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September 9, 2001

## Providence of God

The paper I handed out last Sunday was the result of a question by Linda Ostheimer. But since they are not here this morning, I am going to put off till next week dealing with the questions raised on that paper.

In Sunday School class, we have been going through a Catechism. A Catechism is a book summarizing the principles of the Christian religion, written as questions and answers. This particular catechism is the one used by CH. Spurgeon.

It was not many years ago that a pastor regularly checked on his people to see that the people knew the catechism and that they were teaching their children. The Roman Catholics have been very effective in Catechizing their young people. The Baptist have not, and we see the Baptist falling away because they do not know what the Christian Religion stands for.

I am going to deal with point **#11 this Sunday, and we will deal with the other next Sunday.**

Question #11 has to do with **God's works of providence?**

It asks **What are God s works of providence?**

**And the answer is that God s works of providence** are his most holy, wise, and powerful **preserving and governing** all his creatures, and all their actions. It is God s management of all things, and this management is done beyond man s understanding. It is God s unseen and unknown hand controlling all things for his own glory. He is the uncaused cause for everything that takes place in heaven and earth.

**Isaiah 9:6**, remember, he is the Almighty God.

Let me give some verses:

**Psalms 36:6** *O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.*

We see here that the Lord **preserves all things**. What does it mean for God to preserve things?

First,

**Psalms 119:89** *LAMED. For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. 90 Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. 91 They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants.*

Here we see that God alone is the cause of all things holding together; he alone is the cause of the existence of all things.

**Hebrews 1:3** *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

**Preserves all things**. What does it mean for God to preserve things?

Second,

**Psalms 145:15** *The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. 16 Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*

The Lord makes provision for the needs of every living thing plant, animal, fish, birds, people.

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He is the unseen hand behind everything in existence.

**Next,**

**Psalms 67:4** *Thou shalt govern the nations upon the earth.*

Not only does the Lord preserve all things without his hand being seen, he also governs all things; again, though his hand is not seen. (Governs exercises authority over all nations.)

**What does it mean for God to govern things?**

It means God rules over them; it means that God decides what is the purpose and final end of all things, and then he directs all things toward that end that he has purposed for them.

**Psalms 66:7,** *He ruleth by his power for ever, his eyes behold the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves.*

**Proverbs 16:9** *A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.*

**Question #11, What are God's works of providence?**

What are the objects of God's providence?

(Steve, what is the object of your affection?)

**The first object of God's providence** is all his creatures, especially his children.

**Hebrews 1:3,** *Upholding all things by the word of his power.*

**Psalms 103:19,** *His kingdom ruleth over all.*

**Matthew 10:29, 31,** *One sparrow falleth not to the ground without your Father; -ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

**Matthew 6:26, 28, 30,** *Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and if God clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you?*

**The second object of God's providence** is all the actions of his creatures.

**Acts 17:28** *In him we live and move.*

All natural actions:

Then we have,

**John 15:5,** *Without me ye can do nothing.*

All morally good actions:

That is, nothing that is good and pleasing to God can be done without Christ.

**All casual actions:**

*He that smiteth a man that he die, and lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand, I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. (Ex. 21:12, 13.)*

**All morally evil actions or sins:**

**Question #11, What are God's works of providence?**

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How about sinful actions? How does God's providence fit into sin? Are you saying that God is the unseen hand behind sin?

**First,** God doth permit men to sin.

*Who in time past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. (Acts 14:16.)  
These things hast thou done, and I kept silence. (Ps. 50:21.)*

**Second,** God both limits and restrains men in their sins.

*The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain. (Ps. 76:10.)  
Because thy rage against me is come up into my ears, therefore I will put my hook into thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back... (2 Kings 19:28.)*

**Third,** God directs and brings men's sins to good ends that they did not intend.

*O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, I will send him against an hypocritical nation, (to chastise it for its sin, ed.) howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, (Isa. 10:7-7.)  
But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to save much people alive. (Gen. 50:20.)*

**Question #11, What are God's works of providence?**

What are the attributes, or the characteristics, properties, of God's providence?

**First,** God's providence is most holy.

*The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. (Ps. 145:17.)*

**Second,** God's providence is most wise.

*(Speaking of God's works of providence, including His works in creation.) O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. (Ps. 104:24.)*

**Third,** God's providence is most powerful.

*He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand. (Dan. 4:35.)  
He ruleth by his power for ever. (Ps. 66:7.)*

Conclusion:

God's providence has brought us to this point in our lives — who we know, where we work, where we spend our time.

We are in these places because of God's providence, and we are there to be salt and light in a corrupt and dark world. What have you been doing and what are you doing for Christ in those areas?