

The problem, however, is to fix responsibility for all of these results. Simply to say that man is involved in them is not to resolve the problem. Once again, if responsibility for man's sinfulness lies in his being involved in the results of sin, the prior question of responsibility for his becoming involved must be answered. Again we are pressed to a more ultimate basis for the fixing of man's responsibility for his sinfulness and precondemnation.

[6] Can man's responsibility for his sinfulness (and thus his precondemnation) be fixed on the basis of man's predetermined sinfulness and lost condition?

This proposed solution states (in an extreme supralapsarian framework) that God predetermined that He would elect some possibly creatable, possibly fallible possible men, and would sovereignly and graciously bestow upon them eternal salvation; and that He would pass by some possibly creatable, possibly fallible possible men, and would sovereignly and justly condemn them to eternal damnation, in such a way as to make them responsible for their sinfulness and condemnation. However, in this extreme view God did not fix reprobate man's responsibility for his sinfulness on the basis of his foreseen fall (in fact, reprobation is not framed in view of anything which God foresees man will do or not do); rather, man's responsibility is fixed by God's determination that reprobate man shall be held responsible for his sinfulness. Thus the order in this extreme view is as follows: (1) God determines to condemn the nonelect and hold them justly responsible; (2) God determines to create man; (3) God determines to bring about man's fall and consequent sinfulness.

This "solution" to the problem of fixing man's responsibility for his sinfulness appears to be a nonsolution, an attempt to bury the problem in the inaccessible reaches of the incomprehensibility of God's eternal purpose. As such, it makes justices mean "whatever God chooses to make it mean" (which in one sense is true, since divine justice must surely be defined by God, not by man); instead of "that settled attribute of God revealed in Scripture by which God imposes righteous laws and impartially executes them, and by which he righteously distributes rewards and punishments." The former definition divorces the concept of justice from Scripture and makes it equivalent to sovereignty; the latter definition derives its concept of justice from the ways in which Scripture portrays God acting when He is said to be just, or acting justly or righteously.

it should of course be recognized that a large number of supralapsarians would abhor this "solution" to the problem of fixing man's responsibility for his sinfulness and condemnation, and would stress the idea that precondemnation is an act of God's justice in the sense that it takes account of sin. Thus they would place preterition before the decree to create, and would place precondemnation after the decree to permit the fall (as in the order of supralapsarianism in these class notes).

in any case this "solution" has not given us the answer to the problem of fixing man's responsibility for his sinfulness and condemnation; and therefore we must press on!