

Evil and God's Providence

1689 Confession, ch. 3, "Of God's Decree," para. 1: "God has decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatever come to pass; {Isa 46:10 Eph 1:11 Heb 6:17 Ro 9:15,18} yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; {Jas 1:13 1Jo 1:5} nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established; {Ac 4:27-28 Joh 19:11} in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree" {Nu 23:19 Eph 1:3-5}. [God's *decree* — or *counsels* — has to do with His *will*, determined from all eternity.]

1689 Confession, ch. 5, "Of God's Providence," para. 1: "God the good creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom, does uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all his creatures and things, {Heb 1:3 Job 38:11 Isa 46:10-11 Ps 135:6} from the greatest even to the least, {Mt 10:29-31} by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for which they were created, according to 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" {Eph 1:11}. [God's *providence* has to do with His ongoing sovereign *governance* of all things according to His eternal decree.]

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*: "The carnal mind, when once it has perceived the power of God in the creation, stops there, and, at the farthest, thinks and ponders on nothing else than the wisdom, power, and goodness displayed by the Author of such a work . . . it imagines that all things are sufficiently sustained by the energy divinely infused into them at first. But faith must penetrate deeper. After learning that there is a Creator, it must forthwith infer that he is also a Governor and Preserver . . . not by producing a kind of general motion in the machine of the globe as well as in each of its parts, but by a special providence sustaining, cherishing, superintending, all the things which he has made, to the very minutest, even to a sparrow."

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