



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 3:31-36

“Assurance, Security and Perseverance”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The subject for tonight in our continuation of the study of Johannine thought is “Assurance, Security and Perseverance.” We’re dealing again with some of the aspects of the doctrine of soteriology in John’s thought, and I’m going to begin with a few words by way of introduction.

The doctrines of assurance, security, and perseverance have never been very popular doctrines. They are popular to us in Believers Chapel because most of us believe them, but they have never really been popular doctrines. The popular language is the language of doubt. We surmise. We suppose. We may, therefore, assume. It is probably true, et cetera. In fact, the Church herself has historically never been widely known for creating a sense of certainty among her adherents. A believer’s assurance of pardon of his sins, the Council of Trent affirmed, is a vain and ungodly confidence. So there is a great tradition in the Christian Church for doubt over many of the doctrines of the faith.

Cardinal Bellermein, the champion of Roman Catholicism and its defense, called the doctrine of assurance “a prime error of the heretics.” In this, he was not following Rome’s greatest theologian, for Augustine said, “To be assured of our salvation is no

arrogant stoutness. It is our faith. It is no pride. It is devotion. It is no presumption. It is God’s promise.”

What do we mean by the terms, “assurance, security and perseverance?” Well, when we talk about the doctrine of the assurance of salvation, we generally mean assurance is the doctrine that affirms that the believer may have the certainty of salvation now. So assurance is the certainty that we are saved at the present moment. The doctrine of security is the doctrine that affirms that the believer may have the certainty of salvation not only now but also forever. That’s really the doctrine of the eternity of the spiritual life. In fact, it probably would have been better if the Christian Church had spoken not of eternal security but the eternity of the spiritual life or the question of the continuity of the life is really the issue. “Continuity,” one of the contemporary theologians has said, “is the central problem of those problems which must engage us.” Eternal security, furthermore, is not a biblical term, and since it’s not a biblical term, there are always certain people who are inclined to say, “Well, it’s not found in the Bible itself, the term eternal security so, therefore, I have some question about it being a biblical doctrine.”

Now, that’s a foolish attitude, of course, because there are so many things that are not found in the Bible precisely; that is, the very terms, but the truth is taught there; that it’s, I say, foolish to make statements like that but, nevertheless, people still make them. There is, as we all know, no mention of Trinity in the Bible, but if there is one doctrine that under girds it all, it is the doctrine of the Trinity: The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the three persons of the godhead, and yet one God who subsists in these persons. There is nothing in the Bible specifically about the old nature and the new nature, and again, there is no specific statement that says, “eternal security.” So it probably would have been better, for the sake of people who have a weakness about that, to talk about the doctrine of “eternal life.” If we called it the doctrine of eternal life, we would be saying the same thing, or the doctrine of the “eternity of the spiritual life”. That would be all right too.

So assurance is the certainty of salvation now. Security is the certainty of salvation both now and forever. What is the doctrine of perseverance? People speak of perseverance a great deal. Well, that's the human side of eternal security. He secures and preserves us, and we, therefore, persevere. Even Spurgeon, who was a complete Calvinist, used to say that, “He thought it was more scriptural to speak of the perseverance of the Savior than of the saints. It is, strictly speaking not man, but God who perseveres.” So when we talk about the perseverance of the saints, well, we're talking about something that is biblical but, nevertheless, it probably would be wiser to speak about the perseverance of God or, at least, to make it plain that it is God who perseveres. This is the human side of the doctrine of eternal security.

Now, sometimes the doctrine of perseverance is misunderstood and I'd like to make even plainer what is meant by the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is not simply the doctrine that the elect will be saved in the end, but rather that the elect, once converted, never fall from their salvation and will be saved to the end. Now I say that because there are those who believe that it is possible to be saved and lost and even possible for the elect to be saved and lost, but they will surely be saved again. Lutherans, for example, believe that men may lose their salvation. They do not believe, however, that the elect may lose their salvation ultimately, but they may pass through the experience of being saved and lost, and saved and lost, and some lost forever. But the elect may be saved and lost, but they will be saved ultimately.

Now, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is not merely to the effect that the elect will certainly be saved in the end, but also that they can never fall from the life the eternal life that they have when they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. They may have fallen to sin upon occasion but they will not fall from their salvation. And, furthermore, it is probably true to say that the doctrine of perseverance also teaches that the life that we obtain through regeneration, and the habits of it, will never entirely disappear from the

experience of the Christian. In other words, there has to be some evidence that we have passed from death into life. It's possible that no one ever sees that. It's possible that a man has truly believed in Jesus Christ, and we do not see any of the effects of that, but they must be there because the change of life will manifest itself. Only God may see it. He may see it in some changed attitudes towards the saints or towards the Bible or saints may do things of which we don't have knowledge.

So when we say that a person is a saint and say he will persevere in the faith, we mean he will not apostatize from the faith. He will be preserved by the Lord to the end as a saved individual. And we also mean that he has had a change of life; a definite change of life and those habits that appear from the work of the Spirit in sanctification, can never entirely disappear from him. To put it simply, as one of the leading theologians has put it, “Perseverance is that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of divine grace that is begun in the heart, is continued, and brought to completion.” So assurance, the certainty of salvation now; eternal security, the certainty of salvation now and forever; perseverance, the human side of eternal security, and perseverance is the truth that the believer will certainly be saved in the end. He will not fall from his salvation once he possesses it, and there will be a distinct change in his life as a result of his conversion.

Well now, let's look at assurance first and in the outline, in case you are keeping outlines of the studies in Johannine theology, in my notes this is Roman I: Assurance, and John 3:31 through 36. So turn with me to the 3rd chapter of the Gospel of John, and let me read beginning at verse 31 through verse 36. Now, I'm reading tonight from the New International Version. My Authorized Version is about to fall to pieces, and that lady wrote from Saint Lucia that she wanted a Bible and three or four people in the congregation have already gotten ready to send her a Bible. She touched the hearts of a lot of people, and so I'm letting you know that my Bible is about to fall to pieces. And it's terrible, you know, when you have to turn to the New International Version instead of

the King James Version, but that’s why I’m reading from the King James Version tonight. We don’t believe in solicitation, so don’t send me any Bibles. We had one person today, incidentally, who wrote and said, “This is a one-time gift of two dollars, providing you don’t put me on the mailing list, but I did hear a sermon. I thought it was a great sermon on a particular topic, and I’d like for you to send it to me, but don’t put me on your list, because I’ve” in effect he said, “I’ve been dunned too much by the preachers and teachers.” I’m sure that the people in the office will be happy to let him know that he won’t be put on the list, and that we won’t dun him. Verse 31 of John chapter 3.

“The one who comes from above is above all. The one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God. To him God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son, and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains upon him.”

Now, here is a text that teaches assurance. “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.” There are three means of assurance according to the New Testament. First, an evidential means; works in the believer’s life. John, in the first epistle, speaks about them. Take your Bible and turn for a moment to 1 John chapter 3, and let me read a few verses there. 1 John chapter 3, verse 7 through verse 14. Listen to the things that John says about those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. He says.

“Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to

destroy the devil’s work. No one who is born of God will continue in sin,” [notice that statement] “because God’s seed remains in him. He cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.”

Notice that. “He cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are. Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God, either is anyone who does not love his brother.” Well, you can see from this passage that John says that the evidence of a true believer is that he does what is right; that he does righteousness; that he does not go on sinning. He cannot continue in sin and be a believer.

So the first sign or means of assurance is evidential. It works in the believer’s life. James says much the same thing in chapter 2, verse 14 and verse 26 of his letter when he says, “Faith without works is dead.” The Puritans, I think, had it right when they said, “Faith of adherence comes by hearing, but the faith of assurance comes not without doing. The faith of assurance comes not without doing.” Now, there is also an internal means of assurance, and the Apostle Paul speaks of that in Romans chapter 8, when he speaks about the witness of the Holy Spirit. He says, “The Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” So when a believer has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit witnesses together with his spirit. Our spirit witnesses. The Spirit witnesses together with our spirit that we are the children of God. That’s a second means of assurance. That’s internal. Believers, true believers, know deep down within that they are the children of God. That’s something that the Holy Spirit gives; the assurance that we belong to the Lord. It probably is the most powerful means of assurance of all because it is something given directly by God. It cannot be imitated. No one else can give it but the one who has had that conviction, and that assurance knows that he belongs to the Lord. The Holy Spirit sees to it that he knows.

Remember, the apostle says that when we've been redeemed, “God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba Father.” So believers know that they belong to the Lord by the witness or testimony of the Holy Spirit within. God gives us that spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ.

There is an external means and a more objective means of, well, I shouldn't say more objective because I don't think there's anything more objective than the testimony of God through the Spirit, an external means, the word of God. The Bible says, as we read here in John 3, “Whosoever,” verse 36 in this version, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.” Now, you can see from this that the basis of salvation is the work that Jesus Christ has done. The basis of assurance is God's testimony that the believer has everlasting life. Someone has put it this way, “The blood makes us secure. It is the word that makes us sure.” So what Christ did on the Cross is the objective ground of our salvation; the shedding of the blood; the consummation of the New Covenant; the bearing of our penalty and judgment. That's what Christ did for his people, but it is by the word of God that we have assurance of what he has done and its application to us.

So there are three means of assurance; evidential, the works in the believer's life; internal, the testimony of the Holy Spirit; external, the word of God which tells us that when we believe in him, we are safe and secure. Now, this last verse here speaks of assurance. “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.” Notice the present tenses and they mark out life and wrath as already realized in part. “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, and whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains” present tense “on him.” So those who believe have eternal life. Those who have not, why, the wrath of God already rests upon him. This word “has” is one of the great words of assurance. There are some others. The little word “are” A - R - E, and in 1 John chapter 3 in verse 1, in the Greek text, we have that. I'm going to turn over there, because in the Authorized Version, it's not found, but it is found in the more ancient Greek manuscripts, and this is what John writes in this 3rd chapter, 1st verse of his first

epistle. “How great is the love of the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God, and that is what we are.” Isn’t that a wonderful text? “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called the children of God, and that is what we are.” Now it says literally, “and we are.” We are the children of God. That’s the first great word of assurance.

And then there is the word “hath” or “has.” “Whoever believes in the Son has,” this version has, the Authorized Version says “hath eternal life.” And then there is the word “know.” In 1 John chapter 3 in verse 14, “Hereby know we, that we are the children of God.” Rowland Hill used to say with reference to this text here thinking of the Authorized Version, “Whosoever believes in the Son hath eternal life.” He would spell it out. He was a Bible teacher. He was known in Britain, so he would say, “Notice that hath. It’s H-A-T-H. That spells got it.” That’s the way he would expound it. So “Whoever believes in the Son has got it; has eternal life.”

Now, 1 John chapter 5 in verse 13, expresses something of the same truth, so let’s turn over there too. 1 John chapter 5 in verse 13. John, in 1 John, tells us in this verse one of the reasons why he wrote his epistle. He said he wrote his Gospel, remember, that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that in believing they might have life through his name. He writes his epistle that they might have assurance of life. Notice what he says, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” So in the case of the Gospel, he wrote it that men might have life. He writes this that men might know they have life. So in other words, he writes this and one of his purposes is assurance of life. Putting both of those texts together, John 20:30 and 31, and 1 John 5: 13, there are some purposes that fit together very beautifully. First of all, he writes that men may hear and second that men may believe and third that men may live. That from 1 John 20. “Many other signs truly did Jesus, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that in believing, you might have life

through his name.” So hear, believe, live, and now know. So we are, as John would have it, we are to hear, believe, therefore live, and also know that we have that life. Well, that’s assurance; the certainty, the assurance that we have life now.

Of course, a man may believe in assurance, and believe also we can lose our salvation. John Wesley was a man like that. He believed in assurance. He preached doctrine, he preached messages on the doctrine of assurance, but he also believed that it was theoretically possible for a man to lose his salvation. Mr. Wesley said, “That so far as he was concerned, he didn’t think he would lose his,” but he thought it was theoretically possible for some to lose their salvation. So it’s possible for a person to believe in assurance of salvation, and not believe in the certainty of ultimate salvation.

So let’s think about the doctrine of security, and one of the greatest of all of the passages on the doctrine of the security of the believer is in this same Gospel of John. So let’s turn over to chapter 10, verse 22 through verse 30. John 10: 22 through 30. Now, I think I’ll just read along here a few verses, since we have a little bit of time. I’ll begin reading at verse 22.

“Then came the feast of dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter. And Jesus was in the Temple area, walking in Solomon’s colonnade. The Jews gathered around him saying, ‘how long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered, ‘I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me. But you do not believe, because you are not my sheep.’”

Notice that statement. “You do not believe, because you are not my sheep.” How about that? “You do not believe, because you are not my sheep.” If sheep do believe, those who don’t believe, don’t believe because they’re not his sheep. Sounds like he believes in election, doesn’t it? “My sheep listen to my voice.” Notice that. “My sheep listen to my voice.” Evidently, all the sheep of the Lord Jesus hear his voice. Those who

don't hear it are not his sheep. How about that? “I know them, and they follow me. My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me.” The sheep hear the voice of the shepherd, recognize it, and they follow him. There is the inevitable change of life. They follow him. Now, they may wander off, and the shepherd may have to go out, and go and pull them out of the briars, and they may fall in the ditch, and he may have to pull them up. And they may break an arm or a leg and he may have to carry them in, but nevertheless, they do try to follow. And he says.

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one.”

This is one of the great passages on sovereign grace in the New Testament. God is the sculptor of the spiritual life from the beginning to the end, so that for man, nothing remains in which to boast since it is all of God. Now, if there is a passage that demolishes synergism, it is this.

Now, I think, since we have a few moments, I'm going to just put the word “synergism” here on the overhead and let you take a good look at it because it is one of the words that you should be familiar with. S-Y-N-E-R-G-I-S-M. Now, let me just say just a word about what it means. The Greek word *sun* is the word that means “with” and “synergism,” this “ergism” is from a Greek word that means “to work.” *Ergon so mi*. *Ergon* means “a work.” So “synergism” means a “working together,” a “doing together.”

Now, synergism is particular theological idea. It is the idea that salvation is a work of God and a work of man. Synergism. Synergism, therefore, represents the legalistic heresy. Let me read you a brief statement from one of the theological dictionaries on synergism. The Greek words mean or Greek word means “working together with.” The doctrine such as that of Philip Melancthon, who followed the Lutheran Church; that the

human will has a part to play along with the Holy Spirit or the grace of God in the process of salvation. So synergism is any kind of doctrine which sets forth the way of salvation as being both a work of God and a work of man.

Now, the most deceptive form of synergism is, of course, the doctrine of the semi-Pelagians. Pelagius just said, “A man may get to heaven will apart from divine grace. He may of himself reach heaven. He may by the activity of his human will believe and be saved.” Now, in the case, of course, Pelagius’ doctrine was a doctrine that the Church rejected. Semi-Pelagian, Pelagianism arose afterwards, and semi-Pelagianism laid stress on the fact that men had free will and as a decision of the free will was that which brought divine grace, which resulted in their salvation. Synergism.

Now, Augustine and Pelagius fought out the question of synergism in human salvation, and Augustine’s doctrine won out for a time in the Roman Catholic Church. Augustine’s doctrine was “monergism.” Now, monergism comes from the same root; “ergism” which is from the word “work,” but *monos* in Greek means “below.” So monergism is that salvation is a work entirely of God. Synergism; that man and God cooperate in the work of salvation, and historically, those who believe that salvation is the work of a decision of the free will, plus what Christ did on the Cross, that is synergism. The Christian church, from Augustine through the Reformers and the Lutherans, regarded this as heretical teaching because it is a denial of grace that salvation is altogether of God. So monergism is the teaching of the Bible. That is what is meant when, for example, Jonah says, “Salvation is of the Lord,” not of the Lord and man, but of the Lord. So monergism.

Arminianism also has stressed man’s freedom, either to accept or to reject the regenerating grace of God in Christ, and in the event that man accepts it, sufficient grace is given to all men, and if they accept it as the decision of their free will then God gives them salvation. Arminianism is, therefore, synergistic in its doctrine of salvation. Now, we want to stress the fact that Arminianism is, of course, the doctrine of many men who

are Christians, because their thoughts are confused. They will say, “We are saved by the grace of God” in one breath, and then they will say, “We must make a decision of our free will.” Now, those things are contradictory, but Arminians frequently do not see the contradiction. We’ll give them the benefit of the doubt; say, “Yes, they are good Christians, they’re just confused Christians.”

Now, if we look at our own Christian experience, we’ve been confused about things too, haven’t we? Most of us have advanced through some confusion, and some of us, a lot of confusion into the clarity with which we see the gospel, and the truths of the Bible today, and we hope that we will advance through whatever remaining confusions that we may have to even greater clarity. That’s why we’re here. But synergism is demolished by the grace of God, and if we believe, for example, that a person is saved by the grace of God but we believe that he can fall away by the works that he may do thereafter, he is in effect saying, that he’s saved by what Christ did, plus what he continues to do, and thus, his doctrine of salvation becomes synergistic. The true believer cannot fall away from salvation, either totally or finally. He is saved eternally.

Now with that in mind, look at these statements that the Lord makes. Here in John chapter 10 in verse 27, he says, “My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life.” Now notice he does not say, “I give them six months life.” He does not say, “I give them one year’s life.” He does not say, “I give them life until they commit mortal sin” but “I give them eternal life.” Now that in itself teaches that the life that we have is a life that goes on and on. Notice it is “given.” It’s not “earned.” We don’t cooperate to earn it. It is a monergistic doctrine. “I give them eternal life.” Furthermore, to emphasize the fact that that eternal life is eternal he says, “And they shall never perish.”

Now in the Greek, that’s the strongest way to express a negative prohibition. “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall by no means ever; they shall never perish.” Now, what does that little word “never” do to any doctrine that says, “a man may be

saved, and then may be lost; a man may have eternal life, but he may lose it”. Then our Lord’s word “never” or “by no means ever” is not true. “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” Never. So if a person believes in Jesus Christ, possesses eternal life, commits a mortal sin, and is, according to the teaching of the church laws that Jesus’ words are not true. “I gave that person eternal life, but they committed a mortal sin, and they have perished.” But then, what shall we do with, “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish?” He goes on to stress even more, the certainty of their salvation. “No one can snatch them out of my hand. They are in my hand.” He is the eternal Son. He possesses all power in heaven, and in earth. Who could possibly pluck someone out of his hand? He adds, “My Father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.” It’s almost as if we are in the Father’s hand, and the Father’s hand is in the Son’s hand, for we are in the Son’s hand, and the Son’s hand is in the Father’s hand, so we have a double protection; a protection of the first person of the Trinity; the protection of the second person of the Trinity. No wonder that no one shall ever lose their salvation once they have come to faith in Christ. That will never take place.

Now, we should bear in mind that negatively, the doctrine of eternal security is not the teaching that the believer is saved no matter what his practice may be. When we talk about eternal security, we don’t mean by that that once you’ve been saved you can live as you please. That’s Arminian false inference from the doctrine of eternal security. It’s by a person who doesn’t understand this teaching that overlooks the fact that we’re given a new nature. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” Their nature is changed, so they want to follow the shepherd. That’s what we want to do, isn’t it? Even when we fail, we want to follow the shepherd. That’s why Peter, after he sinned, went out and wept bitterly. He wanted to be following our Lord, but he was overcome by sin. It overlooks the family discipline. In the family of God, he disciplines us. He’s not like earthly fathers, who allow their children to live without discipline, a

terrible sight to see children who've been undisciplined. He's not like that. So we cannot live as we please because he corrects us and disciplines us. Further, the Bible teaches that there are rewards.

So remember the story of a banker who was converted in Scotland, and someone said to him, “You've been converted.” He said, “Yes.” He said, “Where were you converted?” He said, “Well, I was converted over at the Gospel Hall.” “Oh, that's where they believe in ‘once saved, always saved,’ and now you can just go out and live like you please.” He said, “No, I've got different likes now.” That's what happens when a person has come to faith in Christ.

What we mean by “eternal security” is not that if we believe in Christ we're eternally saved and can live like we please. We mean that God secures the salvation of true believers and he keeps them from sinning as a practice in their lives. That's what we mean. It's grounded in sovereign election. Verse 26, again says, “You do not believe because you are not my sheep.” By the way, that statement, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me,” well that really is a text of perseverance. “They follow me.” They persevere in the faith. That's a good test, isn't it? “My sheep hear my voice. I know them. They follow me.” They persevere; not sinless, but that's their bed of life; to follow the Lord.

Now, there's one other text I want you to turn with and it has to do with perseverance, and this is Roman III. That was Roman II: Security, and John 10:22 through 30. 1 John chapter 5, this is Roman III: Perseverance, and 1 John 2:19. 1 John 2:19, the test of perseverance and the test of continuance in the faith is now presented here. 1 John 2:19, listen to what he says. John is talking about individuals who left the company of the believers, and he says, 1 John 2:19.

“They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us.”

“If they belonged to us, they would have remained with us.” That statement is a very interesting statement. It’s the only place in the New Testament in which we have a contrary to fact condition in past time and he says, “If they were of us, they would have continued with us.” And the tense in that plainest time in the apotheosis is the only instance of such a tense in the apotheosis in the New Testament. Now, if you have an Authorized Version, you can see that there were some Arminians who were involved in the translation, because notice the Authorized Version, I don’t have it before me, mine is falling to pieces you know. It says something like this, “They went out from us, for they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.” Do you have it in your Authorized Version? “They would no doubt.” There’s no “no doubt” in the Bible. There’s no Greek word for “no doubt” here. That was added by the translators. You look at your text, and it has italics. That italicized, that means it was added. “They would no doubt.” But after all, if you put in “no doubt” that raises doubt. That’s weaker than just, “They would have continued with us if they were of us.” So perseverance is taught by that great text. That’s one of the strong statements of the perseverance of the true believer. It also states, incidentally, that it’s possible to have unsaved in the local church. “They went out from us, because they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would have continued with us,” John says. It’s possible to have unbelievers in the church, unbelievers who are part of the body, but sooner or later, they may get unhappy and leave.

A few years ago, I received a letter from a missionary in Mexico. He’s been on the field for many years, and he wrote me a letter because he had found out that I had become a Calvinist. Now, I thought I’d read you some of the things that he said. He’s a well-known missionary in Mexico. He has been working among the Tarascan Indians and for many years, I think he mentions here he’s been down there about forty years. He said, “Aside from seeking a, let’s see I’ve been a Bible translator and general missionary

among the Tarascan Indians in, I don't know how to pronounce this word Mishiochan or Michoacán., for some forty years. Such a span of time naturally has been consumed partly in teaching Bible doctrine. I unwittingly taught them semi-Arminianism, as most missionaries imitate the Bible School type of Gospel presentation. However, I was graduated at Westminster Seminary in 1935 when doctors Machen and Alice were still living. My Reform background has led me to review thoroughly, the doctrinal content of the Tarascan lesson material. Also, there was another situation which prompted serious doctrinal review.

“The Tarascan evangelicals developed into embarrassing believers (he has in quotes) ‘who drink, and live like the unbelievers.’ I arrived at a realization that they had never received a complete theological presentation of all doctrines. No wonder they floundered distressingly. They were taught only justification by faith. From translating the New Testament, I naturally knew that there are other truths like: the decrees; the five major themes of Calvinism. Well, I enlarged my instructing, and to my delight, I found that a complete presentation of Bible doctrines overcomes drinking and worldly conformity. It's possible to explain sanctification by faith in Tarsacan, and what Hodge calls the “mystical union or oneness with Christ” election, God's purpose in creation, and the chief end of man; glorifying God, plus large doses of passages studied and memorized from the epistles. Particularly, are the topics which fill the minds of a different group of Tarascans now. You can understand why I'm a doubly convinced Calvinist, but not of the hyper sort. Reform doctrine is biblical, eternal, and pragmatic.”

Isn't that interesting? He went in where a group of professing believers in Mexico, where he taught them the great doctrines of the sovereign grace of God and now they aren't simply professing believers but their Christian lives manifest their faith. That's a great testimony. I was so appreciative from this man. He'd seen my name somewhere and wrote to ask me if I really did believe those things that I seemed to be saying by the company that I was keeping at a certain conference.

Well, our time is up.

Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are thankful to Thee for these great truths of assurance, eternal security, and perseverance. How wonderful it is to know that we can know that we have eternal life, and that we have eternal life and that we shall persevere in the faith to the end because we are preserved by Thee.

We give Thee thanks in Jesus' name. Amen.