

**The Deadly Flower**  
(A Study Of Calvinism)  
Sermon by Mark S. Aites

**TEXT: PROV. 14:12**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. Spring is the time of the year when the flowers will bloom.
2. Tulips are among the most beautiful; (note Tulip Festival; Holland, Mich.).
3. In this lesson we will examine a "tulip" which is in fact deadly; spiritually.
4. Background: 16th century, reformer named John Calvin.
  - 1) Influential man; declared "Master" of the city of Geneva.
  - 2) Wrote the Institutes of the Christian Religion.
  - 3) In 1533, claimed a religious experience; direct operation of the Holy Spirit; "commissioned" to restore the church to its original purity.
5. His works have become the basis for a number of denominational beliefs.
6. He is credited with the deadly flower; the T.U.L.I.P.; with 5 deadly petals:
  - 1) T -Total Hereditary Depravity
  - 2) U -Unconditional Election
  - 3) L -Limited Atonement
  - 4) I -Irresistible Grace
  - 5) P - Perseverance of the Saints

**DISCUSSION:**

**I. TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY.**

- A. Defined:
  1. Total - absolute or complete.
  2. Hereditary - inheritance by birth.
  3. Depravity -wicked, corrupt, estranged from God; spiritual condemnation.
  4. Modern concept: "Doctrine of Original Sin." (sin inherited from parents all the way back to Adam)
- B. "We believe that original sin or depravity, is the corruption of the nature of all offspring from Adam, by reason of which every one is far gone from original righteousness, or the pure state of our first parents at the time of their creation, is averse to God, is without spiritual life, & is inclined to evil, & that continually..." (Nazarene Church Manual)
- C. Calvin was not the first to teach such concepts.
  1. Tertullian (160-220 A.D.); taught that we share in Adam's guilt.
  2. Cyprian, while Bishop of Carthage (248-258 A.D.); taught that infants need forgiveness and they obtained this in infant baptism.
  3. Infant baptism became widely accepted in the 5th century.
- D. We need to search the Scriptures (**Acts 17:11**).
  1. **Rom. 5:12**; sin was not passed on, but the consequences of it (**Heb. 9:2**)
  2. **Luke 3:38**; to accept original sin would be to implicate Christ; (note that Catholicism circumvents this claiming miraculous purification of Mary).
  3. **Ezek. 18:20**; children do not inherit the sins of our fathers.
  4. Some have taught **Rom. 3:23** includes infants; but they cannot distinguish between right and wrong.
  5. **Matt. 18:3**; if children have sin, why would the Lord tell us to be like them to enter

the kingdom of heaven?

## II. UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION.

- A. Defined: it is the belief that God foreordains or predestines certain persons to be saved, and others to be lost.
- B. "Augustine said that God permits people to be damned, & Calvin stressed that God 'decreed' their condemnation, & that the number was definitely established & could not be decreased or diminished." (Maddox, The Eternal Kingdom)
- C. Bro. Charles Abei wrote regarding Calvin's view: "God programmed the computer (the universe) with His own predestined or foreordained program, & all men, like all other creatures & things, are but robots carrying out the absolute sovereign will of God." (East Tenn. School Of Preaching, Lectureship)
- D. Once again we must search the Scriptures:
  - 1. **Eph. 3:10-11**; the church was in the eternal purpose of God.
  - 2. True, those who make up the church were chosen (**Eph. 1:4**); but how does God choose those who will be saved?
  - 3. We are called, i.e. chosen, by means of the Gospel (cf. **2 Thess. 2:14; John 6:45; Rom. 10:17**).
  - 4. In every case, the choice to respond is voluntary (cf. **1 Cor. 1:21**).

## III.LIMITED ATONEMENT.

- A. This is merely an extension of Unconditional Election, in that Calvin contended that only a certain number of people would or could be saved.
  - 1. The implication is that Christ died only for the predestined.
  - 2. The cross becomes of no effect to those not predestined.
- B. Again we must search the Scriptures:
  - 1. We find a great contrast with Calvin's contention (**John 8:51; 10:9; 11:25-26; 12:32**).
  - 2. If Calvin is correct, why did Jesus commission us to preach the Gospel to every creature? (**Mark 16:15**).
  - 3. Why tell us, that "whosoever will can take of the water of life freely?" (**Rev. 22:17**).
  - 4. Consider also **1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9**.
  - 5. True a limited number will be saved (**Matt. 7:13-14**); but of their own choice.

## IV.IRRESISTIBLE GRACE.

- A. Calvin contended that one could not resist the direct operation of the Holy Spirit.
  - 1. This "religious experience" could happen at anytime, anywhere.
  - 2. Calvin himself claimed to have had such an experience; and when it occurred that God divinely commissioned him to restore the church in its original purity.
- B. Once again we must search the Scriptures :
  - 1. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is found twice in Scripture by example (**Acts 2:1-4; 10:44**), and a third time by necessary inference (Paul, **Acts 9:17; 2 Cor. 11:5**).
  - 2. There is but one baptism (**Eph. 4:5; cf. Acts 2:38,41; 8:36-38; 10:47**).
  - 3. It is true, every Christian must have the Spirit of God (**Rom. 8:9**); but not by means of direct operation (**Acts 2:38**).
  - 4. The Spirit operates upon us not directly, but through the written word ("word" is

the sword of the Spirit... not the spirit) (**Eph. 6:17**).

5. Despite Calvin's contentions, the Spirit can be resisted (**Acts 7:51**).

#### **V. PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.**

A. It was Calvin's contention that once you had the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, there was no turning back.

1. The modern conception of this doctrine is, "Once Saved, Always Saved."
2. The belief that a Christian cannot fall from grace.

B. Again we must search the Scriptures:

1. Having the Spirit of God, even miraculously (apostles), does not suggest infallibility in character, as Paul rebuked Peter (**Gal. 2:11ff.**).
2. **Gal. 5:4**; those who had fallen from grace, in returning to Judaism, were cut off!
3. If the doctrine of, "Once Saved, Always Saved" is true, then why did James write what he did? (**James 5:19-20**); or Peter? (**2 Pet. 2:20-22**).
4. Why did the Hebrew write that some had fallen away? (**Heb. 6:4-6**).
5. Was Demas still in good standing with God? (**2 Tim. 4:10**).
6. Can one be saved; then turn back and be a murderer, liar, or fornicator, and die in that condition, and still be saved? If so, then why are we even here?

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. It is regrettable that Calvin's doctrines have been so widely accepted.
2. **Acts 5:29; Matt. 15:9**
3. Salvation is attainable for whosoever will.