**Augustine, Calvin and TULIP**

**T** -- total depravity. This doesn't mean people are as bad as they can be. It means that sin is in every part of one's being, including the mind and will, so that a man cannot save himself.

**U** -- unconditional election. God chooses to save people unconditionally; that is, they are not chosen on the basis of their own merit.

**L** -- limited atonement. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross was for the purpose of saving the elect.

**I** -- irresistible grace. When God has chosen to save someone, He will.

**P** -- perseverence of the saints. Those people God chooses cannot lose their salvation; they will continue to believe. If they fall away, it will be only for a time.

**TOTAL DEPRAVITY OR INABILITY (= "T" of TULIP)**

The first point asserts that the entire or TOTAL human being--body and soul, intellect and will, etc.--is fallen and that everyone is born spiritually dead, helpless, and passive; indeed, everyone is worse than volitionally dead or unable to desire spiritual good but is actually enslaved to sin, positively and actively hostile to the things of the Spirit (Calvinists cite, e.g., John. 1:13; 8:43, 47; 10:26; 12:37-40; 18:37; Romans. 7:18; 8:5-8; 1 Corinthians. 2:9-14).

**UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION (= "U" of TULIP)**

The second point inescapably follows from the first: since one is born totally depraved and enslaved to sin, one's ELECTION cannot be dependent or CONTINGENT on any spiritually worthy actions one commits. According to this point, God predestines or chooses to soften the hard, sin-enslaved hearts of certain fallen individuals and liberate them from their death not because of any merit they have but despite their demerits--i.e., He ELECTS to change their hearts (and thereby join them to Christ and His saving work) DESPITE the fact that they hate God and oppose Him and have hard hearts, not soft hearts, and have sin-enslaved wills, not free wills. Thus, believers have no reason to boast about themselves or their own actions: the only thing that differentiates them from Judas, Esau, or others who never respond in faith is that God gave them grace that He withheld from such reprobates (Calvinists cite, e.g., Ezek. 11:19-20; 36:26-27; Rom. 9:11-18; 1 Cor. 4:7; Eph. 2:8-10; cf. Jn. 1:13; 15:16; Acts 13:48; 16:14; 18:27; Phil. 2:13).

**LIMITED ATONEMENT or Particular Redemption (= "L" of TULIP)**

This point says that while Christ's blood--indeed, His entire life, death, and resurrection--is infinitely INTENSIVE in saving power and thus unlimited in one sense, it is not infinitely EXTENSIVE and is thus limited, not universal, in the extent of its application; for while everyone CONDITIONALLY or "provisionally" shares in Christ's life, death, and resurrection (thus, if everyone believed, everyone would be joined or married to Christ), only members of Christ's body or bride or flock (ELECT believers) actually share in His blood (Calvinists cite, e.g., Jn. 10:11, 15, 26; 17:9; cf. 6:37, 39; 17:2, 6, 24).

**IRRESISTIBLE (SUFFICIENT) GRACE (= "I" of TULIP)**

This is virtually a synonym for Luther's slogan "grace alone" (sola gratia) and is logically implied by points "T" and "U" above. It teaches that God's INWARD CALL is perfectly EFFECTUAL or SUFFICIENT--a hard, fleshly, sinful heart need not add anything to God's grace, such as "co-operation," for this special call or grace is invincible, overpowering all hatred and melting all opposition (Calvinists cite, e.g., Jn. 3:6-8). Here Calvinists distinguish God's inward, effectual call--i.e., IRRESISTIBLE GRACE or sufficient, effective grace--from His outward call, which is simply His commandments written on tablets of stone. The latter is eminently resistible, insufficient, and ineffective to give life to a dead soul or liberate a sin-enslaved heart (e.g., Acts 7:51; 13:39; Rom. 8:3).

**PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS or Eternal Security (= "P" of TULIP)**

This is not the idea that no matter what a believer does he or she cannot lose his or her salvation but the idea that " . . . He who began a good work in you will perfect it . . " (Phil. 1:6 [NASB]; cf., e.g., Jn. 6:37, 39; 10:28-29; Rom. 8:31-39)--i.e., the idea that whenever God creates faith in our hearts and thereby joins us to Christ and His saving work, He will sustain that faith, that saving relationship with Christ, causing us, by His grace, to persevere in faith.

**Discussion**

God can know a matter before hand without predetermining the matter to the point that the people’s will and participation are removed. This is a radical view of predestination that in stressing the sovereignty of God, they have totally eliminated the will and role of man.

     Our English word "predestinate" is from the Greek proonzo*.* "Pro, beforehand," Vine’s dictionary says, "and honzo, denotes to mark out beforehand..., foreordain...."  Indeed, predestination is a biblical subject: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son..." (Rom. 8: 29).  Again, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:  Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will…" (Eph. 1: 4, 5).

     **Predestination in the Bible**.  The scriptures teach the foreknowledge of God. God is able to "declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things are not yet done..." (Isa. 46: 10). Since God's scheme of redemption was planned from the original creation, it is obvious that God knew Adam and Eve would sin, etc. (I Pet. 1: 20, Eph. 1: 4,5, cf. Matt. 25: 34, Rev. 13: 8, 17: 8). Even though God knew Adam and Eve would sin, he did not force or program them to sin. As free moral agents, Adam and Eve elected to commit sin (Gen. 3). Man's will is involved in his salvation, not God's irresistible coercion (Jn. 3: 16, Matt. 11: 28-30). Nonetheless, God knew some would accept before they accepted (Acts 18: 9-11). Hence, some were "ordained to eternal life" because God knew they would obey the gospel when they heard it (Acts 13: 48, cp. Rom. 10: 16).

     **Predestination in Calvinism -** "God hath decreed in himself from all eternity by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will freely and unchangeable, all things whatsoever come to pass," writes man (Philadelphia Confession of Faith, ch. 6, para. 2-4). Calvinism teaches that man is so depraved that he cannot accept God's grace without a special, irresistible working of the Holy Spirit, independent of man's will. It is often in this vein that man teaches that God decided who would be saved and who would be lost before creation and that this decree was arbitrary on God's part (not involving man). Hear John Calvin:

**"In conformity, therefore, to the clear doctrine of the Scripture, we assert, that by an eternal and immutable counsel, God has once for all determined, both whom he would admit to salvation, and whom he would condemn to destruction. We affirm that this counsel, as far as concerns the elect, is founded on his gratuitous mercy, totally irrespective of human merit; but that to those whom he devotes to condemnation, the gate of life is closed by a just and irreprehensible, but incomprehensible, judgment. In the elect, we consider calling as an evidence of election, and justification as another token of its manifestation, till they arrive in glory, which constitutes its completion. As God seals his elect by vocation and justification, so by excluding the reprobate from the knowledge of his name and the sanctification of his Spirit, he affords an indication of the judgement that awaits them." (Institutes of the Christian Religion, translated by John Allen.)**

     **There have been many religious discussions relative to the role of God and man in man's salvation**. It seems man is determined to pervert God's simple plan for man's salvation in either teaching man earns his salvation (God's grace not needed) or in asserting salvation is all of God (man's obedience not involved). The scriptures consistently teach and exemplify both God and man's part in the salvation of man. Man must believe, repent, confess Christ's deity, and be baptized in order to be saved. Since man is not sinless, God provides the necessary grace whereby obedient man can be saved. However, God's grace is not "grace alone," as the Calvinists contends (see addendum).

     One early debate involving the matter of predestination was conducted between Augustine of Hippo and Pelagius. In fact, Augustine originally taught John Calvin's five-point system of predestination. Augustine taught that man has nothing to do with his own salvation. Man has inherited the totally depraved nature of Adam and Eve to the point they are spiritually incapable of availing themselves of God's grace, he further contended. As a result of the depraved Adamic nature being inherited, babies are born in sin and with a sinful nature. Augustine argued that the only way any are saved is by God intervening and choosing some whom he calls his elect to be saved. This choosing is totally arbitrary and independent of those chosen. Those thus chosen, cannot ever be lost or fall from grace. To the converse, those not arbitrarily chosen before the foundation of the world to everlasting life are irrevocably doomed to hell, having absolutely no hope of salvation, regardless of what they do or do not do. Such a doctrine as formulated by Augustine constitutes true "Calvinism" today.

     Pelagius, on the other hand, taught that each man is created free just as Adam was and that each man must choose whether he will serve God or the devil. All men, contended Pelagius, are not sinners because Adam sinned, but because each man himself has violated God's law. Pelagius argued that when God extended the plan of salvation, it is for all who will obey, not just a few whom God arbitrarily chose, totally independently of themselves. Each man may cooperate with God and be saved through his faith and obedience to God's will.

     It is tragic that most who "ruled" on the results of the debate at the ecumenical Council of Ephesus (AD 431), favored the views of Augustine. It is equally sad that many continue to embrace the godless doctrine of Augustine today under the name of Calvinism.

            (information from- <http://www.bibletruths.net/archives/btaro24.htm>)

**RC Sproul’s Book:**

**“Chosen By God:** Know God’s perfect plan for His glory and His children”

       “The specter of an all-powrful God making choices for us, and perhaps even against uys, makes us scream, ‘Give me free will or give me death!’ “ (p.9)

       “If we are biblical in our thinking we must have some doctrine of predstination.” – Ephes. 1:4, 5, 11; Romans 8:29 …the issue is not whether we should have the doctrine of predestination or not, but what kind we should embrace.” (p10-11)

       Sproul says: “My struggle with predestination began early in my Christian life. I knew a professor of philosophy in college who was a convinced Calvinist. He set forth the so-called “Reformed” view of predestination. I did not like it. I did not like it at all. I fought against it tooth and nail all the way through college. I graduated from college unpersuaded of the Reformed or Calvinistic  view of predestination only to go to a seminary that included on its staff the king of the Calvinists, John H. Gerstner. Gerstner is to predestination what Einstein is to physics or what Arnold Palmer is to golf. I wold rather have challenged Einstein on relativity or entered into match play with Palmer than to take on Gerstner. But…fools rush in where angels fear to tread. I challenged Gerstner in the classroom time after time, making a total pest of myself. I resisted for well over a year. My final surrender came in stages. Painful stages. It started when I began work as a student pastor in a church. I wrote a note to myself that I kept on my desk in a place where I could always see it: YOU ARE REQUIRED TO BELIEVE, TO PREACH, AND TO TEACH WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS IS TRUE, NOT WHAT YOU WANT THE BIBLE TO SAY IS TRUE. The note haunted me. My final crisis came in my senior year. I had a three-credit course in the study of Jonathan Edwards. We spent the semester studying Edward’ most famous book, *The Freedom of the Will*, under Gerstner’s tutelage. At the same time I had a Greek exegesis course in the Book of Romans. I was the only student in that course, one on one with the New Testament professor. There was nowhere I could hide. The combination was too much for me. Gerstner, Edwards the New Testament professor, and above all the Apostle Paul, were too formidable a team for me to withstand. The ninth chapter of Romans was the clincher. I simply could find no way to avoid the Apostle’s teaching in that chapter. Reluctantly, I sighed and surrendered, but with my head, not my heart. ‘OK, I believe this stuff, but I don’t have to like it!’ “ (p10-12)

       “The struggle about predestination is all the more confusing because the greatest minds in the history of the church have disagreed about it”

       Reformed View: Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards -----(modern) Francis Schaeffer, Cornelius Van Til, Roger Nicole, James Boice, Philip Hughes.

       Free Will View: Pelagius, Arminius, Philip Melanchthon, John Wesley, Charles Finney----(modern) C.S. Lewis, Norman Geisler, John Warwich Montgomery, Clark Pinnock, Billy Graham.

       “In his famous treatise on theology, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin wrote sparingly on the subject. Luther wrote more about predestination than did Calvin.”

       “What predestination means, in its most elementary form, is that our final destination, heaven or hell, is decided by God not only before we get there, but before we are even born. It teaches that our ultimate destiny is in the hands of God.”

       “From all eternity, before we ever live, God decided to save some members of the human race and to let the rest of the human race perish. God made a choice – he shoes some individuals to be saved unto everlasting blessedness in heaven and others he chose to pass over, to allow them to follow the consequences of their sins into eternal torment in hell.”

       Questions concerning traffic accidents, winning the World Series or stubbing your toe are addressed under the category of Providence. This is not the same discussion as the narrow study of predestination for salvation or damnation.

       A basic tenet of Theism is the sovereignty of God. The Westminster Confession reads: “God, from all eternity, did by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.”