

An Exposition of the 2nd (1689) London Baptist Confession

Chapter 5.5-7: Of Divine Providence

5.5 The most wise, righteous, and gracious God does often times 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. ^a So that whatsoever befalls any of His elect is by His appointment, for His glory, and their good.^b

^a 2 Chron. 32:25–26, 31; 2 Cor. 12:7-9 ^b Rom. 8:28

1. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God does often times leave for a season His own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions of their own hearts.
 - a. God's gracious desertion of His children...
 - i. Often times.
 - ii. For a season.
 - b. In wisdom He leaves them...
 - i. To manifold temptations (testings).
 - ii. To the corruptions of their own hearts.
2. To chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts.
 - a. To chastise them for their former sins.

The blood of Christ removes all condemnation but not every consequence.
 - b. To help them discover...
 - i. The hidden strength of corruption.
 - ii. The deceitfulness of their hearts.
3. 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. [2 Chronicles 32:25-26; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9]
 - a. That they may be humbled.
 - b. To teach them dependence.
 - c. To make them more watchful.
 - d. For other just and holy ends.
4. So that whatsoever befalls any of His elect is by His appointment, for His glory, and their good. [Romans 8:28]
 - a. All that befalls them is by His appointment
 - b. All that befalls them is for His glory.
 - c. All that befalls them is for their good.

5.6 As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as the righteous judge, for former sin does blind and harden;^a from them He not only withholds His grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding, and wrought upon their hearts;^b but sometimes also withdraws the gifts which they had,^c and exposes them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin;^d and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan,^e whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, under those means which God uses for the softening of others.^f

^a Rom. 1:24–26, 28, 11:7–8 ^b Deut. 29:4 ^c Matt. 13:12 ^d Deut. 2:30; 2 Kings 8:12–13 ^e Ps. 81:11,12; 2 Thess. 2:10–12 ^f Exod. 8:15,32; Isa. 6:9–10; 1 Pet. 2:7–8

1. For former sins, God blinds and hardens the wicked.
2. God withholds His grace and withdraws His gifts (benefits) from them.
3. God gives them over...
 - a. To their own lusts.
 - b. To the temptations of the world.
 - c. To the power of Satan.

[Romans 1:24-32 – impurity, perversion, calloused corruption.]

4. They further harden themselves against God under the same things that would soften others.

5.7 As the providence of God does in general reach to all creatures, so after a more special manner it takes care of His church, and disposes of all things to the good thereof.^a

^a 1 Tim. 4:10; Amos 9:8–9; Isa. 43:3–5