

Second London Confession Chapter 9: Free Will

I. A General Statement of Human Free Agency (Par. 1)

- The human will isn't forced to do good or evil (James 1:14).
- The human will isn't determined by any necessity of nature (inherently bound by nature) to do good or evil.

Summary of Paragraphs 2-5

<u>Characteristics</u>	State: <u>Innocence</u>	<u>Sin</u>	<u>Grace</u>	<u>Glory</u>
Ability to do Good	YES	NO	YES	YES
Ability to do Evil	YES	YES	YES	NO
Mutability	YES	NO	NO	NO

II. Human Free Agency in the State of Innocence (Par. 2)

- Immutable (changeable): “unable to alter the moral alignment of the will, based upon choices”
- By virtue of his power of contrary choice (ability to choose between alternatives that are morally antithetical), and his mutability, man fell from innocence into sin (Ecc. 7:29).

III. Human Free Agency in the State of Sin (Par.3)

- People in the state of sin don't have the power of contrary choice. But they do have the power of alternative choice (the ability to choose between alternatives that are morally of the same character—both good or both bad) (Rom. 8:7; Eph. 2:1).
- The essence of Free Agency is alternative choice, not contrary choice.

IV. Human Free Agency in the State of Grace (Pars. 4)

- A person in the state of grace has the power of contrary choice (Rom. 7:25).
- A person in the state of grace becomes so by God's power and action (Phil. 2:12, 13).

V. Human Free Agency in the State of Glory (Par. 5)

- A person in the glorified state loses the power of contrary choice, retains the power of alternative choice, and is immutable (Heb. 12:22, 23; Rev. 21:27).

Six Practical Observations

- 1) Mutability is only in the state of Innocence. After this, God must sovereignly intervene to realign the will.

2) Sin and Glory are precise opposites. Grace is a midway point. Believers must live with the reality of remaining sin.

3) Glory is superior to Innocence.

4) There is an inability of the will in the states of Sin and Glory. There is inability wrt good in Sin, and inability to evil in Glory. As one's moral condition changes, there is no loss of liberty. But there may be a lost of ability. Freedom of the will does not assume ability of the will.

5) The moral alignment of the will proceeds in one direction only. HFA does not mean that human will is arbitrary. It does not imply that the will vacillates back and forth between good and evil by human whim. There is no absolute autonomy of the human will. We move from Innocence to Sin, but not the reverse. We move from Sin to Grace, but not the reverse.

6) Potentially, one can remain in any state except Grace. Grace is a transitional state, a halfway house.

Some Guiding Principles

1) Fallen people are free to do whatever they want to do within the limits of their ability.

2) Inability does no eliminate responsibility. God requires fallen people to do what they are unable to do. [A drunk driver is responsible to obey traffic laws. A broke debtor is responsible to pay his debts.]

3) Character determines choices.

Closing Applications

1) Christian, look ahead to the day when you will no longer sin.

2) Christian, until then, recognize that you don't have to sin.

3) Non-Christian, call upon the Lord that He might make you willing to believe on Jesus, in the day of His power.