
APPENDIX G

DECISION - MAKING
AND DIVINE DETERMINISM

The person who has an inadequate understanding of the doctrine of divine determinism may misunderstand its implications for decision-making. He may assume that discerning the answer to the question—What is the sovereign decree of God?—is a legitimate component of the decision-making process. It is not.

Divine determinism does not alter the fact, obvious to common sense, that decision-making involves fundamentally two things: (i) discerning what is wise to do, and/or (ii) discerning what is desirable to do. The questions that an ordinary human being faces, therefore, are (i) what would be the wise thing to do in this situation, and (ii) what do I want to do in this situation? The question of what God has sovereignly decreed that I shall do in this situation does not and, logically, should not enter into one's deliberations at all. There is no profit in my even asking myself that question. The sovereign decree of the author of all existence will inevitably manifest itself through those choices that I ultimately make after considering only what I want to do and what I believe is wise to do. God determines my choices by determining (i) what I will want to do, (ii) what I decide is wise to do, (iii) whether I will be inclined to do what I want to do or whether, in this particular situation, I will be inclined to forego doing what I want to do, and (iv) whether I will be inclined in this particular situation to do the wise or the unwise thing. These are the components of normal decision-making in ordinary experience. While God sovereignly and transcendently authors my ultimate beliefs and desires with respect to a given situation, they are *my* beliefs and *my* desires, and I experience them in that ordinary way familiar to all of us. Hence, the psychology of decision-making is not the least bit affected by the fact that it is the ultimate author of all reality who creates the components of my decision-making and determines their content.

It makes no sense and it is of no profit whatsoever, therefore, to con-

front the question in advance: what has God sovereignly decreed that I do in this situation? The only question I need confront is this: what shall I choose to do in this situation? The sovereign decree of God will make itself known through the choice I make.

In general, acceptance of divine determinism does not require us to alter the way we understand and experience everyday, ordinary reality. Divine determinism is a doctrine that explains what lies beneath the surface of ordinary, mundane experience. It is not a doctrine that demands that we transform the way we understand and experience everyday, mundane reality. (See appendix H.) This is as true of decision-making as it is of every other aspect of ordinary experience.