

Again, we must ask, How can God purpose something concerning a real person unless He has previously purposed to create such a person? And how can God purpose something concerning a fallen person unless He has previously purposed to permit such a person to fall? The answer to both these questions is that He cannot. The principle that underlies this answer is foundational to every field of thought: Of a non-ens nothing beyond its nonexistence can be predicated. To put this principle another way: it is not rationally possible to affirm or deny any attribute to that which lacks objective or subjective existence.

This brings us back to the concept of man as *creabilis et labilis*. If this expression is taken to mean "certain to be created and to fall", then the supralapsarian is caught in a dilemma: either these men exist in the divine idea as actually created and fallen, or possibly created and fallen (even if all the possibilities are narrowed down to one in each case). If they exist in the divine idea as actually created and fallen, then God can decree the salvation of some and the perdition of other actual persons. However, if this is the case, then the question of how they got to be actually created and fallen in the divine idea must be faced; and prior determinations on God's part to create men and permit their fall must be admitted, in which case the view becomes infralapsarian in fact.

If on the other hand these men exist in the divine idea as possibly created and fallen (and it will not do to insist upon the certainty of this possibility; the only way in which to make certainty out of possibility is for God to make it certain; the only way in which to guarantee certainty of futurity is for God to decree something actually to come to pass) -- if these men exist in the divine idea as possibly created and fallen, then God can decree the salvation of some and the perdition of other possible persons only. In order for these "possible persons" to pass out of the shadowy realm of subjective possibility (in which they exist in the divine mind as mere possibilities) into the clear light of subjective potentiality (in which they exist in the divine mind as real persons in potentiality), God must decide (decree) to bring these "possible persons" into being (decree to create them) and must decide (decree) to permit them to fall into sin (decree to permit the fall). Then, and then only, can He decree the actual salvation of some actual persons and the actual perdition of other actual persons. But if the supralapsarian wishes to continue to speak of persons as possibly created and possibly fallen, and at the same time wishes to speak about the predestination of two definite classes of real persons, then he must somehow bridge the gap between possibility and reality. The only way in which possibly created persons can become really created persons is for God to decree their real creation; and the only way in which possibly fallen persons can become really fallen persons is for God to decree to permit their real fall. If the supralapsarian admits the prior necessity of the decrees to create and permit the fall in order to be able to speak of the predestination of two definite classes of real persons, then he gives up his assertion that the decree of predestination must precede the fall, and joins the ranks of the infralapsarians.