

Providence

By David Feddes

Have you ever stumbled into a situation where you felt confused and out of place, and then it turned out that you were in exactly the right place at the right time? Have you ever been mistreated or felt that everything was going wrong, only to have it all turn out for the best? It's great when that happens, isn't it? Something clicks inside you. A light goes on, and it all starts to make sense. You tell yourself that didn't just happen. It wasn't just a coincidence. It was meant to be. And that's right. It wasn't just a coincidence. In fact, there's no such thing as a coincidence. Everything that happens is part of a plan. This is true of those moments when things click in a special way, and it's true at every other moment as well.

Everything that happens, happens for a purpose. Christians have a word for this. The word is **providence**. The Heidelberg Catechism asks, "What is providence? Providence is the almighty and ever-present power of God by which he upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures, and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty, all things in fact come to us not by chance but from his fatherly hand" (Q&A 27).

Providence vs. luck

Belief in providence is quite different from just trusting your luck. We live in a time when luck and chance are notions that a lot of people trust in. We've got lotteries and casinos and a lot of other forms of gambling where people are trying to get lucky. We have various good luck charms and superstitions about what might bring us good luck. There are lucky numbers, lucky days, lucky this, lucky that.

Belief in luck is not just for superstitious people or those who read the tabloids or those who aren't quite as educated. Many elite intellectuals believe in a random universe governed by chance. They don't use the word luck, but chance and randomness and lack of purpose or plan or direction are big in their thinking. In fact, many say that any talk of intelligent design in the universe is unscientific. Without intelligent design, what have you got? Total chance.

Is existence just a lottery? If you don't believe the doctrine of providence, then most things, or maybe all things that happen, just come to you by chance. But the Scripture teaches something quite different. The catechism uses this phrase: "not by chance, but from his fatherly hand."

If you believe in luck or in chance, that's a vague, undefined, foggy concept. Providence teaches there is someone very definite and real in charge of each event.

Luck is impersonal. Providence says there is a personal Creator and Father who has a plan and is directing things according to his purpose.

Luck is heartless. There is no compassion or love involved in it. Providence is the work of a loving Creator and Father.

Luck is mindless. There is no design, no plan, no purpose. Providence says that someone wise is directing things toward their end according to his plan.

There's quite a difference between our common ideas about luck that are floating around nearly everywhere and the biblical doctrine and teaching of providence.

Providence in Jonah's life

Providence affects people in a variety of ways. Take a biblical example, Jonah. The word of the Lord came to Jonah and told him to bring a message to Nineveh. Jonah didn't want to go, so he sailed off in a different direction.

"The Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea." The Lord was in charge of the word that came to Jonah, but not only that, the Lord hurled a wind upon the sea. When Jonah was thrown overboard from the ship, "the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah." Three days later, "the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land."

Jonah then went and preached to Nineveh. His preaching was a great success, much to his disappointment, because he wanted the city to be destroyed. Instead, they repented, and God spared them. Jonah was furious as he sat outside the city waiting for something bad to happen to it, so the Lord decided to teach him a lesson.

"The Lord God appointed a plant" to grow up very fast over Jonah. It gave him shade from the hot sun. Jonah liked the shade. But then "God appointed a worm" to kill the plant and make it shrivel. Jonah's shade was gone, and that made Jonah really mad. "God appointed a scorching east wind," and Jonah become hot from the weather and hot with anger, so angry he wanted to die.

Jonah then received a message again from God: you're mad about that plant that you had only for a day and that you didn't even plant. What about this great city with 120,000 people who don't even know what they're doing, and many cattle? God even cared about the cattle.

As you read the book of Jonah, notice that God appoints the word, the message to Jonah. God controls the wind and the sea. God controls the fish. God appoints a plant. God controls a little worm. God appoints the scorching wind. God's providence, his hand, is in everything that happens in Jonah's life. Sometimes Jonah likes it, sometimes he doesn't. But in everything God is working out God's plan for Jonah and God's plan for Nineveh.

Providence

Providence has three basic elements. One is that God **preserves** or upholds everything in the universe. There is nothing that could go on for even a second unless God upheld it and continued to give it existence. He not only made it, but he keeps everything in being, and that's part of providence. A second aspect of providence is that God **plans** everything and directs all things according to his plan. A third major component of providence is that God **provides** individually for each one of us. It's not just that he has this big, huge plan for the universe and keeps

everything going, but he directs that plan and arranges it for the good of those who love him. He cares for our needs. He cares not only for the needs of the animals and the birds, but above all for the needs of his people and for his purpose in the lives of those who trust him.

If you need a shorthand way to remember what providence is all about, remember three Ps: **God preserves, plans, provides**. Let's look at some Bible passages that speak of each.

1. God preserves or upholds all things.

Hebrews 1:3 says, "He **upholds** the universe by the word of his power." Here it's not just talking about God the Father, but even more specifically about Jesus Christ, the Word who existed even before he became man. The Son of God upholds the entire universe by the word of his power.

Colossians 1 says something similar about Jesus the Son: "For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and **in him all things hold together**." Without him everything falls apart. Without him nothing continues to go on.

So providence is the work of God the Father and God the Son, through the effective power of the Holy Spirit, in upholding and continuing the existence of all things in the universe, which would instantly perish without the preserving and upholding work of the Lord God.

2. God plans: he directs all things.

Ephesians 1 says, "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who **works all things according to the counsel of his will**" (Ephesians 1:11). He works all things according to the counsel or plan of his will.

Romans 8:28 says, "We know that **in all things God works** for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." So his purpose, his plan, is at work in all things as God arranges things for the good of his people

3. God provides: he cares for our needs.

God's providence is for our good. He is providing and caring for our needs as a loving Father. Jesus says, "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ... Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" (Matthew 6:26-30).

You see it? Your Father cares for the birds, he clothes the flowers, and he certainly cares for you. Provision is one of the most beautiful and comforting aspects of the doctrine of providence. Not

a hair can fall from your head, not a bird can fall from the sky without God's will and without God's plan.

So those are the three things to keep in mind about providence. God preserves, plans, and provides for each of us individually. Every animal, every human is under his care.

Providence in Joseph's life

Let's take another example, one of the clearest examples of providence in the Bible, the life of Joseph, who lived about 1,800 years before the time of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do not confuse this Joseph with the Joseph who was Jesus' adoptive father.

This Joseph had dreams that revealed God's plan for him. He dreamed of family members bowing down to him. Those dreams came from God, but they did not please Joseph's brothers. They hated him when he told them his dream. They also hated him because their father favored Joseph over his brothers. His brothers hated him so much that when they had the chance, they thought about killing Joseph, but instead they sold him to a caravan of slave traders headed for Egypt.

As a slave, Joseph excelled. He worked for Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard, and he proved to be an outstanding and reliable servant, rising to the top of the household. But Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph, and when he refused, she falsely accused him. He was framed for attempted rape and was thrown into prison.

There he excelled as a model prisoner and explained dreams to his fellow prisoners. One of them was released and restored to Pharaoh's favor, but he forgot Joseph and did nothing to help him get released. So Joseph remained in prison for two more years.

Eventually, Joseph was promoted to govern Egypt. God gave him wisdom to interpret Pharaoh's dream and to prepare for famine by storing grain during years of abundance. In this way, Joseph saved many people, including his own family, God's chosen people.

When Joseph revealed himself to his astonished, terrified brothers, he said, "Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life... God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God" (Genesis 45:5–8). Later he told them, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Genesis 50:20).

What a powerful illustration of providence: a life that looked like a tangled mess, yet in the end it revealed God's hand working for good. God brought it about, and God meant it for good.

Nothing too great or small

As we think about providence, remember two things. Nothing is too great or too deadly for God to govern, and nothing is too small or too unimportant for God to notice.

Scripture shows that God rules over nations and powers. "He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him, 'What have you done?'" (Daniel 4:35).

God tells the prophet Isaiah, "Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy; no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed" (Isaiah 54:16-17). Every weapon that gets manufactured is made by someone whom God created. Every enemy, invader, and ravager was created by God. And that means that no weapon fashioned against you who are people of faith shall succeed, because nothing beyond God's power can come into your life. Even the bad things get their existence from God. Nothing is too great, nothing is too deadly for God to govern.

At the same time, nothing is too small to escape his attention. Jesus says, "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7). Jesus is comforting us with the knowledge that God pays attention even to the very smallest things.

It's a good thing that he does, because if God didn't know the little things, he wouldn't be able to handle the big things either. The great thinker Pascal said, "If Cleopatra's nose had been shorter, the face of the world would have changed." If you changed anything about Cleopatra's face, you would have changed the face of the world.

Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, had love affairs with Julius Caesar and then Marc Antony. If her nose had been too short or too long, her beauty would have been flawed, these Roman leaders would not have become her lovers, and entire nations and empires would have been different. God could not have known the future of Rome and Egypt if he had not also known the exact size and shape of Cleopatra's nose before she was ever born, and if he had not known in advance that she and Caesar and Antony would choose to commit adultery. But in fact God did foresee every physical feature and every human choice, both good and bad, before these people ever existed.

God also knew in advance that Caesar's heir, Octavian, would eventually triumph over Antony and become Caesar Augustus. God knew that Augustus would call for a census of the Roman Empire. God knew that, as a result of this census, a carpenter named Joseph and his pregnant wife would have to leave their home in Nazareth and travel to a small village called Bethlehem. God knew that Mary would go into labor during their visit to Bethlehem and that her baby would be born there.

Seven centuries before Jesus' birth, God sent out a birth announcement through the prophet Micah, stating that the ruler of God's people, someone of eternal origin, would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). How could God make this announcement about his Son's birthplace long in advance? Because he also knew in advance the size of Cleopatra's nose, the size of the ego and lust of Roman politicians, the timing of the Roman census, and countless other details, large and small, that led up to Jesus' birth in Bethlehem.

God's knowledge of everything past and present and future is complete and exact. God sees it all before it happens. Nothing ever catches God by surprise. He already knows it all, has included it in his plan, and directs every detail in a way that serves his own good goal for his people and his world.

Some people say that God doesn't know everything about the future, that he can't know the choices that people freely make until they actually make those choices. Some scholars and pastors who call themselves evangelicals speak of "the openness of God." By that they mean that God doesn't know people's future choices. But if God doesn't know such things, if he doesn't know choices and the length of somebody's nose, he doesn't know anything worth knowing about the future of humanity. God knows every free choice and every physical feature of every person who will ever live. God not only knows all things, but he directs all things according to his plan and his providence.

God's plan includes human and demonic sins

God's plan includes the big things. It includes the little things. It includes the bad things. God's plan includes the sins of humans and even the sins of demons. There is ample evidence of this in the Bible.

Job, that great man of God, was devastated by Satan's attacks and by evil people who were motivated by Satan to attack Job's people and property. He was devastated by Satan and by Satan's people only after the Lord allowed it (Job 1-2).

King Saul disobeyed God and was tormented "by a harmful spirit from the Lord" (1 Samuel 16:14, 19:9). In a sense, that was an evil spirit, but in another sense, it happened at God's direction and permission. We don't know exactly how that works, but that's what the Bible says.

David called for a census, and this was wrong of him to do. The Bible says he was prompted by Satan to do it (1 Chronicles 21:1), but it also says that he was prompted by the Lord to do it (2 Samuel 24:1). It is a very strange thing that somebody could be prompted by Satan in one sense, and yet in another sense, in God's bigger plan, the Lord was at work as well.

King Ahab was killed in battle after lying spirits guided false prophets to encourage Ahab to go to battle. A God-sent prophet had a vision of the Lord saying, "Who will entice Ahab to go into battle and be killed?" And one of the evil spirits said, "I will go and be a lying spirit in the mouths of his prophets." And the Lord said, "You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so" (1 Kings 22:20-22). Even the actions of wicked spirits in some way are under the rule and in the plan of God.

Judas was possessed by Satan, but it wasn't just Satan and Judas doing their own thing. God had his own plan to sacrifice Jesus. So the evil of Judas and the evil of Satan were not outside God's plan but were carrying out God's purposes.

The ultimate sin in the history of the world was also the plan of God. Scripture says, "This Jesus, delivered up **according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God**, you crucified and

killed by the hands of lawless men” (Acts 2:23). So it was God’s definite plan and foreknowledge that brought about Jesus’ death, and at the same time it was lawless, wicked men who did this.

A similar thing is stated in a prayer that the apostles offered: “For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place**” (Acts 4:27-28) God’s hand, God’s plan, was in charge even in the horrible actions of Herod and Pontius Pilate and the chief priests and the killers of the Son of God. Wicked people are up to something, but the good God is up to something too. God is doing it in a way that he is not to blame for sin, and yet he uses the actions of sinners. The greatest sin in the history of the world was also the greatest act of the hand of God in bringing about our salvation, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Joseph foreshadowed Jesus

Jesus lived roughly 1,800 years after Joseph lived, but in some ways Joseph was a hint, a foreshadowing, of Jesus. There are striking parallels between Joseph and Jesus.

Joseph's brothers thought he had delusions of grandeur when he dreamed of being a ruler. Jesus' brothers thought he was crazy when he went around acting like he was the Son of God.

Joseph was brought low before God lifted him up. Jesus was brought low to hell and the grave before God lifted him up.

Joseph forgave his brothers; Jesus forgave his tormentors.

God led Joseph down a path of sorrows in order to save many people from starvation. God led Jesus down a path of sorrows to save many people from damnation.

Joseph's brothers had to turn to Joseph for food in order to live through the famine. You and I must turn to Jesus, the bread of life, in order to live forever.

Some aspects of God's plan are still a secret, but it is no secret that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. It is no secret that the way to live forever is to repent of your sins and trust in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross to pay for your sins and to depend on his resurrection power to give you eternal life. It is no secret that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Fatherly hand

Once you belong to Jesus, you live each day by faith in the providence of God, knowing that all things "come to us, not by chance, but from his fatherly hand."

The Heidelberg Catechism asks, “What do you mean when you say I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?” The answer, “The eternal Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and everything in them, who still upholds and rules them by his eternal counsel and providence, is my God and Father because of Christ his Son. I trust him so much that I do not doubt he will provide whatever I need for body and soul, and he will turn to my good whatever adversity he sends me in this sad world. He is able to do this because he is almighty God. He desires to do this because he is a faithful Father” (Q&A 26).

“What is providence? Providence is the almighty and ever present power of God by which he upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures, and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty—all things, in fact, come to us not by chance but from his fatherly hand” (Q &A 27).

Let me remind you one last time of three facts about providence: God preserves: he upholds all things. God plans: he directs all things. God provides: he cares for our needs.

What is the use of knowing all this? The Heidelberg Catechism asks, “How does the knowledge of God’s creation and providence help us? We can be patient when things go against us, thankful when things go well, and for the future we can have good confidence in our faithful God and Father that nothing will separate us from his love. All creatures are so completely in his hand that without his will they can neither move nor be moved” (Q&A 28).

More Strength, Not Less Emotion

Some folks think that if we believe everything is in God's plan, we will become passive and unemotional. But is that what happened with Joseph? Hardly.

Joseph's trust in God's providence didn't make him passive. He didn't say to himself, "If God is directing everything, why should I put forth any effort? It's all up to God." Joseph's faith in God's plan didn't make him sit back and do nothing. It gave him the strength, desire, and confidence to keep doing his best. Even when everything seemed to be going wrong for him, he was energized by faith in God's plan and blessing.

As for emotions, did Joseph's faith in God's plan make him cold and mechanical and unemotional? Quite the opposite. When God's plan finally became clear, Joseph didn't calmly say, "All the pieces are now in place." No, he wept and wept and wept some more. At least eight different times the Bible tells of Joseph weeping: tears of pain at the hurts he'd endured, and tears of joy at what God had accomplished through those hurts.

You see, God's providence isn't a machine where God pushes buttons, and gears and pistons begin pounding. Providence isn't a program designed by a computer and carried out by robots. It's a drama that's planned by a personal God and directed by his fatherly hand, a drama that's lived out in the lives of flesh and blood persons. Trusting in God's plan doesn't stifle deep emotions or heartfelt tears.

But it does have a stabilizing effect on you. Faith in providence doesn't decrease your emotions, but it does increase your strength. Faith in providence helps you to be patient in bad times, thankful in good times, and confident at all times.

Look again at Joseph. His faith in God's plan helped him to be patient when things went against him. His own brothers hated him and sold him as a slave. He was thrown in prison after doing the right thing. He was forgotten by someone he had helped, who could have gotten him out of prison. This all weighed heavily on Joseph, but did he sink into self pity or bitterness? No, he kept counting on God. When he finally had a chance to get back at those who hurt him, what did he do? He forgave them. And he was helped to forgive by the knowledge that God used even the evils of those who had hurt him to bring about something good.

Maybe something rotten has happened to you, or somebody has hurt you terribly. You don't have to like it. You may weep about it. But don't give up when times are bad, and don't seek revenge when people are bad. God has a secret plan to bring good even out of the bad. Faith in his plan can make you a more patient and forgiving person.

Trust in God's plan can also help you to have a healthy attitude when things go well for you. When Joseph finally made it to the top, did he brag about his own achievements? No, he gave God the credit. He said, "God has made me lord of all Egypt." Trust in God's providence makes you thankful and humble, instead of letting success go to your head.

Whatever your situation, whether pleasant or difficult, you can always be confident about the future. No matter what you face, don't give up. Never, never, never give up on God. Joseph endured all kinds of trouble, but he never gave up. Why not? Because he remembered the dream of greatness God had given him, and he knew that somehow God's plan would bring him to that great destiny. God has also given us a dream, a dream even greater than Joseph's dream: not ruling over our family or over a country but ruling with Christ over the universe, with authority even over the angels. That is God's plan for each of his people in Christ. Nothing can separate us from his love, and nothing can keep us from that destiny.

So believe the truth about God's providence. Trust his secret plan. Relate everything in your life to God and give him all the glory for what he accomplishes through you.

When Joseph talked to his brothers about everything that happened, he kept talking again and again about God. "**God** sent me ahead of you... **God** sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance... So then, it was not you who sent me here, but **God**... **God** has made me lord of all Egypt ... You intended to harm me, but **God** intended it for good." After all of Joseph's ups and downs, how did he summarize it all? "God ... God ... God ... God ... God."

That's what happens when you believe in God's providence. You look at your life, with its ups and downs, and what it all comes down to is, "God ... God!"

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Trusting Your Luck

- Lotteries, casinos, and other gambling
- Good luck charms
- Lucky numbers and lucky days
- Random universe, governed by chance
- Is existence just a lottery?

Not by chance but from His fatherly hand

Luck	Providence
Vague	Definite
Impersonal	Personal
Heartless	Loving
Mindless	Wise

Providence in Jonah's life

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah... The Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea... The Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah... The Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land... the Lord God appointed a plant... God appointed a worm... God appointed a scorching east wind.

Providence

- **Preserves:** God upholds all things.
- **Plans:** God directs all things.
- **Provides:** God cares for our needs.

Preserves: upholds all things

He **upholds** the universe by the word of his power. (Hebrews 1:3)

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and **in him all things hold together.** (Colossians 1:16-17)

Plans: directs all things

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who **works all things according to the counsel of his will.** (Ephesians 1:11)

And we know that **in all things God works** for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Provides: cares for our needs.

Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ... Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? (Matthew 6:26-30)

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Providence in Joseph's life

- Dreamed of God's plan for him
- Favored by his father; hated by his brothers
- Sold into slavery
- Excelled as a slave for Potiphar
- Framed for attempted rape
- Excelled as model prisoner and explained dreams to his fellow prisoners
- Forgotten by his fellow prisoner
- Promoted to govern Egypt and save many

God meant it for good

And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life... God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. (Genesis 45:5-8)

You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. (Genesis 50:20)

Nothing too great or deadly for God to govern.

He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" (Daniel 4:35).

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Nothing too small for God to notice

"Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7).

"If Cleopatra's nose had been shorter, the face of the world would have been changed." (Pascal)

God's plan includes human and demonic sins

- Job was devastated by Satan only after the Lord allowed it. (Job 1-2)
- Saul was tormented "by a harmful spirit from the Lord." (1 Sam 16:14, 19:9)
- David's census was prompted by Satan and by the Lord. (1 Chron 21:1; 2 Sam 24:1)
- Ahab died after lying spirits guided prophets in God's plan to kill Ahab. (1 Kings 22)
- Judas was possessed by Satan, as God planned to sacrifice Jesus. (Luke 22:3)

Ultimate sin, ultimate plan

This Jesus, delivered up **according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God**, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. (Acts 2:23)

For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.** (Acts 4:27-28)

Creator and Almighty Father

The eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and everything in them, who still upholds and rules them by his eternal counsel and providence, is

my God and Father because of Christ his Son. I trust him so much that I do not doubt he will provide whatever I need for body and soul, and he will turn to my good whatever adversity he sends me in this sad world. He is able to do this because he is almighty God; he desires to do this because he is a faithful Father. (*Heidelberg Catechism A. 26*)

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