

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

Chapter 5.-Of Providence.

IV. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so farre manifest themselves in his Providence, that it extendeth it selfe even to the first Fall, and all other sinnes of Angels and Men,¹ and that not by a bare permission,² but such as hath joynd with it, a most wise and powerful bounding,³ and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation to his owne holy ends:⁴ yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth onely from the creature, and not from God, who being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the Author or Approver of sin.⁵

Question 1.—*Doth the Almighty power, unsearchable wisdom and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in his Providence, that it extendeth itself, even to the first Fall, and all other sins of angels and men; and hath not a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it, a most wise, and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation to his own holy ends?*

Answer.—Yes. Rom. 11:32-34; 2 Sam. 24:1 (*cf.* 1 Chron. 21:1) and 1 Kings 21:22, 23; 1 Chron. 10:4, 13, 14; 2 Sam. 16:10; Acts 14:16, Ps. 76:10; 2 Kings 19:28, Gen. 50:20. Thus, all those which maintain that the Lord only concurs to sinful actions by a bare, naked and idle permission are confuted. Because: 1.) The Scripture says that the Lord blinds their eyes and hardens their hearts, even actively and judicially, John 12:40; Ex. 7:3; Deut. 2:30; Rom. 9:18. 2.) God is said to punish one sin with another, Rom. 1:24, 26, 28; 2 Thess. 2:11, 12. 3.) From the practice of Job, and David, who when they were afflicted and persecuted looked to God, and took it patiently, Job 1:21.

Question 2.—*In what way may we say that God concurs in the act of sin?*

Answer.—We must first distinguish three things in the sin. 1.) The entity of the act itself, which has the relation of material. 2.) The disorder or wickedness joined with it, which gives it its formal. 3.) The consequent judgment, which is the adjunct of the sin. As to the first, God concurs it effectively and physically, not only by conserving the nature, but by exciting its motions and actions by a physical motion as being good naturally (*cf.* Acts 17:28). As to the third (which is related to the judgment of God) which is joined with sin, not of itself in relation to the sinner (who thinks or intends no such thing, Gen. 50:20; Isa. 10:5-7), but accidentally in relation to God permitting sins and ordaining them to a good end beyond their own nature. As to the second, God can be neither its physical cause (because he neither inspires nor infuses nor does it) nor its ethical cause (because he neither commands nor approves and persuades, but most severely forbids and punishes it).

¹ Rom. 11:32-34; 2 Sam. 24:1 w/ 1 Chron. 21:1; 1 Kings 21:22, 23; 1 Chron. 10:4, 13, 14; 2 Sam. 16:10; Acts 2:23; 4:27, 28.

² Acts 14:16

³ Ps. 76:10; 2 Kings 19:28

⁴ Gen. 50:20; Isa. 10:6, 7, 12

⁵ Jas. 1:13, 14, 17; 1 John 2:16; Ps. 50:21

Question 3.—*Doth the sinfulness of the action proceed only from the creature and not from God?*

Answer.—Yes, Jas. 1:13, 14, 17; 1 John 2:16; Ps. 50:21. Thus do all err and blaspheme who make God to be the Author and Cause of all sin in its moral pollution. Because, 1.) David's testimony is to the contrary, Ps. 5:4. 2.) As is that of Moses, Deut. 32:4. 3.) Also, Daniel, Dan. 9:14. 4.) Added to the that of James, Jas. 1:13. 5.) John's testimony, 1 John 1:5; 2:16. 6.) The testimony of Paul, Rom. 3:3-5. 7.) Additionally, the testimony of Habakkuk, Hab. 1:13. The following reasons also display the confutation of such opinions: 1.) God is in the highest degree, essentially and infinitely Holy, Good and, therefore, Pure, and free from every spot or blemish, Isa. 6:3; Ps. 78:41; 1 Pet. 1:15,16; Lev. 11:44. 2.) God is absolutely perfect and therefore he cannot fail or be deficient in working. 3.) God is the Judge of the whole world. He is the Forbidder, Hater and Revenger of all sin, and unrighteousness, as contrary to his holy nature and law, Ex. 20; Rom. 2:5, 6; Gen. 18:25; Rom. 1:17; Ps. 5:4. 4.) By his own most absolute and most supreme dominion, sovereignty, and infinite perfection, He is in and of himself, above all law whatsoever and under the command of none, in heaven or in earth.