

Subject: Double Predestination By R.C. Sproul

From Sproul's book What is Reformed Theology concerning the difference between "double predestination" and "equal ultimacy":

Given that the bible teaches both election and particularism, we cannot avoid the subject of double predestination. **The question then is not if predestination is double, but how it is double.** There are different views of double predestination. **One of them is so frightening that many shun altogether the use of the term double predestination. This scary view is called "equal ultimacy"** and is based on a symmetrical view of predestination. It sees a symmetry between the work of God in election and his work in reprobation. It seeks an exact balance between the two. Just as God intervenes in the lives of the elect to create faith in their hearts, so **he similarly intervenes in the hearts of the reprobate to work unbelief.** The later is inferred from biblical passages that speak of God's hardening people's hearts.

Classical Reformed theology rejects the doctrine of equal ultimacy. Though some have labeled this doctrine "hyper-Calvinism" I prefer to call it "sub-Calvinism," or even more precisely, "anti-Calvinism." **Though Calvinism certainly holds to a kind of double predestination, it does not embrace "equal ultimacy".**

The Reformed view makes a crucial distinction between God's positive and negative decrees. God positively decrees the election of some and he negatively decrees the reprobation of others. The difference between positive and negative does not refer to the outcome (though the outcome indeed is either positive or negative), but to the manner by which God brings his decrees to pass in history.

The positive side refers to God's active intervention in the lives of the elect to work faith in their hearts. **The negative refers, not to God's working unbelief in the hearts of the reprobate, but simply to his passing them by and withholding his regenerating grace from them.**

Westminster Confession: Sufficient for all, efficient for elect.