



**Advanced Bible Correspondence Course  
Lesson 10: God the Father**

**LORD'S DAY 10**

**Q.27. WHAT DOST THOU MEAN BY THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD?**

**ANSWER: THE ALMIGHTY AND EVERYWHERE PRESENT POWER OF GOD (A); WHEREBY, AS IT WERE BY HIS HAND, HE UPHOLDS AND GOVERNS HEAVEN, EARTH, AND ALL CREATURES (B); SO THAT HERBS AND GRASS, RAIN AND DROUGHT (C), FRUITFUL AND BARREN YEARS, MEAT AND DRINK, HEALTH AND SICKNESS (D), RICHES AND POVERTY (E), YEA, AND ALL THINGS COME, NOT BY CHANCE, BUT BY HIS FATHERLY HAND (F).**

**(A) ACTS 17:25,27-28; JEREMIAH 23:23-24; ISAIAH 29:15-16; EZEKIEL 8:12**

**(B) HEBREWS 1:3 (C) JEREMIAH 5:24; ACTS 14:17 (D) JOHN 9:3 (E) PROVERBS 22:2**

**(F) MATTHEW 10:29; PROVERBS 16:33**

**Confidence, fate or providence?**

Joseph said to his brothers, *"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good"* (Genesis 50:20). His brothers sold him as a slave to get rid of him. At the same time, God had His hand in it; He has Joseph go into Egypt to save his family from starvation. This is it what the Christian here confesses. It was not a coincidence (like unbelievers sometimes say) or a blind power called fate (like the ancient heathens believed), but God governs all things. He foresees everything that will yet take place. But He also provides in all things: He has His hand in all that happens. He is all-knowing and almighty. He is active everywhere with His power. When a contractor has finished building a house, he no longer has anything to do with it, but turns it over to the owner. It is not so with God's creation. God continues to care for it. If He didn't, everything would collapse.

We do not see this with our natural eyes. Only faith knows: my heavenly Father cares for me, always, both in great and in small things, in spiritual life as well as in natural life. This is true when everything goes well for me *and* when it seems as if things are not going well for me.

**God's government and our responsibility**

Naturally, this gives rise to questions. Questions, all of which we cannot resolve with our understanding corrupted by sin. God even governs the sinful actions of man, and yet people remain entirely responsible for what they do: they sin, not by compulsion, but out of free will. "For His power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible,

that He orders and executes His work in the most excellent and just manner, even then when devils and wicked men act unjustly” (Belgic Confession of Faith – Article 13).

**Q.28. WHAT ADVANTAGE IS IT TO US TO KNOW THAT GOD HAS CREATED, AND BY HIS PROVIDENCE DOTH STILL UPHOLD ALL THINGS?**

**ANSWER: THAT WE MAY BE PATIENT IN ADVERSITY (A), THANKFUL IN PROSPERITY (B), AND THAT IN ALL THINGS, WHICH MAY HEREAFTER BEFALL US, WE PLACE OUR FIRM TRUST IN OUR FAITHFUL GOD AND FATHER (C), THAT NOTHING SHALL SEPARATE US FROM HIS LOVE (D); SINCE ALL CREATURES ARE SO IN HIS HAND, THAT WITHOUT HIS WILL THEY CANNOT SO MUCH AS MOVE (E).**

(A) ROMANS 5:3; JAMES 1:3; PSALM 39:9; JOB 1:21-22 (B) I THESSALONIANS 5:18; DEUTERONOMY 8:10 (C) PSALM 55:22; ROMANS 5:4 (D) ROMANS 8:38-39 (E) JOB 1:12, 2:6; PROVERBS 21:1; ACTS 17:25

### **Patience, thankfulness, and trust**

There is much suffering in this world, because we all have sinned so terribly against God. But why is it that in this life one suffers much more than the other? We will never be able to measure this. The Christian only believes that all things are governed by God. His doings are incomprehensible, but at the same time, they are righteous, holy, and good.

And then the Christian may still know something more: God loves him, and nothing can separate him from that love of God. This makes him patient in adversity and thankful in prosperity. That gives him a firm trust and confidence for the future. At times he can still be afraid of the power of the devil and of sinful people, and of the power of sin in his own life. However, he may know that his faithful God and Father will always deliver him. Paul knew of the dangers which threatened the Christians: *For Thy sake (for the confessing of God’s Name) we are killed all the day long.*” But immediately it says: *“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39).*

### **The comfortlessness of modern theology**

The comfortless modern theology says that God suffers because of the evil in this world. Evil would only be governed by dark powers. God is said not to have the power to take away all evil, but He would be willing to help us in the battle against it. And one day He will conquer it. This disbelief in God’s almighty power conflicts with the words of the risen Christ, *“All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18).*

Everyone knows of questions about the purpose of suffering, but only *One* has the final word. It is true that all the questions about the government of God are not so easy to resolve, but one thing is beyond all doubt, as Elihu said to Job, *“Far be it from God, that He should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that He should commit iniquity!” (Job 34:10).*

***Questions:***

1. (a) *What did many people believe in ancient times regarding everything that happens in the world?*

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- (b) *What do many unbelievers today believe in this respect?*

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2. *What does faith know concerning this world?*

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3. *What is the basic cause of all suffering in this world?*

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4. *It has been said, "If it is true that God governs everything that happens, so also evil, then He would do injustice to many people who must suffer much." How will one who sincerely believes in God respond to such a statement?*

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5. (a) *What does modern theology say about God and all evil in the world?*

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- (b) *Why is such a modern theology so comfortless?*

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6. *God helps His children sometimes without and sometimes by means of men. How do we see both of these in the history of the prophet Elijah? (I Kings 17)*

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7. *How does it appear from the history of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt that God also governs the sinful deeds of men? (Exodus 4:21, 7:13, 14:4; Romans 9:17)*

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8. *Does faith in God providence make prayer superfluous? (Ezekiel 36:36-37)*

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9. *What can adversity and what can prosperity lead to, if we do not believe that God rules everything? (Proverbs 30:9)*

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10. *What threefold comfort does the doctrine of God's providence offer to a Christian?*

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*Evaluator:* \_\_\_\_\_

Meditation:

God feeds the wild flowers on the lonely mountainside without the help of man, and they are as fresh and lovely as those that are daily watched over in our gardens. So God can feed His own planted ones without the help of man, by the sweetly falling dew of His Spirit.

*Taken from: "Gems of Robert Murray McCheyne"*