

He ordains none to dishonour and wrath which they do not deserve, or, in other words, He has foreordained none to eternal death, except for sin and voluntary continuance in sin as foreseen, and to the praise of His glorious justice. In this judicial procedure, it is not the production of misery which God has regard to, (to say so were blasphemously to ascribe malevolence to God) but the equity of the relation subsisting between sin and punishment. This statement is of itself sufficient to show how falsely and how slanderously those Arminians speak, who allege that the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation represents God as resolving to create men for the sole purpose of making them miserable; and who, to give countenance to their slander, quote, as John Wesley did, the words of our confession cited above "ordain them to dishonour and wrath," omitting the latter part of the clause "for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice." The first act included in reprobation is sovereign and absolute; but to allege, as Arminians often do, and as the Wesleyan organ did, that, according to Calvinism, God decreed the unconditional damnation of those who perish, and foreordains wrath without reference to conduct or to foreseen evil, is mere falsehood and slander: the second act is entirely judicial, and is wholly founded on their sin and impenitence as foreseen. All that is absolute in reprobation is the negative act of passing by or not electing; and what is included in this is to be measured by the positive act of electing, so that this negative act is simply a purpose not to confer the grace which will infallibly secure salvation. To say that this act is unjust, as Arminians often do, is absurd; for it is to say in other words that the grace which renders salvation certain is matter of debt. In this act, God puts no evil in those passed by, exerts no agency upon them whatever: it contains nothing that causes their unbelief or impenitence, and through these their destruction, or that restrains them from believing and repenting. God does graciously exert a determining influence that produces the faith and repentance with which salvation is inseparably connected; but He does not exert any such influence with regard to the sins of the lost, nor is He in any way the author or cause of those sins which procure their destruction. Men are the authors of their own sins; and no decree of God lays them under a necessity of sinning. He is not the author of their sinful dispositions or sinful acts, nor is He the author of their destruction, though He permits them, by their own sin and evil choice, to abuse, to their eternal ruin, the grace and means of grace afforded them. It is false to say that, according to Calvinism, they cannot help their sinful actions and sinful acts of choice, and so are condemned for what they could not help; their consciences tell them that they ought to have deliberated differently, and so have chosen differently. The non-elect are not left without all grace, nor under a necessity of living and remaining in the practice of sin, but under grace and means of grace committed to the care of their own will, and which they are permitted to abuse to their final unbelief and impenitence. The Scriptures clearly inform us what we must do to be saved, and that they who do not rightly improve this information are the authors of their own ruin. Such men perish because they voluntarily abuse the light both of nature and of the gospel, because, loving the darkness rather than the light, they wilfully reject the offered Saviour, and will not come to Him that they may have life. They do