

The Westminster Confession of Faith, G.I. Williamson, P&R Publishing Co.

Chapter 3: The Eternal Decree

- 1) (1.1) *"From all Eternity...by the Most Wise & Holy"* == God's Plan is Eternal & Perfect
- 2) *"Unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass"* == God predetermines everything that happens
 - a) Includes Everything → Nothing Not Included, big or small, good or bad, natural or moral
 - b) Gen. 50:20—*"you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good"*
 - c) Psalm 115:3—*"Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him."*
 - d) Prov. 16:33—*"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD."*
 - e) Prov. 21:1—*"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will."*
 - f) Isa. 45:7—*"I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things."*
 - g) Lam. 3:38—*"From the mouth of the Most High...both calamities and good things come"*
 - a) Daniel 4:34-35—*"Then I praised the Most High...His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"*
 - h) Matt. 10:27—*"Not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father."*
 - i) Eph. 1:11—*"Predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will."*
- 3) Does Not Make God the Author of Sin → God Orders All Things → Causes—Allows--
 - a) 1 John 1:5—*"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."*
 - b) James. 1:13—*"Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one."*
 - c) Hodge—*"the purpose of God with respect to the sinful acts of men and wicked angels is in no degree to cause the evil, nor to approve it, but only to permit the wicked agent to perform it, and then to overrule it for his own most wise and holy ends."* → Works All Things Together
- 4) *"No Violence offered to the Will"* → God Does Not Force People To Do What Don't Want To Do
 - a) Free == No External Coercion → Controlled by Nature == Do What We Want
 - b) Men love Darkness == People Sin Because It is what they want to do → God Permits It
 - c) Not Destroy Human Freedom—Contingency—Causality → Rather, Upholds and Establishes

- 5) (1.2) Not Conditioned on anything foreseen by him → Done Sovereignly—Freely—Unchangeably
- 6) (1.3) Decree Includes Predestining of Men & Angels To Eternal Life → Foreordaining To Hell
- 7) (1.4) Number of The Elect == Certain and Definite → This is True for Arminians as well
- 8) (1.5) Unconditional Election → Good pleasure—Chosen—mere free grace—Love
 - a) Not Based on Foresight of Faith—Good works—Perseverance →
 - b) Nothing In the Creature → All Alike Are Fallen → Children of Wrath → Dead In Sin
- 9) (1.6) Election To Life Includes All the Means to that End → Ordo Salutis → Order of Salvation
 - a) Those Elected == Redeemed By Xp—Effectually Called—Justified—Adopted—Sanctified—Kept
 - b) Salvation is Not a possibility == But An Accomplished Fact for Elect → Accomplished in Time
- 10) (1.7) Not Actively Harden → Simply withholds Mercy—Passes By → Which In Effect == Ordains
- 11) (1.8) High Mystery to be handled carefully → Matter of Praise—Reverence—Humility—Consolation

Chapter 4: Creation

- 1) (1.1) God Created Ex Nihilo for His Own Glory
- 2) (1.2) Humanity is made in His Image → Reasonable—Immortal—Knowledge—Rtness—Holiness
 - a) But Finite & Free Moral Creatures == Subject To Change & Possibility of Sin

Chapter 5: Providence

- 1) (1.1) Beautifully Defines Providence → Governing & Directing of All Things To His Will & Purpose
- 2) (1.2) Works Thru Natural—2nd Causes (God Is 1st Cause) → Necessarily—Freely—Contingently
- 3) (1.3) Usually works thru Means → Doesn't Have To == without—above—against them as He wills
- 4) (1.4) Overrules—Rules Over All Things → Including Fall—Sin—Sins of Men & Angels
 - a) Not By Bare Permission → Wise & Powerful Bounding—Ordering—Governing
 - b) Yet all sin springs from creatures → God Cannot Be the author of sin → Nor Approve It!
- 5) (1.5) Over the Elect → Survey of some of the reasons God Allows sin into lives of His People
- 6) (1.6) Over the Reprobate → Withholds—Withdraws—Allows Occasions—Gives Over = Hardens
- 7) (1.7) Ordering All → But Working All Things for the Good of the Church == Special Care