

# What Are God's Works of Providence?

Are Things Out of Control?

**Matt. 10:29. – “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.”**

- In this passage, the Lord is encouraging his disciples in light of the troubles they will encounter in the living of the Christian life. If God guides and disposes of even the lowliest creatures, then surely his providence will protect his people all along life's way. From this we learn that there is a providence of God that extends to the very least of matters.

# WSC #11: What Are God's Works of Providence?

- God's works of providence are, his most holy (Ps. 145:17), wise (Ps. 104:24, Isa. 28:29), and powerful preserving (Heb. 1:3), and governing all his creatures, and all their actions (Ps. 103:19, Matt. 10:29–31).

# God's Works Are Holy

- The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works (Psalm 145:17).

# God's Works Are Wise

- O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches (Psalm 104:24).
- This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working (Isaiah 28:29)...or "the Lord gives marvelous advice."

# God's Works Are Powerful And Preserving

- Who [Christ] 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 (Hebrews 1:3)

# There Is A Providence of God

- We know this from plain Scripture testimony.
  - Psalm 103:19
  - Acts 17:28
  - Ephesians 2:11
- Held forth in a three-fold Scripture emblem:
  - Mount Moriah (Gen. 22:14)
  - Jacob's Ladder (Gen. 28)
  - Ezekiel's Wheels Within Wheels (Ezek. 1)

# There Is A Providence of God

- We know this from the nature of God himself
  - He is the first cause of all things that come to pass
  - He is the end of all things
  - He is all-wise, all-powerful, and faithful to accomplish all that he has decreed to come to pass.



# There Is A Providence of God

- We know this from the underlying harmony of even the most confused and chaotic things of this world
  - Though there are confusions in the world, yet the discerning eye sees God in all things
  - If it were possible for chaos to prevail, it certainly would and evil would certainly prevail over virtue.

# There Is A Providence of God

- We know this from the fulfillment of prophecies, which could not be certain unless God's providence assured that they would come to pass in their correct time.

# Providence Extends To Every Creature and Every Action

## ■ Scriptures:

- Heb. 1:3 “upholding all things by the word of his power”
- Psalm 103:19 “his kingdom ruleth over all”
- Prov. 16:33 “the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord”

# Providence Extends To Every Creature and Every Action

- Nothing is so lowly as to escape the providence of God
  - The falling of the sparrow
  - The number of hairs upon anyone's head
  - God feeds the birds and clothes the lilies
  - The king's heart is in God's control
  - He directs and orders the steps of men

# Providence Extends To Every Creature and Every Action

- The most free acts of the freest creatures are governed by God's superintending providence
  - Good acts, John 15:5 "without me ye can do nothing"
  - Evil acts, Acts 4:27, 28 "to do whatsoever thy hand and counsel before determined to be done"
  - Gen. 45:7, "God sent me before you"

# Twofold “Acts” of Providence

- Preserving And Governing.
- By “preserving,” we mean that God so preserves the creature that it continues to have being and the ability to act.
  - Heb. 1:3; Hosea 2:21-22 (both mediate and immediate preservation)
  - Psalm 145:15-16 (provides the necessities of survival)

# Preservation

- There is no necessary connection betwixt the being of the creatures this moment and their being the next; and as they could not give themselves a being, so they cannot continue it.

# Governance

- Prov. 16:9, "A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps."
- God neither puts evil into the hearts of men, nor stirs them up to it.
  - "God cannot be tempted with evil; neither tempteth he any man." Jas. 1:13
  - Therefore God is not the author of sin



# Governance

- Yet:
  - God permits sin, “God in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways” (Acts 14:16).
  - In his permission, he has only holy ends or purposes, for by so doing his mercy, justice, wisdom, and love all appear.
  - God sometimes withdraws his restraint, in which case sinners run to evil.

# Governance

## ■ Further:

- God normally places a bound upon men, only allowing their sin to progress so far and no farther.
- Psalm 76:10, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."
- God allows so much, and only so much, evil as will be for his glory in overturning.

# The Properties of Divine Providence

## ■ Holy, Wise, and Powerful

- The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and **holy** in all his works. Psa. 145:17
- This cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, who is **wonderful in counsel**, and excellent in working. Isa. 28:29
- I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and **I will turn thee** back by the way by which thou camest. 2 Kings 19:28.

# Exhortations

- Beware of drawing an excuse for your sin from the providence of God; for it is most holy, and has not the least efficiency in any sin you commit.
- Beware of murmuring and fretting under any dispensations of providence that you meet with; remembering that nothing falls out without a wise and holy providence, which knows best what is fit and proper for you.

# Exhortations

- Beware of anxious cares and diffidence about your bearing in the world.
- Do not slight means, seeing God works by them; and he that has appointed the end orders the means necessary for gaining the end.
- Happy is the people whose God the Lord is; for all things shall work together for their good.