

# EXAMINATION of TULIP



*"For this is good and acceptable  
in the sight of God our Saviour;  
Who will have all men to be saved,  
and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.  
For there is one God,  
and one mediator between God and men,  
the man Christ Jesus;  
Who gave himself a ransom for all,  
to be testified in due time"  
(1 Timothy 2 :3-6).*

Robert L.Sumner

## Preface

**C**alvinistic theology has divided the Church since the Reformation and is widely taught in seminaries and churches in the 21st century. It is generally referred to as “Reformed Theology”. Reformed Theology is generally Calvinistic and Amillennial; its eschatology has as its central plank a General Resurrection at the 2nd Coming of Christ and the entire system is the natural consequence of that error.

Calvinism requires an answer from the Word of God and Robert L Sumner has done this with simplicity and clarity within the pages of this book.

Usually Calvinistic doctrine is defined under five titles known universally as TULIP. These letters stand for

**T** - Total Depravity

**U** - Unconditional Election

**L** - Limited Atonement

**I** - Irresistable Grace

**P** - Perseverance of the Saints

An understanding of the TULIP system of theology is made more difficult due to the practice by Calvinists of changing the **meaning of words**: Foreknowledge is changed to mean foreordination; grace, which means undeserved favour, is changed to mean pre-selection; total depravity is changed to mean total inability, and no free will; and the call of God is redefined without any Scriptural authority as a “general” call and an “effectual” call. The “general” call cannot be responded to by the unelected and the “effectual” call cannot be resisted by the elected. This makes a mockery of God.

Since doctrine controls practice the practical implications of Calvinistic theology can be taken as a reliable guide as to whether it constitutes sound doctrine. When evaluated in light of the holy, yet loving, character of God revealed in Scripture, its deficiencies immediately becomes apparent.

# *An Examination of TULIP*

*The "Five points" of Calvinism!*

**I**s this teaching Totally Scriptural? Is it Totally Unscriptural? Is it Part True and Part False? How does it effect Evangelism? *"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2 :3-6).*

*"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance**" (2 Peter 3:9).*

Can these Scriptures be taken at face value? Do they mean what they say or is their true meaning hidden and twisted in such a way that it takes an expert theologian, to unravel their mystery? Does God really want ALL men to be saved? Does He want ALL men to come to the knowledge of the truth? Did Christ on the cross really give Himself a ransom for ALL? Does He want ALL to come to repentance? Is it a fact that He wants NO ONE to perish?

Those who hold to five-point Calvinism teach that God, in a sense, really doesn't want all men to be saved or to come unto the knowledge of His truth. They insist that Christ actually did not give Himself a ransom for all on the cross and that He is not at all interested in everyone coming to repentance. Quite the contrary, what they teach amounts to His actually wanting the majority of souls to perish in Hell eternally.

This is shocking, startling teaching! The late Dr. Arno C. Gaebelin, noted Bible teacher, author and consulting editor of the original *Scofield Reference Bible*, in describing this system as outlined in Arthur W. Pink's book, "The Sovereignty of God," used such phrases as "totally unscriptural," "a monstrous thing," "akin to blasphemy," "perversion." He spoke of these "frightful doctrines which make the God of Love a monster"

and said they “present God as a Being of injustice and malign His holy character.” He called it the “kind of teaching which makes atheists.” Was Gaebelein right or wrong?

### *What Are the “Five Points” of Calvinism?*

Proponents of this system of theology commonly refer to it as “Tulip,” each of the five letters in the word indicating one of the points. Opponents usually describe it as hyper-Calvinism, a term which greatly agitates the advocates of five-pointism because “hyper” means “to go beyond the ordinary or norm.” While we feel “hyper-Calvinism” is an honest and fair appraisal, since it goes beyond the position of John Calvin himself, we will refrain from using the term here. We want to be objective, not objectionable.

### *Total Depravity*

The “**T**” stands for **total depravity**, which the more extreme Calvinists call “total inability.” By this is meant that man cannot do anything at all to bring about his salvation--not even believe!

To the fact of man’s total and complete depravity, as stated in Sacred Scripture, we heartily concur. Man is completely corrupt from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. He does have a heart that is “*deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*” (Jer.17:9). His total pollution is such that even Paul was compelled to confess, “*For I know that in me (that is. in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing*” (Rom.7:18). Man is born in sin (Ps.51:5); he goes astray as soon as he is born (Ps.58:3); and the completeness of his impurity is such that it takes a passage like Rom.3:9-20, with its fourteen-fold indictment, to sum up his true condition.

Furthermore, we readily acknowledge also that man’s depravity is such that he cannot and does not initiate any move toward God and redemption on his own. As David and Paul agreed, “*The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one...As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God*” (Ps.14:2-3; Rom.3 :10-11),

Our Lord Himself said,

*"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."* (John 6:44).

We most certainly do not deny these truths; we emphasize and preach them. However, it is the false conclusions which five-point Calvinism draws from these basic, Biblical facts to which we strongly object. The Word of God teaches that, while man is totally depraved and totally unable to help himself, our Lord draws every man sufficiently and enlightens every man as much as necessary for that individual to make a decision of his own free will. Jesus said:

*"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"* (John 12:32).

Five-point Calvinism erroneously insists that man's spiritual deadness makes such a voluntary decision impossible short of the actual reception of spiritual life.

Proponents of this position fondly illustrate by pointing to the total inability of a man **physically dead**. They argue that such a man cannot speak, cannot hear, cannot move a hand or a foot. cannot do anything at all. Since man is dead in trespasses and sins, they reason, he is hopeless to even hear the Gospel with spiritual perception or move a finger to act upon it. However, the kind of "deadness" they describe is unlike any other; certainly it is unlike any of the three forms of deadness found in the Bible. The deadness envisioned by the Word of God is a "separation" deadness.

For example, physical deadness is simply the separation of the spirit and the soul from the body. James wrote:

*"For as **the body without the spirit is dead**, so faith without works is dead also"* (James 2:26).

It is true that the dead corpse cannot hear, speak, or move. But the corps is not the man! The man, even though physically dead, is still able to hear, see, move, act and be cognizant of things.

Our dear Lord certainly gave us ample evidence of this in His story of the rich man and Lazarus, found in Luke 16:19-31.

While not so much is said about Lazarus, our Saviour clearly stated that the rich man, after departing this life, was able to lift up his eyes, he saw, he cried, he prayed, and was apparently in full possession of all his faculties.

The same is true with spiritual deadness. **Spiritual death is not an annihilation**, but simply separation from God, Paul was describing this spiritual deadness when he wrote to Timothy, saying,

*“But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth”* (1Tim.5:6).

Those outside of Christ are spiritually dead, yes; but they eat, talk, think, move, act, work, play, sleep and react in every way just as do the saved people who have spiritual life. Spiritual deadness is not annihilation or unconsciousness.

It is no different with the third type of Biblical death, namely, the *“second death”* so called because it is the second and final form of spiritual death. This, just as with the other two types of death, is certainly not annihilation! The second death is simply a complete, final and eternal **separation from God** in the lake of fire (Gehenna) because of sin and rejection of Christ. John wrote:

*“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death”* (Rev.20:14).

But sinners in Hell will think, move, act, and otherwise manifest full sense of their faculties. So it is a strange sort of deadness; one completely foreign to any type described in the Word of God that the five-point Calvinist describes in his doctrine of total inability.

It is certainly true that no sinner can come to Christ unless drawn by the Spirit of God; but **the blessed Holy Spirit draws every man** (John 12:32), giving man enough light so that he is, as Romans 1 :20 says, *“without excuse.”* And John says about Jcsus,

*“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world”* (John 1:9).

No man has ever been born who was not given light by our Lord Jesus Christ, and any man, once given that light, is capable of responding; yea, he is held accountable if he does not!

### **Unconditional Election**

The “U” in Tulip stands for **unconditional election**: By this is meant that the decision which determines the individual’s eternal destiny is wholly and entirely God’s decision and not in the slightest degree that of the sinner! If you will forgive us for saying so, unconditional election is the kind they had in Communist Russia, Red China and Fascist Spain. It is a stuffed ballot. The election is already settled before one goes to the polls! This kind of theology simply makes a taunting of the Saviour’s charge to the people of His day:

*“Ye will not come to me, that ye might have Life” (John 5:40).*

According to the philosophy of five-point Calvinism, it is not that these sinners **would not**, but rather that they **could not**. All of the “*whosoever wills*” in the Word of God thereby become as meaningless as the mumbo jumbo of an African witch doctor. Yet this is the kind of election which the five-point adherent boasts will bring the greatest “glory” to God!

Actually, **unconditional election makes God a respecter of persons**; choosing some and rejecting others, and arbitrarily at that, since they say His selection is not based upon any action of the chosen. “Blind selection” might be a more proper term since there is no discernable or explainable reason for His **partiality** to the few. The Bible says:

*“(God) Who will render to every man according to his deeds... For there is no respect of persons with God” (Rom.2:6-11).*

The five-point Calvinist charges, falsely we might add, that “*whosoever will*” reflects on God’s sovereignty and omnipotence, however, unconditional election reflects much more on His Divine attributes of love and justice.

To be consistent, although he uses all kinds of double-talk to escape the reality of what he is actually teaching, a five-point Calvinist must insist that God hates sinners. His understanding of “*God so loved the world*” (John 3:16) is that “*God so loved the elect.*” The God of the five-point Calvinist is a God who hates a non-elect baby even before he is born. He hates him when he is born. He hates him in his infancy. He hates him in his childhood. He hates him in his youth. He hates him in

his adulthood. And when he dies, this God of the five-point Calvinist tosses the poor non-elect sinner, whom He has always hated, into Hell. At the end of time the unelected sinner will be brought out of Hell at the second resurrection, only to be cast into the Lake of Fire (*Gehenna*)!

What a contrast this is to the God of the Bible, who wept over the non-elect in Jerusalem; the very ones who, in a matter of hours would be crucifying Him, saying:

*“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”* (Matt. 23:37).

This loving heartache, incidentally, was manifested at the very time He was compelled to leave them *“desolate”* (Vs. 38). What a contrast to the God of the five-point Calvinist is the Saviour revealed in the New Testament, about whom it is said with reference to the non-elect rich young ruler, *“Jesus beholding him, loved him”* (Mark 10:21).

Yes, it may safely be said, beyond honest denial, God **loves** sinners!

How deadening five-point Calvinism is to evangelism! You cannot blame people for not getting excited about winning people to Christ if their excitement and zealous activity has nothing to do with it.

Some time ago I was out on the West Coast in a meeting. On the Wednesday previous to my arrival, the pastor assured his prayer meeting crowd, while talking about soul winning, that there would not be one less person in Heaven if he sat in his study instead of going out on visitation. It would only mean, he said, a loss of reward on his part for unfaithfulness in service.

The way I discovered he had made the statement was through his reminder to his Sunday School class, emphasizing again in my presence what he had said, this time, however, he partially *“corrected”* himself, saying, there was a sense in which he wouldn't even lose any reward! (That, I suppose, being *“foreordained”* as well.)



Frankly, I was not overly surprised when the choir leader, a two-year Bible school veteran, went home from the evangelistic meeting every night after the choir number. His wife, a pastor's daughter and also an ex-Bible school student, did not attend a single weeknight service of the crusade. As a matter of fact, the couple left town the closing weekend and missed all of those services.

Nor was I especially surprised when two of the best, if not the best men in his Church, left the State on the closing weekend of the crusade to go pheasant hunting.

I repeat, Why get excited about evangelism and soul winning if nothing you do or don't do effects the final outcome? Summed up, the unconditional election theory says in effect:

"God brings a baby into this world. He has done neither good nor evil. Yet that baby is going to grow up and go to Hell and be damned forever. There is absolutely nothing he can do to keep from going to Hell. God will not permit it. God arbitrarily decided it in eternity past that the baby would grow up, never be saved, and go to Hell and be tormented forever. This decision was not made upon anything the baby would or would not do; God simply did not select him to be saved,"

This is truly a doctrine which makes atheists. It is, as the late Dr. Gaebelein charged, "totally unscriptural" and "akin to blasphemy."

### *Limited Atonement*

The "L" stands for "**Limited Atonement.**" By this the five-point Calvinist means that Jesus Christ only died at Calvary for the elect. None of the billions of non-elect were included in the provision through the shedding of His blood. The "limited" brethren claim that if the atonement had been "unlimited," universalism would have resulted and all men would have been saved. They argue that if Christ died for all, then, unless His work was a failure, all must be forgiven and taken to Heaven. But this is strange reasoning in the light of the host of Scriptures which make the atonement applicable to the sinner only upon his acceptance!

Let me illustrate. Suppose I were a man of immense wealth. Suppose, further, in a sincere desire to join our governmental leaders in their anti-poverty crusade, I deposited in the Banks of the United States, \$1,000 in the name of every man, woman, boy and girl in this nation. However, in order to receive that money, I stipulated that each recipient must join a fundamental, Bible-teaching church in his own community. The money would be available to all of the 320 million or so Americans. But not one single one of them could receive his thousand dollars unless he fulfilled the terms of the agreement, namely, joining a local church where the Word of God was preached and the Lord Jesus Christ exalted!

It is the same with the Biblical atonement. Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world and His blood provided the ransom price for each individual's redemption. Deposit for that very thing has been made in the bank of Heaven. However, that ransom is applicable to no individual unless he adheres to the terms stipulated by the Heavenly Father, namely, receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Lord! This does not have even the slightest semblance of universalism about it and it is a rather dishonest argument when used by the limited atonement theorist.

Perhaps it points out how hard-pressed the Calvinist is to defend his untenable position. It is in this matter of the atonement that the five-point Calvinist out-Calvins Calvin! As Augustus H. Strong, in his "Systematic Theology," points out:

"Richards, Theology, p.302 shows that Calvin, while in his early work, the Institutes, he avoided definite statements of his position with regard to the extent of the atonement, yet in his latter works, the Commentaries, acceded to the theory of universal atonement. Supralapsarianism is therefore hyper-Calvinistic, rather than Calvinistic" (Revised and Enlarged Seventh Edition, p.426).

Actually, in order to believe and preach a limited atonement, it is necessary to rewrite both the Bible and the dictionary. The five~point Calvinist tell us that when John 1:29 says, "*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of **the world**,*" John really didn't

mean the world. And when the Apostle declared about Jesus Christ, *“And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our’s only, but also for the sins of **the whole world**”* (1 John 2 :2), he didn’t really mean that Christ was the propitiation for everybody’s sins.

In the dictionary of the “tulip” man, “world” does not mean world; “all” does not mean all; “whosoever” does not mean whosoever; and a brand new language must be understood which, in turn, makes the Bible a hopeless mass of confusion for the average reader, even though he be a child of God!

The writer in Lange’s widely-used commentary, discussing the phrase in I John 2: 2, *“not for our’s only, but also for the whole world,”* said:

*“The Apostle’s design was manifestly to show the universality of the propitiation, in the most emphatic manner, and without any exception, This renders any and every limitation inadmissible...As in ch.1: 7, the work of Christ extends to all the sins of His people, so it extends here to the sin of the whole world, without distinguishing between contemporaneous and successive generations, or finding here any reference to the difference between sufficientia and officacia. This renders it also perfectly clear that while Christ is the Paraclete of believing penitent Christians only, His propitiation has respect to, and is sufficient for, all men in general”* (Vol. 23, First Epistle of John, p.45) .

The Apostle Paul based the passion of his entire ministry upon an unlimited atonement. When charged with being beside himself he wrote in his defense:

*“For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that **if one died for all**, then were all dead: And that **he died for all**, that **they which live** should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again”* (2 Cor.5:13-15).

Paul reasoned that if *“one died for all,”* then every one must be dead in trespasses and sins and on the road to Hell. He augmented that conviction with the flat statement that Christ

had “*died for all,*” and this persuasion drove him day and night, with tears, out into the highways, hedges and throughout the parts of the known world of his day, suffering, being abused, persecuted, tormented, imprisoned and finally slain. And he based it all upon the fad that our Lord Jesus Christ died for everyone - according to Calvinists.

### *Irresistible Grace*

The “**I**” in Tulip represents **Irresistible Grace**. Proponents mean by this expression that God’s grace, when presented by the Holy Spirit, is of such a nature that it is impossible for the sinner to resist or refuse. However, this simply does not stack up against the facts. We have already seen in John 1:9 how every individual is given some light by The Light. Yet in many cases that light is refused and rejected by sinners who would rather have sin than a Saviour. John wrote:

*“For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d”* (John3:20).

Surely these words indicate that men can resist the Holy Spirit. Stephen, in the sermon that brought about his martyrdom by stoning, told the religious leaders of Jerusalem:

*“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye”* (Acts 7:51).

In order to get around this dilemma of sinners resisting the grace of God when presented by the Holy Spirit, the five-point Calvinist has **invented two calls**. One is described as a “general” call, which every sinner is able to hear, and the other is supposed to be an “effectual” call, which only the elect can hear. While the five-point Calvinist would vigorously deny such a conclusion, in truth and in fact, this theology makes God out to be a hypocrite who has an “insincere” call and a “sincere” call.

In the “general” call, He insincerely invites everybody to come, but He does not really mean it! This call is merely the “window dressing” of a false pretense. It is only in the “effectual” call that He is sincere with His invitation. My, what a perverted theology is this! No wonder Dr. Gaebelein called it the “kind of teaching which makes atheists.”

In defense of his position, the “TULIP” man is fond of declaring, *“For many are called, but few are chosen.”*

As a matter of fact, this statement is made twice by our Saviour in the Gospel of Matthew. The first time is in Matthew 20:16, where it forms the conclusion for His parable about the householder who hired labourers to work in his vineyard. By no stretch of the imagination could this application be construed as having anything to do with anyone’s election to salvation! The entire theme relates to **service and rewards** and to apply this to a “general” and “effectual” call to sinners for salvation is the grossest form of perverting Scripture.

The second time our Lord used the phrase was in Matthew 22:14, in the application of His parable about the king who made a marriage for his son and invited many guests. When the king’s servants went to call the bidden ones to the wedding banquet, they all made light of it. One went to his farm, another to his merchandise, and others took the servants who issued the invitation and slew them. The angry king sent forth his armies, destroyed the murderers and burned up their city.

Then he sent other servants out into the highways and gathered *“both bad and good”* to furnish the wedding with guests. However, when the king came in to greet the guests, he found *“a man which had not on a wedding garment.”* In anger, the king rebuked him and ordered him bound hand and foot, taken away, and cast into outer darkness. Then he said, *“For many are called, but few are chosen.”*

It is true that this parable, unlike the previous one, has an application to salvation. It is equally true that whatever our Lord meant by many being called and few being chosen, He placed the responsibility for the man’s presence without the wedding garment squarely upon the man himself. The shocked king demanded, *“Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?”*

As we know from the history of Oriental custom in our Lord’s day, wedding garments were provided by the host for wedding guests. This man’s lack was inexcusable and his speechlessness

indicated his realization of that fact. **A garment had been provided for him by the king and he had refused to wear it!** This in no way pictures irresistible grace or proves the theology of a general and an effectual call. (On the other hand, we might point out that the parable favours unlimited atonement since a wedding garment would have been provided, even though unused!)

### *The Perseverance of Saints*

The “P” in Tulip represents the **Perseverance of the Saints**. By this the five-point Calvinist means that the saints are eternally secure in Christ and that once in grace, they are always in grace. This is truly in accord with scriptural teaching, although the terminology here is most unfortunate. As ones who magnify God’s grace, surely five-point Calvinists should know that it is not the saints who persevere, but the blessed Holy Spirit. It is His “holding out,” not that of the saints! Phil. 1:6 expresses it:

*“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you **will perform it** until the day of Jesus Christ.”*

Such is the Tulip position of five-point Calvinism. Do you remember Richard Speck, the murderer of the eight student nurses in Chicago, and his tattoo, “Born to Raise Hell”?

The five-pointer’s position with reference to well over fifty per cent of the world’s approximate seven billion, three hundred million population is that they have been invisibly tattooed by the Spirit of God, “Born to go to Hell!” And he thinks absolutely nothing can be done about reaching and winning to Jesus Christ a single one of them!

There is no point in even trying to do so, in his estimation, since the irreversible decision was made by God in eternity past.

### *How Does this Position Effect Evangelism?*

Why waste time, spend money and expend labor for something you cannot change? Would a banker be wise to pour millions of dollars into a hopelessly defunct organization? Would a doctor be wise to apply mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to one who had been dead for two weeks? Would an insurance agent be wise to grant retroactive coverage on a house that had already been destroyed? Would a Christian be wise to knock himself out trying to get sinners saved when the whole thing had been settled before the foundation of the world?

Five-point Calvinism curtails missions, wrecks revivalism and destroys personal soul winning! And, if those who hold the "TULIP" position are right, why should we get excited about evangelism?

When I go into a church to hold a campaign, I expect the people to go all-out in an effort to reach sinners, considering no sacrifice too great to make in reaching this goal. I expect them to curtail all outside activities for the duration of the campaign, giving the meetings top priority. I expect them to lose sleep, miss meals, pay a very real price in money, and inconvenience themselves in a hundred ways so that we can see the "*demonstration of the Spirit and of power*" of which Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1Cor.2:4).

But why should they, if it matters not anyway and if everything has been predetermined by God in eternity past? Who wants to run a race when the outcome has already been decided, the winners have already been posted, and the victors' names already engraved upon the trophies?

A pastor in Michigan, who believes in unconditional election and irresistible grace, wrote me recently admitting the deadening effect of these doctrines upon the churches where they are taught. He acknowledged:

"When teaching and preaching through the Scripture these concepts are communicated to the people in the congregation. When the time for evangelistic meetings comes we give the

practical lie to our teaching as the evangelist invariably rejects [these doctrines] and stresses the primacy of human choice... This to me is a perplexing problem as I find it difficult to get involved with special evangelistic meetings for this reason."

As I replied to this pastor:

"I would certainly think it strange for God to inaugurate a program that would cripple and deaden the main beat of His heart: getting sinners saved!"

The whole idea of individual responsibility in soul winning is annihilated in the "TULIP" view. What is the meaning, for example, of such passages as Ezekiel 3 and 33, where Jehovah says:

*"When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; IF THOU DOST NOT SPEAK TO WARN THE WICKED FROM HIS WAY, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; BUT HIS BLOOD WILL I REQUIRE AT THINE HAND"* (Ezekiel 33:8)?

Why should God hold us responsible if our warning, our witnessing, our pleading has nothing whatsoever to do with it? How would their blood be on our head if their eternal destiny had already been determined in eternity past completely apart from the will of man through the deciding predetermination of God?

If this view of election were true, it would not mean that the Church had failed during the past 1900 years, but that God had failed. He must be blamed for not electing more. Actually, five-point Calvinism carried to its logical conclusion **can only lead to fatalism**. As a matter of fact, one writer in a leading five-point Calvinist publication recently admitted:

"It follows that if God foreordains the elect, then God also foreordains the degree of responsibility that each individual Christian will carry out while alive on this earth."

In his comments that followed, he described every action of the Christian's life as predetermined by God's elective sovereignty. If a lazy Christian sits idly by and does little or nothing in the church, it is because God has not elected him to do more. If he



does not witness or win souls, it is because God decreed for him not to do so. In fact, the matter is immutable! He wrote:

*"These different degrees cannot be changed because God, from the beginning, has foreordained our length of Christian life, and our degree of Christian activity. Because of this, some of the elect will win more stars for their heavenly crown than others."*

If one can believe that God has it all fixed up ahead of time regarding who can be saved and who cannot, it should not be difficult to believe that **the rewards are all predetermined** ahead of time as well. How contrary this is to the Word of God!

Paul believed that by doing certain things, making certain sacrifices, following certain programs and pursuing certain methods, he could win "more" than he could if he did not do them, make them, follow them, or pursue them. He wrote:

*"I have made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more" (1Cor.9:19).*

This was stated in a context of service and soul winning.

### ***What is Wrong with the "Five Point" Position?***

Perhaps the best way to answer this is by examining some of the principal Scriptures used by the five-point Calvinist, showing how they have been taken out of context. By making the "tulip" advocate consider Scripture in context, his system collapses like a house of cards in a tornado. What are some of his foundation passages?

#### ***Romans 9:10-19***

One of the key passages used by Calvinists is Romans 9:10-13. This is really a favorite with the five-point promoters. It states:

*"And not only this; bid when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."*

However, the key to unlocking the mystery of this passage, its

“mystery” it may be called, is found in our Lord’s declaration of verse 12:

*“It was said to her, the elder shall serve the younger.”*

It ought to be pointed out, and pointed out very strongly, that “S-E-R-V-E” does not spell “S-A-L-V-A-T-I-O-N.” What a dishonest perversion of Bible teaching: to endeavor to build a theology of salvation upon a passage relating to service!

As a matter of fact, the whole issue is a national matter which pertains to governments, not a personal matter dealing with the salvation of individuals.

This “*purpose of God according to election*” deals strictly with the descendants of Esau serving the descendants of Jacob! The entire chapter relates to God’s dealing with a nation, Israel, not with individuals as such.

Perhaps it should be pointed out also that it is common practice with the five-point Calvinist to mingle the “*not yet born, neither having done any good or evil*” of verse eleven, with the “*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*” of verse thirteen.

The implication is that Jehovah’s love and hatred were predetermined, long before either was born or had done any good or evil. This is not so and such implication slanders the holy character of God!

If you check the source of the statement in verse twelve, “*the elder shall serve the younger,*” you will find that it was made in Gen.25:23, when the twins, Jacob and Esau, were struggling in Rebecca’s womb. That, if we follow Ussher’s chronology, was probably about 1,800 B.C. In checking the source of the statement in Rom.9:13, “*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,*” we discover that it was made in the last of the Old Testament books. Malachi 1:2-3, tells us:

*“I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob’s brother saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.”*

This statement was made, again using Ussher's chronology, about 400 B.C. In other words, the declaration about loving Jacob and hating Esau was made by God approximately 1,300 years after the death of Jacob and Esau, **not before they were born**, "*neither having done any good or evil!*." One was a prophetic statement, looking forward; the other was **historical, looking backward**.

Furthermore, note that the hatred of Esau as defined in Malachi had to do with "*his mountains* [a biblical expression often representing multitudes of people] *and his heritage*".

Perhaps Jacob was saved and Esau lost. I am not arguing the matter either pro or con at this moment, but whether Jacob was personally saved and Esau personally lost is definitely not the issue in Romans 9. To make it the issue is to pervert the Scripture!

### **John 15:15-16**

Another favorite passage of the five-point Calvinist is John 15:15-16, where our Lord declared to His disciples:

*"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. **Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you**, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."*

Does this have to do with election in salvation? It most definitely does not! Note carefully that our Lord is talking here about His "choosing" of **servants**, not sons. To discover how His sons are chosen, turn to John 1:11-13, and read:

*"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Son of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."*

Sons are chosen by their reception of Christ and their believing on His Name. Furthermore, notice that the statement of our

Lord in John 15:16 about choosing **relates to bearing fruit, not getting saved!** The disciples were saved Old Testament saints BEFORE the Lord called them to be His disciples. He said:

*"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and **bring forth fruit**, and that your fruit should remain"*

To relate this choosing to the election of salvation is to pervert the Word of God.

Perhaps, however, you are like a man in one of my meetings. After a clear-cut evangelistic message in which I invited whosoever will to trust Christ, he came up to argue the "five points" theology. To defend his position he immediately turned to this passage in John 15:16. When I pointed out that the subject under discussion was fruitbearing, not salvation, he explained to me that he had read "The Institutes" and knew all about it. He confidently assured me that "chosen" and "election" were synonymous terms and that since these people had been chosen, even though the subject under discussion was fruitbearing, they had obviously been elected as well! But you should have seen my friend's face and visualized his embarrassment when I made him turn back to John 6 :70-71, and read:

*"Jesus answered them, **Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil** He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve."*

Obviously, he couldn't stay with his theology any longer! If "chosen" is synonymous with "election" and the same Greek word is used for chosen in both John 15:16 and John 6:70-71 then Judas was elected! This was something my friend, and all the friends of five-point Calvinism, could not swallow. To do so would force the unscriptural conclusion that Judas is now in Heaven as one of the elect, or the equally unscriptural position that he apostatized and fell from grace.

### **2Timothy 2:9-10**

Another favorite passage of the "Five-Point" brethren is 2Tim.2:9-10:

*"Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the*

*elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."*

At a session for preachers at a national conference some time ago, I listened with amazement to a dear brother refer to this passage and say:

"You see, man's salvation is not according to evangelism, but according to election." He went on to explain, "I preach the Gospel, not to win men to Christ, but because I know the elect out there will respond."

But if that is the case, the elect will respond whether he preaches the Gospel, recites passages from the Koran, or goes fishing!

However, this passage is teaching the exact opposite of unconditional election. Why should Paul "*endure all things*" if the elect would be saved anyway? No, Paul was saying that he must endure those things in order that the elect might be saved! If he did not suffer according to the description of his sufferings as he outlined them in 2Cor.11:16-33, then some would not be elected. His enduring was that others might "*obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*"

Perhaps this would be a good place to answer the slander of five-point Calvinists that failure to accept their position minimizes the sovereignty of God. Nonsense! **Election based upon foreknowledge** rather than predetermination does not make God one whit less sovereign than He is represented to be in the "TULIP" position. The God Who in His sovereignty "elected" men to salvation, also in His sovereignty "elected" the MEANS of that salvation and made it available to all: REPENTANCE and FAITH!

Calvinists cannot accept that a sovereign God can, in His infinite wisdom, provide men with opportunity to repent. In this regard Calvinism denies the sovereignty of God! Our only way of knowing how a sovereign God would save sinners is from His own Word and it states:

*"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And **whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely**" (Rev.22:17).*

Calvinists cannot believe that a sovereign God can give man a free will to choose to repent and believe the Gospel. They have a wrong conception of the character of God which limits God.

### *Assurance of Salvation*

Apart from this, how would it be possible to understand 2Peter1:10, where the Apostle makes his appeal to “*give diligence to make your calling and election sure*”? How would it be possible to make one’s election “sure” according to five-point Calvinism? You either have it or you can’t have it! The same argument would be applicable to Paul’s demand of the Corinthians, “*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves*” (2Cor.13 :5).

Suppose one did examine himself and discover he was not in the faith; what good would it do? If he happened to be one of the elect “*in the faith,*” well and good; but if he were not, all the “*examination*” and “*proving*” in the world would not help him. But if he did examine himself, How would he determine whether he was in or out? The whole question of assurance of salvation is thrown into doubt.

### *The Unpardonable Sin*

What about Mark 3:28-29, where our Lord said,  
*“Verily, I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation”*

How, in the light of five-point Calvinism, could this warning about the unpardonable sin make sense? Who could commit it? If the “*elect*” could, then you would have “*falling from grace,*” as some unscripturally refer to a saved person losing salvation.

If the “*non-elect*” could commit the unpardonable sin, so what, How could it make the “*danger*” of “*eternal damnation*” any worse or more real? The force of the whole argument in our Lord’s teaching about the unpardonable sin would thus be annihilated.

Perhaps that is one reason why most five-point Calvinists teach that the unpardonable sin is “*not for this dispensation*”!

### ***What Happens to Babies?***

Furthermore, if God in His sovereignty did not elect the means of salvation; man's individual repentance and faith based upon "whosoever will"; what happens to babies when they die in infancy?

Augustine, the originator of the unconditional election theology in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, taught that all non-elect babies went to Hell. Since this grates rather severely on the minds of spiritual people, John Calvin, when he revived the doctrine of unconditional election, modified Augustine's view somewhat. Calvin concluded that babies dying in infancy go to Heaven; hence, apparently, only "elect" infants die!

This, too, since it lacks even a single sentence of scriptural support, is rather difficult to swallow. The Dominicans taught still a third possibility with their doctrine that both elect and non-elect babies experience death, but the non-elect infants end up in Limbo, a "way station" on the road to Purgatory. Of the three, the original doctrine propounded by Augustine is the most logical though unscriptural.

Would it be logical to suppose that God allows non-elect infants to reach maturity only to mock them with insincere "general" calls to salvation? Would it be logical to suppose that God determines to let non-elect infants live and grow to a state of harmful wickedness, while refusing to let elect infants live who would bless the world by their contribution of righteousness and purity? Would it be logical to suppose, since the lost will be punished "*according to their works*" (Rev.20:12-13), that God would refuse to mercifully allow some of the non-elect to die in infancy and thus lighten some of their eternal horror? No, of the three choices facing the "unconditional election" brethren, Augustine's original theory of non-elect infants dying and going to Hell is the most satisfactory.

The Bible teaches that all infants who die go to Heaven. Jesus said:

*"Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven"*( Matt.19:14).

When David's baby died it went to Paradise where David went (2Sam.12:23) and it was conceived in an adulterous relationship.

### *The Book of Life*

The Book of Life has everybody's name recorded from before the foundation of the world and only those who reject God's mercy have their names blotted out (Exod.32:32-33; Rev.3:5). Little children and aborted babies have never rejected God's mercy and their names remain in the book of life.

When the unsaved are cast into the Lake of Fire they are judged "according to their works" (Rev.20:13). What works has an aborted baby or an infant done?

Actually, the entire five-point Calvinist position on election is completely untenable. As another has so graphically pictured it, according to the five-pointer's own illustration of a dead man being totally unable to do anything to get saved, even to believe, he is faced with a picture like this:

God has made two men. They are both corpses. He stands both corpses upright, draws a line before them which we will name salvation, then says to one: "Either cross this line or I will damn you in Hell for ever!" But, in His love and mercy, He picks up the corpse and carries it across the line.

Then, to the other, He says: "Either cross this line or I will damn you in Hell for ever!" But because the corpse does not cross the line, God, in hot anger and fiery indignation, picks him up and hurls him into the damnation of the fires of eternal Hell!

No one denies that this is not a very pleasant picture! As a matter of fact, it was because of such assassinations of God's character presented by preachers in by-gone days that the Voltaires, Tom Paines, Bob Ingersolls and others stumped public platforms in protest of such a God! Fortunately, this does not portray the God of the Bible!

### *Chosen to be Raptured - 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14*

Another favourite passage of the five-point Calvinist is found in 2Thess. 2:13-14:

*"But we bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren*



*beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the **obtaining of the glory** of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Note the words: "God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation." There is absolutely no question but what these words, taken by themselves, do portray unconditional election. But these words do not stand by themselves!

There is no period after salvation; the sentence does not end there. The passage goes on in unbroken continuity to present a conditional salvation, one "through" something else. To take the words, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation," by themselves belongs in the same dishonest category with the baptismal regenerationist who quotes "baptism doth also now save us" (1 Peter 3:21) by itself. The full statement in the latter passage shows that baptism is a "like figure" of salvation, not a saving ordinance in itself. It even goes on to state positively that baptism is "not the **putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.**"

In like manner, the supposed unconditional election in "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation" immediately evaporates with the revelation following that this Bible election hinges on "sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

How could one believe before the foundation of the world? It is impossible! Then the "election" before the foundation of the world must be an election based on God's infinite foreknowledge!

However, the **context of this passage** indicates that the salvation described in 2Thess.2:13-14 is not our pardon and new birth but **our transformation at the Rapture** of the Church. God has chosen all who believe, to be Raptured and thus finally and eternally conformed to the image of His dear Son. We are called "*to the obtaining of glory*" and this is consistent with the whole context which is about whether

the Day of the Lord (Tribulation) had come and whether the Thessalonians had missed the Rapture. Paul's answer was that the Tribulation could not have come because God has appointed believers to glory and for the Church that refers to the Rapture.

The same thing is true in Paul's first epistle where he states:

*"God hath not appointed us to wrath (of the Tribulation) but to obtain salvation..."* (1Thess.5:9).

Every believer already has salvation but our body is not yet redeemed. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit **unto the day of redemption** when we will experience the salvation of our body and receive a resurrection body at the Rapture. The whole context of 2Thess.2 is the Rapture which must occur before the man of sin is revealed and the Tribulation begins. It is therefore true that God has from the beginning, **when we were saved**, chosen us to be resurrected at the Rapture.

#### *Foreknowledge and the Process of Salvation - 1Peter 1:2*

The process of salvation is indicated in 1Peter 1:2 where we are told:

*"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."*

This election to salvation is *"according to the foreknowledge of God the Father."* Consider the language carefully. It is not, as some would have us think, "foreknowledge according to election," but *"election according to the foreknowledge."* Incidentally, some have tried to eliminate the tremendous impact of this verse by following the revised version, which moves "elect" to verse one, making it read: "the elect who are sojourners." This, however, makes absolutely no difference whatsoever since the entire matter, both electing and sojourning, is according to God's infinite foreknowledge.

#### *Romans 8 :28*

Note also, in the same light, the passage of Rom.8:28-31. This is the only passage in the Word of God setting forth the steps in man's redemption, from eternity past to eternity future, in

chronological order. We are told there:

*“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did **foreknow**, He also did **predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them **he also called**: and whom he called, them he also **justified**: and whom he justified, them he also **glorified**. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”*

It starts in eternity past with **foreknowledge** and concludes with glorification in eternity future. That future glorification is based upon justification; justification, in turn, is based upon calling; calling, in turn, is based upon predestination; predestination, in turn, is based upon foreknowledge.

Please note that predestination is not to justification but to be conformed to the image of Christ. Those who believe, are predestinated to be like Christ at the Rapture. Predestination is not to do with my getting converted but is assures me that once converted, I will one day be transformed into the image of God’s dear Son! The doctrine of predestination is therefore the doctrine of eternal security.

The Bible kind of election starts with foreknowledge and any teaching of election today not starting in the same place will be fraught with confusion, misunderstanding and outright heresy. Recently, in an excellent Christian journal, I read an attempt by a highly revered and respected evangelical leader to answer this argument. He wrote:

*“We are told by the supporters of the foreknowledge theory that Romans 8:29 substantiates their position. This verse says, ‘For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate.’ We would call attention to the fact that the opening word of this verse is ‘for,’ which, of course, immediately throws us back into something that has gone before. And in this case it throws us back into verse 28 which says, ‘And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.’ Then we slip into verse 29, ‘For whom he did foreknow.’ So when we take the whole passage together*

we discover that His 'foreknowledge' does not rest upon what He saw in the future at all, but upon what He saw in His own sovereign election in an eternity which was past. The order in these verses is clear. First, we are called according to His purpose. Second, we are therefore foreknown. Third, we are therefore predestinated. Fourth, those whom He had called in His own counsels, foreknown and predestinated, He calls by preaching, by the Holy Spirit, and by the Word to come into fellowship with Himself. This is where we come into the picture, and those whom He called He certainly justifies, and those whom he has already justified He will yet glorify."

No one denies that the "for" of verse 29 refers the reader back to verse 28. However, far from being an "extra step" in God's chronological plan for the sinner, it is the setting forth of a precious truth which verses 29 and 30 merely substantiate. Paul is simply arguing, "Since one 'whom he did foreknow' is predestinated, and one 'predestinated' is called, and one 'called' is justified, and one 'justified' will be 'glorified', **you may be sure that all things work together for good to such a person!**"

Furthermore, the explanation by our brother foolishly **puts the "call" in twice**. He makes it start with the call of verse 28, then finds himself with **a second call in verse 30**. This would be like having two justifications or two glorifications in separate places within the chronology.

Finally, the writer's explanation proves too much! If the "for" in verse 29 refers back chronologically to the "call" of the latter part of verse 28, then it would be logical to suppose that it, in turn, refers to the first half of the same verse. **This would make the "call" hinge upon "loving God,"** something a sincere five-point Calvinist would never acknowledge for a single moment. Calvinists don't believe anybody can love God before they are saved.

### *Foreknowledge is Not Predestination*

Perhaps the problem is that the five-point Calvinist confuses foreknowledge with predestination. They are not the same! It is possible to foreknow without predestinating. Edmond Haley,

of Haley's Comet fame, was able to foreknow the time of the comet's appearing and predict it with great accuracy. But he certainly did not cause the comet to appear; it was not due to predetermination on Haley's part.

The eclipse of the sun is further illustration of this truth. Scientists are able to foreknow right to the exact minute, centuries in advance, the eclipse of the sun, but their foreknowledge is a far cry from predetermination! As a matter of fact, foreknowledge of the eclipse has nothing to do with the actual eclipse. And an election based upon foreknowledge is the only understanding of election whereby all of the Biblical parts fall perfectly into place without confusion. For a Biblical illustration of the fact that foreknowledge is not predestination, consider Peter's words:

*"Ye therefore, beloved, SEEING YE KNOW THESE THINGS BEFORE, beware lest ye also, be led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Peter 3:17).*

### *The "Five Points" Effect on Prayer*

In truth and in fact, "TULIP" views of election have a deadly detrimental effect on a number of other important Bible truths. For example, the doctrine of prayer. If the five-point Calvinist teaching be true, why pray for the lost? Since the matter would have already been arbitrarily settled in eternity past, prayer could not have any possible effect whatsoever on an individual's conversion. If one had been elected, he would be saved whether Christians prayed for him or not. If he had not been elected, all the praying of thousands of righteous saints would do not the slightest good. Prayer would have no effect one way or the other.

One college student told me his professor, a godly, good man, but an unconditional electionist in theology, as much as acknowledged this to his class.

One five-point Calvinist said, "I pray for the lost because I know the elect are going to be saved." But, if his doctrine be true, they will be saved just as easily and just as surely if he does not pray!

Someone else objects, "But such prayer is good for the one who does the praying!" Perhaps so, but the purpose of asking... seeking... knocking" in prayer is "receiving...finding...opening" (Matt.7:7-8).

The five-point Calvinist's philosophy reduces begging God for the salvation of souls down to the level of a pagan spinning a prayer wheel! He gets a warm religious feeling, but there isn't any result from his intercession...and he doesn't expect any!

Another illustration pertains to the Biblical teaching regarding - training children. In the Christian journal referred to previously, the author, quoting from Romans 9 which we have already seen pertains to service, not salvation, went on to comment:

"No matter how much we may shake our heads at this proposition, here is scripture which seems to declare in unequivocal language that God prepares some people as vessels of dishonor and destruction and others of honor and salvation. And if He does not and if He cannot, then He is not sovereign. The fact that one of these vessels not ordained to eternal life may happen to be one of our own loved ones or one of our own children in nowise changes the picture. And if you reply that God is under obligation to save your beloved, we would ask, whence cometh the obligation? The answer is self-evident. The supposed obligation arises from our own selfishness in insisting that our own loved ones be saved but not caring so much about someone else's loved ones."

Note here:

(1) The author refers to the Romans 9 passage and confesses "here is Scripture which **seems to declare**". This seeming declaration evaporates the moment the context is viewed in the light given by the Holy Spirit; that is, here is a passage explaining sovereignty **in service**, not salvation.

(2) He says, "The fact that one of these vessels not ordained to eternal life may happen to be one of our own children in nowise changes the picture." Then he asks, "And if you reply that God is under obligation to save your beloved, we

would ask, whence cometh the obligation?" That is dead easy to answer! The obligation comes from a Divine inability to lie (Titus 1 :2; Hebrews 6 :18), As Paul declared, "*For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us*" (2Cor. 1:20).

Since He went on record as guaranteeing, in Proverbs 22 :6, "*Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it,*" when parents train their children in obedience to Christ and His Word, God has an obligation to save them, help them live victoriously, and take them to Heaven when they die! The writer would have us believe that Proverbs 22:6 says, "*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old-if he happens to be one of the elect - he will not depart from it.*" That Is absurd!

(3) We cannot join the author in bemeaning the "selfishness in insisting that our own loved ones be saved but not caring so much about someone else's loved ones." We have a greater responsibility, surely, to our own loved ones than to others. Is it sinful selfishness that we be more concerned that our own loved ones have food, clothing and shelter than we are that someone else's loved ones be cared for? I think not.

Paul did not tell Timothy that failure to provide for all the loved ones of the world was denying the faith and being worse than an infidel, but he did regarding providing "*for his own, and specially for those of his own house*" (1Tim.5 :8). Christians likewise have a **special responsibility** about getting their own loved ones saved.

One brother told me that election could be likened to a man who offered candy to a room full of boys and girls. All shyly refused (something rather difficult to imagine, by the way), so the gentleman forced some of the children to eat the delicious candy. Naturally, the ones who had been compelled to eat enjoyed it very much!

Thus it is, he informed me, in election. Man, because of his depravity, refuses to accept God's wonderful redemption. So God, in His grace, forces some men to receive Christ in order that they might experience the sweet blessings of salvation.

I asked this dear brother, "Why give only part of the kids the candy? If it would be a tremendous enjoyment for them, why not make them all partake? If you were the man with the candy, wouldn't you?" He just grinned sheepishly and declined to answer.

The doctrine of unconditional election makes God an unjust respecter of persons in denying the candy to all the children. Biblical election, which is based upon foreknowledge, **offers freely and sincerely the candy to all** - and all the responsibility for "going without" is laid at the door of the would-be receiver, not the anxious Giver who makes the loving offer.

Some time ago I spoke at a Baptist school where considerable emphasis is placed upon unconditional election. As is usually the case when I address audiences on the Bible Institute, College or Seminary level, I bore down rather heavily on the matter of personal responsibility in soul winning.

As soon as the chapel hour was over, one of the ministerial students rushed to the front, blocked my path and announced that he had "a question." Putting on the pseudo-intellectual air so common to his breed (any experienced chapel speaker can immediately spot the type), he smilingly intoned in the special, intellectually superior voice which seminary freshmen with six weeks in theology behind them reserve for such occasions, "Suppose there just doesn't happen to be any 'elect' in your neighborhood! What then?"

My, how suave, how sure was his manner! It was obvious that he thought he really had the poor, ignorant evangelist between the proverbial rock and the hard place. So, putting my best, condescending, brother-I'll-get-down-on-your-level-at-least-this-once-to-try-to-help-you attitude, I held up my Bible so that the wide side was flat and level. I said, "We'll let this Bible represent a community neighborhood of about two thousand people.

"Here," I continued, pointing to two spots close together on the dark surface of the Bible, "are two evangelical, fundamental Bible-preaching Baptist churches. "This one," I said, pointing



to one of the spots, “believes as you do, that every thing is already settled. Those who are in ‘the elect’ will be saved, but those not fortunate enough to have been ‘chosen’ will not and cannot be saved. Absolutely nothing can be done about it!

“On the other hand, this other church believes, just as Paul and Peter both declared, that Bible election is based upon God’s foreknowledge. Hence, Heaven or Hell for some hinges on the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of those who know the truth. Believing this, these folks go all-out in a strong program of mass and personal evangelism. They have a visitation program. Their members witness on the job, in their neighborhood, and to their lost loved ones and friends. They have several evangelistic crusades throughout the year. Every thing they know to do is tried in an effort to bring the lost to Christ. “Isn’t it strange,” I concluded, pointing again to the spot which represented the evangelistic church, “how many souls God is ‘electing’ over here and how few,” pointing to the spot representing the non-evangelistic church, “God is ‘electing’ over here?”

I will never forget the dumbfounded, amazed expression on that young seminarian’s face! His mouth dropped open, and then he stammered, “I...I...I... never thought about that”. Laying my hand on his shoulder in a fatherly manner, I softly counselled, “Well, son, you’d better think about it”, turned on my heels, and left the chapel. I certainly hope he honestly faced and seriously studied this fact, of common experience which, to the five-point Calvinist, is such, a strange phenomenon.

Many, many more souls are being “elected” into the family of God where a strong program of New Testament evangelism (Acts 5:42) is in operation than in the, non--evangelistic and sometimes even anti-evangelistic-atmosphere of the TULIP churches.

Do not misunderstand: doctrine is not based upon experience! On the other hand, correct, doctrine is always harmonious with actual experience. Theology which disagrees with the fact of experience is “suspect” theology. Let me illustrate.

In Matthew 14:22-34 we have the account of our Lord walking on the water and of His invitation to Peter, “Come.” Now someone

might conclude from this account that our Lord wants all His followers to walk on water. He might preach on the text, “*Lord if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come*” (Matt.14:28-29). But that theology would soon prove destitute of supporting practical experience. All who believed, thus and based their doctrine on this invitation would sink the moment they attempted to walk on the waves.

A proponent of such a doctrine would do well to re-check, since not supported by experience, to see whether Christ was giving instructions to Peter only, or whether it contained an admonition for all followers. He would need to study the context, re-evaluate and re-assess his position. **Experience conforms to doctrine if the theology is correct.** Election according to, foreknowledge harmonizes with the experience of church history, both ancient and current.

### *Conclusion*

Thank God, the answers to the questions voiced at the start of this study are positive and dogmatic. God does want all men to be saved! He does want all men to come to the knowledge of the truth! Christ did give Himself a ransom for all on the cross! He does want all to come to repentance! It is a blessed fact that He wants no one to perish!

Now let us get busy reaching sinners with a fervent program of mass and individual evangelism. May God help us to face our faults, correct them lovingly, and pursue the scriptural program -both now, and until Jesus comes. “*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few*”!

*An in-depth exposure of Calvinistic doctrines is provided in a book by Dave Hunt entitled, What Love is This? Hunt places the doctrines in their **historical context** and shows what impact they had on the Church. Jesus said, “Beware of false prophets...Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matt.7:16). Calvinism does not pass the fruit inspection test.*