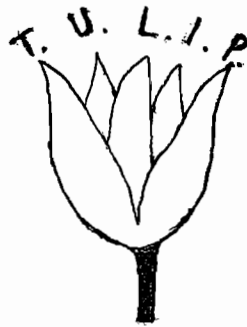


A Discourse on the  
Principles of  
5 Point Calvinism



- T. Total Depravity
- U. Unconditional Election
- L. Limited Atonement
- I. Irresistible Grace
- P. Perseverance

Written in refutation of Dr. J. R. Rice's book:  
"Predestined to Hell? No!"

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Everett N. Falvey

## Chapter 1

### Points of Correction

An important distinction should be made to begin with. It is at least a very misleading title theme-- to refer to the correlary, or negative side of the doctrine of election, whereas 5-point Calvinism (so-called) primarily teaches the positive truth of predestination to heaven. Yet, rightly interpreted, the question part of the book is nonetheless true, and should be answered Yes! (as later explained herein).

The prefix "hyper" is used by Dr. Rice throughout the book to label all who hold more than 2 of the distinguishing 5 points of the Calvinist system, as "heretics", "neglectful of soul-winning", "proud intellectuals", "morally guilty", "decadent", "ruinous", etc.

Yet he would call one a Calvinist ("moderate") including himself, who denounces 3 of the 5 points, which are each an integral, essential part of the Calvinist system of salvation theology. Why isn't such a one a sub-Calvinist?

In other words, 5 points is the minimum; how can it be "hyper", which means an excess? The standard is 5; anything less would be at best only part Calvinist, and part something else--essentially Arminian. This is because the common denominator of Arminian salvation theology, is an inherent "free" human will. Whereas, a basic tenet of Calvinism is the teaching of the absence of such capacity, via total depravity from the fall.

If a Christian is called a fundamentalist because he believes in every fundamental article of biblical doctrine, why isn't he called a hyper-fundamentalist? Wouldn't he only be termed such by one who is not a full fundamentalist; that is, who believes less (something different) than every fundamental article of doctrine? Better yet, how about the term: hyper-Christian? Or, doctrinally speaking, what would hyper-truth be?

This analogy ought to help us see how indiscriminately the modification of "hyper" can be used, as it is so frequently misapplied by Dr. Rice in his attack--retaliatory, or otherwise--upon the historic salvation theology traditionally known as 5-point Calvinism.

My point is this: he is not only talking about those who hold to some extra-Calvinistic interpretations and practices, he is attacking the very frame-

work of the basic Calvinist system. And even if Calvin himself at sometime deviated from his once-declared views, the system is still there to be considered by others, in all of its particulars, for its validity.

Also the controversy should be confined to that part of Calvin's theology dealing with salvation. One can be Calvinistic in other areas of Christian doctrine and philosophy, but not necessarily subscribe to the "5-point" salvation principles, entirely. Therefore, the distinction should be made when applying the term Calvinism, as to just what branch of theology is involved.

This is no minor point considering the recklessness by which the term Calvinist has been historically manipulated, maligned, and misappropriated.

#### Better Words Than Calvinism and Arminianism

There are ~~two~~ terms, however, that I have come across after writing a treatise, "Disputing the Free Will Concept", which I believe eliminate the uncertainty and elusiveness of the terms Calvinism and Arminianism. Their meanings further help clarify the related terms of "free grace": to wit, God's sovereignty, foreknowledge, election, predestination, decrees, and all other associated salvation language.

Apparently the words were used for some time around the reformation era, as may be noted in Hurst's History of the Christian Church, Vol. 1. These words are monergy, and synergy -- or in other forms, monergism, and synergism, etc.

Monergy - one agency; that is, in man's salvation, God is the only active agent: man being entirely passive. This was the Western church view, promulgated by Tertullian (within limits), Augustine, Calvin, etc. One reason maintained being that the depth of human depravity necessitates that the first and (every) controlling part in salvation be solely divine grace.

Synergy - two agencies; that is, the cooperation of both human and divine agents in achieving man's salvation (this was the predominant tendency of the Eastern church, with Pelagius, the great leader).

In the latter connection, it is also interesting to observe the Gnostic view of sin and grace: "While there are certain evils in human nature, and the disposition is warped by inherited infirmities, man is at liberty to choose salvation, and is responsible for neglecting the offer of divine grace" (with such liberty and responsibility implying adequate capacity, or ability). Quoted from Hurst's Church History, Vol. 1. Parenthetical note, mine.

Referring again to the words monergy, and synergy, and related forms, I believe these contrasting words call for such a decision of alignment with one or the other, that they will clearly distinguish (1) those who believe in salvation by God's grace alone, which is the sole active agency, and (2) those who believe that salvation requires the co-operative, co-active agency of man's natural will, as being both free and inducible to choose or reject salvation, as "proffered" by grace.

Now sticking strictly to the fundamental monergistic principle, which is, simply that God is active, and man is passive in every aspect of salvation--how could there be any such thing as a hyper monergist (true Calvinist)? No more than there could be any such thing as a hyper-Christian!

The elements of the principle are absolute in themselves: God is only active, without limit; man is only passive, without limit.

Conversely, according to the principle of synergy, the characteristic elements are that God is active, and man is active. But neither element is absolute in itself, nor without limit. God can not be the 100% active agent in the whole spectrum of salvation, and man can not be without some freedom, and power of choice, positive or negative.

There is an indisputable line of demarcation between the two postulates, monergism and synergism, which can not be denied as long as the basic word definitions are not modified, as has unfortunately been the case with the meanings of Calvinism, Arminianism, etc.

Is it not more accurate and self-explanatory to use grammatical words with root components which define and establish their meanings, than proper names--which of themselves prove nothing; often having different connotations, or interpretations, of which the case in point is a perfect example?

In summation of this point of consideration, then, would it not be more identifying of one's salvation theology to determine whether he is a monergist, or synergist in his convictions--than to classify him as a Calvinist, Arminian, etc., with all the confusion and shades of meanings attached to those names?

At any rate, I am very thankful for these words, and hereafter intend to refer to them as being more readily definitive than Calvinism, etc.

More On The "Hyper" Misnomer

A prevailing misrepresentation that Dr. Rice makes throughout the book is that even what should be considered the best construction of Calvinism appears to be disregarded by him, and the label hyper-Calvinism is applied, with little exception, to all Calvinists (monergists). Example: Page 5, "After showing (?) what Calvinism is, and that it is a man-made philosophy, we plan to show the following blessed facts (What makes them blessed, and what makes them facts):

"Hyper-Calvinism is a man-made philosophy, not in the scriptures....etc."

Note that Calvinism and hyper-Calvinism are used interchangeably with the same indictment, so that hyper must only be used for added clout in his vehement diatribe against Calvinism (monergism), per se.

## Chapter 2

### Election and Reprobation Distinctions

The opening statement of the book (Predestined for Hell? No!) introduction, Page 5, reads,

"Does God really predestinate some people to be saved, and predestinate others to go to Hell, so that they have no free choice? Absolutely not! Nobody is predestined to be saved, except as he chooses of his own free will, to repent of sin and trust Christ for salvation. No one is predestined ahead of time to go to Hell".

In Dr. Rice's theology, free choice, or free will is ultimately the basis of predestination. We have, then, the following contrast:

The free will concept (synergy) says in effect, that: man's predestination is based on man's will (God's will is subject to man's will).

The sovereign grace interpretation (monergy): man's predestination is based on God's will, only.

This might sound over-simplified, but it is a true representation of the contrast. Dr. Rice said it very clearly, as quoted above, "Nobody is predestined to be saved, except as he chooses of his own free will, to repent, etc."

As to the denial of predestination to hell, the whole problem of interpretation lies in what is understood, or assumed to be the cause of such predestination.

Dr. Rice, page 8 and elsewhere, rejects as heresy (which is the height of irony) the doctrine that God predestined some men to hell, even because of their sin, and that some cannot be saved, because they are not elected.

This is a radical enough position itself, but when he further adds that it is a doctrine of Calvinism that such condemned souls are "born to be damned by God's own choice", he is not only laying a very unjust charge on true Calvinism (scripturally provable), there appears to be cause for a serious question of his understanding of certain other cardinal elements of God's grace in salvation.

I would like to quote from John Gill in his book, "The Cause of God and Truth", for as logical and theologically sound explanation of the doctrine of reprobation as one could hope for, apart from the scriptures, which are of course, his source.

First, Gill says that, "What is called reprobation is no other than non-election, or what is opposite to predestination to heaven. But it is easy to observe the design of these men (the Arminian Remonstrants), which is, that by exposing to contempt the doctrine of reprobation, which is sparingly spoken of in scripture, and left to be concluded from that of election, and being most odious to carnal minds, they hope to weaken all regards to the doctrine of election, which stands in glaring light, and with full evidence in the word of God".

In reference to Prov. 16:4, <sup>(Gill)</sup> he says, "It is commonly said that it is our sentiment, and the sense we give of this text, and what may be inferred from the doctrine of predestination, that God made man to damn him (or some men); whereas this is neither our sentiment, nor is it the sense we give of this text, nor is it to be inferred from the doctrine of predestination; for there is a wide difference between God's making man to damn him, and his appointing (predestinating) wicked men to damnation for their wickedness, which is the meaning of this text, and of the doctrine of reprobation we assert. We say that God made man neither to damn him, nor to save him; neither salvation nor damnation were God's ultimate end in making man, but his own glory, which will be answered, one way or another, either in his salvation or damnation".

Further, he states, "Reprobation may be distinguished into preterition, and predamnation. Preterition is God's act of passing by and leaving some, who are called the rest, when he chose others to salvation; and is the effect of God's sovereign good will and pleasure, etc. Predamnation is God's appointing men to damnation, in consideration and on account of sin; not God's decree and the execution of it, is the cause of damnation; God damns no man but for sin, nor does he appoint any to damnation but on account of it."

May we see, then, that He decreed the consequence of sin, not sin itself?

Elsewhere, Gill says, "The main thing to be attended to is, how it comes to pass, that some men have faith and repentance, and so are saved; whilst others have neither, and so are damned? Some men have faith and repentance; how come they by them? God freely gives these graces to them, and implants them in them; and why does he do so? Because of his sovereign good pleasure he has, from all eternity, willed and determined to do so; which is a considerable branch of election. On the other hand, some men have neither faith nor repentance; what is the reason of it? Because, being by nature in a state of infidelity

and impenitence, God does not give them that grace which only can deliver them from it. And why does he not give them that grace? Because, of his sovereign will and pleasure, he has determined not to give it to them; which is a considerable branch of reprobation."

God's justice is seriously called into question, at least by implication, when the supposition that anyone may be saved, overrides the truth that He did not have to save anyone; the fall, due to organic union with Adam, justly bringing eternal ruin and condemnation to the race.

#### The Decree Factor

Clearly, from Rom. 9:15, 18, God may show mercy, to whom he will. This is an unlimited principle; an absolute independent prerogative of God's will. He need not show mercy to all, or at all!

If we rightly define and divide God's decrees pertaining to (1) the fall, and (2) salvation, in that order, it should give us a more true understanding and perspective of these things.

First, God decreed the fall; not sin, the cause of the fall. He decreed the result, or consequence of the original sin of Adam, and its effect on all posterity.

This was a just decree, and could have been unalterably final for all humanity, but God--under no necessity within himself, or externally--by free choice of his sovereign will, further decreed to provide salvation for a certain elected number of the fallen race. Also, the decree not only provides the end, but all the necessary means to accomplish that end--which is, the actual salvation of every soul whom God appointed to be saved.

This was expressed in bygone days by some historic Calvinists (monergists) as "the unfrustrable grace of God".

#### Foreknowledge Misconceived

The following quote is a typical free will interpretation of the word "foreknowledge" used by Dr. Rice, page 8,

"It is a Bible doctrine that God foreknows who will trust in Christ, and that he has predestined or purposed to see that they are justified and glorified".

Again, this is election based upon man's will, not God's.



Among other explanations to the contrary of this detracting simplification, the affinity between the original Greek words for foreknowledge, and foreordination conveys a much greater significance than only God's power of foresight, or precognition of the future. The synonymy of the two words may be especially noted in I Pet. 1:20. The closeness further relates to predestined, appointed, decreed, etc.

#### A Reflective Pause and Explanation

Before saying much more against Dr. Rice's teaching on the various aspects of the subject, I want to express honest respect for the doctor, regarding the good reputation that he had--personally and professionally. I have no doubt that he sincerely loved and worshipped God, and had faithfully served him to His glory, and the church's good in many ways throughout his long and productive life and ministry.

I have <sup>read</sup> some of his writings, and been much blessed and profited. I also had the privilege of meeting him, some fifteen years or more ago, when he was in our town by invitation of our church. He held public evangelistic meetings in the junior high school building. A few years ago I was in Tennessee, and met associates and relatives of his, and know that he was held in high regard by them and a great many others.

If I did not give recognition and commendation to his many good works, and try to act in love toward him in memory as an elder brother, then I might be seen as assailing his total character, rather than justifiably taking issue with his position in the particular controversy noted.

And if it were not for the far-reaching effect that such published teaching can have upon the church, contemporary and future, I would not feel the same compulsion or necessity to counter his opinions and interpretations with such an open refutation as this.

#### God's Honor Above All

Within the limits of such prescribed ethics, preceding, there is nonetheless a serious conflict of doctrinal interpretation to be resolved. It is no live-and-let-live matter. The honor of God's truth in this area of doctrine is at stake, as well as consistency in teaching the church. God is not the author of confusion; his word is never controversial. There is only one true interpretation of any biblical revelation, and that particular meaning must be

determined and vindicated above everything at variance with it.

On page 9-10 of his book, where Dr. Rice refers to the historic 5 points, with a brief definition of each--the following may be said.

### True Calvinism Defended

His explanation of "Total Inability" as held by Calvin, etc. is substantially right, and well stated; as well as the description of "Unconditional Election", and "Limited Atonement" (none of which he agreed with). These are essentially accurate statements, despite his intent to disparage them. As to his comment on "Irresistible Grace", that "Calvin meant it is foolish to urge people to decide (whether to accept Christ, etc.) because those who are ordained to be saved will be irresistibly moved and overpowered by God's grace, and so will be saved"--I would answer as follows:

It is not foolish to witness, or preach the gospel (we do not know who the elect are). Also God will direct circumstances to be, thus making effectual our witness, etc. (which is the external general call; God performing the internal operation on whomever he has elected). "whereunto he called you by our gospel", II Thess.2:14.

In other words, God has ordained, and commanded the proclamation of His Gospel. There can be no justification to do otherwise. Neither is such ministry incompatible with monergistic salvation, for God has ordained the means, and well as the end. Being about our father's business, is as much concerned with witnessing as anything else we are responsible to do. But it is not nearly the captivating, consuming occupation that most free-will motivated evangelism makes it to be.

This "free-will" deception is almost universally pervasive in the church, and is exemplified by the not-infrequent deviation of even most Calvinists from the required constancy of their avowed principles. For example, Dr. Rice says, "it is fair to say Calvin is thought to have modified his views somewhat through the years", and "when we speak of Calvinism we mean Calvinism gone to extremes, not necessarily Calvin's more mature (?) thought but the earlier radical (?) position, and particularly the extreme position and hurtful heresy held by many followers of Calvin."

While I admit many instances of regretful deviation of various well-known basic Calvinists, it is at least a little presumptuous to re-classify some of them, as if

they had repudiated their constitutional salvation theology. An excerpt from my treatise, "Disputing the Free Will Concept", page 59-60, will help illustrate the nature of this problem:

"So subtle is the flesh, that even when some degree of belief in an absolute God-controlled election is theologically held by many, their preaching fervor for salvation decisions often either betrays, or contradicts that principle. It as if the truth of election is elusive to them, because in certain instances when the subject is being emphasized it is supported and explained with some justice. Yet when the gospel is being preached and the emphasis is an evangelistic appeal to the unsaved--more times than not, the truth of election does not control or stabilize the preaching or witnessing method, or message."

"I do not mean that every word must be so theologically technical in this regard, because there must be allowance for our human limits; and there is justification for earnest desire to see anyone possibly saved. But yet, I have observed much more careful and consistent maintenance of other principles of the faith, than election."

"In the fervency of preaching and witnessing, as motivated by the common free-will influence, the basic principle of election is often over-ridden, and negated by the warnings and appeals to the will of the unsaved to respond, as if the final decision rests with them, as optional."

Some examples of lifting verses of scripture out of context, misinterpreting and misapplying them as proof-texts of the free will concept, which Dr. Rice predictably uses are: II Pet. 3:9, I Tim. 2:4, Rev. 22:17, in addition to John 3:16, I John 2:2, etc. Reference to the treatise mentioned above (pages, 61, 62, and 31) will give explanations disputing these common misconceptions.

Also, it is necessary to readily admit that there is indeed a form of right-wing extremism, maintained by many who have adopted the basic Calvinistic salvation principles. Again, from the above-noted treatise, page 2-3, speaking of the problem of over-reaction to the Calvinist system:

"2. Extreme right reaction (full acceptance, or strict predestination belief. Problem: Tendency to under-emphasis in evangelism, because of failure to understand both the cause, and means of election. That is, that God is the cause, and men are the means (but always under God's active control)."

#### "Characteristic Effects"

"Unresponsiveness, and irresponsibility to God; producing various degrees of militant, spiritless, dogmatic, unhealthy Christians and churches from an extremism of interpretation, not balanced with legitimate Christian obedience, i.e., works of service, etc., as means (inst-

uments) of God's sovereign grace in His work of salvation."

If Dr. Rice, or anyone else were to use the term hyper-Calvinism in opposition to this kind of misrepresented Calvinism, it would be understandable and justified as such. Unfortunately, the assault is not aimed at only this particular class of extremists, but to all who hold a salvation theology more Calvinistic\* than Arminian\* (or more than Dr. Rice's conception). \*I would prefer to identify them as monergists vs. synergists, as defined on pages 2-3.

## Chapter 3

### The Captivating Power of Error

It is one thing to contend for the truth, but whoever is wrong in this doctrinal dispute is contending against the truth. Now this is obviously very serious, and if whoever is wrong doesn't get straightened out now, God may act somehow in intervention, chastisement, etc.; or surely the one(s) in error will bear no little shame and reproach at the judgment seat of Christ. This is especially more serious when considered for its effect on the church, and the tremendous responsibility to lead believers in the right way--which, however circumstantially difficult, is nonetheless always determinable, and attainable. God has promised nothing less, but on his terms only.

There can be no innocent, or excusable misrepresentation of any such major doctrine. What is it if a man, though he may be otherwise faithful and correct in theology--persistently maintains and teaches an erroneous interpretation of a particular doctrine? Is he not "prophesying (or teaching) out of his own heart"; that is, "following his own spirit"? And therefore, the "Lord hath not sent them (him)", in that area.

These indicting words are from Ezekiel 13, and while no further implication is to be drawn as to the Ezekiel case itself--the point is, that whenever we speak in error, especially dogmatically and authoritatively, we are to that extent a false teacher, a heretic and whatever else is contrary to the true representation of God's word. No modification of a biblical truth can be allowed. The responsibility to be right, permits no excuse for error, and prohibits personal opinions to be proclaimed as truth.

The realization of this fact alone, should make us afraid of mishandling God's word in any respect, let alone a central doctrine such as we are discussing.

### Bearing The Marks Of Bigotry

So many superficial, half-truth statements are made by Dr. Rice in his vehement opposition to the true principle of predestinated salvation, that it is difficult to know where to start, and stop, in refutation of them. But again, God allows no room for misinterpretation of his word. Such part-truths are no truths at all--but mishandling of scripture; yea, false teaching, which is "abominable" to the Lord.

For example, on page 44 of Rice's book, he comments

in his typical tirade fashion, against what he calls the "man-made term of limited atonement", for he says "that term is exact opposite of what the Bible teaches". Here is the half-truth, and very minor at that: only the term can be authoritatively called man-made. But what establishes the principle to be man-made, except Dr. Rice's and others' opinions? I believe with as much force (of biblical conviction) that his salvation system is the real man-made theory, resting on nothing more, essentially, than the shaky hypothesis that man's will is inherently free to choose a potential salvation, which they say is universally available.

As an example, apparently undiscovered or unstudied by Dr. Rice and evidently most others of his persuasion: even the taken-for-granted free-will "support" of John 3:16 will not stand the true test of exegesis, as explained below (from treatise, previously referred to):

"To continue the consideration of whether the word "world" as related to reconciliation means every individual, or something less or different (as stated elsewhere), let us trace several scriptural instances of the words being used."

"Romans 11:15, which says: "For if the casting away of them (Israel) be the reconciling of the world, etc.", if nothing else at least shows us that the world as here, and elsewhere used, excludes Israel (nationally)".

"This <sup>is</sup> significant to temper the interpretation of an English word which, apart from scripture, ordinarily means the entire race, or all of mankind, to us. In this passage, "world" is used to describe people other than Jews. It would not be wrong to substitute the word "Gentiles" as implied and elsewhere stated to emphasize the contrast between the setting aside of the chosen nation, and the extension of salvation to other nations. At any rate, there is surely nothing conclusive in this referred scripture to support reconciliation of every individual in the world, then or since."

"Now, if we compare Rom. 11:15 and II Cor. 5:19 -- which says "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, etc." -- why can it not mean the same thing? That is, that the "world" means people or nations, as contrasted to Israel. Is that not the established fact of it all? In other words, this interpretation is certain, but whether there is an all-inclusive application of the doctrine and ministry of reconciliation to the entire earth's population (except Israel?) is not a certainty, as many would conclude."

"The doctrine of an exclusive election by God of certain individuals to be saved, and the idea as usually maintained from John 3:16, etc. of a universal opportunity for salvation can not co-exist -- because they contra-

dict each other; and God's word must, and does harmonize."

"What we can safely say is that John 3:15-17 shows the broadening of God's grace from Israel only, to other nations, tongues, etc."

"What we can not safely say, without much further evidence, is that this extension of salvation is inclusive, without exception, of every human being on earth, at any particular time, or otherwise."

Another of many examples of Dr. Rice's subjective\* (and this is a key characteristic) interpretations of salvation doctrine, are his attempts to disprove the terminology of the 5 points of Calvinism. He says that the Bible does not call total depravity, total inability; which is insignificantly true, but how can he say that it is not a scriptural truth, that it is equal to the same thing (total depravity and total inability)?

He is guilty of one of his own charges, whereas it is really he who draws a line on the extent of total depravity, not the true Calvinist. In other words, it is apparent to me that he does (did) not understand, or accept the full doctrine of total depravity (because it leaves no room for a free will), nor for that matter the true significance of election, grace, atonement, regeneration, faith and probably most other actual salvation factors.

When he can do nothing much more than malign the terminology of monergistic salvation, as technically unscriptural language--a man can not be open to consideration of whether the terms represent the truth in principle. How could an honest, unbiased endeavor to study the subject doctrines to conclusive interpretations, still leave one with such specious ideas; and then the unholy boldness to preach and publish them as if they were indeed the "oracles of God".

The contradiction of various scriptural facts by free-will slanted theology is nothing less than abject error; even heresy. For example, as a comment relative to man's depravity, inability, etc., Dr. Rice says, "The Bible never even hints that there are many people who have no ability to be saved".

If every man is spiritually dead before regenera-

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\*Free-will motivated interpretation is subjective handling of objective Gospel truth; thus, adulteration of scriptural teaching with the leaven of humanism.

tion, does that not hint that he has no inherent ability to comprehend the Gospel? Doesn't II Cor. 2:14 at least hint that the natural man has no capacity for spiritual things? And isn't the Gospel a spiritual thing?

He (Dr. Rice) says that the Bible represents the grace of God as loving mercy offered to all men. To which I would at least comment that grace includes how God works in salvation, not merely what he offers. He says that the Calvinist represents God as forcing a man to believe and be saved, even against his will. But I say that the true Calvinist means no such thing; rather that it is God who makes a man willing by giving him a new, spiritually active will so that he can believe, and communicate with God in that otherwise inaccessible spiritual dimension. (And this he only does for the elect). Eph. 1:5-6, etc. Which all, is nothing short of regeneration--the making of a Christian, directly, and independently by God, at his appointed time.



Deluded Disciples

The following quote from Rice, is typical of the many illogical contradictions of true predestination to be found throughout his writings on the subject:

"The great masses of orthodox (?), Bible believing Christians (like himself and all other free-willers, he means), etc.....believe that God has known ahead of time who will come to love and trust him, that he has predestined these to be conformed to the image of His Son, as we are plainly told in Rom. 8:29". And then, this over-sized pill for the readers to swallow:

"But they are not Calvinists as regards predestination".

Right, he is, because anyone, including himself, who can buy the first quoted statement doesn't know the first thing about true predestination. And about the only thing scripturally, that such a theory is based upon is the erroneous assumption that "~~fore~~knowledge" is equivalent to the foresight of faith (and even faith misconceived).

In answer to which, I quote from my treatise, page 19-22 (partial):

"I believe the very term "foreknowledge", traditionally made to be the basis of election, is equally grounded in God's sovereign will--not as the result of something he foresaw that might happen, but that was guaranteed to happen because he foreordained it to. It may then be that the word "foreknowledge" is more than recognition, prescience, or God's ability to foresee the future; especially since all such future events are either caused, or controlled by Him. By this I mean that the Father's foreknowledge of the elect in Christ is probably more of a term referring to the intimacy of our relationship to Him, as seeing and knowing us in Christ at the time of predestinating us to all the wonderful things of Rom. 8:29-30--called, justified, to be conformed to the image of his Son, glorified. That the elect are personally known by the Father in eternity past, is a much more precious and meaningful connotation of this word (foreknowledge) than impersonally foreseeing what the future conveys."

"For example, in Rom. 8:29 foreknowledge seems to stand in the order and significance of foreordination, as well as in I Peter 1:20. I Peter 1:2 is the almost singular basis for Scofield and others' classification of ~~fore~~knowledge preceding--even determining election."

"Scofield and others in tracing back the elective procedure, usually end up with foreknowledge being the first step, and then comment that nothing is revealed as to what it is in the divine foreknowledge that determines

the election. While often there is probably no subtle, or conscious reason for stopping there--the effect is to make the doctrinal element of foreknowledge more of a mysterious cause in itself, than it is relative to something greater."

"In other words, if indeed the mind and will of God is sovereign and supreme, isn't it better to say--rightly so --that God has not revealed why he has elected anyone to salvation; including the fact that the idea of foreknowledge of any thing external to himself can not be of any causative, or extenuating effect upon that decree. My point is, that we ought to start everything with the will of God, which is probably practically synonymous with his mind--and that foreknowledge as prescience, as great a power as that is, is by comparison a faculty or attribute."

"Again in summary, first, I think there is something importantly akin between foreknowledge and foreordination. Secondly, the application of the word as God's ability to know beforehand refers more to who is known, than what is known. By this, I mean that the believer is foreknown personally in Christ because of his election--versus being elected as the result of a foreseen positive response to the gospel. A note from M. R. Vincent on I Peter 1:20 as to foreordained being foreknown is good on this: referring to the 'place held and continuing to be held by Christ in the divine mind'. Also the perfect participle, 'has been known from all eternity down to the present time'. Note also the same sense of meaning applied to spiritual Israel in Rom. 11:2, 'God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew'."

#### Is There Not A Litmus Test?

If we turn again to the crux of the whole issue--the key question is whether Dr. Rice, and so many others he endorses, are monergists, or synergists, per explanation page 2-3, herein. For now, we may identify the contrast as: divine grace + nothing vs. divine grace + human free will.

Of course, there is no question but that he, and most all believers are synergists, Dr. Rice speaks as if this great majority situation makes it all so obviously right--that Calvinists, being so few must therefore be wrong. True? Hardly! As sad as it may be that such a situation exists in the church; of itself it doesn't prove a thing as to which side is right\*.

Even apostasy, at its height, may well count more followers than resisters, but such a majority is still as wrong as the first defector from the truth. The revealed

\*Consensus is not evidence of truth.

truth of God's word is an objective science--not open to subjective theory, nor especially are any such fabrications allowed by God to be propagated as doctrine.

There is going to be an awful price paid for mishandling the word of God--and I say, not without sympathy, but with absolute conviction, that every proponent of the free will scheme of salvation will bear the shameful consequences of such false teaching and practice.

There are no options for persisting in the hidebound opinions, and concocted rationales of the traditions of men (reminiscent of the rabbinical scholars, who supplanted the scriptures with their own spurious dicta)--substituted for the true interpretations of doctrinal principles.

On page 16 of his book, Dr. Rice refers to the "great majority of Baptists, the Bible institutes, the independent Christian colleges, and even most of the best (?) Christians, the most devout Bible believers who do not hold to Calvin's position of strict predestination. limited atonement, irresistible grace, or that God planned some to be eternally damned" (which is a gross misrepresentation of the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation, or condemnation).

However true these statistics of his may all be, they are in reality a sad commentary of the large-scale defection of believers from the truth of the doctrines of monergistic salvation.

He further says that such great evangelists and soul winners as Moody, Torrey, Sunday, Jones, Hyles, etc. were, or are not Arminian because they believed in salvation by grace. To which I say that if (as is the case) they are/were free will proponents and practitioners (a definite Arminian trait), then they did not/do not know what salvation by grace actually is!

Salvation by grace is monergistic from start to finish. Conversely, these men were undeniably synergists. When grace is taught or explained by most of this class of Christians, it may include any amount of what God does for man in the way of prevenient leading, opportunity, and circumstances; in fact practically anything short of actually allowing conversion to be irresistibly caused by God. The irony of this being that they become advocates of what must be essentially "limited grace". Their perpetual assault against the "limited atonement" of Calvinism, rings rather hollow when matched against the conditional points of their theological system.

It comes down this way: when the Arminian, free-willer, or the more definitive term synergist draws a line on grace, which will not allow it to be an irresistible work of God in bringing his "unconditional" elect to himself--they place a limitation on the fullest extent of what grace may be held to be. And they permit no exception to this for anyone, in their system of salvation; unless perhaps some hold to a similarly unsound idea of a dual plan of salvation, where some may be exclusively chosen for special purposes, and all others potentially eligible for salvation.

Now, by contrast, the "particular redemption" that Calvinists hold which is otherwise known as "limited atonement", is only limited in this sense: it is limited to the elect--but is fully efficacious for them; that is, unlimited in value and power on their behalf. Therefore, because grace includes how God effects his plan of salvation, nothing can finally thwart or frustrate its fulfillment.

Let the reader consider, then, which system espouses the most questionable limitations!

Very similar analogies can be drawn with the synergistic view of election--as being inherently more limited, by being made to be "conditional" upon God's foresight of faith (which is the free willer's erroneous interpretation of the "foreknowledge" of predestination).

The comparable modification of "total depravity", again carries with it a specific limitation of extent--whereby the fallen Adamic nature, under the Arminian, synergistic concept, is not so completely corrupted and spiritually helpless as Calvinism (the monergistic interpretation) maintains. That is, to make the idea of a human free will workable--however mysteriously--there "has" to be some unique capacity in natural man, whereby he has an inviolable freedom of choice to either accept or reject personal salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, flesh and spirit can communicate according to such a theory, despite the teaching of scripture to the contrary in II Cor. 2:14, Gal. 5:17, Rom. 8:5, etc.

The synergist, therefore, places a far more serious limitation on the power and efficacy of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, than the monergist, who makes no qualification of the absolute application of the atonement to all who are its God-appointed objects (they being the elect only). Under the synergistic theory--no one is certain to be saved.

Another example of misinterpretation of scriptural doctrine, is on page 38, where Dr. Rice in speaking of Pharoah's heart being hardened, refers to his rejection of God and failure to repent, as the unpardonable sin (by which he means it was the cause of his doom).

To refute a common misconception, the unpardonable sin is not itself a cause of irrevocable condemnation, but a sign or confirmation of it (as with apostates); which can only occur in the non-elect, and for the very reason that they are not predestinated to salvation--not vice-versa, as the free will concept, by its very nature, must advocate.

In a different matter, a similar idea or representative meaning inheres. While Dr. Rice oversimplifies and typically misrepresents the Calvinist 5th point of "perseverance"--the true meaning of the doctrine is that it is the outward or visible manifestation and proof of that inward principle of grace, by which God preserves his saints.

The unpardonable sin proves the inward irreversible condition of the wicked unbeliever (non-elect, or whatever similar term may be used). The perseverance of the saints proves their inward irrevocable possession of eternal life.

How would Rice have interpreted the similar scripture of Matt. 24:13, which says that those who endure to the end shall be saved? If he might agree that it means the same as perseverance, as noted above, why would he question that the true Calvinist has any other ideas than the same interpretation? Again, there appears to be the same specious method of unfounded accusation, and malignant attack against the authentic distinguishing articles of monergistic salvation. (Because they do not fit the fallacious subjective, free will disposition of mind)!

Whereas, there is indeed warrant to speak out against the excesses and provable errors of any ism, etc.; it betrays the ethics of honest scholarship (especially doctrinal responsibility) to attack the very core and structure of that theological system known as Calvinism, which has proven and demonstrated its basic worth in both the church and secular world's history--albeit sadly lacking in today's church world.

When authors or voices of error have widely extensive outreach, the damage to the church's life and testimony is practically beyond repair--but some attempt must be made by those who know the truth.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion Of A Key Passage

One of the classic passages of scripture dealing with God's sovereignty in mercy, election, and salvation is Romans 9; the early part of the chapter relating to spiritual Israel vs. natural Israel--and the mid-to-latter portion referring to God's mercy to both Jew and Gentile elect; plus his contrasting wrath and condemnation to the wicked, as in Pharoah's case.

Now, Dr. Rice, true to form in his non-contextual treatment of the passage from vs. 10-18, says that the entire passage has nothing to do with salvation, but that God's love and election of Jacob and Esau, and his hardening of Pharoah's heart were only for earthly purposes. For example, he says that "when God chose Isaac to be the head of the nation Israel instead of Ishmael, it was not a matter of salvation".

What about the many things about Isaac which are indeed related to Christ and salvation? Is not Isaac son of the promise of the spiritual seed of Abraham--itself a salvation covenant? Further, does he not both typify Christ, and the church, therefore? Does Dr. Rice discount and discredit scriptural typology, with its wealth of spiritual lessons?

How can it be denied that Rom. 9:1-10 is all about the spiritually elect Israelites vs. the natural descendants of Abraham? How much clearer can words be than these, per vss. 7-9: "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed"(elect, saved, etc.) .

And then, we can go to Sarah his mother, the free-woman, type of grace - Gen. 17:19,21, which especially spells out the whole promise and plan of salvation, as related to Isaac and spiritual Israel (including elect Gentiles).

Again, listen to Dr. Rice's comment referring to Jacob's being chosen, as having no connection with salvation: "when God chose Jacob, instead of Esau, to have the birthright and the headship of the nation, it had nothing to do with salvation". First of all, in reply, the birthright itself is a spiritual blessing, for mainly spiritual purposes, as the birthright includes the position of priest to the family. And what is something spiritual, except that which tends or relates to salvation, whether personal, or corporate?

In the case of Jacob and Esau, listen to what John Gill had to say: ...."wherefore the purpose of God, respecting election of Jacob, fully appears to depend not of works, but of the grace of him that calleth. From all this we conclude, that the predestination of men, either to life or death, is personal: that the objects of either branch of predestination are alike, or are considered in the same situation or condition, whether in the pure, or corrupt mass, or in both; that God was not influenced or moved, in the election of the one, by their good works, or in the rejection of the other, by their bad ones; that God's decree of election stands firm and immovable, not upon the foot of works, but of the grace of God; and that love and hatred are the real springs and source of predestination in its respective branches."

"This servitude, therefore is to be understood in a spiritual sense of Esau's exclusion from the favor of God, and the blessings of grace: for these two phrases, 'The elder shall serve the younger!', and 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated', are the same signification; the one is explanative of the other. When Jacob got the birth-right, and received the blessing, this oracle began to have a visible accomplishment. Esau then appeared not to be the son and heir of promise, who was to abide in the house; and therefore departs, and pitches his dwelling elsewhere; all which showed he had no interest in spiritual adoption--no right to the blessings of the covenant of grace--nor was he an heir of heaven; these belonged to Jacob. Esau was a servant of sin, under the dominion of it, and in bondage to it; whilst Jacob was the Lord's freeman, and as a prince, had power with God, and with men, and prevailed."

"Esau is represented as a profane person; yea, is expressly said to be (Greek word) rejected, that is, from inheriting the blessing. Jacob, on the other hand, is spoken of as a plain and upright man; one interested in the covenant of grace, and a chosen vessel of salvation."

"Add to all this, that the apostle continues his discourse, in the following verses, upon the subject of personal election and rejection; he observes, ver. 15, 18, that 'God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth'; which respects persons, and not nations; and instances in Pharoah, which surely cannot be understood of the posterity, but of the person of Pharoah; and in ver. 22, 23, speaks of 'vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and of 'vessels of mercy afore prepared for glory'; which design neither nations, nor churches, nor Jewish converts only, but particular persons among Jews and Gentiles; which latter appear to be the people and beloved of God, and vessels of mercy, by their being called by grace".

A Close Look At Romans 9

In dealing with <sup>the</sup> point (as questioned, or denied by Dr. Rice) of the basic salvation significance of Rom. 9:10-24, it may be properly stated in context as this:

Whereas Paul had been explaining the purpose of God in salvation through the Gospel in the latter part of Chapter 8 (the theme of Romans being the Gospel in its various ramifications)--in chapter 9 he digresses, in apostolic concern for Israel, to explain that the Gospel does not abrogate, but fulfills the Old Testament covenant promises of salvation to spiritually elect Israel. And, more important to our discussion, Paul gives the ground of all salvation--God's sovereign will, determining whom he will have mercy upon.

To say that this portion of scripture doesn't even mention salvation, is no more warranted than to say the same thing about John 3:16, etc., because they use words other than salvation--even though they mean the same thing. "A rose by any other name, would smell as sweet"; to use an old, but apt expression.

Paul starts the chapter out, wishing that his national kinsmen could be saved. Why would he then deviate to a discussion of anything imprecisely related to that solicitous concern? In fact, Romans 9 is an ideal passage of scripture for us to see something of the extent of both the human and divine relationships to salvation. To properly interpret both factors, thus harmonizing their respective truths, must indeed be the object of our study (as, of course, with all scripture). Surely we need to see the design of God in putting these two different extremes in the same portion of His word.

Was Paul a free-willer, or synergist, because of what he said in Rom. 9:2-3, wherein he said "That I have great heaviness and continued sorrow in my heart. For I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:"? Since he uses such strong words later in the chapter, declaring the sovereignty of God's will in determining who may be saved (that is, extended mercy to, which ultimately must mean salvation)--do these two statements contradict each other, or raise any question about Paul's position on the doctrine of predestination?

I believe the key to a balanced interpretation, is to recognize that Paul progresses from a more natural, or human reasoning perspective in the early part of the chapter, to a full explanation of that sovereign principle of God's divine prerogatives, whether he may love or



hate, extend mercy, or harden in judgment. And we may easily err here, as we are warned in vss. 19-23, when we do not properly interpret what these prerogatives mean, or do not mean!

May we indeed tread carefully on such divine ground, but stand humbly confident thereon, when we are enlightened in such transcendent revelations of our perfect God; his unlimited rights, and ever just ways.

Paul speaks from the depths of his humanity in vss. 2-3, as quoted. Read these verses with a strong emphasis on "I" (espec. vs. 3) as if Paul were to say: if it were within his power (but not questioning God's ways), he would sacrifice his own salvation for his Israelite kin to be saved. That is, if it were him, he says that he would do such and such--but he is only saying this in human comparison to God's way, which he is shortly to explain.

But may we not think for a minute that Paul, with the extent of divine revelations which he had been blessed to receive, did not fully understand God's monergistic plan and system of grace in the salvation of men.

Where we may easily make our mistake, is to take what Paul said in vs. 2-3 as doctrinal warrant to think and act synergistically in our evangelism. Except for the humanly commendable attitude of heart and mind that Paul expresses, there is no constitutional evangelistic principle here for us to assume.

He is not laying down a tenet for us to emulate, or that we may say--There!, see how Paul "proves" the maximum extent to which our lives should be dedicated and engaged in soul winning.

Is that essentially what he means, or is he rather making an elementary comparative point in his discourse, of the ultimate, purely human concept of salvation? While all that is said between vs. 3 and vs. 14, is a progressive unfolding of the doctrine under discussion, and should be convincing as such--we shall not violate the contextual truth, if we directly connect vs. 3 and 14 to illustrate the important point which I believe is there for us to realize.

Such abridgment would read as follows: (vs.3), "For I could wish myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:.....(vs.14), "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid."

That is, God forbid that Paul or you, or I, or anyone, should impugn the rightness of His sovereign ways; no matter <sup>what</sup> we think or wish--or how much we think we love souls, or would do if we were God. All such thoughts are not only to no avail, they neither mitigate nor qualify the doctrinal principle revealed in verses 8-23, etc. --that God has the sovereign, exclusive prerogative to either save man, or not save him; and all within His just perfections (including his related judgments).

He is not only the architect of the plan of salvation in design, and details of the whole construction (or re-construction) project--he is the only builder; the sole artisan and engineer. All the preparatory work--the groundwork, is his; performed by Him. If the completed church--the body of Christ--is that building, which God the father, the Son, and Holy Spirit are constructing, what can the building do to aid (or resist) its erection and completion.

We are the raw materials in the hand of the master craftsman. Tools and materials can do nothing of themselves. They are only instruments; means, by which God accomplishes His purposes--and nothing can stop, thwart, or change His plans.

I would like to close this refutation ~~discourse~~ with a quotation from treatise previously referred to, "Disputing the Free Will Concept", page 20:

"Ephesians 1:5 tells us that God has 'predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will'. This, without question, is a statement that clearly supports absolute election, and must be severely strained to make an action of the will of God, somehow the result of a foreseen act of the will of man. The demeaning implication is this: that if we ever make a work of God subject to a work of man--we make God subject to man. In other words, man's will would be sovereign, at least in one area, instead of God's will. And that, no matter how it is rationalized, is the ultimate effect of free will theology."

"Going on to verse 9 in Ephesians 1, again we have the explanation of how His will is carried out which he purposed in himself. How hard it is for us to come to the place of admitting, or agreeing with the idea that God originates (within Himself) such a great work as salvation, without any factor external to himself conditioning its ultimate consummation, including man's will."

May God's truth be vindicated, and the church be delivered from the "commandments and doctrines of men".  
Amen!

Sovereign Grace  
Salvation Theology

A complete example, copied from John Gill's commentary on II Timothy 1:9,

"(God) Who hath saved us, and called us, with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

With statements keyed by number to scriptural references, and parenthetical notes and underlinings, added.

"Who hath saved us, and called us, etc. And therefore should not be ashamed of his Gospel, but should readily partake of the afflictions of it, depending on his power to support under them. This is a salvation previous to vocation (calling): there is a temporal salvation ; a special providence attends the elect of God, as soon as born; God's visitation in a very special manner preserves<sup>1</sup> their spirits; they are kept from many imminent dangers, and some of them from the grosser immoralities of life; and there is a chain of providences, as the fixing of their habitations, bringing to such a place, and under such a ministry, with various other things, ways, and methods, which lead on to effectual vocation (calling): and there is a preservation of them in Christ Jesus, antecedent to vocation, Jude 1.\* God had a mind to save some<sup>2</sup>; he pitched (?) on his own Son to be the Saviour of them; he put those persons (elect) into his hands, where they are safely preserved; so as not to be damned, and everlastingly perish, notwithstanding their fall in Adam, their original corruption, and actual transgressions, until called by grace; yea, that spiritual and eternal salvation, which is by Jesus Christ, is before calling; this was resolved upon from eternity;<sup>3</sup> a council of peace was formed; a covenant of grace was made; a promise of life given; persons were fixed upon to be saved;<sup>4</sup> a Saviour was appointed, and blessings of grace were put into his hands; and all according to an eternal purpose. Salvation was not only resolved upon, but the scheme of it was contrived from eternity, in a way agreeable to all the divine perfections, in which Satan is most mortified; the creature abased, and the elect effectually saved;<sup>5</sup> nay, salvation is obtained before calling, for Christ being called to this work, and having undertaken it, was in the fulness of time sent to effect it, and is become the Author of it; the thing is done,<sup>6</sup> and all that <sup>remain</sup> are the application of it, which is in effectual vocation<sup>A</sup> (calling), and the full possession of it, which will be in heaven. The calling here spoken of is not to an office, nor a mere call by the external ministry of the word, but a call by special grace, to special privileges, to grace and glory; and is a high and heavenly one, and is here called holy; for it follows, 'with an holy calling'. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read 'with his holy calling', the Author of it is holy; it is a call to holiness, and the means of it are holy,<sup>3,9,10,11</sup> and in it persons have principles of grace and holiness implanted in them (before they can be-

lieve)<sup>7,8</sup> and are influenced to live holy lives and conversations: 'not according to our works'; neither salvation nor vocation (calling) are according to the works of men: not salvation; works are not the moving cause of it, but the free love and favour of God<sup>20</sup>; nor the procuring cause of it, but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor the adjuvant or helping cause of it, for his own arm brought salvation alone; nor vocation (external calling), which must be according to works before, or after; not according to works before calling, for such are not properly good works, being destitute of faith in Christ, and proceeding neither from a right principle, nor to a right end; not according to works after calling, for as they are after it, they are the fruits of calling grace, and cannot be the cause, or rule, and measure of it: 'but according to his own purpose and grace'; salvation is according to both: it is according to the purpose of God,<sup>12</sup> God resolved upon the salvation of some; in pursuance of this resolution, he set up Christ as the Mediator; and it being necessary that he should be man, this was agreed to, and a body was prepared him; the time of his coming was fixed, called the fulness of time; and his sufferings and death, with all the circumstances of them, were determined by God. And it is according to grace; the resolution for it, and the contrivance of it, are owing to the grace of God; and which also appears in the making of a covenant<sup>4</sup> in setting up Christ as the Mediator of it; in the mission of him into this world; and in all the parts and branches of salvation<sup>13</sup> in the choice of persons to it; in the redemption of them by Christ<sup>14</sup> in their justification by his righteousness; in the pardon of their sins through his blood<sup>15,16</sup> in their adoption, regeneration, sanctification, and eternal glory; and the end of it is the glory and grace of God. Vocation (calling) is also according to both the purpose and grace of God; it is according to his purpose; the persons called are fixed upon by him; whom he predestinates he calls; none are called, but whom God purposed to call<sup>13,17</sup> and for their calling no other reason can be assigned but the sovereign will of God<sup>18</sup> nor can any other reason be given why others are not called; the time of their vocation (calling) is fixed in the decrees of God<sup>2</sup>; and the place where, and means whereby, and occasion whereof, all are predetermined by him: and this is also according to grace; the author of it is the God of all grace; and in it is made the first discovery of grace to sinners; nothing out of God (external to him) could move him to do it, and so it is sovereign grace; it is of some men, and not all, and so is distinguishing grace<sup>17</sup> it is of sinners, and so is free grace; and it is both to grace and glory, and so is rich grace; and it is according to grace 'which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began'; it is a gift, and a free gift, not at all depending upon any conditions in the creature, and entirely proceeding from the sovereign will of God; and it was a gift from eternity; there was not only a purpose of grace in God's heart, and a promise of it so early, but there was a real donation (giving) of it in eternity<sup>19</sup> and though those to whom it was given did not then personally exist, yet Christ did, and he existed as a covenant-Head and

Representative of his people, and they were in him, as members of him, as represented by him, being united to him; and this grace was given to him for them, and to them in him; in whom they were chosen, and in whom they were blessed with all spiritual blessings."

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|----|----------------|----|-----------------|
| 1  | I Tim. 4:10    | 11 | John 1:13       |
| 2  | Acts 13:48     | 12 | Rom. 9:11       |
| 3  | II Thess. 2:13 | 13 | Rom. 8:28-30    |
| 4  | John 17:2      | 14 | John 3:16       |
| 5  | Acts 2:23      | 15 | Heb. 10:10,14   |
| 6  | Heb. 12:2      | 16 | Rev. 1:5        |
| 7  | John 6:29      | 17 | John 6:37,44,65 |
| 8  | I Cor. 2:14    | 18 | Eph. 1:9,11     |
| 9  | Eph. 2:8       | 19 | John 10:29      |
| 10 | Jonah 2:9      | 20 | I John 4:9,10   |

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Supplement to other similar material compiled.