

In miracle God's Involvement is most direct (of the three degrees of God's involvement in the history of the universe and of mankind.)

4. God's Providence, although it Includes the execution of the divine decrees relative to sin, does not make God responsible for causing sin or any of its terrible results. As Millard Erickson points out, God can act in four ways in relation to sin. He can (a) prevent it, (b) permit it, (c) direct it, (d) limit it. In none of these ways is God in any sense the author of sin.

Perhaps two quotations from John Calvin will be helpful in assessing God's relationship to sin, in both His decrees and His providence.

In Calvin's brief reply to an unnamed person who denounced his treatise on *The Eternal Predestination of God* he says:

John Calvin constantly declares aloud throughout his writings, wherever sin is the subject of discussion, that the name of God is not to be mingled or mentioned with sin, because nothing is consistent with the character of God but rectitude and equity. How foul, then, is the calumny to involve a man . . . in the crime of making God the author of sin!

A bit further on, Calvin says:

God, commanding that which is right, thereby testified what truly pleased Him; nor is there any other counsel concealed in His own mind by which He either loves or wills to accomplish anything whatever that He condemns in man. But He exercises His judgments in a marvelous way, so that, by His surpassing wisdom and equity, He ordains and directs to a good end things that are, in themselves, evil. Nor will Calvin ever concede that God wills that which is evil -- that is, in as far as it is evil -- but His secret and righteous judgments shine forth marvelously in overruling the iniquities of men.

For Instance, by the incestuous deeds of Absalom God punishes the adultery of David. Wherefore, when God commands Adam not to taste the fruit of the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil,' He thereby tests his obedience. Meanwhile, He foreknew what would take place; and not only foreknew it, but ordained it.

Calvin then quotes Augustine in support:

These are the mighty works of the Lord, exquisitely perfect in every point of His will; and so wisely perfect, that when the angelic and the human natures had sinned -- that is, had each done not what God willed, but what each nature willed, though each nature did that which was contrary to the will of God in one sense -- yet God, by the same will of each nature, accomplished that which He willed righteously, using