**Views of Providence**

Human beings cannot fully know the mind of God; therefore, we cannot understand His providence completely. Our view of divine providence depends on our view of God and how He works in the world. The fact that some aspects of God’s providence remain a mystery should make us humble and increase our faith. Unfortunately, many have taken a wrong or distorted view of God’s providence. Consider these theological views: 1) Atheism says that there is no God, and therefore there is no Providence; 2) Deism teaches that God lets the universe run itself; 3) Pentecostal/Holiness teaching maintains that providence equals miracles.

Many other misconceptions of Divine Providence may be observed. Casual believers often see God as a divine rescuer who is mostly ignored until they are in trouble. Others perceive Him to be a moral policeman who takes away their pleasure by enforcing laws of conduct. The selfish nature of humans leads to the view that God is supposed to provide only good things and never punish us for our mistakes. These and many other false views of God’s nature point out the need for a clear understanding of God and his Providence.

**God’s Nature and Character**

The Bible says that God brought the world into existence (Isaiah 44:24; Col. 1:16-18). Having created the world, he continues to guide and care for it (Psalm 135:7; Eccl. 3:13; Acts 14:17). Because He is merciful, God has made provision to save His children who obey Him (John 1:12-13; 6:37-40; Eph. 1:4-11; Rom. 8:29-30; Acts 13:48; Phil. 1:29).

God’s divine nature allows His providence to exceed human capabilities. God is *omnipotent*--He has the power to do anything He desires (Job 42:2; Luke 1:37). He is *Omnipresent*--He is in all places, all the time (Jer. 23:24; 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 90:2). He is *omniscient*--He knows all things (1 John 3:20). These attributes of God’s nature compel His creation to stand in awe of His majesty and goodness.

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possibility must exist for humans to make unwise and even dangerous choices. But the resulting evil, pain, and suffering is no proof of God’s impotence or that He does not exist.

Now let us look at what omnipotence is. In our present world, God can do all that possibly can be done. God will act in harmony with His perfect nature. We must distinguish between what God permits (or does not prevent) and what He Himself does. God cannot and will not intervene when such intervention goes against His nature. Such failure to intervene is no proof against the omnipotence of God but is rather a failure in human reasoning.

**Divine goodness**

To understand divine goodness, we can compare it with the human view of goodness. What we call “good” and what God calls “good” may be different. Compare a perfect circle to a child’s attempt to draw a wheel. In reference to God’s goodness, we usually mean His love, His kindness, His wish for our happiness. But this is our view, and not necessarily God’s. God’s goodness is often preceded or accompanied by His severity. Compare a parent’s scolding or punishment of a child for the child’s own ultimate good. Many people who are selfish and spiritually weak want a God who will make them constantly happy. They want a life filled with pleasure and free from pain and physical death. In other words, a “good” God would provide for us a paradise on earth according to our individual specifications. The problems attending such a condition, if granted, would be partly unimaginable and mostly catastrophic. Do good times and painless existence really bring us closer to God? Prosperity and good health bind us to the world and cause us to forget God. Adversity makes people think about God (some fall to their knees, others curse their fate).

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