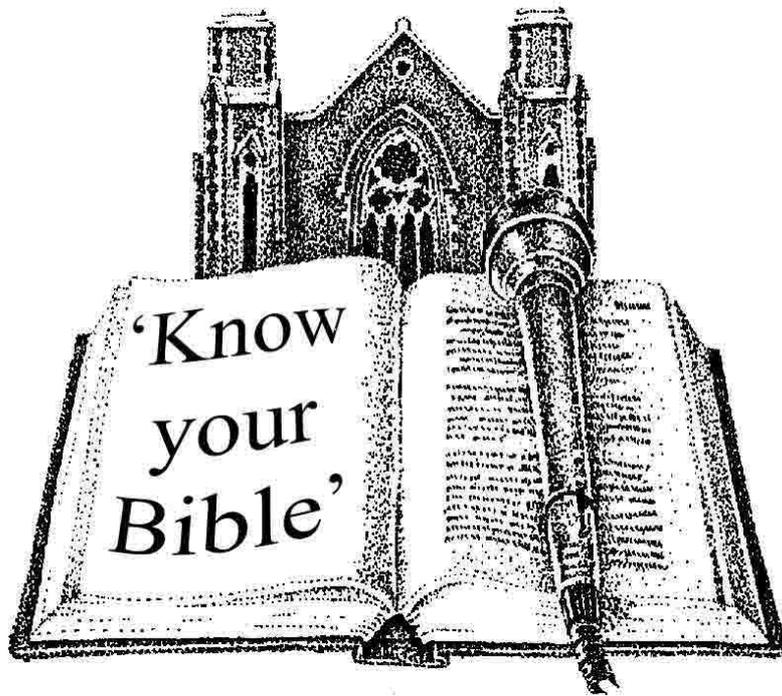


# What is this “Calvinism” we hear so much about?

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**Study Notes by Stuart Olyott**



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## **What is this “Calvinism” we hear so much about?**

There is a lot of talk about Calvinism today.

- Amongst some professing Christians there is scarcely another word that arouses so much suspicion, mistrust, and bad-feeling.
- On the other hand there are increasing numbers of believers who love 'the Reformed Faith', and thank God for 'the doctrines of grace'.

Where there is Calvinism, there is often division.

It is obvious, then, that we must know what this Calvinism is.

### **Some misunderstandings cleared up.**

#### **Calvinism is not all about predestination**

- in the 1st catechism Calvin drew up (1537), predestination is only briefly mentioned.
- In his 1537 Confession of Faith it is not mentioned at all.
- It is only scantily touched on in his other catechisms and confessions
- And when “The Institutes” first came out it received no important place
- It was only when many attacks had been made upon his teaching about the grace of God that he spoke more fully about predestination.
- And the same can be said of the other Reformers

#### **Calvinism is not restricted to 'five points'.**

In 1610 a Dutch professor called James Arminius died, and his followers Arminians) summarised his teaching in 5 points. They tried to get the church of their country, whose teachings were set squarely on the Reformation, to adopt these 5 points.

From 1618-1620 an international conference met at Dort; examining the teaching of Arminius in the light of the Word of God. It concluded that the Reformation teachings were Scriptural, and that Arminianism was false. It refuted the teaching of Arminius with five points of its own, which have now come to be popularly known as the 'five points of Calvinism'

#### **Arminius:-**

Free will, human ability.

Conditional election.

General atonement.

Human will restricts God's grace.

Falling from Grace.

#### **The Word of God:-**

Total depravity.

Unconditional election.

Limited atonement.

Irresistible Grace.

Perseverance of the Saints.

Calvinism, however, does not have only five points; but an unlimited number. It is as broad as the Bible. Its goal is to expound all the Bible, and its watch cry is "all the Bible and only the Bible".

All Calvinists are expositors. Arminians, Liberals, and anti-Calvinists have attempted serious exposition; but prejudiced by their views, their work has always been poor. The GREAT expositors, whose names and books live on, were Calvinists to a man (e.g. Matthew Henry, Matthew Poole, Thomas Chalmers, William Gurnall, John Trapp, Robert Haldane, John Brown, Joseph Caryl, J. C. Ryle, Thomas Scott, C. H. Spurgeon etc. etc.).

### **Calvinism did not start with Calvin!**

Calvin did not invent a new teaching; any more than Columbus invented America, or Newton invented the law of gravity.

**HE UNCOVERED AND FORMULATED WHAT WAS ALREADY THERE - in the Bible.**

What Christ and the apostles taught; the early fathers; Augustine; the Reformers - this is what Calvin taught. He was not the first or sole teacher. But after the long silence of the middle ages he was the most able and systematic expositor of these truths. Hence the word 'Calvinism'.

### **IT IS THE HISTORIC FAITH OF CHRIST'S CHURCH.**

"It is no novelty, then, that I am preaching, no new doctrine. I love to proclaim those strong old doctrines that are nicknamed 'Calvinism', but which are surely and verily the revealed truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus" (C.H. Spurgeon).

What a pity that 19th century mission Christianity, and the Schofield Reference Bible, have misled millions into thinking that SOMETHING ELSE is the historic and apostolic faith!

## **Calvinism is not against evangelism, but promotes it.**

From Calvinism started

- Bible translation:- Wycliff, Tyndale, Coverdale.
- Literature distribution:- Huss, Luther, Tyndale, Calvin, Alleine, Baxter etc..
- Countrywide evangelism:- Whitefield, Howell Harris, Jonathan Edwards, Tennants
- Modern missionary movement:- Carey and Fuller, Brainerd, Livingstone, Judson,

And there is an inextricable link between Calvinism and Revival.

- To say that Calvinism quenches the fire of evangelistic zeal a lie from the Devil himself. History proves otherwise.
- To say that Calvinism leads to coldness and formality is a similar lie. Passion, zeal, devotion, fire, sacrifice, these have always been promoted by true Biblical Calvinism. It is the religion of the martyrs.

### **Calvinism has not harmed the world, but blessed it.**

Here are some of the fruits of Calvinism-

- World-wide Gospel light.
- The West's historic belief in the sanctity of human life.
- A higher standard of law, order and justice in the West.
- A higher view of marriage, the dignity of woman and the importance and stability of the family,
- The abolition of slavery, the rights of workers, and reward for service rendered.
- Neighbourliness and the right to private property and its protection.
- The duty of those in places of responsibility to maintain an even higher integrity and purer morals than even ordinary citizens.
- The freedom of inquiry, and the teaching of consistency in the universe, which has led to the rise of modern science.
- And practically every private and legal freedom we enjoy.
  
- Some of these things have grown into things which are the enemies of the Gospel - because they have been perverted by depraved human reason.
- But they were born good. And the womb which bore them was Biblical Calvinism.

### **This series**

In this series we will look at:-

#### **Calvinism's 2 great partner-principles**

- Scriptura tota. Scriptura sola ( "All the Bible and only the Bible")
- Soli Deo Gloria ( "Glory be to God alone")

And then Calvinism's so-called 'five points'.

Having cleared up some misunderstandings about Calvinism, we now come to look at the 1st of its 2 great partner-principles:-

## **Principle 1:- Scripture tota: Scriptura sola.** **"ALL the Bible: and ONLY the Bible".**

### **The Bible.**

- Creation reveals sufficient of God to leave man inexcusable. Psalm 19:1-3. Romans 1:20.
- But sinful man is too blind to see it. 1 Corinthians 1:21, 2:14
- And therefore God has revealed Himself in His Word, which has been committed to writing, 'the Holy Scriptures' Psalm 119:130, Matthew 4:4, 7, 10. Romans 15:4.
- From the Son of God we learn that we are to accept the 39 books of the Old Testament (and no more) as the Word of God. Mark 7:13, 12:36, Matthew 22:31, 19:4-5, Luke 24:44-46, John 10:35, 17:17 etc...
- The 27 books of the New Testament were written by the apostles and their associates.

They wrote under the Inspiration of His Spirit, just as He had promised and their writings are on the same level as those of the Old Testament. John 14:26. 15:26-27, 16:13, Acts 15:28, 1 Thessalonians 4:8, 5:27. 2 Peter 3:15.

- So the WHOLE Bible is to be received as the Spirit-inspired Word of God. 2 Peter 1:21, 2 Timothy 3:16.
- There are countless 'external' proofs of the Divine inspiration of the Bible. But believers are fully assured that the Bible is God's Word, not by these evidences, but by the Holy Spirit. 1 John 2:20, 27. John 16:13-14. 1 Corinthians 2:10-12

### **ONLY the Bible**

Having received such a Book from God:-

- We NEED NOT look anywhere else:-
- To find out what to believe
- Or how to behave.
- We OUGHT NOT to look anywhere else:-
- For this is the only infallible revelation that God has given us.

### **EVERYTHING which God requires us to believe is found in the Bible.**

We are not to add to it: or take away from It 2 Timothy 3:16. Revelation 22:18-19.

- anything which goes against it is false. Isaiah 8:20. Galatians 1:8-9.
- we must examine every opinion in the light of it. Acts 17:11.
- anything which does not spring from the Bible is a man-made opinion, and not to be believed or obeyed. Matthew 15:2, 3, 6.

### **EVERYTHING which we need to know to live aright is found in the Bible.**

By means of the Bible's instructions we can become all that God wants us to be. Psalm 19:7-8. 2 Timothy 3:15-17. Nothing else is needed.

### **ALL the Bible.**

The Bible, then, is God's Word.

We do not need to look outside it nor should we.

But we must be well-acquainted with EVERYTHING INSIDE it.

#### **If we do not know the WHOLE of God's Word:-**

- Our view of Christ is defective. Luke 24:44, 27.
- Our spiritual understanding and behaviour is defective. Matthew 4:4, 2 Timothy 3:15-17.
- We fall into error. Mark 12:24.
- We may break God's commandments by obeying man-made rules. Matthew 15:6.
- We become easy prey for all sorts of speculation, philosophy and man-made ideas. Colossians 2:8,

#### **It is, essential that we give our closest attention to ALL the Bible. 2 Peter 1:19-21.**

- It is for this reason that the Reformed Faith gives priority to expository preaching. In this way a congregation becomes well acquainted with the WHOLE of God's Word, rather than just, knowing scores of isolated texts.
- It is for this reason that Calvinists steer clear of 'gimmicks' 'entertainment evangelism', special meetings etc., for they recognise that only the preaching of the "whole counsel of God" can meet the needs of church and world.
- It is for this reason that those who love the doctrines of grace are always a Bible-carrying, Bible-loving people. It is this first partner principle which marks Calvinism out as BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY.

We have seen that the Bible is a book FROM GOD.  
But when we open it, what do we see?  
It is principally a book ABOUT GOD

This fact is the cause of Calvinism's 2nd great partner-principle.

## **Principle 2:- Soli Deo Gloria** **“Glory be to God alone”.**

### **God.** **In Himself**

God is :-	a Spirit	John 4:24
	invisible	1 Timothy 6:15-16, John 1:18.
	personal	Exodus 3:14, John 14:23
	infinite :-	
	everywhere present	Jeremiah 23:24, Psalm 139:7-10.
	eternal	Psalm 90:24, Isaiah 40:28
	all knowing	Psalm 139:2-5, 147:5
	incomprehensible	1 Kings 8:27
	unsearchable	Romans 11:33-34
	all sufficient	Genesis 17:19, Exodus 3:14
	sovereign	Daniel 4:34-35, Isaiah 46:10

### **His Attributes**

This great God of Scripture Is :-	
holy	Isaiah 40:25, Isaiah 57:15
righteous	Psalm 97:2
loving	1 John 4:8, 10, 16
good	Mark 10:18, Psalm 107:1
wise	Daniel 2:20, Romans 16:27
unchanging	Malachi 3:6, James 1:17
all-sufficient	Exodus 3:14, Isaiah 40:18-23

**Yet there be three persons In the Godhead**, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one true eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties  
Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19, John 10:30, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 1 John 5:7.

### **Glory be to God.**

God's attributes and what He is in Himself, should move us to give Him worship, honour, homage glory. Psalm 48:1.

This God is the God of:-

**Creation** Genesis 1 Hebrews 11:3, Proverbs 16:4.

- You were created by Him.
- Then give glory to Him. Psalm 95:6.

**Providence**. Psalm 103:19, Romans 11:36.

- YOU are provided for by God.
- Then give glory to Him. James 1:16-17.

**Judgement** Ecclesiastes 12:14, Hebrews 9:27.

- YOU will be righteously judged by God.
- Then give glory to Him. Psalm 98:9.

**Redemption**. John 3:16, Romans 3:24-25, 8:3-4, 2 Corinthians 4:4.

- Are YOU redeemed by God?
- Then give glory to Him. Ephesians 1:3, 1 Peter 1:3.

**Glory be to God ALONE.**

There is NO OTHER God. Psalm 18:31, Deuteronomy 6:4. 1 Corinthians 8:4, 6.  
So we should give worship to HIM ALONE. Exodus 20:3.

**Creation is entirely His work.** Job 38:4. Psalm 96:5. It was unshared.

- He did it ALONE.
- It is not enough to glorify Him for creation,
- You must glorify ONLY HIM.

**Providence is entirely His work.** 1 Timothy 6:15, Psalm 135:6. It is unshared.

- He does it ALONE.
- It is not enough to glorify Him for providence.
- You must glorify ONLY HIM.

**Judgement is entirely His work.** Acts 17:31, Romans 2:16. It will be unshared.

- He will do it ALONE.
- It is not enough to glorify Him for righteous judgement.
- You must glorify ONLY HIM.

**Redemption is entirely His work.** Isaiah 43:11, Romans 9:15-16. It is unshared - even by us who believe.

- He does It ALONE.
- It is not enough to glorify Him for redemption.
- You must glorify ONLY HIM. And take no credit whatever to yourself. 1 Corinthians 4:7.
- This last point is THE CHIEF DIFFERENCE between Biblical Christianity and man-made religion.

# **The so-called “five-points”**

## **1. Total Depravity.**

We have seen that the Bible is a book FROM GOD, and principally ABOUT GOD. But it is also a book about MAN.

The main truth about man which it teaches is that every part of him is suffering the consequences of sin - total depravity.

### **God created Adam in His own image and likeness.**

A solemn, divine counsel took place first. Genesis 1:26.

It was an Immediate act - Genesis 1:27, 2:7.

Unlike other creatures, he was made after a divine type - Genesis 1:26-27.

He was a body and a soul from the very beginning - Genesis 2:7.

He was at once placed in an exalted position. - Genesis 1:28.

He was righteous - Genesis 1:31. Ecclesiastes 7:29. A moral creature.

He was a soul able to commune with God - 2:7. A spiritual creature.

He did not need to die - Genesis 2:17. An immortal creature.

He was placed over the creation - Genesis 1:26. A ruling creature.

“Image” does not mean bodily likeness - God is a Spirit.

Man is basically spiritual - he is more than a body.

This is true of no other creature.

### **God entered into a covenant with Adam.** (Genesis 2 & 3)

He gave to him many privileges:-

- He put him in paradise, to labour, and to eat of its fruits.
- The creatures were placed under his dominion.
- Marriage was given to him for a help.
- The Sabbath was instituted.
- Man enjoyed living communion with God.

He also demanded some things from him:-

- Personal, perfect and perpetual obedience,
- The tree of life was held out to him as a pledge.
- But he was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, on pain of death.

### **Adam broke the covenant** (Genesis 3)

- The tempter sowed seeds of doubt unbelief and pride in Eve’s mind, She then led Adam to break God’s clear commandment
- Man became depraved; lost communion with God; aware of moral pollution; guilty and shamed; spiritually dead; doomed to return to dust expelled from paradise; and afflicted with many troubles.
- And so sin entered the world
- It is lawlessness; hate of God; wickedness of heart.

**Adam's sin has had permanent effects on the whole human race.**

- All men are now sinners, not by bias or imitation - but by NATURE! Psalm 51:5, Ephesians 2:3, Romans 5:12-14.
- This does not mean that each man is as wicked as he possibly can be. Nor does it mean that he cannot be kind, neighbourly, merciful etc...
- But his whole nature is sinful - everything about him.
- And he is completely unable to do anything which pleases God. Romans 8:8.
- You see, the covenant was made with Adam as a public person. He stood as a representative not only for himself, but all his descendants. ALL of us sinned in him, and fell with him - for we are descended from him. We are of Adam's race. Acts 17:26. Romans 5:12-20
- We are conceived and born in sin. Our whole nature is polluted by sin. It is because of this that we DO, and DO CONSTANTLY, acts of sin. Psalm 51:5. Romans 3:10-26, James 1:14-15.
- We cannot do what is good Matthew 7:17-18. Romans 8:7-8.
- We cannot understand spiritual truth. 1 Corinthians 2:14. Mark 4:11.
- We cannot choose godly things. John 3:3, 6:65, Romans 3:12-18. Ephesians 2:2.
- We are out of touch with God. Genesis 3:24. Ephesians 2:12,
- We are under the anger of God. Ephesians 2:2-3. Romans 1:18
- We are in slavery to the Devil. Ephesians 2:2. 2 Timothy 2:25.
- We are enemies of God. Romans 8:7. James 4:4.

**IN SHORT we are hopelessly lost, and can do nothing about it.** Job 14:4, Jeremiah 13:23, Romans 8:7, John 3:6-7.

**IN THE FUTURE nothing awaits us but separation from God,** and everlasting torment of body and soul in the fires of hell for ever. 2 Thessalonians 1:9, Luke 16:24-26, Revelation 20:12-15, 21:8.

**The Fall is a total fall, and man is unable to save himself.** If a man is to saved at all, then GOD must save him!!

**But God, BEING GOD, is free to save whom He will.**

This majestic fact is what we shall study next, when we come to the second of the so-called five points "Unconditional Election".

# **The so-called "five points"**

## **2. Unconditional Election.**

We have seen that the Bible is FROM GOD, and principally ABOUT GOD. It also tells us about MAN - totally fallen, and unable to save himself.

**The truth is, if any man is to be saved at all, GOD must save him.**

But God, BEING GOD, is free to save whom He will.

- In His love He has not left all mankind to perish in sin and misery.
- Out of sheer kindness He has CHOSEN to save some hell-deserving rebels.
- This is not because of any good He saw in them - for there is none good.

**It is UNCONDITIONAL election.**

### **This truth should not surprise us.**

- We have seen how lost man is
- We have learned that God -is loving and good.
- We should not be surprised to read, therefore, that THIS God has stepped in to save men and women DESPITE themselves. (Or don't you believe in the love of God at all??)
- Observation should lead us to expect this truth.  
ALL men are spiritually dead, and NONE can raise themselves.  
Yet some ARE raised, so GOD must have raised them.  
And some are NOT raised - so God must have chosen to pass them by.  
From observation we must conclude that God has chosen to save some, and to pass others by.
- Our reading of the Old Testament should lead us to expect this truth.  
The stones of Abraham, and, supremely ISRAEL show God to be an electing God-. See Deuteronomy 7:7, Romans 9:11-13, Luke 4:25-27.  
It is UNCONDITIONAL election.

### **This truth is plainly taught in the Word of God.**

You may not understand it; you may not like it.

But don't argue with it, for you will be arguing with GOD.

Read the following texts, in their PLAIN SENSE:-

John 6: 37-39. 15:16.

Acts 13:48.

Romans 8:29-30, 9:6-26.

Ephesians 1:4-5.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.

"Calvinism", you see is Biblical Christianity.

To deny or water down Unconditional Election is to scorn God's Word.

### **This truth has practical effects on a Christian's life.**

- Those who see it, see that it is to be believed because it is in the BIBLE. Their regard for Scripture is very high.  
They see human responsibility in the Bible too, and so believe that as well.  
They do not believe only what they can explain, but what the BIBLE TEACHES  
That is why Calvinism and Biblical Evangelism go hand-in-hand.
- Seeing that salvation has its source in God, Calvinists make their priority, however, the WORSHIP and praise of God.
- Knowing that salvation is the work of the eternal God alone, and not of man, they enjoy assurances of salvation to the end. Philippians 1:6.

**This truth is by some professing Christians, denied, disbelieved, distorted.**

- Their main objection is that this truth makes God appear unjust.
- But for God to APPEAR unjust does not mean that He is. His ways are not ours.
- Besides, he has declared elsewhere that He IS Just. Deuteronomy 32:4. Revelation 15:3.
- These Statements about His attributes they believe, but not His statements about His purposes. They exalt their own reason above God's Word, which is heinous sin and blasphemy.
- They like to think that man has the power to choose or not to choose God.
- But why are they, so keen to hold on to a doctrine which Scripture expressly denies? Romans 3:10-19, 8:7-8, Ephesians 2:1-2, 4:17-19.
- Why do they want to maintain that (sinful) man has the right to choose, and deny that the Perfect One exercises such a right?
  - Such people are obviously "lovers of their own selves... boasters... proud".
  
- They want a God Whose ways are known to them, understood by them, answerable to them.
- Such a God is NOT the God of Scripture.
- For them to have such a God in their minds is to break the first 3 commandments, and to be guilty of idolatry. It is sin which needs to be urgently repented of.
- To put it in a nutshell, they do not like to See God exalted; and man made to look so weak, helpless and small.
- This is the spirit of a rebel.
- If they claim to be God's children, they must ask why they are so intent on grieving their loving Saviour.
- They need to make their calling and election sure by loving the Lord their God with heart, soul, might - and MIND.

## **The so-called "five points"**

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

We have seen that the Bible is FROM GOD, and ABOUT GOD.

It also tells us about MAN - totally fallen, and unable to save himself.

- We have seen that God, in eternity, chose to save some of these rebels. For these Christ made atonement on the Cross.
- He did not bear the punishment of all men's sins. But the sins of the elect.
- He did not procure salvation for all men. Only the elect.

This is the truth of LIMITED ATONEMENT (particular Redemption).

#### **This truth should not surprise us - if we think it out.**

#### **The Bible says that when Christ died on the Cross:-**

- He was an ACTUAL substitute for sins. Hebrews 2:9-10. Whose sins?
- He ACTUALLY turned away the righteous wrath of God. Romans 3:25. 1 John 4:10. Who from?
- He ACTUALLY reconciled a people to God. Romans 5:10, Hebrews 2:17, Who?
- He ACTUALLY redeemed from the curse of the Law. Galatians 3:13, Who?
- In other words, He didn't make something POSSIBLE by His death He actually DID something!!
- WHO FOR??
- All men without distinction, says the Universalist.
- But if Christ has ACTUALLY done that for all men, then all men are saved - which is a clear contradiction of the Word of God.
- For no-one in particular, says the Arminian.
- But if Christ has ACTUALLY done that for no-one in particular, then no-one is saved - which also contradicts the Word of God.
- For some people in particular, says the Bible.
- Because Christ has ACTUALLY done that for some people in particular, and not for others, this explains why some are saved and some are lost. The Calvinist holds to this Biblical teaching.

#### **This truth is plainly taught in the Word of God.**

Matthew 1:21	John 10:11, 15, 26. 6:37-40, 15:13.	Acts 20:28.
Romans 8:31-39, 14:15,	1 Corinthians 8:11.	2 Corinthians 5:14-15.
Ephesians 5:25-27.	Hebrews 2:9-13.	1 John 5:13, 2:2, 4:10,

- These verses must be taken in their PLAIN SENSE.
- "Calvinism", you see, is BIBLICAL Christianity.
- To deny Particular Redemption is to scorn God's Word.
- Of course there are many verses which appear to teach that Christ died for all (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 1 Timothy 2:6), but we must remember that the word "all" in Scripture does not mean "all people everywhere", but is used in a limited sense see Luke 2:1-2, John 12:32, 1 Corinthians 6:12.
- The word "world" is used in many ways, but NEVER to mean "all people on the globe", when redemption is being spoken about. John 1:29, 4:42 and 1 John 2:2. do not deny particular redemption-.

**This truth has practical effects on a Christian's life.**

**He becomes overwhelmed with a sense of the love of God.**

- He no longer thinks of Christ as One Who died for an anonymous group, without any particular thought for him. He sees the Son of God died specifically for him, for his sins, for him by name.
- He enjoys unspeakable comfort.
- If the Saviour did so-much for him personally, will he withhold anything any other good thing from him personally? Can anything separate him from the personal love of God? See Romans 8:32-39.
- He becomes a worshipper
- The truth of particular redemption fills him with deep gratitude that God's distinguishing grace has saved him, and he loves to worship God, and seeks to serve Him.
- He becomes a Biblical evangelist.
- Out of love for his Saviour he obeys the command to preach the Gospel to every creature; but does not go round vainly saying "Christ died for you", but sets forth the Gospel in a Biblical way.
- He is filled with hope as He does so, knowing that God will use his words to call home the sheep for whom Christ died. Such a holy optimism keeps his zeal from flagging; and stops him giving up in difficulty.
- He presents Christ in a way which is worthy of Him. He does not say He is One Who 'can be' a Saviour, but One Who IS a Saviour. He sets forth Christ as One who DOES SAVE; not as one Who makes it 'possible' to be saved. What good news for dying sinners!!

# **The so-called "five points"**

## **4. Irresistible Grace**

We have seen that the Bible is FROM GOD and ABOUT GOD.  
It also tells us about MAN - totally fallen, and unable to save himself.

God in eternity chose to save some of these rebels.  
For these elect sinners Christ made atonement on the Cross.

In turn the Holy Spirit calls each one of them to salvation; He brings them into the experience and benefits of the salvation that Christ procured for them; they cannot resist Him.

### **This is the truth of IRRESISTIBLE GRACE.**

#### **This truth should not surprise us - if we think it out.**

Whose will is going to prevail?

- The Devil's?
  - a. in which case all will remain in bondage to him.
- Man's?
  - a. in which case no-one will be saved, for man's will is both unwilling and unable to choose the things of God.
- Or God's? In which case all whom He has chosen, and for whom Christ died will be certainly brought to salvation.
- Calvinists believe the simple statements of Scripture, that GOD'S WILL, will prevail. Psalm 135:6, Isaiah 46:10, Daniel 4:35, Ephesians 1:11.
- GOD would cease to be GOD if His purpose to save His church through the atonement of His Son was less than perfectly fulfilled. So He sends His Spirit to each elect person; regenerates his will; and he most gladly and freely comes to Christ.
- What an act of love! of undeserved love! of GRACE!
- If it was resistible, it would not be grace, for we would all choose damnation - such is our depravity.
- Because it IS grace, it is irresistible. God saves rebels despite themselves; despite their intentions to do themselves eternal harm.

#### **This truth is plainly taught in the Word of God.**

Direct statements teach it.

John 6:37, 44-45; 10:16. Acts 16:14. Romans 8:14, 29-30. (!)

Galatians 1:15. 1 Peter 2:9, 5:10.

Again we must stress that Calvinism is not a man-made system,  
but BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY.

#### **Biblical pictures of salvation teach it.**

Resurrection John 5:24-26, Ephesians 2:10.

The New Birth John 3:1-8 1 Peter 1:3, 23-25.

New Creation 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:10.

Yes, those whom God chose and for whom Christ died are certainly and effectually and unconquerably brought to the actual experience of salvation. His grace works irresistibly.

**This truth has practical effects on a Christian's life.**

- He becomes a worshipper
- He cannot get over the depth of God's grace, so his greatest priority is to give himself to private and public worship of the God of grace. Psalm 116.
- Deeply conscious of what God has called him to be, he seeks to live a life worthy of such a calling. Ephesians 3 4:1, Colossians 1:10.
- He becomes a Biblical evangelist.
- He does not resort to carnal weapons or gimmicks, but prayerfully takes the Word of God to the lost. He knows that the declared Word is all that is needed to call home God's elect and will resort to no other method whatever. 1 Corinthians 1:17-31.
- He does not give up in the face of difficulty or discouragement, for the salvation of his hearers does not lie with him, or with them, but with GOD - and therefore there is hope. When the King says "you" they must come! Acts 18:9-11.

Hallelujah!

## **The so-called "five points"**

### **5. The Perseverance of the Saints. (Part 1)**

We have seen that the Bible is FROM GOD and ABOUT GOD It also tells us about MAN - totally fallen, and unable to save himself.

God in eternity, chose to save some of these rebels.  
For these elect sinners Christ made atonement on the Cross.  
In turn the Holy Spirit effectually calls each one of them into the experience of salvation.

God does not now lose those whom He has chosen, bought, and called.  
He preserves them, and brings each one of them safely to heaven.  
He does this by ensuring that each saint perseveres and continues in the faith until the end.

#### **Note!**

- No elect, purchased and called sinner need ever fear being lost.
- The only grounds that you have for maintaining that you are elect, purchased and called are that you persevere and continue in the faith until the very end.
  - a. This is the twofold truth of the PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.
- **No elect purchased and called sinner need ever fear being lost.**

#### **What we have learned so far makes this clear.**

- God has purposed to save a people, for whom Christ died, and whom the Holy Spirit called. If one of them fails to arrive in heaven His will has been defeated - and He is no longer GOD! Isaiah 46:10 & Ephesians 1:11 would no longer be true.
- God will not forsake His elect. To do this He would have to change, deny Himself, and do something which would not stand for ever. These are three things God cannot do. Malachi 4:6, 2 Timothy 2:13, Ecclesiastes 3:14.
- No - once it is realised that God is Sovereign, and that this God has purposed to save a people for Himself, it becomes clear that all His elect are eternally secure.
- Only those who doubt either God's sovereignty, or unconditional election, doubt the final perseverance of the saints.

#### **Specific texts make this clear.**

John 5:24, 6:37-39, 10:27-30.

Romans 8:28-39, 11:29.

Ephesians 1:13-14.

Philippians 1:6.

1 Peter 1:3-5.

1 John 5:13.

These are just some examples. There are many similar texts.

It is important to stress again that Calvinism is not a man-made system, but BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY.

## **The terms which describe salvation make this clear.**

### **Eternal life**

- John 3:15-16, 17:2-3, 20:31.
- This means life of a different quality, like God's, and therefore without any time limits.

### **Born-again**

- John 3:5-8 1 Peter 1:23.
- The life of the Spirit (God) is now ours, and we are born again of an incorruptible seed,
- The pictures of us being Christ's bride, His building, and members of His body all show that salvation must be eternal. We are inextricably united to Him, the Eternal One. Ephesians 1:22-23, 2:19-22, 5:22-32.

### **We are also pictured**

- As being sons of God, and brothers of Christ. As long as Christ is, so are we in favour with God. Romans 8:14-17, Galatians 4:4-7, Heb 2:10-13
- This truth is the cause of unspeakable comfort to God's children.
- But it does not lead them to take their salvation for granted so that they live just as they please, as the second part of this truth makes clear.

## **The so-called "five points"**

### **5. The Perseverance of the Saints. (Part 2)**

This truth is in two parts:-

- No elect, purchased and called sinner need ever fear being lost. (Which we studied last week).
- The only grounds that you have for maintaining that you are elect purchased, and called, are that you persevere and continue in the faith until the very end.
- Those who do not persevere are NOT God's children, and are lost.
- We do not doubt that believers backslide - but backsliding in Scripture is exceptional, never normal. It is a temporary condition, eventually repented of; never a settled state in which a true believer is content to remain permanently.
- Despite his sins, the overall trend in a true believer is fruit-bearing, holiness, godliness, PERSEVERANCE!

#### **This truth should not surprise us - if we think it out.**

- The Father chose them, to be HIS holy people. Ephesians 1:4. His purposes cannot be frustrated. Those whom He chose do indeed become holy.
- The Son died for them, not only to redeem them, but to purify them. Titus 2:14 Those for whom Christ died do indeed become pure.
- The Spirit called them, indwelling them and giving them a new nature. Ezekiel 36:26. Those the Spirit called; do indeed show forth the fruit of the Spirit.
- It is utterly impossible that any elect, purchased, called sinner should ever go back to his unconverted ways
- So:- those who do go back are not such saved sinners, but apostates.  
Perseverance alone is the proof you are a saved sinner.

#### **This truth is plainly taught in the Word of God.**

##### **Jesus taught it.**

Matthew 7:20-29.

- Here He warned that a professed believer may work miracles, and expect to be received at the last day - but unless he is doing the Father's will (21), and obeying Christ's sayings (24), his hope is vain
- Luke 8:5-15.
- The only genuine believers are where the seed falls on good ground. These are those who hear the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.
- John 8:30-31
- In verses 44-45 Jesus told these professing believers that they were the Devil's children. He will own no one as His disciple unless he goes on and on progressively. (31).
- John 15:1-8.
- Jesus acknowledges no-one as a believer unless he constantly bears fruit (2:4-5, 8). If a professed believer does NOT bear fruit, it is because he is not truly joined to the Vine. Such people are clearly lost.

## **The apostles taught it.**

2 Peter 2:20-22

- If professing believers return to their former ways it is because they have had no true change of nature. They are lost.
- It is a dominant theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews that without perseverance there is no salvation. (3:6, 14, 4:11, 5:9. 6:4-8. 10:26-27, 35-39, 12:11).
- The Apostle John wrote his first epistle to give believers assurance. But he constantly stresses that no UNHOLY person can have any certainty that he is a child of God, and eternally saved. (1:6-7. 2:4-5, 9-10, 15, 29, 3:6, 14, 4:5-8, 12-13, 5:1, 18)
- Paul's epistles are full of the same truth. Romans 8:13. Gal 4:11, 5:19-26. Ephesians 4:17-21 Philippians 1:6. 1 Thessalonians 3:5-8, 4:7-8. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15.

## **This truth has practical effects on a Christian's life.**

- He does not say to himself that he, just because he has made a profession, is 'eternally secure'; and so can live as he pleases. He remembers that he is not exempt from falling away. 1Corinthians 9:27, 10:12.
- He therefore takes steps to ensure that he perseveres, counting on the help of God. Philippians 1:12-13. 2 Peter 1:10.
- This involves - mortification of sin. Matthew 5:27-30; Romans 6, ,in using the means of grace. Acts 2:42.
- And when he sees fellow-believers sinning willfully
- He does not say that they are backsliders, who although they cannot be lost, will never be happy as they are.
- But he warns them that IF THEY STAY AS THEY ARE THEY WILL BE LOST and urges them to repent, and return to the Lord. See Acts 8:20-24.
- In short, the correct understanding of the doctrine of Final Perseverance leads the individual Christian, and the local church, to be filled with abounding JOY, and practical, continuing HOLINESS.

### **A practical conclusion.**

- During the-past weeks we have been looking at the teachings of Calvinism. We have seen that the Reformed Faith is none other than BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY.
- This being so, we must take heed to the command of the Living God given in Jude 1:3 :-  
"...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints".

### **What we are to contend for.**

- The faith
- A definable body of truth. A collection of beliefs which can be stated.
- THE faith
- The only body of teaching which is TRUTH; all else being false
- Once for all delivered
- That body of truth which is not a man-made invention but which was delivered to the prophets and apostles by Divine revelation; and is preserved in the Holy Scriptures.
- Unto the saints
- That Scriptural body of truth by which believers are saved; which God has called them to believe and maintain.
- In short, this is a command to contend for Biblical Christianity. But, as we have clearly seen, Calvinism / the Reformed Faith IS Biblical Christianity.
- We must be blunt. The only way to obey this command is to contend for the Reformed Faith.

### **How we are to contend.**

"...contend, fight and struggle continuously - and do this strenuously - in defence of the faith..."

- So runs the force of the original language. AT VERY LEAST we must:-

### **Believe the Reformed Faith ourselves.**

- To the Book! Find out what it does teach. Follow the example of Acts 17:11.
- Improve our knowledge of the Reformed Faith
- By spiritual counsel with mature believers
- By attending gatherings where it is expounded
- By regular reading of appropriate books and magazines.
- Disassociate from and oppose all that opposes Reformed Christianity-
- This means withstanding error to the face - always with grace; always firmly and without compromise; always using only prayer and the Word of God as weapons to bring down error.
- We must separate from, and be opposed to humanism; materialism; false religions; the cults; Roman Catholicism; ecumenism; modernism; Arminianism; dispensationalism, etc...
- Give only qualified support to Christian activity which is not openly committed to the doctrines of grace.
- Where such is submissive to Holy Scripture we must support it. Where it isn't, we must seek to correct it.
- Give unqualified, enthusiastic and regular support to all Christian activity openly committed to the doctrines of grace.
- First, the local church; and then other agencies.
- Encourage individual non-Reformed believers to seriously consider God's true
- We must stress that we have continuing friendship and personal fellowship with such; that we forever remind them of the truths of Scripture; that we pass on to them helpful magazines and books., and use other methods which will bring them more to the truth as it is in Jesus.
- Give ourselves to acts of Christ like compassion.
- Reformed Christians are caricatured as hard, unfeeling, bigots. We must doubly careful to do good to all men, especially to the household of faith.
- Engage in Biblical Evangelism.
- Out of love to God and men we should do this. We have received the pure Evangel, which alone is the hope of the world. We, of all people, should be most zealous in spreading God's infallible and saving Truth

**The choice between religion and man-made religion.  
Unless we contend for the faith in this way,  
pure religion will disappear from the earth.**

**THE TRUTH OF GOD IS AT STAKE.  
How can we dare do anything less?**