missions?
- Does irresistible grace violate man's free agency and free will?

4. What is another term that might be used for “irresistible grace”?

Answer. The term “*efficacious grace*” is another way to explain the concept that is being set forth. The grace of God in bringing a soul to salvation is effectual. God will accomplish what He intends to do. Understanding this truth will cause the heart to sing with John Newton, “*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.*”

Chapter 9

What Is The Perseverance Of The Saints?

1. Is the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints logical?

Answer. Like the other points in the T.U.L.I.P. acrostic the perseverance of the saints is a logical progression. If a person is without natural ability to come to Christ and is in need of God's sovereign choice, if Christ has died for the elect who are effectually drawn to the Cross then it is certain they will persevere in the faith for God will preserve them by His sustaining grace.

2. What would be true if the elect did not persevere in the faith and were not kept by the power of God unto salvation?

Answer.

- If the elect do not persevere then the decrees of God are a failure and God is not truly sovereign.
- If the elect do not persevere then the death of Christ is a failure for He did not accomplish what He intended, which is to secure the salvation of the elect.
- If the elect do not persevere then the grace of God for them would, in the end, be resistible.

3. How does Ira summarize the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints?

Answer. Perseverance is the doctrine that says the elect will continue in the way of salvation and sanctification, being kept by the power of God, because they are the objects of God's eternal decree and the object of Christ's atoning work at Calvary.

4. Question posed by Dr. Sisk. Does the doctrine of perseverance rule out backsliding?

Answer. Though a Christian may sin he may not abide in a state of sin.

5. How does Dr. Sisk explain the theory of a “carnal Christian”?

Answer. A carnal Christian is believed by some to be a person who has been truly saved and yet lives like a lost person.

6. Question posed by Dr. Sisk. Is the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints the same as the Baptist teaching of “once saved, always saved?”

Answer. The teaching of “*once saved, always saved*” is only a half-truth. The doctrine of perseverance embraces the concepts of security and perseverance. There cannot be one without the other.

Chapter 10
How Can I Find Time For This Study?

1. Summarize each of the five points of Calvinism with one sentence.

Answer.

- **Total depravity.** The powerlessness of man by his nature to know, desire, please or come to God.
- **Unconditional election.** The sovereign choosing by God for salvation an elect people apart from good works or foreseen faith in them.
- **Limited Atonement.** The design of the death of Christ which secured the salvation of the elect.
- **Irresistible Grace.** The effectual call of the elect to salvation.
- **Perseverance of the Saints.** The elect are secure for eternity reflected in part by a continuing work of sanctification in their hearts which causes them to persevere in the Christian life.

2. Are most Christians well informed of the true definition of Calvinism?

Answer. Most Christians are quite ignorant of the true definition of Calvinism and yet they speak about it with confidence and authority in their attempts to define and destroy it.

Chapter 11 Were Early Baptist Calvinists?

1. What was the difference between the General Baptist and the Particular Baptist?

Answer. Modern Baptist trace their heritage to the early English Baptist of the Reformation period. The General Baptist did not believe in a particular atonement while the Particular Baptist did.

2. Do early Baptist confessions of faith reflect belief in election?

Answer. Clear statements on election can be found in the First London Confession of 1644 and in the Second London Confession of 1689. During the development of American history Baptist thought was guided by the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (c. 1725) which was similar to the Second London Confession.

3. According to Ira, how and when did the Baptist begin to move away from Calvinism?

Answer. The First Great Awakening (c. 1740) caused many people in established churches to leave and join the Baptist movement. But the people who came out of the Great Awakening brought some damaging tendencies with them to include a distrust of ministers, a view of the immediate illumination of the Holy Spirit, a spirit of anti-intellectualism and an ignorance of history. Personal piety was stressed over doctrine. Individualism was exalted over corporate worship. Strong opposition to confessions emerged. The result was a movement from a God centered theology (Calvinism) to a man centered theology (Arminianism).

Chapter 12 Is It Heretical For Baptist To Be Calvinist Today?

1. Proposition given by Dr. Bloom: Baptist are better off today for not being Calvinist. How did Ira respond to that presupposition?

Answer. Ira's response was gentle as he pointed out that some of the greatest evangelistic and missionary concerns were rooted historically in Calvinists.

2. What are some unique problems modern Baptist face?

Answer. One problem is the infiltration of liberalism into their denominations. Another is the problem of non-resident church membership. Third, modern Baptist are not as doctrinally informed as Baptists of the past.

3. While Dr. Bloom does not like Calvinism, in a spirit of academic honesty what grade did he give to Ira?

Answer. For proving his thesis that it is not heretical for a Baptist to be a Calvinist and that in fact, Calvinism is an integral part of Baptist heritage Ira received an A from Dr. Bloom.

Chapter 13 **Will You Marry Me?**

- 1. On the night of a lively discussion on Calvinism, Ira proposed marriage to Terry. His proposal was accepted. Are Calvinist romantic?**

Answer. While Ira is a strong student of the *Scriptures* he has a great capacity to love. The doctrines of grace have not taken away his appreciation of God's gift of a godly woman.

- 2. What characteristics emerge about Terry as Ira discussed his journey in grace with her?**

Answer. Terry appears as a very intelligent and godly young lady with an open and inquisitive mind. Upon hearing the doctrines of grace unfold she asked for more instruction in righteousness. For that she is to be commended.

Chapter 14 **Will You Be Our Pastor?**

- 1. Under the preaching of Ira, Lime Creek Baptist Church grew numerically and in a dramatic way. Might this be a common experience of congregations which embrace the doctrines of grace?**

Answer. While men labor only the Lord can give the increase in any local assembly. That God was pleased to use Ira as an instrument of bringing people to spiritual maturity is another manifestation of His sovereign grace.

- 2. Is the humility of Ira over the spiritual attention he was getting genuine or feigned?**

Answer. Ira appears to be a genuine man of God who knows that it takes God's grace to handle success as well as setbacks. Rather than exalt himself as it would be easy for him to do and take the best offers made to him, Ira is willing to wait upon the Lord. Ira has a healthy distrust of his abilities and a clear understanding of his present circumstances. If the Church is to lay hands suddenly on no man, in like manner men should be cautious of allowing the Church to exalt them before they are mature. Ira's patience and hesitancy are signs of a healthy soul and unfeigned humility.

Chapter 15 **Is Total Depravity Scriptural?**

- 1. List five truths set forth in Romans 3:10-12 about the nature of man.**

Answer. Romans 3:10-12 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

- **No one is righteous as a person.** The reason for this state of unrighteousness is the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity. Men are born physically alive but spiritually dead. The issue of sin in the soul has to be dealt with.
- **No one seeks after God.** This does not mean that individuals are not religious. They are. But the god that is sought after is the god of men's imagination and not the true God of revelation.
- **No one understands God or spiritual matters.** The reason for the inability to understand God or spiritual matters is the result of the Fall and the imputation of sin to the soul which darkens the mind. The illuminating work of God the Holy Spirit is essential to spiritual understanding.
- **Everyone person has gone astray and has become unprofitable.** From the earliest moment in childhood the imputed sin nature is manifested. By birth and then by choice individuals go astray.
- **No one does any good.** That men do good acts by a subjective standard of judgment cannot be denied. But the goodness of man is relative for men compare themselves to one another. When man compares his attitude and actions against the law of God and then against the character of the God of the law it is evident that no one does any good in the flesh or in the natural state that is pleasing to God.

2. What verses did Ira find that established man's responsibility to seek God?

Answer.

- *Isaiah 55:6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.*
- *Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*
- *Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

3. From Ephesians 2:1-3 describe what a person is like prior to salvation.

Answer. Ephesians 2:1-3 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 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: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

- Prior to God saving the soul a person is dead in trespasses and sin.
- Prior to God saving the soul a person walks according to the course of this world.
- Prior to God saving the soul a person walks according to the dictates of Satan.
- Prior to God saving the soul a person walks in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the world.

- Prior to God saving the soul a person is by nature a child of wrath.

4. What conclusion did Ira draw from his understanding of Ephesians 2:1-3?

Answer. The conclusion was made that the natural state of man did not leave any room in ability in man's mind, will, or emotions to move towards God or please Him.

Chapter 16 Is Unconditional Election Scriptural?

1. What verses are appealed to by those who believe that God's election of souls to salvation is based upon foreseen faith?

Answer.

- *Romans 8:29-30 **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. 30 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.*
- *1 Peter 1:1-2 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect **according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*

2. What verses are appealed to by those who believe that God's election of souls to salvation is based not upon foreseen faith but upon God's own sovereign will?

Answer.

- *Ephesians 1:5-6 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, **according to the good pleasure of his will**, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*
- *Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated **according to** the purpose of him who worketh all things after **the counsel of his own will**.*

3. How can these verses and ideas be reconciled?

Answer. The larger context of Romans 8:28-30 is that the Christian's hope for the future is rooted in what God has done in the past. As the believer awaits the final consummation of all things along with creation the Holy Spirit is present to help (Rom. 8:26-27). The Christian is assured that every event in life comes from the hand of God (Rom. 8:28). God is in control of all things including salvation.

- Salvation comes to those **whom** God foreknew for those and only those did He predestinate.
- Salvation comes to those **whom** God predestinated for those and only those did He call.
- Salvation comes to those and only those **whom** God did call for those He justified.
- Salvation come to those and only those **whom** God justified for those and only those did He glorify.

Is salvation based upon foreseen faith in what a person does or has (i.e., faith)? No. Salvation is rooted in who and what God is and what He does on behalf of those who are to be the objects of His special love and sovereign work.

The passage in Ephesians 1 teaches the same truth. God has a people He has chosen (Eph. 1:4). God chose this people before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). God's choice and predestination (lit. *to mark out*) was on the basis of the good pleasure of His will (Eph. 1:5). All was done to the praise of the glory of His sovereign grace (Eph. 1:5).

Chapter 17 Please Come and be Our Pastor

1. Was Ira wrong to go and preach to a congregations he had so many reservations about?

Answer. While the will of God shall ultimately be done in every life many decisions are initially subjective. While Ira gave several valid reasons why he should not be considered as a candidate for another assembly he did no wrong in accepting the invitation to preach for he had no clear leading of the Lord on the matter at this point.

2. What two lingering thoughts did Ira mediate upon concerning the doctrine of unconditional election?

Answer. Ira wondered if men should not let God be God in the matter of election since He is the definer and determiner of justice and just actions! In other words, since the doctrine of unconditional election is *Scriptural* who is man to sit in judgment upon God and accuse Him of being unfair or unjust? Secondly, Ira was curious as to when God's decree of election took place in relation to man's fall. Did the election of souls to salvation take place before the fall? Did it take place after the fall?

3. Is it possible to become an overbalanced Calvinist? If so, how?

Answer. Ira thought that Jim Mitchell, the former pastor of Lime Creek Baptist Church had become an overbalanced Calvinist illustrated in his use of unfamiliar terminology in the pulpit, the giving of theological lectures instead of Biblical sermons, long sermons, an air of superiority, only preaching on the acrostic T.U.L.I.P. and the use of archaic words such as "thee" and "thou."

4. How can the ministry be attractive for people with personality disorders?

Answer. The ministry can be a definite attraction to a person who desires to be liked or the center of attention, craves power or authority over others, or is interested in a feeling of self-importance.

Chapter 18
Does Unconditional Election Make God Unjust?

1. Define the terms infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism.

Answer. Infralapsarianism is the view that God's decree of election followed the decree of the fall of man. Supralapsarianism is the view that God decreed the salvation of the elect prior to the decree of the fall.

2. How can religious people debase the character of God in opposing the doctrine of unconditional election by ascribing to Him words such as “arbitrary” “despot” “tyrant” and “autocrat”.

Answer. Religious people can debase God by ascribing to Him terms as if He were an equal. The truth of the matter is that God works all things according to the counsel of His own will. He is the only true absolute monarch of the universe. He does exercise absolute power. He is the Supreme Ruler with unrestricted power—and the hearts of His creation should rejoice in this in order to feel safe and secure and in order to give God all honor and glory due to His name.

Chapter 19
Don't You Know This Man Is A Calvinist?

1. Is Ira's position that “the best defense is a good offense” justifiable in religious debate?

Answer. The Bible commands Christians to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves (Matt. 10:16). Christians are also to be good soldiers of the cross (2 Tim. 2:3). Sometimes that means taking the offensive in order to give a good defense of the hope that is within in the heart (1 Pet. 3:15). Believers can contend for the faith (Jude 3) without being contentious.

2. What accusations did Dr. Bloom level against Ira? In making his accusations did Dr. Bloom fulfill the guidelines of 1 Timothy 5:19?

Answer. Dr. Bloom accused Ira of being a Calvinist, which to him meant having a distorted view of God that discourages evangelism and missions. He went on to imply that Ira was argumentative and unteachable not to mention narrow, bigoted, rebellious against authority and non-Baptistic in doctrine.

Chapter 20 For Whom Did Christ Die?

1. How does Ira summarize the doctrine of limited atonement?

Answer. Limited atonement states that the death of Christ had a particular design and intent towards the elect. Christ did not die to make men savable; rather Christ died to secure the salvation of those whom the Father had given to Him. Limited atonement is the logical outgrowth of man's inability to help himself and the Father's electing love. If Christ did not die for the elect His atoning work at Calvary would have no purpose for it would not be necessary for Him to die for the non-elect.

2. What Scriptures can be appealed to in support of the doctrine of a limited or definite atonement?

Answer.

- *John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*
- *Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*
- *Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*
- *Hebrews 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*

3. List the passages that seem to teach that Christ died for the sins of all men in a general atonement.

Answer.

- *1 Timothy 4:10 For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.*
- *1 John 4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*
- *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.*
- *John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

- *2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*
- *1 Timothy 2:3-6 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*
- *Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*
- *1 John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

4. List three possible ways to understand the verses which seem to teach a universal atonement in light of the verse which seem to teach a definite atonement.

Answer.

- **Possibility One.** The *Scriptures* contradict themselves for they teach that Christ died for the church (and thus the elect) and also for every person without exception in the world.
- **Possibility Two.** The *Scriptures* teach that all men shall be saved. This view is called Universalism.
- **Possibility Three.** The *Scriptures* do not contradict themselves nor do they teach universal salvation. Rather, Christ died for the elect in the sense that He made a general atonement for the sins of all men—which would include the sins of the elect..

Chapter 21

Did Christ Make An Atonement For Sin Or Not?

1. Not satisfied with the three possible understandings of the extent of the atonement of Christ what fourth possibility does Ira propose?

Answer. Ira suggested that Christ did not die for the elect in the same way He died for the non-elect. For the elect Christ died in such a way as to secure their salvation by covering their sins, satisfying the justice and law of God, acting as a substitute and assuming their legal responsibilities. An understanding of the death of Christ in relation to the non-elect would have to wait for further study.

2. **Ira talks about growing conviction that the Lord wanted him to become the pastor at First Baptist Church. Does this sound mystical?**

Answer. There is a mystical side to the spiritual life of a Christian. One important thought every Christian should always remember is that any subjective reasoning and subsequent overt action must not violate any clear principle or precept of the *Word of God*.

Chapter 22 **Does Calvinism Negate The Necessity Of Prayer?**

1. **Was the heart attack Dr. Bloom suffered a direct judgment of God upon his life?**

Answer. It is not always easy to determine the direct cause of sickness. Certainly the emotional duress Dr. Bloom placed himself under by opposing the doctrines of grace and the ministry of Ira was unnecessary.

2. **What did Ira conclude about the place of prayer in the life of the believer?**

Answer. Though God is sovereign and has decreed all that shall come to pass, the *Bible* does teach the necessity and need of prayer in doing the work of the Lord. There is no contradiction between the sovereignty of God and human responsibility in prayer for God has ordained not only what will come to pass but also the means by which events will happen. God has ordained prayer as a means of achieving His will. Therefore Christians are to “*pray without ceasing*” (1 Thess. 5:17).

3. ***Personal Opinion.* Ira was gracious enough to visit the hospital after hearing of Dr. Bloom’s heart attack. Would you have gone to visit Dr. Bloom?**

Chapter 23 **Is Calvinism The Cure Of All The Ills Of The Church?**

1. **Is it wrong for minister to deliberately use humor in the pulpit?**

Answer. Laughter is God’s gift as part of human emotions. However, the Lord does not need comedians for ministers. Ira did not appreciate the “warming up” of the audience before the sermon with jokes when the subject matter was so serious, the holiness of God.

2. **Why was Ira bored with the second speaker?**

Answer. The second speaker at the conference did not expound the *Scriptures* but relied upon the Puritans and what they said. Men need fresh bread to feed upon.

3. **What test might be applied to determine if a sermon passes for Biblical preaching?**

Answer. Biblical preaching is characterized by a faithful exposition of the *Word of God* whereby a passage is explained in context with careful consideration being given to the grammar, syntax and what the writer intended to say. Personal application of the principles of a passage can follow after a proper interpretation has been given. In this way the heart of the believer is both edified and challenged.

4. Just because a person is a Calvinist, does it follow that Calvinism is the cure all of the Church?

Answer. Christ not Calvinism is the cure for all the ills of the Church. To be a Calvinist does not mean that a person knows how to effectively communicate the *Word of God*.

Chapter 24
Is Christ the Saviour of the World?

1. What difficulty did Paul face during the course of his ministry?

Answer. Paul faced the great challenge of convincing his Jewish brethren that the church consisted of both Jew and Gentiles. Partial success was found following a church council in Jerusalem (Acts 15) but there was much opposition to the concept.

2. In the passages that seem to teach a universal redemption, if John is not teaching that Christ is the Savior of every person in the world what is he teaching? See John 4:41-42; 1 John 4:14; John 3:16; John 1:29; 1 John 2:2.

Answer. Since not all men are saved then Christ cannot have died to secure their salvation or else His work of redemption would have not accomplished what He intended. Therefore, John must be saying that Christ died to take away the sins not only of the Jews but also of the Gentiles. For a Jew this would have been a revolutionary thought.

Chapter 25
Does It Make Any Difference If I Am A Calvinist?

1. What are some unique challenges that ministers face on a daily basis within the sphere of the ministry?

Answer. It is possible for a pastor to be nothing more than a “good time Charlie” or a “coffee clutch Elmer” who spends little time in the *Word of God*. It is also possible for a pastor to spend so much time in theological studies that he forgets the practical needs of his people.

2. Does it matter what theological persuasion a pastor holds?

Answer. In theory most people would say that it does matter what their pastor believes. The members of the pulpit committee of First Baptist certainly wanted Ira to be Baptist in his view—however they might have understood that concept. Ira was concerned to know if they cared if he was Biblical or not.

3. **Personal Opinion.** Ira and the people on the pulpit search committee of First Baptist Church agreed that he would study the *Scriptures* and lead them to doctrinal maturity. However, is it likely that an institutionalized Church steeped in Arminian theology will stand in judgment upon itself and embrace a theology that is so diametrically opposed to what it was established with?

Chapter 26

Does All Always Mean All In The Bible?

1. **Explain the meaning of 1 Timothy 4:10.** *“For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God [the Father], who is the Saviour [preserver] of all men [Jew and Gentiles], specially of those that believe [the elect].”*

Answer. This passage simply teaches that God the Father is the preserver of all men, and especially are believers under His care and protection.

2. **Give some biblical passages where the word “all” does not refer to every single person without exception.**

Answer.

- *Mark 1:5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.*
- *Acts 22:15 For thou [Paul] shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.*
- *Matthew 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*

3. **Summarize the meaning of 1 Timothy 2:1-4.** *“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all [of the following categories of] men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all [types of] men to be saved [Jew and Gentile], and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

Answer. Paul exhorts the Church pray for all types of men as he enumerates that so that a peaceful and quiet life may result. For those who will come to faith there is only one Mediator, Christ Jesus. According to the will of the Father there will be no category of individuals left out of the scope of redeeming grace.

Chapter 27

How Did Baptist Ever Get Into Such A Mess?

1. **Personal Opinion.** Before moving into the new parsonage Ira is challenged by unhappy parishioners over his presence. Is Ira brave or brash as he faces one crisis after another? Are most people suited for so many personal confrontations in life?
2. **Going to the home of Dr. Bloom, Ira issues a bold rebuke to the professor. Why did he do this?**

Answer. Ira went to the home of Dr. Bloom to determine if he was behind the movement to keep him from moving into the parsonage. Having discovered that he was Ira did not hesitate to rebuke Dr. Bloom for Ira firmly believed that those who oppose God's message and man risk "severe consequences". However, Ira never goes so far as to pronounce a specific type of judgment. Ira was determined to manifest a holy boldness in warning individuals of the consequences of their actions. Few men are temperamentally such forceful prophets of God.

3. **What conclusion did Ira come to as to how Baptist churches get into a mess?**

Answer. Ira concluded that results are the consequences of what is believed. Bad theology will lead to bad practices. Practical theology cannot be separated from doctrinal theology. "When doctrinal theology goes astray, then practical theology will follow."

Chapter 28

Did Christ Taste Death For All Men Or All Things?

1. **What is the message of Hebrews 2:7-10.** "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 8 Thou hast put all things [panta] in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all [ta panta] in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things [ta panta] put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he [Christ] by the grace of God should taste death for every man [huper pantos; Note. The Greek word for man, anthropos, is not in this verse]. 10 For it became him, for whom are all things [ta panta], and by whom are all things [ta panta], in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

Answer. The message of Hebrews 2:7-10 is that while God the Father has made Christ the head of all things, due to sin not yet are all things under Him. However, because of the Lord's death there will be a benefit to the whole creation because He tasted death for everything (not every man). Because of Calvary Christ will bring many sons to glory. The Lord's death not only brings many sons into glory but it also removes the curse of sin from creation.

2. **Personal Opinion.** Should the Christian not rejoice to learn how extensive the death of Christ is in affecting the universe?
3. **Personal Opinion.** How does the understanding that the death of Christ was not for every man but for the elect tend to affect people emotionally?

Chapter 29

Is God Really Sovereign In The Daily Affairs Of Life?

1. How does the Bible describe rebellion?

Answer. Rebellion is described as being worse than witchcraft and stubbornness is described as being worse than engaging in acts of idolatry. *1 Samuel 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*

2. What conclusion did Ira come to regarding the negative acts of life in light of the sovereignty of God?

Answer. Ira believed that God is sovereign in all things—even in the negative events and experiences of life. That was a source of great comfort to Ira for it meant that God and not man is in control of circumstances. All he had to do was to submit to the sovereign and then live righteously according to the *Scriptures*.

Chapter 30

Will You Preach His Funeral?

1. **Personal Opinion.** In the final moments of his life Dr. Bloom repented of his evil attitude and actions against Ira. Was his repentance too little and too late?
2. **Personal Opinion.** Is it really possible for Christians to show as much grace to a personal enemy as Ira showed to Dr. Bloom?

Chapter 31

Where Is He Getting Such Ideas?

1. As a young pastor what mistakes did Todd make with his new congregation?

Answer. Todd was moving too fast and too soon to make changes at his new congregation.

- He had stopped preaching and started to give theological lectures on Calvinism.
- He was offensive in his attitude daring anyone to disagree with him.
- He had stopped the evangelistic out reach programs.
- He began to use terms people were not familiar with.
- He wanted to change the church constitution so that people had to be a Calvinist to be a member.

2. **Personal Opinion.** What counsel would you give to someone who was being unduly influenced in a negative way by a strong but disruptive spirit?

Chapter 32

How Does 2 Peter 3:9 Fit A Limited Atonement?

1. **Summarize what 2 Peter 3:9 teaches about the atoning work of Christ.** *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward [i.e., Christians], not willing that any [of us] should perish, but that all [men without distinction but not without exception] should come to repentance.”*

Answer. During the days of Peter some religious scoffers had raised the question as to whether or not Christ would return as He promised. The response of Peter was that Christ had not forsaken His Church. Rather, there is a group that is the object of God’s forbearance. God is not willing that any of these certain ones perish but that all of them should come to repentance. The Second Coming will take place on schedule according to God’s plan.

2. **What are the consequences if people perish for whom Christ has died?**

Answer. If men perish for whom Christ has died then God is not sovereign but weak and controlled by the will of men.

Chapter 33

Will I Ever Find A Balanced Calvinist?

1. **Personal Opinion.** Once more Ira found it necessary to speak “bluntly” to someone, this time his friend Todd. Is the Christian life a series of one confrontation after another?
2. **Personal Opinion.** When Ira finished speaking to Todd he was thanked for the strong rebuke he had given. What has been your experience in rebuking someone for his or her bad behavior?

Chapter 34

How Does 2 Peter 2:1 Fit Into A Limited Atonement?

1. **Summarize the teaching of 2 Peter 2:1** *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord [despotes] that bought [owns and possesses] them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”*

Answer. There are two important points to note in understanding this passage. First, it is not Christ who is spoken of but God the Father. Second, the term for “bought” is a word that speaks of complete ownership and possession. This word is never used in the New Testament in the sense of a potential ownership as suggested by those who believe this verse teaches a general atonement. The point of the passage is that false teachers were bringing in damnable heresies and denying God, their Sovereign, their Master, their Owner. The attack upon the sovereignty of God, not the salvation of souls is in view here.

2. **Personal Opinion.** What damnable heresies are being taught today that you are aware of? Do the following teachings fall into the category of heresy or extreme error?
- Self-Esteem Theology
 - Health and Wealth Gospel
 - Liberation Theology
 - New Age Movement
 - The Goddess Sophia Movement

Chapter 35 **Are You A True Calvinist?**

1. What is a hyper-Calvinist?

Answer. Ira might say that a hyper Calvinist is someone who is more concerned about making people a Calvinist than a Christian.

2. What are the characteristics of a hyper-Calvinist?

Answer. A hyper-Calvinist will manifest the following beliefs and practices.

- A hyper-Calvinist denies the necessity for missions and evangelism.
- A hyper-Calvinist will not challenge individuals to trust Christ.
- A hyper-Calvinist believes that God loves only the elect.
- A hyper-Calvinist is unwilling to offer the gospel to everyone.
- A hyper-Calvinist does not recognize how God uses means to bring individuals to Himself.
- A hyper-Calvinist will not recognize non-Calvinist as brothers or sisters in Christ.
- A hyper-Calvinist will expound the five points in the doctrines of grace instead of preaching the whole counsel of God's Word.
- A hyper-Calvinist will manifest a hostile attitude towards anyone who does not agree with him.
- A hyper-Calvinist will tend to talk in the language of the Puritans, using words like "thee" and "thou."
- A hyper-Calvinist is like a Gnostic, puffed up with esoteric knowledge.

Chapter 36 **What Is Irresistible Grace?**

1. How does Ira define irresistible grace?

Answer. The doctrine of irresistible grace may be understood as an outgrowth of the natural inability of man to save himself, the unconditional election to salvation and the definite atonement of Christ for the sins of the elect. It is logical that those for whom Christ died must be effectively drawn to Him for salvation by the sovereign work of God the Holy Spirit.

2. What questions of concern might arise from the doctrine of irresistible grace?

Answer.

- **Question of Concern.** If a non-elect person wants to come to Christ for salvation but they are not irresistibly drawn can they still be saved?

Response. There is a popular illusion that men are wanting to come to Christ apart from the drawing ministry of the Holy Spirit. This is not true. The Bible says in Romans 3:11 *“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”*

- **Question of Concern.** What if one of the elect does not want to come to Christ but they are irresistibly drawn. Is not God dragging that soul into heaven against their will?

Response. All of the elect want to come to Christ for salvation. Psalm 110:3 says *“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.”* God does not drag men to heaven against their wills but He does change the will in sovereign grace.

- **Question of Concern.** If God is going to save individuals irresistibly, why evangelize?

Response. Evangelism is to take place because it is the known will of the Lord. Matthew 28:18-20 *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”* God is pleased to use means in bringing souls to salvation including the preaching of the gospel. *“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Rom. 10:15).*

- **Question of Concern.** What is to be said of man being a free agent and having a free will if individuals are irresistibly drawn to salvation?

Response. Man is free to act according to his nature. The nature of the natural man is enslaved to sin. The natural man has no freedom nor inclination to please God for his soul is in bondage to sin. He needs a freed will in order to be saved. Christ has come to set the captives free. Jesus said at the beginning of His earthly ministry *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19).*

Chapter 37

Don't You Remember Me?

1. *Personal Opinion.* How is it that evil men surface to influence or guide a local church?
2. *Personal Opinion.* What are your thoughts about Jim Mitchell?
3. *Personal Opinion.* Ira reacted with alarm when his friend Todd told him that they could no longer have fellowship together. How might you have reacted?

Chapter 38

Will You Help Me?

1. **What steps did Todd decide he had to take in order to regain control of his ministry?**

Answer.

- **Step One.** Confess his sins.
 - **Step Two.** Apologize to the congregation.
 - **Step Three.** Ask for forgiveness.
 - **Step Four.** Be willing to resign his pastorate if necessary.
 - **Step Four.** Confront Jim Mitchell with his evil.
2. *Personal Opinion.* From what you know about Todd Shelton, is his repentance genuine or spurious?

Chapter 39

Is God's Grace Irresistible?

1. **Does the doctrine of irresistible grace mean that God forces Himself on an unwilling sinner who would rather stay in his sin after God saves him?**

Answer. By nature no sinner wants to come to God until the Lord in graces gives a new heart, a new will and a new mind so that the soul desires salvation and longs to be different. "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh." (Ezek. 11:19).

On the other side of evil the sinner sees by means of regeneration the beauty of holiness. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

2. **What are some of the passages that Ira appeals to in support of the doctrine of irresistible grace?**

Answer.

- *1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

- *Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*
- *Ephesians 1:19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.*

3. What three statements summarize Ira's view of irresistible grace?

Answer.

- Salvation is a deep work requiring great power to affect it.
- Salvation is such a deep work that only God's power can accomplish it.
- Salvation as a deep work of God is given in matchless grace according to God's sovereign will.

Chapter 40

What Is The Perseverance Of The Saints?

1. How does Ira understand the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints?

Answer. The perseverance of the saints states that those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit will be kept by the power of God in the way of salvation.

2. What place does backsliding have in the Christian's life?

Answer. Though Christians are saved they do transgress and need to confess sin according to 1 John 1:9. No professing Christian can live in a backslidden state and have any hope of heaven. A question mark needs to be put beside the profession of faith.

3. What is a carnal Christian?

Answer. A carnal Christian refers to the theory that a person can be truly saved and yet live as though he is lost.

4. What is the balance to the concept that once saved, always saved implies that it does not matter how a person lives?

Answer. The doctrine of God preserving the saints by the power of His might is balanced by the perseverance of the saints in good work because "*faith without works is dead*" (James 2:20).

Chapter 41
Is The Doctrine OF Perseverance Scriptural

1. **What are some of the passages that plainly teach that a believer cannot lose his salvation?**

Answer

- *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.*
- *John 6:47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*
- *Romans 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*

2. **Summarize the teaching of Christ in Matthew 7:16-18** “*Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*”

Answer.

- The fruit of a life tells something about what is at the root of a person’s life.
- A saved person will bring forth good fruit, which means there will be a proper conduct to life.
- A saved person’s life will not be consistently evil.
- Lost people will bring forth-bad fruit manifested by improper conduct in life.
- A lost person will not bring forth good fruit by living a proper life.

Chapter 42
Young Lady, Are You A Calvinist?

1. **What does 2 Corinthians 5:17 mean?** “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*”

Answer. The Bible teaches that once a person is born again that person moves into a different state with new views of himself, his nature, life, God, sins, the world, Satan and truth. The person who is born again has new affections, a new will and a new mind.

2. **What are some of the promises in Revelation given to the Christian who perseveres?**

Answer.

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| • There is the promise of the Tree of Life | Revelation 2:7 |
| • There is hidden manna to eat | Revelation 2:17 |
| • The believer will be given a new name | Revelation 3:12 |
| • The believer will fellowship with the Father | Revelation 3:21 |
| • The believe will not suffer the Second Death | Revelation 2:11 |

- The believer shall be clothed in white Revelation 3:5
- The believer shall rule and reign Revelation 2:26

Chapter 43

Will You Answer These Questions Concerning Calvinism?

1. Does God love the non-elect?

Answer. God does have a love for the non-elect as indicated in Matthew 5:44. Jesus commanded His followers to “*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.*” The Lord could not command His followers to love their enemies with an agape type of love if God did not love those who oppose the truth. In Mark 10:21 the love of Christ for the rich young ruler is plainly stated. “*Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me*” (Mark 10:21).

2. Should all men be challenged to come to Christ or should the gospel be offered only to the elect?

Answer. John the Baptist preached repentance to all men (Matthew 3:2). The message of Christ was directed to the elect and the non elect (cf. Matt. 4:17; 11:20; 12:41; Luke 13:3). The message of the apostles was a message for all to repent (cf. Mark 16:12; Acts 17:30). The great commission is to take the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). Paul says that the gospel was preached to every creature (Col. 1:23).

Chapter 44

Will You Take This Woman?

1. What should the doctrines of grace (Calvinism) produce in the life of the believer?

Answer.

- The doctrines of grace will make a believer more evangelistic for there is assurance that if the gospel is preached the elect will come to faith.
- The doctrines of grace will make a believer more effective in proclaiming the *Scriptures* for the emphasis will be focused on the sovereignty of God. Truth will be crystallized and purer.
- The doctrines of grace will safeguard how members are received into the local assembly. The church will be purer and stronger.
- The doctrines of grace will lead to self examination and an encouragement of biblical accountability.

2. What doctrinal issue did Ira think he would be studying next?

Answer. Ira thought that his next field of inquiry would be in the area of eschatology which is a study of prophecy.

Definition of terms

- Amillennialism refers to the present rule and reign of Christ now.
- Arminianism is that system of belief which denies the major tenets of Calvinism and argues that man has a natural ability to accept or reject Christ.
- Calvinism refers to the doctrines of grace which emphasizes God's sovereignty in the salvation of a soul.
- Conservatism, when used in a religious sense, refers to those who embrace the orthodox faith to include the deity of Christ, His virgin birth and His bodily resurrection from the dead.
- Decree (of God). God has decreed or determined all things that shall come to pass. Nothing is certain apart from God's decree.
- Dispensationalism has come to be identified with a particular view of Israel whereby that nation has a glorious political future among the nations of the earth.
- Evangelicalism refers to the efforts of Christians who believe in the fundamentals of the faith to work in co-operative programs with others to advance the gospel message.
- Fundamentalism is a term associated with those who do not want to work with liberal ministers or denominations to advance the gospel. A Fundamentalist is generally characterized by dispensational pre-millennial beliefs.
- Infralapsarianism is the view that God's decree of election followed the decree of the fall of man.
- Liberalism does not find it necessary to hold to the fundamentals of the Christian faith.
- Modernism is a movement towards liberalism.
- Pietism emphasizes individual piety or holiness.
- Premillennialism refers to the coming of Christ prior to the establishment of His kingdom on earth.
- Pretribulationism teaches that the Church will be raptured or taken off the earth in a secret silent coming of Christ prior to an alleged future seven year period of great horror.
- Postmillennialism believes that the nations of the earth will embrace the gospel prior to the second coming of Christ.
- Revivalism refers to efforts to bring spiritual life back to Church. A revival refers to those periods of divine visitation whereby God visits His people in a special way so that they pray in earnest, witness with boldness, worship willingly and live in holiness.

- Supralapsarianism is the view that God decreed the salvation of the elect prior to the decree of the fall.

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