

**Shalom Church Adult's Christian Education Class**  
**Divine Providence**  
**14<sup>th</sup> August 2016**

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**THE ORTHODOX CATECHISM\* (1680)**

Q26: What is the providence of God?

A: *The almighty power of God, everywhere present<sup>1</sup>, whereby He doth as it were by His hand uphold and govern heaven and earth<sup>2</sup>, with all the creatures therein, so that those things which grow in the earth, as likewise rain and drought, fruitfulness and barrenness, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty; in a word, all things come not rashly or by chance, but by His fatherly counsel and will<sup>3</sup>.*

<sup>1</sup>Psalm 94:9; Isaiah 29:15; Ezekiel 8:12; Acts 17:25

<sup>2</sup>Hebrews 1:2-3

<sup>3</sup>Proverbs 22:2; Jeremiah 5:24; John 9:3; Acts 14:17

Q27: What doth this knowledge of the creation and providence of God profit us?

A: *That in adversity we may be patient<sup>1</sup>, and thankful in prosperity<sup>2</sup>, and have hereafter our chief hope<sup>3</sup> reposed in God our most faithful Father. We can be sure that there is nothing which may withdraw us from His love<sup>4</sup>, forasmuch as all creatures are so in His power, that without His will they are not able not only to do any thing, but not so much as once to move<sup>5</sup>.*

<sup>1</sup>Job 1:21; Romans 5:3

<sup>2</sup>Deuteronomy 8:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:18

<sup>3</sup>Romans 5:4-5

<sup>4</sup>Romans 8:19, 38

<sup>5</sup>Job 1:12; 2:6; Proverbs 21:1; Acts 17:27

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**What is the providence of God?**

➤ *The almighty power of God, everywhere present . . .*

- God is \_\_\_\_\_ → God is \_\_\_\_\_!
  - |
  - | He is not \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_!
  - | **JEREMIAH 23:23-24**
  - | **PSALM 94:9 (CF. ISAIAH 29:15; EZEKIEL 8:12)**
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  - | **PSALM 91:1**

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\* Will be referred to as OC henceforth

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➤ *... whereby He doth as it were by His hand uphold and govern heaven and earth, with all the creatures therein...*

▪ God \_\_\_\_\_!

Cf. BC ~ *preserving and governing of all His creatures, and all their actions*

2LCF ~ *uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least*

Louis Berkhof ~ *“... that continued exercise of the divine energy whereby the Creator preserves all His creatures, is operative in all that comes to pass in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end.”*

○ Preservation

**HEBREWS 1:3**

**COLOSSIANS 1:17**

**NEHEMIAH 9:6**

**JOB 34:14-15; PSALM 104:29**

*... they continue to exist, not in virtue of a merely negative act of God,  
but in virtue of a positive and continued exercise of divine power.  
The power of God put forth in upholding all things is  
just as positive as that exercised in creation...*

*... that continuous work of God by which He maintains the things  
which He created, together with the properties and powers  
which He endowed them...*

Louis Berkhof

*So what?*

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○ Concurrency

*... the co-operation of the divine power with all subordinate powers,  
according to the pre-established laws of their operation,  
causing them to act and to act precisely as they do.*

*(1) That the powers of nature do not work by themselves,  
that is, simply by their own inherent power,  
but that God is immediately operative in every act of the creature.*

*(2) That second causes are real, and not to be regarded simply as  
the operative power of God. It is only on the condition that  
second causes are real, that we can properly speak of a  
concurrency or co-operation of the First Cause with secondary causes.*

Louis Berkhof

**PSALM 104:14; MATTHEW 5:45; ACTS 14:17**

**PROVERBS 16:33**

**PROVERBS 16:1, 9; PSALM 127:3; DEUTERONOMY 8:18**

**JONAH 1:15; 14; 2:3**

**PHILIPPIANS 2:13**

Story of Joseph: (a) **GENESIS 37:11; 4-5,8; 20; 24; 28**  
(b) **GENESIS 45:5; 50:20**

*After the activity of the creature is begun, the efficacious will of God must accompany it at every moment, if it is to continue. There is not a single moment that the creature works independently of the will and the power of God. It is in Him that we live and move and have our being, Acts 17:28.*

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*This divine activity accompanies the action of man at every point, but without robbing man in any way of his freedom. The action remains the free act of man, an act for which he is held responsible. This simultaneous concurrence does not result in an identification of the causa prima (primary cause) and the causa secunda (secondary cause).*

*In a very real sense the operation is the product of both causes. Man is and remains the real subject of the action. Bavinck illustrates this by pointing to the fact that wood burns, that God only causes it to burn, but that formally this burning cannot be ascribed to God but only to the wood as subject. It is evident that this simultaneous action cannot be separated from the previous and pre-determining concurrence, but should be distinguished from it.*

*In His government of the world God employs all kinds of means for the realization of His ends; but He does not so work in the divine concurrence. When He destroys the cities of the plain by fire, this is an act of divine government in which He employs means. But at the same time it is His immediate concurrence by which He enables the fire to fall, to burn, and to destroy. So God also works in man in endowing him with power, in the determination of his actions, and in sustaining his activities all along the line.*

*The divine concursus energizes man and determines him efficaciously to the specific act, but it is man who gives the act its formal quality, and who is therefore responsible for its sinful character. Neither one of these solutions can be said to give entire satisfaction, so that the problem of God's relation to sin remains a mystery.*

Louis Berkhof

*So what?*

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- Government

**PSALM 103:19**  
**DANIEL 4:32, 34-35**

**PROVERBS 21:1**  
**EZRA 1:1; 6:22**

**PSALM 33:14-15**

Louis Berkhof ~ *"That continued activity of God whereby He rules all things teleologically so as to secure the accomplishment of the divine purpose."*

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2LCF C5 Para 7 ~ *"As the providence of God doth in general reach to all creatures, so after a more special manner it taketh care of his church, and disposeth of all things to the good thereof."*

**ISAIAH 43:3-7**

**EPHESIANS 1:20** ~ *And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church (NKJV)*

NASB/ESV: to the church

NIV: for the church (Chinese Bible: 为教会)

NLT: for the benefit of the church

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➤ *... all things come not rashly or by chance, but by His fatherly counsel and will*

**LUKE 12:32**

**MATTHEW 6:32**

**ROMANS 8:32**

**1 SAMUEL 3:18**

**LUKE 1:38**

*Whate'er my God ordains is right:*

*His holy will abideth;*

*I will be still whate'er He doth;*

*And follow where He guideth.*

*He is my God: though dark my road.*

*He holds me that I shall not fall.*

*And so to Him I leave it all,*

*He holds me that I shall not fall.*

*Whate'er my God ordains is right*

*Here shall my stand be taken*

*Though sorrow, need, or death be mine,*

*Yet I am not forsaken*

*My Father's care*

*Is round me there*

*He holds me that I shall not fall*

*And so to Him I leave it all*

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**THE BAPTIST CATECHISM\*\* (1693)**

Q14: What are God's works of providence?

A: *God's works of providence are His most holy,<sup>1</sup> wise,<sup>2</sup> and powerful preserving<sup>3</sup> and governing of all His creatures, and all their actions.<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>*Psalm 145:17*

<sup>2</sup>*Psalm 104:24; Isaiah 28:29*

<sup>3</sup>*Hebrews 1:3*

<sup>4</sup>*Psalm 103:19; Matthew 10:29-31*

**SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH\*\*\* (1677)**

**CHAPTER 5: OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE**

1. God the good Creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were created, according unto 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.  
( [Hebrews 1:3; Job 38:11; Isaiah 46:10, 11; Psalms 135:6; Matthew 10:29-31; Ephesians 1:11](#) )
  
2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; so that there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without his providence; yet by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.  
( [Acts 2:23; Proverbs 16:33; Genesis 8:22](#) )
  
3. God, in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure.  
( [Acts 27:31, 44; Isaiah 55:10, 11; Hosea 1:7; Romans 4:19-21; Daniel 3:27](#) )

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4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that his determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to his most holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.  
( [Romans 11:32-34](#); [2 Samuel 24:1](#), [1 Chronicles 21:1](#); [2 Kings 19:28](#); [Psalms 76:10](#); [Genesis 1:20](#); [Isaiah 10:6, 7, 12](#); [Psalms 1:21](#); [1 John 2:16](#) )
5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes 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. So that whatsoever befalls any of his elect is by his appointment, for his glory, and their good.  
( [2 Chronicles 32:25, 26, 31](#); [2 Corinthians 12:7-9](#); [Romans 8:28](#) )
6. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as the righteous judge, for former sin doth blind and harden; from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding, and wrought upon their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, under those means which God useth for the softening of others.  
( [Romans 1:24-26, 28](#); [Romans 11:7, 8](#); [Deuteronomy 29:4](#); [Matthew 13:12](#); [Deuteronomy 2:30](#); [2 Kings 8:12, 13](#); [Psalms 81:11, 12](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:10-12](#); [Exodus 8:15, 32](#); [Isaiah 6:9, 10](#); [1 Peter 2:7, 8](#) )
7. As the providence of God doth in general reach to all creatures, so after a more special manner it taketh care of his church, and disposeth of all things to the good thereof.  
( [1 Timothy 4:10](#); [Amos 9:8, 9](#); [Isaiah 43:3-5](#) )