

**Chapter 1 : What does Divine Grace do for us?**

*Such is the case with Rebecca Weaver's "Divine Grace and Human Agency." Her work is a gift to historical theology and was a great help to me recently as I studied Augustine and the history of semi-pelagianism.*

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: Smith Rebecca Harden Weaver. *Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy*. Patristic Monograph Series Mercer University Press, The tendency in treatments focusing on Dogmengeschichte has been to regard the period as a sort of quiet backwater, highlighted occasionally by evidence of the decays and glimmerings of Augustinianism. Such a viewpoint has never been adequate, and its insufficiency has been underscored in recent decades by the renewed scholarly interest in the profound social and cultural transformations of the fifth and sixth centuries. Such differences have been noted before. Weaver distills the differences between, on the one hand, Augustine and his defenders and, on the other, those who questioned his doctrine of divine grace. The former, operating within a congregational setting, sought to safeguard the sovereignty of grace, while the latter, from within a monastic milieu, aimed to preserve the connection between human actions and human destiny. In truth, the distinction between the two perspectives might be expressed with greater nuance. But the reality to which it points is clear enough. As Weaver patiently demonstrates, the differences between Augustine and, for example, John Cassian, were so deep that they could not be overcome by the convergences of vocabulary that marked the century-long evolution of the controversy. This survey is unobtrusively informed by the most recent scholarship, and Weaver proves herself a careful reader of texts. It also suggests the need for detailed and comprehensive accounts of Gallic and North African monasticism. This book should certainly be in every theological library. It is a sure guide to an important period in the history of doctrine, for the Augustine who emerged from this period, his rough predestinarian edges worn somewhat smoother by the course of this controversy, was the doctor of grace for the Middle Ages. You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

**Chapter 2 : Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment - Logos Bible Software**

*A study of the controversies surrounding the Semi-Pelagians in the 5th and early 6th centuries, providing a window onto the Church's prolonged struggle to define the relation of grace and human agency.*

History of Calvinistâ€™Arminian debate Christians who were influenced by the teachings of Jacobus Arminius such as Methodists believe that while God is all-knowing and always knows what choices each person will make, and he still gives them the ability to choose or not choose everything, regardless of whether there are any internal or external factors contributing to that choice. Like John Calvin , Arminius affirmed total depravity , but Arminius believed that only prevenient grace allowed people to choose salvation: Concerning grace and free will, this is what I teach according to the Scriptures and orthodox consent: Free will is unable to begin or to perfect any true and spiritual good, without grace It exists prior to and without reference to anything humans may have done. As humans are corrupted by the effects of sin , prevenient grace allows persons to engage their God-given free will to choose the salvation offered by God in Jesus Christ or to reject that salvific offer. Thomas Jay Oord offers perhaps the most cogent free will theology presupposing prevenient grace. This view is backed in the Bible with verses such as Luke How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! We see that whilst Jesus wants to save Jerusalem He respects their choice to continue on in sin despite His will that they be saved. Lutheranism [71] Lutherans believe that although humans have free will concerning civil righteousness, they cannot work spiritual righteousness without the Holy Spirit, since righteousness in the heart cannot be wrought in the absence of the Holy Spirit. As long as we desire sin, our wills are only free for sin. He repeatedly and voluntarily acts according to it. However, Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, trusting in their own strength, knowledge, and wisdom. Lutherans reject the Calvinist doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Like both Calvinist camps, Lutherans view the work of salvation as monergistic in that "the natural [that is, corrupted and divinely unrenewed] powers of man cannot do anything or help towards salvation" Formula of Concord: Hence, Lutherans believe that a true Christian that is, a genuine recipient of saving grace can lose his or her salvation, "[b]ut the cause is not as though God were unwilling to grant grace for perseverance to those in whom He has begun the good work Unlike Calvinists, Lutherans do not believe in a predestination to damnation. Many earlier movements such as Waldensians and others likewise held this viewpoint. This freedom to will what one desires is inherent in all people. This is perfectly true: They quote Ephesians 1: Edwards believed that indeterminism was incompatible with individual dependence on God and hence with his sovereignty. In this book, Edwards attempts to show that libertarianism is incoherent. It claims that man is free to act on his strongest moral impulse and volition, which is externally determined, but is not free to act contrary to them, or to alter them. Proponents, such as John L. Girardeau , have indicated their belief that moral neutrality is impossible; that even if it were possible, and one were equally inclined to contrary options, one could make no choice at all; that if one is inclined, however slightly, toward one option, then that person will necessarily choose that one over any others. Some non-Calvinist Christians attempt a reconciliation of the dual concepts of predestination and free will by pointing to the situation of God as Christ. In taking the form of a man, a necessary element of this process was that Jesus Christ lived the existence of a mortal. When Jesus was born he was not born with the omniscient power of God the Creator, but with the mind of a human child - yet he was still God in essence. The precedent this creates is that God is able to will the abandonment of His knowledge, or ignore knowledge, while remaining fully God. Thus it is not inconceivable that although omniscience demands that God knows what the future holds for individuals, it is within his power to deny this knowledge in order to preserve individual free will. Other theologians argue that the Calvinist-Edwardsean view suggests that if all human volitions are predetermined by God, then all actions dictated by fallen will of man necessarily satisfy His sovereign decree. An early proposal toward such a reconciliation states that God is, in fact, not aware of future events, but rather, being eternal, He is outside time, and sees the past, present, and future as one whole creation. Consequently, it is not as though God would know "in advance" that Jeffrey Dahmer would become guilty of homicide years prior to the event as an

example, but that He was aware of it from all eternity, viewing all time as a single present. Calvinist theologian Loraine Boettner argued that the doctrine of divine foreknowledge does not escape the alleged problems of divine foreordination. He wrote that "what God foreknows must, in the very nature of the case, be as fixed and certain as what is foreordained; and if one is inconsistent with the free agency of man, the other is also. Foreordination renders the events certain, while foreknowledge presupposes that they are certain. Comparison of Protestants[ edit ] This table summarizes three classical Protestant beliefs about free will. Moral agency includes free will and agency. Having the choice to do right or wrong was important, because God wants a society of a certain type—those that comply with eternal laws. Before this Earth was created, this dispute over agency rose to the level that there was a " war in heaven. Many Mormon leaders have also taught that the battle in Heaven over agency is now being carried out on earth[ citation needed ], where dictators, influenced by Satan, fight against freedom or free agency in governments contrary to the will of God. Mormons also believe in a limited form of foreordination — not in deterministic, unalterable decrees, but rather in callings from God for individuals to perform specific missions in mortality. Those who are foreordained can reject the foreordination, either outright or by transgressing the laws of God and becoming unworthy to fulfill the call. New Church[ edit ] The New Church , or Swedenborgianism, teaches that every person has complete freedom to choose heaven or hell. Emanuel Swedenborg , upon whose writings the New Church is founded, argued that if God is love itself, people must have free will. If God is love itself, then He desires no harm to come to anyone: On the other hand, if God is love itself, then He must love things outside of Himself; and if people do not have the freedom to choose evil, they are simply extensions of God, and He cannot love them as something outside of Himself. In addition, Swedenborg argues that if a person does not have free will to choose goodness and faith, then all of the commandments in the Bible to love God and the neighbor are worthless, since no one can choose to do them - and it is impossible that a God who is love itself and wisdom itself would give impossible commandments. Within the predominant schools of Hindu philosophy there are two main opinions. The Advaita monistic schools generally believe in a fate -based approach, and the Dvaita dualistic schools are proponents for the theory of free will. In both Dvaita and Advaita schools, and also in the many other traditions within Hinduism, there is a strong belief in destiny [] and that both the past and future are known, or viewable, by certain saints or mystics as well as by the supreme being Ishvara in traditions where Ishvara is worshipped as an all-knowing being. I know everything that has happened in the past, all that is happening in the present, and all things that are yet to come. Different approaches[ edit ] The six orthodox astika schools of thought in Hindu philosophy give differing opinions: In the Samkhya , for instance, matter is without any freedom, and soul lacks any ability to control the unfolding of matter. The only real freedom kaivalya consists in realizing the ultimate separateness of matter and self. For the Yoga school, only Ishvara is truly free, and its freedom is also distinct from all feelings, thoughts, actions, or wills, and is thus not at all a freedom of will. The metaphysics of the Nyaya and Vaisheshika schools strongly suggest a belief in determinism, but do not seem to make explicit claims about determinism or free will. Therefore, we see at once that there cannot be any such thing as free-will; the very words are a contradiction, because will is what we know, and everything that we know is within our universe, and everything within our universe is moulded by conditions of time, space and causality. To acquire freedom we have to get beyond the limitations of this universe; it cannot be found here. On the other hand, Mimamsa , Vedanta , and the more theistic versions of Hinduism such as Shaivism and Vaishnavism have often emphasized the importance of free will. For example, in the Bhagavad Gita the living beings jivas are described as being of a higher nature who have the freedom to exploit the inferior material nature prakrti: Besides these, O mighty-armed Arjuna, there is another, superior energy of Mine, which comprises the living entities who are exploiting the resources of this material, inferior nature. The Advaitin philosopher Chandrashekhara Bharati Swaminah puts it this way: Fate is past karma, free-will is present karma. Both are really one, that is, karma, though they may differ in the matter of time. There can be no conflict when they are really one. Fate, as I told you, is the resultant of the past exercise of your free-will. By exercising your free-will in the past, you brought on the resultant fate. By exercising your free-will in the present, I want you to wipe out your past record if it hurts you, or to add to it if you find it enjoyable. In any case, whether for

acquiring more happiness or for reducing misery, you have to exercise your free-will in the present. God creates the possibility of a human action with his divine jabr, but then the human follows through and "acquires" the act, making it theirs and taking responsibility for it using their human qadar. The topic is also often discussed in connection with Negative theology, Divine simplicity and Divine Providence, as well as Jewish principles of faith in general. Free will and creation[ edit ] The traditional teaching regarding the purpose of creation, particularly as influenced by Jewish mysticism, is that "This world is like a corridor to the World to Come". God thus created the world such that both good and evil can operate freely, this is the meaning of the rabbinic maxim, "All is in the hands of Heaven except the fear of Heaven". If he desires to incline towards the good way and be righteous, he has the power to do so; and if he desires to incline towards the unrighteous way and be a wicked man, he also has the power to do so. Give no place in your minds to that which is asserted by many of the ignorant: Since the power of doing good or evil is in our own hands, and since all the wicked deeds which we have committed have been committed with our full consciousness, it befits us to turn in penitence and to forsake our evil deed. The representative view is that "Everything is foreseen; yet free will is given". So does He know whether a particular person will be righteous or wicked, or not? If He does know, then it will be impossible for that person not to be righteous. If He knows that he will be righteous but that it is possible for him to be wicked, then He does not know everything that He has created. It has been said because of this that a man is judged according to all his actions. One analogy here is that of time travel. The time traveller, having returned from the future, knows in advance what x will do, but while he knows what x will do, that knowledge does not cause x to do so: Alternate approaches[ edit ] Although the above discussion of the paradox represents the majority Rabbinic view, there are several major thinkers who resolve the issue by explicitly excluding human action from divine foreknowledge. Isaiah Horowitz takes the view that God cannot know which moral choices people will make, but that, nevertheless, this does not impair his perfection. In line with this thinking, the teaching from Pirkei Avoth above, is then to be read as: Tzimtzum entails the idea that God "constricted" his infinite essence, to allow for the existence of a "conceptual space" in which a finite, independent world could exist. This "constriction" made free will possible, and hence the potential to earn the World to Come. Further, according to the first approach, it is understood that the Free-will Omniscience paradox provides a temporal parallel to the paradox inherent within Tzimtzum.

**Chapter 3 : God's Will, Man's Will and Free Will**

*Her central thesis is unremarkable, namely, that the controversies over divine grace and human agency that burst forth sporadically from Augustine's last years (c. ) to Orange were the function of deep differences of theological concern and social setting between the disputants.*

A brief summary will be helpful as we continue: Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well pleasing to God; but that state was mutable, or changeable, so that he was able to fall from it. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has entirely lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; therefore, as a natural man, being altogether averse to that good, and dead in sin, he is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself or to prepare himself for salvation. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage under sin, and by His grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet, by reason of his remaining corruption, he also wills that which is evil. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to do good alone in the state of glory only. Any study of the will of man is incomplete without some explanation of the difference between free will and free agency. Man is only free to act according to his nature, and he was born with a sinful nature see Ps. We must, in all candor, acknowledge these apparent contradictions. They deserve some serious, thoughtful consideration. There are some who deny this upon the grounds that man does not have the spiritual ability to believe in Jesus. There are many things which men ought to do which they have now lost the moral and spiritual though not the physical power to do. A man ought to be chaste; but if he has been so long immoral that he cannot restrain his passions, he is not therefore free from the obligation. It is the duty of a debtor to pay his debts; but if he has been such a spendthrift that he has brought himself into hopeless poverty, he is not exonerated from his debts on account of his inability to pay. Every man ought to believe that which is true, but if his mind has become so depraved that he loves a lie and will not receive the truth, is he therefore excused? If the law of God is to be lowered according to the moral condition of sinners, we would have a law graduated upon a sliding scale to suit the degrees of human sinfulness. In fact, the worst man would then be under the least law and become consequently the least guilty. The command of Christ stands good, however bad men may be; and when lie commands all men everywhere to repent, they are required to repent, whether their sinfulness renders it impossible for them to be willing to do so or not. But, one may ask, how can a person be a free and responsible agent if his actions have been foreordained from eternity? Again, a free and responsible agent means an intelligent person who acts with rational self-determination. Foreordination means that from eternity past God has made certain the actual course of events which take place in the life of every person and in the realm of nature. It is important to note at the outset that the true solution of this difficult question respecting the sovereignty of God and the freedom of man is not to be found in denying the sovereignty of God; neither is it found in denying the responsibility of man. The same God who has ordained the events has ordained human liberty and human responsibility in the midst of these events. The Bible teaches that it is just as important to assert the true validity of the secondary agent man as it is to assert the ultimate validity of the final cause God. One can readily see that we have as our solution either fatalism on the one hand, or the intelligent plan and purpose of an almighty, personal God on the other. The Bible clearly teaches that God has a plan and that He has the wisdom and power to execute that plan. Pelagianism denies human depravity, the necessity of efficacious grace, and exalts the human will above the divine will. According to Arminians three things belong to the freedom of the will: That the will has a self-determining power, or a certain sovereignty over itself, and its own acts, whereby it determines its own volitions. A state of indifference, or that equilibrium, whereby the will is without all antecedent bias, and left entirely free from any prepossessing inclination to one side or the other. That the volitions, or acts of the will, are contingent, not only as opposed to all constraint, but to all necessity, or any fixed and certain connection with some previous ground or reason of their existence. According to Calvinists, the liberty of a moral agent consists in the power of acting according to his choice; and those actions are free which are performed without any external compulsion or restraint, in consequence of the determination of his own mind. The infinite Being

necessarily wills and acts according to the absolute perfection of his nature, yet with the highest liberty. The very essence of its liberty lies in acting consciously, choosing or refusing without any external compulsion or constraint, but according to inward principles of rational apprehension and natural disposition. The Calvinist believes the man is free to choose and act in accordance with his nature. Spurgeon says this on the implications of free will: What do ye, sirs, but drag the Eternal from his throne and lift up into it that fallen creature, man; for man, according to that theory, nods and his nod is destiny. You must have a destiny somewhere; it must either be as God wills or as man wills. Glory I can and must in my text in its fullest sense. Only God can set the prisoner free.

**Chapter 4 : Project MUSE - Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy (**

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Sometimes in the comment threads the Traditional Baptist Statement on Soteriology TS is referenced and occasionally the claim of Semipelagianism pops up. In short, the TS is not and in fact cannot be legitimately interpreted as Semipelagian. What is the heresy of Pelagianism? Simply put, it is this: Pelagianism denies original sin and asserts wrongly that human nature is essentially unimpaired by the Fall. This is in error. Actually it was Theodore Beza who invented the term in , and applied it to the Roman Catholic view of grace and human will. Faith is viewed both as a gift of God and a choice of the human will. The Massilians considered Pelagius a heretic and sided with Augustine on the priority of divine grace before human response, but also differed with Augustine because they believed the human will acts freely in appropriating saving grace. Historical and Systematic, 2nd ed. By the s the term had become common currency while its original sixteenth-century meanings and usages were virtually forgotten. Interestingly, early Catholic catalogues of heresies of the Reformation period make no mention of Semipelagianism. Mercer University Press, This is not to say that the idea of Semipelagianism did not exist in the fifth and sixth centuries. The Council of Orange condemned the theological position which was later identified with Semipelagianism. It is also important to note the elasticity of the term and its usage from the sixteenth century until today. Semipelagianism means different things to different people. Wipf and Stock, ], â€” By that definition, Baptist theologians Malcolm Yarnell and Adam Harwood have demonstrated from the language of the TS itself that it clearly denies Semipelagianism. The Statement affirms the priority of divine grace in nearly every article, including Article Two, which is the focus of the Semipelagian charge. The TS prohibits the Semipelagian understanding of a sinner taking the first steps toward salvation. The TS does not prioritize the human will over the grace of God. Semipelagianism does not argue for the priority of grace in the matter of salvation. Now, here is what I have observed in some of the comments by Calvinists labeling the TS as Semipelagian. First, there is the presumption and presupposition that concepts like total inability, irresistible grace, and regeneration preceding faith are matters of fact. These are of course all disputed by those of us who are not Calvinists. The latter is disputed by many Calvinists as well, but I digress. Not even Reformed theologians are in agreement on whether original sin includes original guilt. Henri Blocher in his book Original Sin notes the different views among the Reformed. Third, it appears to me that some Calvinists have only two theological boxes and some have only three. A few, thankfully only a few, seem to believe that the two boxes are Calvinism and Unbiblical. This is a classic case of the False Dilemma Fallacy. Others operate under the three box system: Calvinism, Arminianism, Unbiblical where Arminianism barely escapes the third category, i. Now back to point number three above. This approach does not do justice to the varieties of orthodox Christian traditions. Sweeney professor of Church History at Trinity informs us that Lutheranism is. Baptists are Baptists, and we are a varied bunch! Those who affirm the TS reject the notion that one has to be either Calvinist or Arminian. Fourth, and this may be the most problematic of all, some critics of the TS seem to assume or believe that anything that is not Calvinism is, by entailment, Semipelagianism. Since the TS authors and signers deny such things as regeneration preceding faith, total depravity entails total inability, and that faith is a special grace gift given only to the elect, some Calvinists wrongly interpret the TS as denying prior divine initiative in salvation, and thus they conclude it is Semipelagian. This is a misuse of the term. It reads Semipelagianism into the words of the TS rather than finding it there. Spoiler alertâ€”heavy dependence on Jonathan Edwards for your understanding of the freedom of the will, or the lack thereof, is problematic according to Muller! Even the 19th century Calvinist theologians B. Warfield and Charles Hodge were not on board with Edwards. The TS is not Semipelagian. Denial of total inability is not Semipelagianism. As Arminius rightly made clear in his refutation of the charge of Pelagianism, the sinfulness of humanity is so complete that only by grace, and by grace alone, is human freedom even a possibility. A will that is not free is

not a will, as the early Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas all affirmed. Libertarian freedom, rightly understood, has always been a qualified freedom. Prior to the later Augustine, with the exception of the Pelagians, all Christians held the concept of an inherited sin nature and propensity to sin which prohibited any human approach to God apart from an initiating divine grace. As Kenneth Wilson has recently demonstrated, Augustine redefined the standard notion of original sin to include original guilt. Mohr Siebeck, ], This ground-breaking book is a bombshell in Augustinian studies and demonstrates Augustine derived much of his later theology more from Stoic, Manichaeic, and Neo-Platonic philosophies, which he then superimposed on key biblical texts. Augustine is the fountainhead of Reformed theology and the primary influencer of Calvin. So, back to the title of this piece: The claim that the TS is Semipelagian remains unsubstantiated. Clarityâ€™definitional, historical, theologicalâ€™must be the order of the day. Charity must rule as we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Chapter 5 : Divine and Human Agency in Paul and his Cultural Environment: John M.G. Barclay: T&T Clar**

*Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy by Rebecca Harden Weaver starting at \$*  
*Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy has 3 available editions to buy at Half Price Books Marketplace.*

What does Divine Grace do for us? Grace is a sharing in the divine life. It is the infused presence of God, a presence that is supernatural, not merely natural. Human persons are not born in a state of grace. And there is nothing we can do ourselves to earn grace. Rather, divine grace is favor, and it is freely bestowed. It is true that we can reject grace. And so we have to cooperate with it. But it is grace that renders the human person holy and favorable to God. So the first effect of grace is that it sanctifies. No one can be truly holy unless he is in a state of grace. Grace renders the soul beautiful. For whatever is holy is beautiful. If grace is a sharing in the divine life, then grace can only beautify the soul. It has been said that the eyes are the windows of the soul. There is a great deal of truth to this statement. One can readily see the difference between the soul that is elevated by divine grace. There is a splendor in the countenance, a superabundance of a certain humane quality in the eyes that renders the person very attractive. Nor are we strong enough to resist evil. But divine grace enables us to resist evil, and it strengthens the will to do good. In order to do good or resist evil, we have to be able to discern what is truly good and evil. To the perverted mind unenlightened by grace, what is evil appears as good, and what is good appears as evil. Dulling of the intellect is an effect of Original Sin. So grace enlightens the mind, enabling us to see intuitively all sorts of things that we would otherwise be in the dark about. Grace inspires us to good works of all sorts, but most importantly it inspires us to draw closer to God. Grace inspires us to pray, to praise God, to adore God, to trust Him, to petition Him, and to thank Him. And of course, the more we enter deeply into prayer, the more beautiful the soul becomes, which manifests physically in the eyes, and the stronger we are made to resist evil and do good, and the more enlightened the mind becomes. The Gravity of Sin: Through mortal sin, a person turns his back entirely on God and rejects His friendship. Three Conditions of Mortal Sin: Deliberate consent - one must consent freely and deliberately, as opposed to being momentarily overcome by passion. Venial sin is forgiven through holy communion. A number of unrepented venial sins can lead to mortal sin. Between these two is serious sin. Serious sin does not completely destroy grace, but seriously deprives a person of grace. It is more than venial sin and one should not receive communion without Confession. It depends upon the three conditions of sin. The first condition, serious matter, is obvious. But perhaps he was not as free in his decision as he otherwise would have been. He is the past president of the Canadian Fellowship of Catholic Scholars. Deacon Douglas studied Philosophy at St.

**Chapter 6 : Divine Grace and Human Agency – HFS Books**

*Divine Grace and Human Agency A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy. By Rebecca Harden Weaver. The Catholic University of America Press.*

Since His written revelation teaches concepts that appear to be mutually exclusive, we must realize that with God both truths are friends, not enemies. Thus, when the biblical facts warrant them, we can embrace incomprehensibles in the Bible and relate them to the omniscience and omnipotence of God. The General Problem God has revealed to us in the Bible that He not only created all things but He also preplanned everything that would happen in His creation. He both knows everything that has happened and everything that is yet future. He actively decreed every detail of this reality, and He is sovereign over all. But here is where the mystery comes in: These choices are his; he cannot blame God for them. And they will genuinely affect and modify the rest of his life. Because this mystery more intimately affects us than most of the others, it is one of the most difficult to accept. This produces a lack of balance. This mystery manifests itself in different ways. For instance, it relates to the issue of election and faith in the doctrine of salvation, as we will see later in this chapter. It also relates to the problem of evil, that is, how evil could enter the creation without God being responsible for it. We will examine this age-old problem in chapter 5. But first we need to demonstrate from the Word of God the truth of the two basic propositions in this mystery. Do the Scriptures really say that man is completely responsible for what he does even though God planned everything that would come to pass? Divine Sovereignty God is able to do anything He desires. The Lord carries out everything exactly as planned. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not establish it? All that God has preplanned is as good as done. Nothing can change it, for there is no authority above God. Whom do I resemble? God directs the history of the universe along the course of His foreordained plan. This involves His ability to choose individuals and groups for special purposes in the outworking of this plan. God also elects individuals for salvation. Christ speaks of those elected for salvation Matt. It is best that God works in all things, for only in this way will all things ultimately glorify God. Nevertheless, God will also glorify all believers at the resurrection when He finally conforms us to the image of His Son. Consider the implications of a statement like this! Ultimately there is no chance in this universe because even the workings of probability and statistics are controlled by God. There are no real accidents and God is surprised by nothing. If this is so, reprobation may be a more appropriate word than preterition. God has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires--both verbs are active v. But if God hardens some, how can human responsibility be real? How can He blame the non-elect for not doing His will v. God answers that the question is out of order v. We know that there is no injustice with God v. For man this issue is a mystery. Another passage along this line is 1 Peter 2: Other verses also reveal how God hardens hearts Is. Human Responsibility Just as biblical a doctrine as divine sovereignty is human responsibility. King Saul furnishes a good example of the reality of human responsibility. His disobedience cost him a kingdom that would have been everlasting: The Bible makes it clear that we are not pawns in the hands of a deterministic and fatalistic universe. Consider, for instance, the Crucifixion of the Son of God. This mystery also relates directly to Judas Iscariot and his betrayal of Christ: In His omniscience He also knew the Jews would not turn back from their sins indeed, He had even hardened their hearts; Isa. Yet His appeal to Judah was no sham Jer. Paul is talking about the outworking of the Christian life. He emphasizes the aspect of human responsibility in this process v. God is controlling and man is responsible. Neither of these two verses should be quoted without the other because the Bible keeps both truths in perfect balance. His plan affects every detail of this creation. This plan is eternal, and there never was another plan. Thus, terms like purpose, foreknowledge, predestination, and election are logically related, and they are equally timeless. Since God has knowledge of all things actual and possible, His eternal plan is not based upon blind choice. Instead, God has wisely chosen a plan in which all details will finally work together to bring about the greatest good the glorification of God. Since God is the absolute of truth, goodness, and love, His plan is a reflection of His own being and nature. Not only has God chosen the best possible plan; He also has the power and authority to bring it about omnipotence. When God

promises to do something, there is no question that it will be done. This is why every biblical prophecy will be perfectly fulfilled. Nevertheless, God carries out his all-inclusive plan by a variety of means. God may directly intervene or He may achieve His purpose by an indirect agency e. But God is in control regardless of what means He chooses to use. In some inexplicable way God has seen fit to incorporate human freedom and responsibility into His all-inclusive plan. Even though the Lord is in sovereign control of the details in His creation, He never forces any man to do anything against his will. The fact that He judges sin means that He is not responsible for the commission of the sins He judges. When a person sins it is because he has freely chosen to do so. Because it is free choice, he will be held responsible for the decision he makes see John In my view, personal and moral responsibility require free will. We do not control the fundamental realities of our lives e. In biblical terms this whole mystery can be summed up by saying that God is both King and Judge. Scripture also teaches that, as Judge, He holds every man responsible for the choices he makes and the courses of action he pursues. Although His plan controls what men will be, the product often is not what He desires. This is partly because God has chosen to allow human will to operate. Yet He has not elected all men: He has revealed His desire what men ought to do , but His plan for what specific men will do has for the most part been hidden. All too often, people try to apply illustrations of foreknowledge to predestination and election. For instance, they may compare God with a man standing on top of a mountain, looking down at a road that curves around the base of the mountain. The man can see into the future because he knows which cars will pass by one another before they become visible to each other. Foreknowledge is passive, but divine control is active. Another illustration involves a person engineering a situation in such a way that it creates a desire in another person to make a certain decision. Courtship is an example. When a man wants a woman to become his wife, he designs his courtship in such a way that she will respond with a willing "yes" when he proposes. He plans the situation and perhaps knows she will accept his proposal; yet she has a free choice to accept or reject. But even this illustration breaks down. It implies that when we sin, God seduced us in this direction. But that simply is not so see chap. The Alternatives and the Extremes As with other biblical mysteries, three alternatives are possible. One can accept the mystery, reject it as untrue, or rationalize it. To rationalize it, one must overemphasize one truth and minimize the other, and this leads to the two extremes. This means that the principles should be regarded as apparent contradictions and not ultimate contradictions. The only problem is that human understanding is sometimes deficient. Some are exclusively concerned with the former, others with the latter. Either error can lead to very practical problems. Those hung up on human responsibility may overemphasize methods and develop guilt feelings about not witnessing to everyone they meet. The elect are going to get saved anyway. If God is not sovereign, there is no point in praying because He is unable to answer most prayers.

### Chapter 7 : Free will in theology - Wikipedia

*It seems now worthwhile to examine to what extent there was an internal debate within Judaism about divine grace and its relation to human agency, and whether this debate could or did spawn various more or less radical solutions.*

### Chapter 8 : Divine Sovereignty vs. Human Responsibility | theinnatdunvilla.com

*Self-sufficiency and Power: Divine and Human Agency in Epictetus and Paul- Professor Troels Engberg-Pedersen, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. 7. 'By the Grace of God I am what I am': Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul- Professor John Barclay, University of Glasgow, UK.*

### Chapter 9 : Divine and Human Agency Â« Philonica et Neotestamentica

*Paul's view requires that human agency be located within the noncoercive agency of the Spirit by which it is transformed. Both "grace" (divine agency) and "works" (human agency) are simultaneously operative."*