

LESSON 6

CHAPTER 9. “Of Free Will”

I. Paragraph 1: Free will defined

- A. God created mankind with the ability to choose spiritual good or evil.
- B. God does not force us to choose against our will.

II. Paragraph 2: The first estate: an innocent nature (pre-fall)

- A. Before the fall, mankind had true free will.

III. Paragraph 3: The second estate: a sin nature (post-fall)

- A. After the fall, we have the freedom to choose spiritual good, but not the ability to do so.
- B. Original sin, by imputation, has placed our will in bondage to sin.
- C. If God left us to ourselves, we cannot choose to believe the gospel.

IV. Paragraph 4: The third estate: a redeemed nature (believers)

- A. Our ability to choose spiritual good is reborn by the operation of the Holy Spirit.
- B. Remaining sin prevents us from always doing spiritual good (see Romans 7).

V. Paragraph 5: The fourth estate: a glorified, perfect nature

- A. In the intermediate and eternal states, believers will be free from sin and not able to fall.

Discussion Questions:

What is the difference between free will and free agency?

Can you exist free from God?

Will we have free will in heaven?

Book suggestions:

Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*

Thomas Boston: *Man in His Fourfold State*

R. C. Sproul, *Willing to Believe*

Jonathan Edwards, *A Serious Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will*

