

The advocates of this view often attempt to soften and meliorate the force of this description with fair words and euphonious phrases which sound very God honoring and God exalting (and no doubt they intend them to honor and exalt God!). But to speak of "God's sovereign grace", and to mean by this that God is sovereign over everything in the universe except man's will, and that God graciously bestows salvation upon those who wish to have it, see a travesty of the historical meaning of the expression. And to assert that "God takes the initiative in salvation," and that "salvation is God's work from start to finish," and to mean by this that God is the one who takes the first step by providing a salvation for man and offering a salvation to man, but that as far as that salvation's actually saving anyone, man must take the first step before God can do anything to save him, once again uses expressions which historically have stressed conceptions quite different! Behind these fair words lie the centrality, the decisiveness, the crucial nature of man's choice; and this must be seen for what it is. Although any thought of merit in man's choice to be saved is explicitly excluded by this view, nevertheless the fact remains that the ultimate reason and the only reason a man is saved is because he decides to be, he chooses to be, he responds favorably. There may be proximate causes and reasons and considerations which move him and influence him and persuade him, but the ultimate cause of his choice lies, not in God but in the free will of the man himself. This point should be pondered by the friends of the sublapsarian view.