

## Reformed Doctrine, Chapter V Of Providence

### I.

God as creator of all things sustains all things,<sup>1</sup> directs all things, disposes of all things, and governs all creatures, actions and things<sup>2</sup> from the greatest to the least<sup>3</sup> by His wise and holy providence.<sup>4</sup> This is accomplished by the infallible foreknowledge<sup>5</sup> of God through His free immutable counsel of His own will.<sup>6</sup> All of which God does for His glory in wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.<sup>7</sup>

### II.

God because of His decree and foreknowledge is the first cause whereby all things come to pass without fail or change.<sup>8</sup> By providence God orders all things to happen according to the nature of second causes whether of necessity or contingently, all are of His free will.<sup>9</sup>

### III.

God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means,[10] yet is free to work without,[11] above,[12] and against them, at his pleasure.[13]  
God ordinarily works His providence by the use of means.<sup>10</sup> But is free to work outside<sup>11</sup> or against the normal means as He pleases.<sup>12</sup>

### IV.

That God is almighty, unsearchable, all wise, and of infinite goodness is shown in His providential ordering of all things to include the fall of man and angels.<sup>13</sup> This not as if God is passive or by mere permission<sup>14</sup> but has attached to it a powerful boundary.<sup>15</sup> God orders and governs by several means of distribution but ever to His holy will.<sup>16</sup> God so orders all things that sin comes from the created and never of God who cannot sin or approve of sin.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Neh. 9:6; Psa. 145:14-16; Heb. 1:3

<sup>2</sup> Dan. 4:34-35; Psa. 135:6; Acts 17:25-28; Job 34:1-41:34

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 6:26-32; 10:29-31

<sup>4</sup> Prov. 15:3; I Chr. 16:9; Psa. 104:24; 145:17

<sup>5</sup> Acts 15:18; Isa. 42:9; Ezek. 11:5

<sup>6</sup> Eph. 1:11; Psa. 33:10-11

<sup>7</sup> Isa. 63:14; Eph. 3:10; Rom. 9:17; Gen. 45:7; Psa. 145:7

<sup>8</sup> Acts 2:23; see Isa. 14:24, 27

<sup>9</sup> Gen 8:22; Jer. 31:35; Isa. 10:6,7; see Exod. 21:13 and Deut. 19:5; I Kings 22:28-34

<sup>10</sup> Acts 27:24, 31, 44; Isa. 55:10-11

<sup>11</sup> Hosea 1:7; Matt. 4:4; Job 34:20

<sup>12</sup> Rom. 4:19-21

<sup>13</sup> II Kings 6:6; Dan. 3:27

<sup>14</sup> . Isa. 45:7; Rom. 11:32-34; II Sam. 16:10; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; see II Sam. 24:1 and I Chr. 21:1; I Kings 22:22-23; I Chr. 10:4, 13-14

<sup>15</sup> John 12:40; II Thess. 2:11

<sup>16</sup> Psa. 76:10; II Kings 19:28

<sup>17</sup> Gen. 50:20; Isa. 10:6-7,12-15 (particularly v.12)

<sup>18</sup> James 1:13-14, 17; I John 2:16; Psa. 50:21

## V.

God at times leaves His own children to be tempted and to the corruption of their own hearts but within His limits. God does this to admonish them for previous sins or to teach the powerful nature and corruption of their own hearts. All of this is intended to humble God's children before Him.<sup>18</sup> This will raise His children to a closer and more constant dependence on God and make them more watchful against future sins.<sup>19</sup>

## VI.

The wicked and ungodly God, as a righteous God, because of their sins lets them remain in darkness further hardening their hearts against Him<sup>20</sup>. He withholds the grace whereby they might become enlightened and their hearts changed.<sup>21</sup> God also at times removes gifts that they had.<sup>22</sup> God exposes them to their own corruption that makes sin abound in their life.<sup>23</sup> Overall God gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and to the power of Satan in their lives.<sup>24</sup> For the ungodly this results in their hardening themselves because of the same means God uses to soften His elect.<sup>25</sup>

## VII.

God's providential ordering of all things to good reaches all creatures and in a very special manner takes care of the church.<sup>26</sup>

## Questions

1. What is another word for providence?
2. How does God order all things?
3. What difference is there between a decree and foreordination?
4. What does it mean that the decree is immutable?
5. What is taken into consideration in foreordination that is not considered in the eternal decree?
6. How does God soften the hearts of the elect?
7. How does God harden the hearts of the ungodly?
8. What is not part of God's providential control?

---

<sup>18</sup> II Chr. 32:25-26, 31; Deut. 8:2-3, 5; Luke 22:31-32; see II Sam. 24:1, 25

<sup>19</sup> II Cor. 12:7-9; see Psa. 73:1-28; 77:1-12; Mark 14: 66-72; John 21:15-19

<sup>20</sup> Rom. 1:24, 26, 28; 11:7-8

<sup>21</sup> Deut. 29:4; Mark 4:11-12

<sup>22</sup> Matt. 13:12; 25:29; see Acts 13:10-11

<sup>23</sup> Gen. 4:4; II Kings 8:12-13; see Matt. 26:14-16

<sup>24</sup> Psa. 109:6; Luke 22:3; II Thess. 2:10-12

<sup>25</sup> Exod. 7:3, 8:15, 32; II Cor. 2:15-16; Isa. 6:9-10, 8:14; I Pet 2:7-8; Acts 28:26-27

<sup>26</sup> I Tim. 4:10; Amos 9:8-9; Matt. 16:18; Rom. 4:28; Isa. 43:3-5, 14