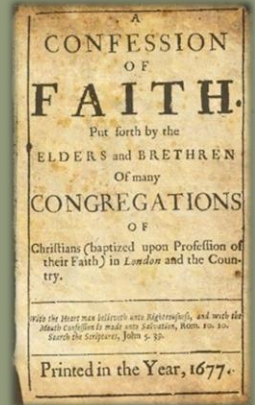


SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH



CHAPTER 3 OF GOD'S DECREE



1

“

God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established; in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness^d in accomplishing his decree.

2LCF; 3.1

2

“

Ephesians 1:7–10 (ESV)

⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him.

3

God Has Ordained All Things

- God has decreed all things for His ultimate purposes according His wisdom
- He has decreed all things “in Himself”
 - He is eternal
 - This is continuing the thought from Chapter 2
- We do not see the end or understand it, but we are to trust Him
- God has decreed all things so that two things are true:
 1. God is not the author of sin
 2. Man makes choices of his own will and is responsible (“nor is violence offered to the will of the creature”)
- There is a great mystery in this, but God works providentially and man is responsible

4

Whose Will is it Anyway?

- Can God use evil for good?

5

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Genesis 45:4–9 (ESV)

⁴ So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.

⁵ And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷ And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹ Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry.

6

“

Genesis 50:17–21 (ESV)

¹⁷ ‘Say to Joseph, “Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.” ’ And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹ So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

7

Whose Will is it Anyway?

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- Can God use evil for good?
 - Was the incarnation, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ God’s reaction to man’s sin or were they God’s plan before the foundations of the world?
 - Was it necessary then Adam to sin?
 - Did God intend Adam’s sin to be for the ultimate good of His Creation?

8

Who Willed Jesus' Death?

- Was it a sin to crucify Jesus?
 - John 10:18 (ESV) - No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."
- Was it God's decree that Judas would betray Jesus? Was it God's decree and will that mankind would kill His Son?

9

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Acts 2:22–23 (ESV)

²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know — ²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

10

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*Acts 4:25–28 (ESV)**²⁵ who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,**“ ‘Why did the Gentiles rage,
and the peoples plot in vain?**²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers were gathered together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed’ —**²⁷ for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.*

11

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God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of **second causes taken away [see chapter 5.1]**, but rather established; in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree.

2LCF; 3.1

12



FOREKNOWLEDGE

13

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Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

2LCF; 3.2

14

Specific Theology

- Arminian theologians saw the foreknowledge of God (Romans 8:29) as God seeing into the future and knowing what people would do
- The Catholic Jesuits, in response to the Reformation, taught a doctrine called *Molinism*
 - *Molinism* teaches that God saw all possible worlds and all possible choices within all these possible worlds and created the world that would accomplish His Will
 - The thinking behind this doctrine is that God is able to be sovereign over the design of His Creation yet man completely free in their will

15

Freedom

- Who is the freest being?
- Is God free to create however He desires?
- In Arminian theology and Molinist theology, God's ability to create is limited to the will of man
- God created a world where He ordains the outcome, yet the creature behaves of his own will

16



PREDESTINATION AND THE ELECT

17

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By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice.

2LCF; 3.3

18

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These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

2LCF; 3.4

19

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Romans 8:28–30 (ESV)

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

20

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Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto.

2LCF; 3.5

21

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As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so he hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto; wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

2LCF; 3.6

22

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The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.