

## Second London Confession Chapter 3: God's Decree

### Part 1: God's General Decree of All Things (Pars. 1, 2)

#### I. The Universality of God's General Decree (Par. 1)

A. Stated: *"From all eternity God decreed everything that occurs, without reference to anything outside Himself. He did this by the perfectly wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably."* (Prov. 16:4, 33; Is. 45:7; Dan. 2:21; 4:35; Mal. 3:6; Acts 4:27, 28; Eph. 1:11; 3:11)

B. Qualified: *"Yet God did this in such a way that He is neither the author of sin nor has fellowship with any in their sin. This decree does not violate the will of the creature or take away the free working or contingency of second causes. On the contrary, these are established by God's decree."* (1 Sam. 23; 2 Sam. 24:1 with 1 Chron. 21:1; Hab. 1:13; Acts 4:27, 28; John 19:11)

C. Applied: *"In this decree God's wisdom is displayed in directing all things, and His power and faithfulness are demonstrated in accomplishing His decree."*

#### II. The Unconditionality of God's General Decree (Par. 2)

*"God knows everything that could happen under any given conditions. However, His decree of anything is not based on foreseeing it in the future or foreseeing that it would occur under such conditions."* (Rom. 9:11-13, 16, 18)

### Part 2: God's Specific Decree of Predestination (Pars. 3-7)

#### I. Its Dual Aspects—Double Predestination (Par. 3)

A. Origin: *"By God's decree..."*

B. Goal: *"...for the demonstration of His glory..."*

C. Components: *"...some human beings and angels are predestined (or foreordained) to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace" (election); "Others are left to live in their sin, leading to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice" (preterition).*

- Texts: 1 Tim. 5:21 with Matt. 25:34, 41; Rom. 9:22, 23; Eph. 1:4-6; 1 Pet. 2:8, 9; Jude 4

-Difference between Unconditional Reprobation (God actively decrees some to condemnation and death apart from their guilt in Adam) and Preterition (passing over; God passively leaves the non-elect to suffer the consequences of their guilt in Adam.)

-Evaluation: A choice to save some is a choice to condemn others. Election and reprobation aren't presented in Scripture as strictly parallel.

## II. Its Unchanging Specificity (Par. 4)

*“These predestined and foreordained angels and people are individually and unchangeably designated, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or decreased.”* (2 Tim. 2:19)

## III. Its Gracious Character (Par. 5)

*“Those people who are predestined to life were chosen by God before the foundation of the world, according to His eternal and unchangeable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will. He chose them in Christ for eternal glory, purely as a result of His free grace and love, without anything else about them serving as a condition or cause moving Him to do so.”* (Rom. 8:30; 11:5, 6; 1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Tim. 1:9)

## IV. Its Means of Execution (Par. 6)

A. Divine Appointment: *“Just as God has appointed the elect to glory, so He has by the eternal and completely free purpose of His will foreordained all the means.”* (2 Thess. 2:13)

B. Identity: *“Therefore, those who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ and effectually called to faith in Christ by His Spirit working at the appropriate time. They are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith to salvation.”* (Rom. 8:30)

C. Exclusive Objects: *“None but the elect are redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved.”* (Rom. 8:30)

## V. Its Prudent Handling (Par. 7)

*“The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care so that those heeding the will of God revealed in His Word and obeying Him may be assured of their eternal election by the certainty of their effectual calling. In this way this doctrine will give reasons for praise, reverence, and admiration of God, as well as humility, diligence and rich comfort to all who sincerely obey the gospel.”* (Eph. 1:6; 2 Pet. 1:10).