

# LECTURE 8: Is God the Author of Sin?—as *ordainer* of

## INTRODUCTION

- I. Did God ordain sin?
- II. Does this make him *responsible* for sin?
- III. But a question still remains: If God ordained sin, both Adam's sin and our personal sins, how can we be held morally responsible?
- IV. The claim that foreordination destroys human freedom and culpability is a purely philosophical one, having no scriptural foundation:
- V. To prove that foreordination destroys human freedom and culpability, the non-Calvinist has two strategies to follow:
- VI. The non-Calvinistic doctrine rests on an *extrabiblical* theory of human freedom:

## CAN ACTIONS BE DETERMINED AND YET FREE?

For any given action performed, could men have done otherwise?		
Indeterminism	Determinism	
Libertarianism	Soft Determinism of the Calvinists (i.e., Spiritual Self-Determinism)	Hard Determinism of the Materialists (i.e., Mechanical-Environmental Determinism)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. With the libertarians, Calvinists affirm that men are able to do whatever they desire</li> <li>2. With the hard determinists, and against the libertarians, Calvinists deny that men could have done other than they actually did.</li> <li>3. However, with the libertarians, and against the hard determinists, Calvinists deny that a man's choice is mechanically determined by outside forces; rather, all of man's actions proceed from the spontaneity of his own self; he does only what <i>he</i> wants to do.</li> </ol>		

## TIGHTENING OF THE QUESTION

- I. The debate is not on whether man is a 'free agent':
- II. The debate revolves around one central question: *Do one's motives have a determining influence over their decisions?*
- III. To answer this question, we must understand the meaning of 'will':
  - A. The *cognitive* dimension of the agent:
  - B. The *conative* dimension of the agent:
    1. 'Will' in the sense of *motivating disposition*:
    2. 'Will' in the sense of volition, decision, or exertion of will power:
    3. Uncontroversial sense in which these two "wills" are related:

- IV. What causes a volition?
- A. Why the faculty of will is not the cause of the volition:
  - B. Therefore, the agent is the only true cause of his volition, since the volition *just is* the agent exerting his will power:
  - C. But what causes the agent to exert himself?
  - D. We may now clarify the original question, *Whether motives have a determining influence over decisions, so as to render those decisions certain?*

### REFUTATION OF LIBERTARIAN ANSWER

- I. Incoherence of the ability to do otherwise:
- II. The ability to do otherwise is at odds with biblical teaching

### QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

- I. "Isn't Calvinism implying that actions are produced by motives rather than agents?"
- II. "So do we have free will or not?"
- III. "How is soft (spiritual) determinism of the Calvinists different from hard (mechanical) determinism of the atheistic materialists?"
- IV. "How is certainty of action consistent with liberty of action?"
- V. "But in denying contracausal freedom, aren't you denying what is self-evidently true?"
- VI. "But isn't contracausal freedom presupposed in our ascriptions of moral culpability?"
- VII. "But isn't contracausal freedom presupposed by our experiencing of repenting?"
- VIII. "But how can sinners be held accountable for what they could not help but do?"