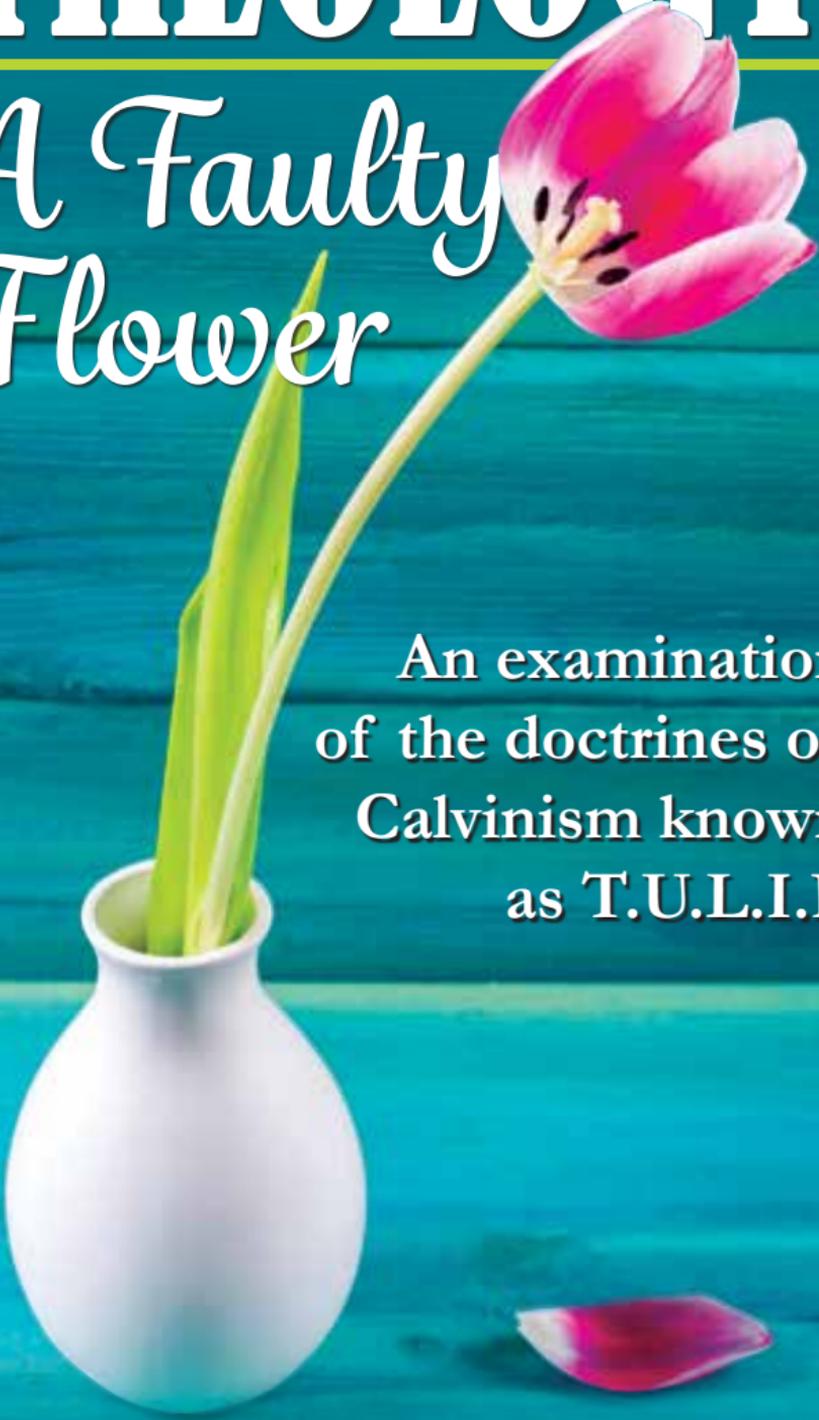


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# REFORMED THEOLOGY

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## *A Faulty Flower*

A pink tulip flower with a yellow center and dark spots on its petals is in a white ceramic vase. The vase sits on a teal wooden surface. A single pink petal has fallen to the right of the vase. The background is a teal wooden wall.

An examination  
of the doctrines of  
Calvinism known  
as T.U.L.I.P

by Vincent Wall  
FOR THE HERALD OF HOPE

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## *About the Author*



The author of this tract was raised in a devout Catholic family. Vince attended Mass each Sunday and received all of his primary and secondary education in the Catholic School system. A number of his relatives served in the Catholic Church as clergy.

After finishing his schooling, Vince left Australia and travelled to Europe as a back-packer. Whilst overseas, still as a committed Catholic, Vince was able to visit a number of important Roman Catholic places of pilgrimage.

Shortly after returning from Europe Vince attended a church of another denomination where a visiting evangelist was speaking. After the evangelistic meeting he was shown a Gospel tract that quoted the verse John 3:16 in the Bible. It became clear to Vince that God was offering eternal life to all of sinful mankind and all could believe in Christ and be saved. He saw that salvation was obtained, not by doing good works in order to obtain merit with God, but through faith in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross. That night Vince received Christ as his personal Saviour and God changed his life.

It is the truth that eternal salvation is offered freely to all; that all may receive God's pardon because of Christ's once-for-all death on the cross, that has stirred Vince to write this tract. While the Catholic system of salvation is by good works, Calvinism excludes from God's mercy all whom they claim have not been chosen: Both systems are a denial of the Gospel of Christ.

# *The Faulty Flower*

An examination of T.U.L.I.P.

by Vince Wall

**C**alvinism is a belief system that has its roots in the theology of Augustine who was Bishop of Hippo in Northern Africa from 395 to 430. According to *The Church in History* by B. K. Kuiper, Augustine's teachings largely dominated the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages. Augustine taught that Christ did not die for all people in the world and that God has predestinated some people for Heaven, whilst He has chosen others for Hell.

In the 16th century Calvin systematized the teachings of Augustine on predestination and published them in his *Institutes*, affirming his Augustinian beliefs that

“God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to destruction” (Ch. 21).

In the 1640's the *Westminster Confession* incorporated Calvin's system and Reformed Churches use it, or adaptations of it, as their doctrinal statement today.

Reformed writer Loraine Boettner in his book, *The Reformed Doctrine Of Predestination*, states:

“The Calvinistic system emphasizes five distinct doctrines. These are technically known as ‘The Five Points of Calvinism’ and they are the main pillars upon which the superstructure rests....The Five Points may be more easily remembered if they are associated with the word T-U-L-I-P:

**T** - *Total Inability*,

**U** - *Unconditional Election*,

**L** - *Limited Atonement*,

**I** - *Irresistible Grace* and

**P** - *Perseverance of the Saints*.

It should be noted that some people in Reformed Churches may not subscribe to ALL the five points of Calvinism.

### *1. Total Depravity:*

Calvinists rightly understand that man is depraved and cannot in any way merit righteousness before God (Jer.1:9; Isa.64:6; Eph.2:8-9) but they err in believing that man is totally incapable of **accepting God's free offer** of salvation. In the Calvinist's mind only the elect can have faith which they see as a gift bestowed by a sovereign act of God.

Paul wrote about faith:

*"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom.10.17).*

Faith comes by hearing and believing the Word of God. God invites all humanity to respond to His offer of salvation but though all humanity is totally depraved, this does not make man incapable of hearing God's call and responding.

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John wrote of Christ:

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

God does not call sinful man to respond and then prevent them from responding because they happen to be the unelected. God loves sinful humanity and says:

*"Look unto me, and be ye saved, **ALL the ends of the earth**" (Isa.45:22).*

Jonah told wicked Nineveh they would perish in 40 days but the whole city believed God and God spared them (Jonah 3:5,10).

Numerous references could be cited on how God calls sinful men to respond to Him. (Gen.4:7; Joshua 24:15; Acts 17:30; Rom.1:16; 1Tim.2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). Jesus did not say, "You cannot come to me" but "*ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*" (John 5:40).

## 2. *Unconditional Election:*

The doctrine of Unconditional Election teaches that God has chosen specific individuals for salvation whilst others are chosen by God for damnation. John Calvin wrote:

“All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation”( *Institutes*, Book 3 Chap.21:5 ).

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* in Chapter III also teaches Unconditional Election

“...for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.”

The Bible says God has “*no pleasure in the death of the wicked*” (Ezek.18:32; 33:11) and is longsuffering “*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (2 Peter 3:9). Calvinistic Theology teaches the opposite; that God is more than willing for the non-elect to perish.

Calvinism makes God out to be a respecter of persons but

“*There is no respect of persons with God*” (Rom.2:11).

We read in the Bible that God elects (chooses) individuals for various tasks. For example:

i) God chose the nation of Israel to be His witness to the world, and to bring the Saviour forth (Deut.7:6-8; Isa.11:1-5; Matt.2:6,15,17,23).

ii) Jesus chose His twelve disciples including Judas to be with Him in the ministry (John 6:70).

iii) In the “*foreknowledge of God*” the believers are chosen to bear fruit; to be holy and without blame, to be conformed to the image of His Son and to be a blessing in the world (John 15:16; Eph.1:3-4; Rom.8:29; 1Peter1:1-2).

The process of salvation is clearly described in Eph.1:13:

*“In whom ye also **trusted**, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.”*

The elect are those that respond to the good news of salvation provided in the sacrificial death of Christ for the sins of the entire world. The elect in the New Testament Church are chosen for eternal blessings and not for salvation.

Paul told Timothy to pray for *“all men”* for *“God will have **all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (1Tim.2:1-6).

### **3. Limited Atonement:**

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The doctrine of Limited Atonement teaches that Christ only died for the elect and that He did not die for all people. This Calvinistic doctrine strikes a blow at the heart of the Gospel (Rom.1:16).

Limited Atonement can be destroyed by one single verse of Scripture found in 2Peter2:1 for Christ even died for false prophets with damnable heresies who were *“denying the Lord that bought them”*. Jesus is the *“Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world”* (John1:29) and He died for the sins of believers and unbelievers alike (John 3:14-18; 4:24, 1John 2:1-2). Jesus is *“the Saviour of the world”* (1John 4:14) though many reject Him.

Praise God that the atonement was for all humanity and not just for a few SELECTED ELECTED! See the following Scriptures:

(Isa.45:21-22; 53:6; Luke 2:10; John 12:32; Acts 17:30; 2Cor.5:14-20; Col.1:20; Rom.3:23-26; 2Peter3:9; 1 Tim.2:3-6; 1 Tim.4:10; Titus 2:11; Heb.2:9; 1John 2:2; Rev.22:17).

#### 4. Irresistible Grace

Calvinists believe that God makes His grace irresistible only to His elect people in order that they would be saved.

Calvinist author Edwin H. Palmer writes,  
“**God loves certain ones**, sends Jesus to die for them, and then sends His Holy Spirit to cause them to accept the sacrifice that Christ has made for them.”

Irresistible grace means that when God has chosen some to be saved He sends his Spirit to change them from being hateful to being loving and they cannot resist Him but the unelected have no capacity to respond to God as Palmer goes on to state:

“He (man) is never able to choose good, God, and Christ, because he is in slavery to the Devil and his own sinful desires. He has no real freedom...” (*The Five Points of Calvinism*, pages 68-73, Edwin Palmer).

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Calvinism denies that **man has a freewill** and that human beings can respond to God in their unsaved state. Contrary to Calvinistic doctrines in fact, sinful man is told to seek the Lord in order to find Him (Jer.29:13; 1Chron.28:9; Amos 5:4-6; Isa.55:6-7; Matt.11:28).

The term Irresistible Grace is never found in the Bible. **Men do resist God** and His grace before they are converted; Paul did (Acts 9:3).

God made man with a free will. Adam and Eve were sinless yet they chose to sin (Gen.2.15-17; 3:6); their wills were independent of their natures! Cain had a sinful nature and chose to sin but Abel chose to obey. Joshua told Israel, “*Choose you this day whom ye will serve*” (Josh.24:15); some obeyed and some turned to idolatry.

No person can blame God for sending them to hell. When men go to hell it is because

they bring *"upon themselves swift destruction"* (2Peter 2:1).

To Israel Jesus said:

*"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).

God never forces individuals to be saved and His grace is not offered to just a select few. All are responsible for what they do with Christ.

Biblical salvation is not a gift given only to a select few who cannot resist but a free gift given to all who see their great need and who flee *"for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them...even Jesus"* (Heb.6:18-20).

Jesus said

*"Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"* (Rev.22:17).

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The grace of God and the salvation of God is open to any that would come to Him. For *"the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to ALL MEN"* (Titus 2:11).

### *5. Perseverance of the Saints*

Calvinists believe that the true Elect of God will persevere to the end and therefore cannot lose their salvation.

I, along with many other Christians, would affirm that believers can never lose their salvation, but our salvation does not depend on our perseverance. God Himself is the one that preserves the believer for all eternity.

The Bible teaches that once a person trusts Christ for their salvation that **they are eternally secure**. Our eternal security rests on the finished work of Christ and not on our effectiveness in living out the Christian

life. Christ's righteousness is imputed to our account at the moment of salvation (2Cor.5:21).

Numerous scriptures in the Bible show us that every believer is secure in Christ and in fact becomes a child of God receiving eternal life the moment that they believe (John 1:12). Believers receive the free gift of eternal life (Rom.6:23) and not probationary life at salvation. We are not like criminals out on probation, in the hope of freedom, but we have already "*passed from death unto life*" because of the blood of the Lamb (John 5:24;10:27-28).

Calvin believed perseverance was a gift from God given to only whom God chooses. In reality, salvation is a gift from God **to all who simply trust in Christ**. When a person has received the gift of salvation then that which accompanies salvation is the Holy Spirit's work in PRESERVING us. Jude wrote to believers and identified them as the "*preserved in Christ*" (Jude 1).

Peter in his epistle shows that the believer's security and inheritance is because of the work of God and not man. Every believer has "*an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are KEPT by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*" (1Peter 1.4-5).

In his book, *The Faith of God's Elect*, John F Parkinson writes,

"The dogma of perseverance has serious implications for the Calvinist believer. How can he know if he is in a present state of perseverance, or whether in God's estimation, he has already fallen away in his heart? Thus the Calvinist is in the intolerable position of uncertainty. He can never be sure of his salvation because he doesn't know whether he will persevere to

the end. For the Calvinist the overriding question is not 'Am I saved'? but 'Am I elect?'" (Pages 90-91).

Thank God that the believer's salvation does not depend on his or her perseverance but in God's preservation of all that trust in Him. Paul wrote:

*"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"* (Phil.1:6).

Dr Curtis Hutson, Editor of *The Sword of the Lord*, writes;

8 "Calvin and those who follow him claimed to believe and follow the Lord. But a careful student will find that again and again they go beyond Scripture, and that Calvinism is a philosophy developed by man and developed on fallible logic and frail, human reasoning with the perversion of some Scriptures, the misuse of others, and the total ignoring of many clear scriptures... Calvinism goes into the realm of human philosophy. It is not a Bible doctrine but a system of human philosophy, especially appealing to the scholarly intellect, the self sufficient and the proud mind. Brilliant, philosophical scholarly preachers are apt to be misled on this matter more than the humble hearted Bible believing Christian".

### *Conclusion*

Calvinism denies that man has a free will and that God loves sinful men except a chosen few. It denies Christ died for the sins of the world, and can lead souls into a false hope. The Calvinist Gospel teaches salvation by selection instead of by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus and is therefore "*another* (of a different kind, *heteros*) *Gospel which not another* (of the same kind, *allos*)...*If any preach any other* (contrary, *para*) *Gospel...let him be accursed"* Gal.1:9).

## The Calvinist Way of Salvation



## The Biblical Way of Salvation



Exod.32:32-33; Ps.69:28; Rev.3:5; 13:8; 20:15

*“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isa.55:6-7).*

*“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” (2Pet.3:9).*

*“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our’s only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1John2:2).*

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).*

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