

B. The "Five Points" in Modern Evangelical Theology

The past forty years have seen the appearance of two works of systematic theology which have aptly illustrated the status of the "five points" in evangelical theology today. These works are Henry C. Thiessen's introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), and .7. O. Buswell, Jr.'s A systematic Theology of the Christian Religion (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962, 63).

1. Thiessen's View on the Five Points

Thiessen's view is found scattered throughout his *Introductory Lectures*, and must therefore be defined and supported piecemeal from his book. His view is as follows:

a. Conditional Election

". . . By election we mean that sovereign act of God in grace whereby he chose in Christ Jesus for salvation all those whom He foreknew would accept Him Although we are nowhere told what it is in the foreknowledge of God that determines His choice, the repeated teaching of Scripture that man is responsible for accepting or rejecting salvation necessitates our postulating that it is man's reaction to the revelation God has made of Himself that is the basis of His election in His foreknowledge He perceives what each one will do with this restored ability (prevenient grace), and elects men to salvation in harmony with His knowledge of their choice of Him." (pp. 344 345)

"In the minds of some people, election is a choice that God makes for which we can see no reason and which we can hardly harmonize with His justice. ye are asked to accept the theory of "unconditional election" as true but unexplainable in spite of the fact that the persistent demand of the heart is for a theory of election that does commend itself to our sense of justice and that harmonizes the teaching of Scripture concerning the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man." (italics by the professor)

b. Total Depravity

"By depravity we mean man's want of original righteousness and of holy affections toward God, and also the corruption of his moral nature and his bias toward evil.

". . . The Scriptures speak of human nature as wholly depraved. From the negative standpoint, it does not mean that every sinner is devoid of all qualities pleasing to men; that he commits, or is prone to every form of sin; that he is as bitterly opposed to God as it is possible for him to be. . . .

"From the positive standpoint, it does mean that every sinner is totally destitute of that love to God which is the fundamental requirement of the law. . . ; that he is supremely given to a preference of himself to God. . . ; that he has an aversion to God which on occasion becomes active enmity to Him. . . ; that his every faculty is disordered and corrupted . . . ; that he has no thought, feeling, or deed of which God can fully approve . . . ; and that he has entered upon a line of constant progress in depravity, from which he can in no wise turn away in his own strength. . . .