

Emmaus Essentials
The London Baptist Confession of 1689
Chapter 5 - Of Divine Providence - Part 2
For Distribution the Week of 01/19/2014

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 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..."
 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) He works through second causes - para 2
 - (1) The relationship between first and second causes
 - (a) The first cause - the decree of God
 - (b) Second causes - the decree of God - God uses earthquakes, hurricanes, etc., to accomplish his purposes
 - i) Events that seem random are from God
 - ii) 1 Kings 22:17-32
 3. A qualification - para 3
God, in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure.
 - a) God can work in ways that are out of the ordinary - para 3
 - (1) God normally works according to the laws established in creation
 - (a) Miracles can and do happen
- B. **The mystery of providence in relation to the fact of sin - paragraphs 4-6**
1. The mystery providence in relation to sin in general - para 4
4 - "The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that his determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to his most holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin."
 - a) The problem - how do we account for presence of sin and evil in God's creation?

- (1) We account for it in two ways, though it is a mystery.
 - (a) The source is in God Himself
 - (b) "The sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God"
 - (c) This reflects the teaching of scripture
 - i) Isaiah 10:5 - Assyria used to judge Jerusalem, though he is wicked. And then God judges Assyria.
 - ii) Judas - Acts 4:28
 - (d) Error creeps in when we try to do away with tensions
2. The mystery of providence in the life of his people - para 5

5 - *"The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself; and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends. So that whatsoever befalls any of his elect is by his appointment, for his glory, and their good."*

 - a) *Wisdom, righteousness, and graciousness emphasized*
 - b) *For a purpose - Hebrews 11, James 1*
 - (1) *Chastisement and humbling*
 - (2) *Dependence upon him - "prosperity is more dangerous than poverty"*
 - (3) *Mortification of their sins*
 - (4) *For his glory and our good*
 - (a) *Genesis 50:20 - You meant it for evil, but God meant it for God."*
3. The mystery of sin in the ungodly - para 6

6 - *"As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as the righteous judge, for former sin doth blind and harden; from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding, and wrought upon their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, under those means which God useth for the softening of others."*

 - a) *God is judge*
 - (1) *Blinded and hardened*
 - (2) *Withholds grace*
 - (3) *Withholds gifts*
 - (4) *Gives them over to their lusts - Romans 1:18*
 - (5) *Harden themselves, under those means which God useth for the softening of others*
- C. The relation of providence to the care of the church - paragraph 7

7 - *"As the providence of God doth in general reach to all creatures, so after a more special manner it taketh care of his church, and disposeth of all things to the good thereof."*

 1. *God watches over his people*

God is sovereign over all and we must bow before him. His ways are mysterious.