

Emmaus Essentials
The London Baptist Confession of 1689
Chapter 5 - Of Divine Providence - Part 1
For Distribution the Week of 01/12/2014

I. Introduction

- A. What is this chapter all about?
1. Providence
 - a) The meaning of the word - "To see beforehand, foresight, or forethought."
 - b) Used in theology to refer to the the ongoing work of God after creation.
 - c) Providence is dependent on creation.
 - d) Prior to that, providence is dependent upon the decree of God.
 - (1) The decree is the blueprint.
 - (2) Providence is the carrying out of that blueprint or plan.
- B. How is the chapter basically organized?
1. The summery statement of the doctrine - paragraph 1
 2. The major concerns about the doctrine - paragraphs 2-7
 - a) The relation of providence to the use of means - paragraphs 2-3
 - b) The relation of providence to the fact of sin - paragraphs 4-6
 - c) The relation of providence to the care of the church - paragraph 7

II. The summery statement of the doctrine - paragraph 1¹

1 - "God the good Creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were created, according unto his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will; to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy."

- A. The Person
1. "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high..." (Hebrews 1:3, ESV)
 2. "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'?" (Job 38:8-11, ESV)
 3. "... for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,' calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it." (Isaiah 46:9-11, ESV)
 4. "Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps." (Psalm 135:6, ESV)
- B. The foundation of providence: 'his infinite power and wisdom'
- C. The essence of providence: 'uphold, direct, dispose and govern'
- D. The objects of providence: 'all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least'
1. "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." (Matthew 10:29-31, ESV)
- E. The nature of providence: 'by his most wise and holy providence'

¹ Basic outline taken from "A Modern Exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith" by Samuel Waldron, p. 68-69.

- F. The compatibility of providence (with his creation): 'to the end for which they were created'
- G. The determining cause of God's providence:
 - 1. God's mind: 'his infallible foreknowledge'
 - 2. God's will: 'and the free and immutable counsel of his own will'
- H. The goal of providence: 'to the praise of his glorious grace'

III. The major concerns about the doctrine - paragraphs 2-7

- A. The relation of providence to the use of means - paragraphs 2-3

- 1. A concession - para 2a

2a - *"Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; so that there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without his providence..."*

- a) LBC Proof Texts

- (1) "...this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. (Acts 2:23, ESV)
- (2) The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord. (Proverbs 16:33, ESV)

- 2. An assertion - para 2b

2b *"... yet by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently."*

- a) LBC Proof Texts

- (1) "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." (Genesis 8:22, ESV)

- b) Further Considerations

- (1) "The proof of this statement is the many places in which free or random actions are the necessary conditions of divinely determined events..." (Waldron, 90)

(a) "No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish... No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3-5, ESV)

(b) "For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. But we must run aground on some island." (Acts 27:23-26, ESV)

(c)

- 3. A qualification - para 3

3 - *God, in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure.*