**False Views of Divine Providence**

The scope of divine providence includes the universe (the earth in particular), human beings and their relationships, as well as the affairs of nations. God also makes special provision for His people. He is able to make all of these provisions because He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. These attributes of God make it possible for Him to create, sustain, and redeem His people.

There are many views of the universe and life that do not accept or acknowledge the providence or the existence of God. The spectrum of anti-provident views ranges from those who deny that God exists (atheists) to those who believe in God but not his providence (Deists). Let us examine several of these false views in detail.

**Atheism**

Atheists say there is no God. They believe that the universe is run by natural law, and everything that happens is according to accident or chance. Atheists look for scientific explanations for all phenomena and never attach supernatural causes to any event. They think that religious people are ignorant and unenlightened pagans. This view is supported by many in the scientific community and by worldly societies and governments that discourage religious practice, particularly Christianity.

**Agnosticism**

Agnosticism is the view that human reason cannot reasonably prove

that God exists or that He does not exist. In matters of the intellect,

agnostics do not pretend that conclusions are certain if they cannot be rationally demonstrated. Agnostics say that because the spirit world cannot be known by any of the five human senses, it is not possible to determine for sure that such a spirit world exists or that God (if He exists) is operating in human lives. For both atheists and agnostics, the question of divine providence cannot arise.

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**Evil, Pain, and Suffering**

**Introduction**

Many Christians look at the world around them and see a lot wrong with it. Babies are born with birth defects. People die tragically of many diseases. Natural disasters kill thousands of innocent people. War and violent crime cause millions to live in fear. Why didn’t God create a world in which bad things don’t happen?

Unbelievers say that the existence of evil, pain, and suffering proves that God does not exist. Their reasoning runs like this: If God wants to remove evil, and cannot, he is not omnipotent.If he can remove evil, but does not want to, he is not benevolent.Because he is neither omnipotent nor benevolent, he is not God. Therefore, God does not exist. With this argument, atheists feel that they can prove that God does not exist or that God is the cause of evil in the world. But is this true? Let us look at the origin of evil.

**The origin of evil**

The origin of sin can be traced to rebellious angels (Ezek. 28:11-19; Isa. 14:12-14). Satan and his helpers were thrown out of heaven. Because he is condemned, Satan seeks the condemnation of others, using evil, pain, and suffering for this purpose. God created humans as free moral agents; therefore, the possibility of sin came into the world along with humans. Human contact with sin occurred in the Garden of Eden. All humans have since carried the potential and even the tendency to sin. This fact helps to explain the reason for evil, pain, and suffering today.

If we accept this explanation of the origin of sin (which causes evil, pain, and suffering) why does God allow evil to continue? Does He have a purpose for evil? Does He have the power to stop evil? Let us look at the idea of divine omnipotence.

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