Studies in the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith

Chapter 3, Paragraph 1, Session 3

1. **God decreed all things**, (continued from last session)
   1. **whatsoever comes to pass**:
      1. An all-encompassing statement.
      2. Scripture tells us that this literally includes *everything*:
         1. Isaiah 46:9-10
         2. Ephesians 1:11
         3. Proverbs 16:4
      3. Including:
         1. Random events:
            1. Proverbs 16:33
            2. Read 1 Kings 22:13-38
         2. Good deeds of His people:
            1. Ephesians 2:10
            2. Philippians 2:12-13
         3. How many days we live:
            1. Psalm 139:16
         4. Where we live:
            1. Acts 17:25-26
         5. What we do every day:
            1. James 4:13-15
         6. It even includes Evil Events:
            1. Amos 3:6
            2. Isaiah 45:6-7
            3. Genesis 50:20
            4. Proverbs 16:4
2. Statements Guarding this Truth against Misunderstanding:
   1. **Yet, so as thereby, God is neither the author of sin, nor has any fellowship with any therein**:
      1. Habakkuk 1:13
      2. James 1:13
      3. 1 John 1:5
      4. God is not the author of sin, and yet, sin cannot exist unless God (as Creator) decreed that it would exist. How are we to understand this?
         1. Chapter 5, paragraph 4
         2. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, page 81:
            1. God’s decree does not make God the author of sin. The *“decree merely makes God the author of free moral beings, who are themselves the authors of sin. God decrees to sustain their free agency, to regulate the circumstances of their life, and to permit that free agency to exert itself in a multitude of acts, of which some are sinful. For good and holy reasons He renders these sinful acts certain, but He does not decree to work evil desires or choices efficiently in man. The decree respecting sin is not an efficient but permissive decree, or a decree to permit, in distinction from a decree to produce, sin by divine efficiency. No difficulty attaches to such a decree which does nto also attach to a mere passive permission of what He could very well prevent, such as the Arminians, who generally raise this objection, assume.”*
            2. *The problem of God’s relation to sin remains a mystery for us, which we are not able to solve. It may be said, however, that His decree to permit sin, while it renders the entrance of sin into the world certain, does not mean that He takes delight in it; but only that He deemed it wise, for the purpose of His self-revelation, to permit moral evil, however abhorrent it may be to His nature.*
   2. **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**:
      1. You can see this relationship between God’s decree and man’s willful actions by comparing Mathew 17:12 with Luke 22:22.
      2. Acts 2:23-24
      3. Acts 4:27-28
      4. Sam Waldron, “*God is not the author of sin because He does not by His own immediate causation bring it to pass. It is the responsibility of the second cause who willingly engages in it. This is illustrated by the of God’s decreeing David should sinfully number Israel.”*
      5. Compare 2 Samuel 24:1 with 1 Chronicles 21:1.