

The *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Question 7, asks, "What are the decrees of God?" and answers, "The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

4. The power of God

a. The meaning of power

- (1) According to *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*:

power (1) the ability to act, the ability to exert effort
(2) exerted energy, force, might

- (2) According to *Webster's New World Dictionary*:

power 1 ability to do, act, or produce 2 a specific ability or faculty (the power of hearing) 3 great ability to do, act, or affect strongly; vigor; force; strength; 4 a) the ability to control others; authority; sway; influence b) (pl.) special authority assigned to or exercised by a person or group holding office c) legal ability or authority; also, a document giving it 5 a source of physical or mechanical force or energy; force or energy that is at, or can be put to, work

- (3) According to William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n. d.), Volume One, pp. 358-359:

The Power of God is the Divine essence energizing, and producing outward effects. It is the Divine activity *ad extra*. The immanent activity of the essence *ad intra*, as seen in the trinal distinctions and their intercommunion, does not come under the category of the Divine power. For this is necessary and constitutional activity. It is not optional with God to be triune. Eternal generation and spiration are not, like creation, providence, and redemption, acts of power, in the sense that if God so please they need not be performed. The Divine power is optional in its exercise. God need not have created anything. And after creation, he may annihilate. Only when he has bound himself by promise, as in the instance of faith in Christ, does his action cease to be optional. It cannot be said that God may keep his promises, or not, as he pleases.

- (4) According to Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Washington: Scribner, 1871), Volume One, pp. 406-407:

We get the idea of power from our own consciousness. That is, we are conscious of the ability