

grace. This grace, which does not in itself save, makes it possible, when a man comes in contact with the gospel call, to respond favorably. In order to do this, however, the effects of depravity must somehow be sufficiently overcome to place a man in a neutral stance *vis a vis* the gospel. But what does this actually imply? Does it mean that his understanding is momentarily quickened, that his will is briefly turned from his own way, that the shackles of his bondslavery to sin are momentarily loosened, that he is given enough spiritual life for a brief movement, however slight and faltering, toward God, that his hostility to God is temporarily suspended, and that he can do one small thing to please God? Any proposal of prevenient grace must face and attempt to give meaningful answers to questions such as these. In other words, one who posits some kind of modification of nature or force of depravity must become specific, in terms of the human faculties or powers particularly affected by such modification.

The other aspect of this problem concerns the seeming absence of a scriptural basis for prevenient grace, except in terms of implications which some have drawn from their constructions of certain biblical doctrines. All introduction or postulation of "our sense of justice", or of "our sense of fairness", or of "the demand of the human heart" as a basis for this doctrine must be analyzed and evaluated in the light of God's revelation. The question must be, "How are justice and fairness and the needs of the human heart defined in the Scriptures?" Having ascertained the answers, we must bring our conceptions and convictions into line with those definitions, not the other way around!

View #2 -- Foreknowledge (of fellowship) of elect fallen men as the basis of predestination

This view holds that, by a knowledge of love, favor, and personal choice, God foreknew those persons whom He had chosen, and that on the basis of this foreknowledge He predestinated these persons to salvation. Two problems arise in connection with this view:

[1] The problem of a special use of the word "foreknow"

Critics of this view point to the five uses of προγινώσκω and two uses of προγνώσις in the New Testament and ask for a clear case of "prior personal knowledge of choice or favor" as the meaning of any of these uses, instead of a simple "prior knowledge of cognition of facts" as the meaning in all of them.

It is to be admitted that simple knowledge of cognition appears to be intended in the uses of προγινώσκω in Acts 26:5 ("since they [the Jews] have known about me for a long time previously, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion"); 1 Peter 1:20 ("For He [Christ] was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you"); and 2 Peter 3:17 ("You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness"); and in the use of προγνώσις in Acts 2:23 ("this man [Jesus], delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put him to death"). And, of course, in the two Scriptures which relate election or predestination and foreknowledge --