

1689 LBCF – Chapter 3 – Of God’s Decree Detailed Outline

Section 1 – The General Decree of all events

I. (1) God’s Decree Stated

- A. God has decreed all events from eternity, but is neither the author nor accomplice in sin
- B. God has established our “freedom” by controlling all events
- C. God’s decree is perfectly wise and unchangeable

II. (2) God’s Foreknowledge

- A. God’s foreknowledge is based on His decree
- B. His foreknowledge is not prescience (i.e., looking into the future to see what happens)

Section 2 – The Specific decree of Predestination to Life

III. Predestination

- A. (3) Election is a gracious, positive action to save some people and angels
 - 1. Elect angels were preserved from falling and have no need of salvation
 - 2. Fallen angels are not redeemed
- B. (3) Reprobation is God allowing the non-elect to receive their just punishment
- C. (4) God’s choosing of the elect made in eternity past before creation & is unchangeable
- D. (5) The choosing was made by God, in His sovereign wisdom and grace, not randomly
- E. (5) The choosing was made independently from any foreseen goodness or faith

IV. (6) Means of Redemption

- A. Christ, the redeemer, pays the penalty to satisfy God’s justice
- B. The Holy Spirit works effectually in the redeemed to give them faith in Christ
- C. Only the elect person (not angels) are redeemed

V. (7) Praise and Humility

- A. Predestination is a deep mystery and should be discussed with caution and care
- B. Election by grace is underserved and should produce profound humility and obedience
- C. God could have passed you by, but for reasons only known to him, he did not

Books for further study:

Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*.**

A.W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*. **

** denotes a book in the church lending library

INFRALAPSARIAN, n. One who ventures to believe that Adam need not have sinned unless he had a mind to—in opposition to the Supralapsarians, who hold that that luckless person's fall was decreed from the beginning. Infralapsarians are sometimes called Sublapsarians without material effect upon the importance and lucidity of their views about Adam.

Two theologues once, as they wended their way
To chapel, engaged in colloquial fray—
An earnest logomachy, bitter as gall,
Concerning poor Adam and what made him fall.
" 'Twas Predestination," cried one—"for the Lord
Decreed he should fall of his own accord."
"Not so—'twas Free will," the other maintained,
"Which led him to choose what the Lord had ordained."
So fierce and so fiery grew the debate
That nothing but bloodshed their dudgeon could sate;
So off flew their cassocks and caps to the ground
And, moved by the spirit, their hands went round.
Ere either had proved his theology right
By winning, or even beginning, the fight,
A gray old professor of Latin came by,
A staff in his hand and a scowl in his eye,
And learning the cause of their quarrel (for still
As they clumsily sparred they disputed with skill
Of foreordination of freedom of will)
Cried: "Sirrahs! this reasonless warfare compose:
Atwixt ye's no difference worthy of blows.
The sects ye belong to—I'm ready to swear
Ye wrongly interpret the names that they bear.
You—Infralapsarian son of a clown!—
Should only contend that Adam slipped down;
While you—you Supralapsarian pup!—
Should nothing aver but that Adam slipped up.
It's all the same whether up or down
You slip on a peel of banana brown.
Even Adam analyzed not his blunder,
But thought he had slipped on a peal of thunder!

From "The Devil's Dictionary" (or "The Cynic's Word Book") by Ambrose Bierce, circa 1890.

A more detailed outline of paragraph 6:

1. The Elect are appointed to glory
2. The decree of election is executed by foreordained means
3. It is Christ who redeems the elect
4. It is the Spirit who applies Christ's redemption through effectual calling
5. The benefits of effectual calling (ordo salutis)
6. The exclusive recipient of Christ's redemption and effectual calling with its benefits

(#) – denotes specific paragraph of the confession that the outline refers to.