

5. "This doctrine predetermines that men shall sin, and it therefore makes God the author of sin."

In reply to this objection Christopher Ness, in the year 1700, wrote:

" 'Tis a fallacy: as if the decree of nonelection was the procuring cause of man's damnation. Sin is the cause of damnation, but reprobation is not the cause of sin. . . .

"it is a false hypothesis to suppose that God, in the decree of reprobation, doth by as effectual means intend to bring men to damnation as in the decree of election to bring others to salvation: for salvation is a favour not due to any, so God may absolutely give or deny it; but damnation is a punishment, so hath relation to a fault. Means to salvation is the gift of free grace, but damnation comes of man's own voluntary sin, and is the fruit or wages thereof (Rom. 6:23). it is God that fitteth Peter for salvation; but Judas fits himself for damnation.

"Should God constrain the creature to sin, and then damn him for it, He delighteth in the destruction of His creature, contrary to Ezek. 13:23 and 23:11. God did not thrust Adam into his sin, as, after he had willingly sinned, He thrust him out of Paradise. Man's punishment is from God as a judge; but man's destruction is from himself as a sinner. Let it be repeated, and again repeated, that man's sin came freely come himself."

-- *An Antidote Against Arminianism* (reprinted, Suengel, PA: Bible Truth Depot, 1946), pp. 44-45.

It should of course be remembered that the same kind of objection has been made against the general doctrine of God's decrees as inclusive of all things. If God's decrees embrace whatever comes to pass, evil as well as good, then the doctrine of predestination, being a specific aspect of the decrees in general, can be expected to be liable to some of the same objection.

However, some of those who voice this objection have a legitimate concern to preserve God from the charge of unrighteousness. They should be told that those aspects of the decrees of God which pertain to sin do not contain any causality of sin, nor do they exercise efficient power to bring about sin, nor do they produce any divine necessity for human sin. These permissive decrees merely render certain future those acts of sin which men, in accordance with their own natures, dispositions, inclinations, preferences, and choices, freely determine to perform. Man's self determining will, not the permissive decree of God, is the chargeable cause of his sinful action. Men are responsible for their sins, even though God has purposed to permit them.

In addition to this distinction between what God determines to cause and what He determines to permit, perhaps a few Scriptures will help the objector. Acts 2:23 speaks of the Father having determined that wicked men would put His Son to death. Acts 4:28 speaks of the Father predetermining the death of His Son by the wicked hands of Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel. In both these instances God predetermined to permit men to commit the horrendous sin of killing the Lord of glory, but He did not thereby become the Author of sin!