

The difficulty comes when the electing decree is made to depend upon foreknowledge of an action made by fallen men whose entire being is enslaved to and under the constant bondage of sin, and who are at enmity with God. If eternal election is based upon foreknowledge of what unregenerate, spiritually blind, spiritually dead men will do with the gospel, then no one in this whole world can be elected!

Of course, sublapsarianism brings to this problem the mitigating force of prevenient grace, which enables unregenerate, spiritually blind, spiritually dead men to make a very small, very tentative, very initial, very imperfect, but nevertheless very crucial favorable response to the gospel. As a result, God, foreseeing this response, can Himself respond by electing these men to salvation. The one problem with this whole concept of prevenient grace is that it does not rest upon any explicit scriptural basis, either small or broad. Those who advocate it realize this problem, but assert that it is a necessary implication of God's justice, or a "persistent demand of the heart", or that which "commends itself to our sense of justice", or "a necessary postulate" to reconcile the scriptural teaching concerning the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Thus Thiessen writes:

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. May we repeat: Since mankind is hopelessly dead in trespasses and sins and can do nothing to obtain salvation, God graciously restores to all men sufficient ability to make a choice in the matter of submission to Him. This is the salvation bringing grace of God that has appeared to all men. In His foreknowledge He perceives what each one will do with this restored ability, and elects men to salvation in harmony with His knowledge of their choice of Him."

-- *Introductory Lectures* pp. 344-345.

Another problem in this view may be seen in the following consideration. The electing decree is based upon divine foreknowledge of human responses to the gospel. Those who in time elect for God, God in eternity past elects to salvation. However, in this construct divine election, usually understood as a choice of persons, has changed its meaning. Election in this view does not mean that God decides who the elect will be; it means that God decides what the elect are destined to become. Not WHO, but WHAT. In this sense of the term, God chooses no one; men choose themselves. Just as the chargeable cause of the fall of man is not God, but man, so the creditable cause of the salvation of man is not God, but man! Man lost himself; man saves himself! That is, the ultimate reason why a man is saved is because he chooses to be saved!