Samuel Rutherford’s Treatise on Providence:
The Table of Contents in English

Translated by

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Disputatio Scholastica de Divina Providentia (1649)

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A SCHOLASTIC DISPUTE ABOUT
DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Delivered to Young Candidates in the Renowned University of St Andrews by way of Various Lectures, in which (because it pertains to the greatest heads of matters) is both contended and argued a rebuttal to the Jesuits, Arminians, and Socinians, concerning the Dominion of GOD through His industrious action surrounding sin, through concurrence of primary cause, and through predetermination.

Adjoined are Metaphysical Inquiries concerning Being, Possibility, the Dominion of GOD in entities and non-entities, and various Questions which especially conduce to a more fruitful and more exquisite study of the Doctrines of Divine Providence.

Through the studies and diligence of Samuel Rutherford, honored Professor of Sacred Theology at the Renowned University of St Andrews.

JOB XXIII:8&9
“Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.”

ROMANS XI:23
“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

EDINBURGH
Printed by the Heirs of George Anderson,\(^1\) on behalf of Robert Brown, and for sale in the flank of the Northern courtyard, not much beyond the cross, toward the insignia of the Sun, in the Year of the LORD 1649.

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\(^1\) [George Anderson was one of the first Scottish printers to gain significant renown. His earliest extant work was the *Protestation of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, printed in Glasgow on Nov. 28 & 29, 1638. He appears to have died in 1648, hence why the present pamphlet was printed by his heirs. (M’Ure, 368).]
# Table of Chapters

1 - What Providence is

2 - What is the permissive nature of the will of GOD, and of the will of sign and the will of good pleasure: the Arminian Remonstrants are invoked for their part.

3 - Concerning the new fiction of Middle Knowledge. Whether Middle Knowledge rescues the Providence of GOD when it comes to the control of contingent things: the flights of the Jesuits Hieronymus Fasolus, Rodrigo de Arriaga, Diego Ruiz de Montoya, Petrus de Arubal (1559-1608), Gabriel Vázquez, Philipe de Gamaches (1568-1625), and others are examined.

4 - The Middle Knowledge of the Dominion of GOD is overturned.

5 - The arguments of Diego Ruiz, Fasolus, Petrus de Arubal, Alexander Pesantius, and others contending for the Middle Knowledge are extracted in parts.

6 - Concerning the nature of permission

7 - Seven questions that are to be urged concerning permission:

   **Q. 1** - Whether permission is merely non-violentation or non-necessitation of will; as the Jesuits Penotto, Pesantius & Ruiz and the Arminians would have it?

   **Q. 2** - Whether permission and hindrance of sin are accomplished with GOD by way of persuasion?

8 - **Q. 3** - Whether sin still necessarily follows from the ordained permission of GOD by necessity of consequence, even though not by causal obligation.

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2 [Hieronymus Fasolus (1566-1639)]
3 [Rodrigo de Arriaga (1592-1667)]
4 [Diego Ruiz de Montoya (1562-1632)]
5 [Gabriel Vázquez (1549-1604)]
6 [Philipe de Gamaches (1568-1625)]
7 [Alexander Pesantius (15??-1617)]
8 [Penotto (1574-1639)]
9 [Literally, “by such persuasive means?”]
9 - Q. 4 - Whether permission of sin is absolutely dependent on the free good pleasure of God, or whether it arises conditionally for the determination\(^\text{10}\) of a created will that is alleging said permission? Gabriele Penotto, Diego Ruiz de Montoya, Theodorus Smising,\(^\text{11}\) Jacob Arminius,\(^\text{12}\) and others are invoked for their part. 86 [The remaining three questions are discussed in this same place.]

10 - Whether that which is to be admitted is some Christian concept of fate?

11 - The opinion of Englishman Thomas Jackson\(^\text{13}\) concerning fate and necessity is examined.

12 - Concerning various degrees or types of necessities that Jackson alleges about Providence in chapter 23 of his book.\(^\text{14}\) His reasons are examined.

13 - How does one respond to passages that appear to teach in favor of Middle Knowledge? And does predetermination subvert that Knowledge with regard to the active will of God in which He knows future contingency?

14 - The reasons in favor of Middle Knowledge which are poorly understood from the Scriptures by the Jesuit François Annat,\(^\text{15}\) opponent of Doctor William Twisse,\(^\text{16}\) are explained. That matters move from the state of possibilities to the state of futurition only by means of the will of God from eternity; that created will is not the cause of secret and most high Election and Reprobation; and that the matter is not explained by means of a Middle Knowledge.

15 - How Annat argues in favor of Middle Knowledge, thus denying everything belonging to God surrounding sin and the will.

16 - Whether Evangelicals [Calvinists] rightly prove from the Scriptures that God, Himself permitting, wills sin to occur. The passage Genesis 45, regarding the selling of Joseph into slavery, is judged and vindicated.

17 - Whether, from other Scriptures, Evangelicals rightly prove that God, Himself permitting, wills sin to occur? The passage Acts 2:23 & 4:27, regarding CHRIST having been crucified from the definite council and foreknowledge of God, is judged and vindicated.

\(^{10}\) [The original reads, “for the creation of a created will.” However, at the actual head of the chapter, the title was edited to read, “for the determination of a created will.” This is probably because the Latin term for creation can also mean “choice,” and either Rutherford or his editor must have realized the potential confusion this wording would cause.]

\(^{11}\) [Theodorus Smising (1580-1626)]

\(^{12}\) [Jacob Arminius (1560-1609)]

\(^{13}\) [Thomas Jackson (1579-1640)]

\(^{14}\) [The book in question is A Treatise of the Divine Essence and Attributes, published 1628-9.]

\(^{15}\) [François Annat (1590-1670)]

\(^{16}\) [Doctor William Twisse (1577-1646)]
18 - Whether, supposing that GOD had stored up the damned unto the day of destruction and had permissively ordained them unto sin, it would then follow that GOD would be the Author of sin? The passage Prov. 16:4 (“The LORD hath made all things for himself…”) is judged and vindicated. Likewise the passage Rom. 9:17 (“Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up…”). Also, the passage 1 Pet. 2:8 is judged and vindicated. Bellarmino,17 Ruiz, Louis le Mairat (1577-1664), Arubal, Fasolus, and the Arminians are invoked in parts.18

19 - Whether GOD therefore is the agent principally, when Devils and damned persons sin, so that He is nevertheless free from every fault of sin, yet they the instruments of sin are tainted with the entire charge?

20 - Whether sin is the penalty of sin? Whether GOD wills sin insofar as it is the penalty of sin? Bellarmino, Diego Ruiz, Leonardus Lessius,19 Gabriele Penotto, Louis le Mairat, Philipe de Gemache, and also the Arminians are invoked in parts.

21 - That GOD does not harden men by bare permission. Regarding the method of hardening, the Jesuits and Arminians are invoked in parts.

22 - Whether the free Good Pleasure of GOD is the first Principle of every moral virtue in created beings?

23 - It is proven by other arguments that GOD wills sin to take place, Himself permitting.

24 - The same thing is proven by other arguments

25 - First, of Durandus 20 and Ludovicus a Dola,21 deniers of GOD’s non-mediated concurrence with all secondary causes. Second, the idea is overthrown which argues for a general concurrence of GOD delimited by secondary cause.

26 - Whether physical predetermination, by which GOD preordains wills unto entitative physical acts of sin, makes God to be the Author of sin? Whether this is fate? Whether Manaechism? Whether, according to the doctrine of the Jesuits and the Arminians, the general and indifferent concurrence of GOD truly absolves GOD from copartnership with

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17 [Bellarmino (1542-1621)]
18 [In the original Table of Chapters, the entire sentence regarding Prov. 16:4 is missing, rendering the conjunction item (“likewise”) at the beginning of the next sentence confusing. This has been amended in the present copy.]
19 [Leonardus Lessius (1554-1623)]
20 [Durandus (1230-1296)]
21 [Ludovicus a Dola (16??-1636)]
crime? Diego Ruiz, Arriaga, Suarez, Raynaud, Jacob Arminius, etc., are invoked in parts.

27 - The reasons which Rodrigo de Arriaga, Suarez, Theophile Raynaud, and Guillaume Gibieuf give against GOD’s predetermination unto material acts of sin are discussed. The reasons given by Jacob Arminius, Nicolaas Grevinchoven and Diego Ruiz, insofar as they contend that the act of sin itself is distinguished from malice, are noted with censure.

28 - First, that the special Providence of GOD which is determinative of acts of sin and individuates them, would stand out. Second, that the “general concurrence” of the Arminians and the Jesuits, out of their Doctrine, entangles GOD with a bond of crimes. Third, the distinction is defended by which malice of actions is exposed to have its origin from a created will, not from GOD.

29 - First, that Calvin, Beza and our own authors use formulas of speech that agree with the Scriptures, and with quite an orthodox understanding; and that they do not sound in unison with the Libertines. Second, the chapter answers the objections of Jacob Arminius and the Jesuits.

30 - That the Patristics, the Doctors, and the Scholastics stand with us regarding GOD’s active Providence in sin.

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22 [Suarez (1548-1617)]
23 [Raynaud (1583-1663)]
24 [Guillaume Gibieuf (1585-1650)]
25 [Nicolaas Grevinchoven (1570-1632)]
26 [Calvin (1509-1564)]
27 [Beza (1519-1605)]
28 [“The chapter” is understood in the original.]
Metaphysical Inquiries

that may Perhaps bring forth a Measure of Light to the Doctrine of Providence

1 - Whether being is directly prior to non-being? 531

2 - Whether GOD is the Ruling cause of being and non-being? 532

3 - Whether God is the origin and cause of possibility and impossibility? 538

4 - Whether anything is impossible outside the extent it is originally impossible with GOD? 540

5 - Whether, from an hypothesis that there was no first cause, possiblity or impossibility would therefore have existed in the nature of things? 545

6 - Whether a possibility is a reality? 557

7 - By what knowledge and will GOD lays hold on possibilities? 559

8 - Whether God exercises providence in all things by necessity of nature or by freedom? 561

9 - Whether God’s free good pleasure is the cause of beings, of gradations of being, and of particular forms in natural things, moral things, supernatural things, and artifical things? 563

10 - Whether the Creator is able to inflict injury to the creature, and what right GOD has in the creatures? 573

To what extent justice belongs to GOD essentially, and what follows. 584

Whether the decree of GOD removes ability from a secondary cause? 586

Whether the ability to act or not act absolutely is of the essence of freedom? 587

29 [The word therefore is not in the original Table of Chapters, but has been added on the basis of the actual chapter title.]
Whether a free action is contingent? 589

By what knowledge GOD lays hold of a conditional future? 590

Whether creatures are able to act without a concurrent primary cause? Whether GOD moves a secondary cause by a previous concurrence or a simultaneous one? Concerning the insanity of the Jesuits in this matter. 592

Whether Adam sinned freely because he sinned by the remote predetermine motion of GOD? 597

Whether there is such a thing as a contingent future and what it is? from an anonymous debater. 597

Whether ordinability unto the good, in and of itself, harmonizes with sin? 604

Concerning decretive will 611

Concerning the conflict in GOD’s will as it is falsely imputed to our side.30 613

Concerning the will of approval and the will of good pleasure, a debater is examined who says that GOD wills every possibility. 615

30 [In Latin, “us.”]