

[3] Can man's responsibility for his sinfulness (and thus his precondemnation) be fixed on the basis of man's suppression, distortion, and perversion of the truth of general revelation?

There is no question whatever that fallen man is blameworthy and inexcusable and culpable for what he does with the truth of God's works of creation and providence, and the truths of the attributes of God which are constantly being revealed by means of the visible things which He has made. The major problem with making this response to general revelation the basis of precondemnation in order to fix man's responsibility appears to lie in the connection between man's sinful response and the noetic effects of sin. For when man perceives the made things, he perceives them with a sin darkened mind, and by means of spiritually dead spiritual eyes. And he suppresses, distorts, and perverts the truth in unrighteousness.

Of course, this points us back to something more ultimate than man's response to general revelation. As a result the question of fixing responsibility has once again only been partially answered when we say that fallen men are responsible for their sinful response to general revelation. Blameworthiness for their precondemnation must have a broader, more ultimate basis.

[4] Can man's responsibility for his sinfulness (and thus his precondemnation) be fixed on the basis of man's natural depravity?

Since the proposed solutions in numbers [1], [2], and [3] have all led back to the problem of depravity, this proposal seems naturally to follow. If rejection of the gospel is seen as one expression of depravity, if sinful actions arise out of a sinful nature, and if man's sinful response to general revelation is informed by the noetic effects of depravity, then the depravity of man's nature would seem the prime candidate for the locus of responsibility.

The problem, of course, is how to fix responsibility for the depravity itself. If man is born a depraved sinner (in fact, conceived in depravity), then how can he be responsible for being a sinner (unless he is in some sense responsible for being born)? That is, if responsibility for man's sinfulness lies in his being depraved, then the prior question of responsibility for his becoming depraved must be faced (and responsibly [1!] answered).

Once again we seem to be pressed toward a more ultimate basis for the fixing of responsibility for man's sinfulness and precondemnation.

[5] Can man's responsibility for his sinfulness (and thus his precondemnation) be fixed on the basis of man's involvement in the results of the fall?

It is to be admitted that all men descending from Adam by ordinary general are involved in the results of the fall. All men are characterized by spiritual death (including the depravity and corruption of all of the faculties and powers of the moral and spiritual nature), loss of original righteousness, loss of communion with God, bondage to Satan, physical death, guilt and condemnation, and the incurring of God's wrath and curse.