

LESSON 4

Chapter 5. "Of Divine Providence"

I. Paragraph 1: Control of Creation

- A. God sustains all creation.
- B. God controls all actions of His creatures and events in the natural world.
- C. In sustaining His creation, God manifests His glory.

II. Paragraph 2: Control of Events

- A. God's control guarantees the perfect execution of all His decrees.
- B. God's sovereignty does not destroy human liberty.
- C. Fate and chance are excluded.

III. Paragraph 3: Control of Second and Subsequent Causes

- A. God providentially uses means (angels, demons, people, animals, nature, etc).
- B. God's sovereignty does not deny second causes (means).
- C. God may overrule His "natural laws" and second causes at His pleasure.
 - 1. Regeneration
 - 2. Inspiration
 - 3. Miracles

IV. Paragraph 4: Control of Evil and Sin

- A. God ordained "the Fall" of both angels and humans and the consequences of it without Himself being evil, doing evil, or working evil in the creature.

V. Paragraph 5: Control of Sin for Good for the Believer

- A. God uses the sin and the consequences thereof to reveal our sinfulness and need of Him.
- B. God uses the sin and its attendant consequences to humble us and strengthen our resolve against it.

VI. Paragraph 6: Effect of Sin on the Reprobate (Persons not elected)

- A. Special providence is withheld.
- B. God allows them to follow the desires of the flesh and the temptation of the world.
- C. The same means which saves the elect hardens the reprobate.

VII. Paragraph 7: Special Providence for the Church

A. God's providence works all things for the good of the His church.

Questions for discussion:

How do fate and Divine sovereignty differ?

If God controls everything, are we responsible for what we do?

If God controls everything, will things turn out the same no matter what we do?

If God decrees and controls everything, is He the author of sin?

Suggested reading:

R. C. Sproul, *The Invisible Hand*

John Flavel, *The Mystery of Providence*

Thomas Watson, *All Things for Good*