

THE WORKS OF GOD

I. THE DECREES OF GOD

A. Statements of the Doctrine

The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter III, Article 1. states:

God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

Charles Hodge, in volume 1, part 1, chapter 9 of his *Systematic Theology* states:

"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."
Agreeably to this statement: (1) The end or final cause contemplated in all God's decrees, is his own glory. (2) They are all reducible to one eternal purpose. (3) They are free and sovereign, determined by the counsel of his own will. (4) They comprehend all events.

-- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* in three volumes.
Reprinted. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), p. 535.

Archibald Alexander Hodge, in chapter 10 of his *Outlines of Theology* states:

The decree of God in his eternal, unchangeable, holy, wise, and sovereign purpose, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions, successions, and relations, and determining their certain futurity. The several contents of this one eternal purpose are, because of the limitation of our faculties, necessarily conceived of by us in partial aspects, and in logical relations, and are therefore styled Decrees.

-- Archibald Alexander Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, revised.
Reprinted. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 200.

William G. T. Shedd, in chapter 6 of the section on Theology (Doctrine of God) in volume 1 of his *Dogmatic Theology*, states:

The consideration of the Divine Decrees naturally follows that of the divine attributes, because the decrees regulate the operation of the attributes. God's acts agree with God's determination. Hence the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Q. 7, defines the decrees of God to be "his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his own will, whereby he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." God does not act until he has decided to act, and his decision is free and voluntary.

The Divine decree relates only to God's *opera ad extra* or transitive acts. It does not include those immanent activities which