

Providence and the Problem of Evil

Homer Hailey

This study begins with the premise that God is, and that He is absolute in all His attributes: holiness, intelligence, wisdom, knowledge, and power. Therefore, He cannot make a mistake; the world He created was complete, perfect for the purpose for which He created it. When the creation was finished, God “saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). If, then, everything was very good, how do we explain evil as it is found in such a world? This lecture will attempt to answer that question.

This problem necessitates a second accepted fact: Man, as a moral creature, possesses a moral conscience with the ability to choose his own actions. We accept this proposition as self-evident, as axiomatic. Hence, the consequences of his choices must be considered.

When we have accepted these two premises, a third follows: God put His creation and man under law, including law in the physical world and moral and spiritual law in the moral realm. Compliance or non-compliance, obedience or disobedience, to these laws brings inevitable consequences. Only on the basis of these three premises can we come to grips with the problem of evil, and, in the providence of such a Creator-God, can we find a solution to the perplexing question of evil.

The three topics assigned to me are: (1) Providence and the Problem of Evil; (2) Providence in God's Redemptive Plan; and (3) Providence in the Christian's Life. My lecture this morning will deal with a brief discussion of the two words, "providence" and "evil." The following two will be concerned primarily with providence.

Providence

The word "providence" occurs often in our speech. We say of some incident, "It was an act of providence"; of some failure to respond to duty, "I was providentially hindered," and the like. There are others who believe that the *kosmos* was set in order by some divine power or by a process of evolution, and, therefore, they conclude that what is to be will be, and that there is no special guidance of any kind unless it be the blind process of natural forces.

There are those who confuse "providence" with "miracle"; these use the word "miracle" in a very loose way, often contrary to the Biblical concept of miracle. A miracle may be defined as a deed in an order which is impossible to the forces ordinarily working in that order (Faulkner); it is the intervention of the creative power of God, the exercise of a power that transcends the natural order. There are three words in the Bible which denote supernatural acts: "wonders," which arouse astonishment in the mind of the beholder; "powers," which express the divine energy exerted in the working of the miracle; and "signs," tokens of God's presence, by which the divine origin of the message or claim of a speaker is confirmed.

However, miracles are not under consideration in this lecture. Our theme is providence, which is the working of God through His provision in the natural and spiritual realms, and yet it is a control that violates neither the sovereignty of the human will nor the divine natural and spiritual laws.

Our English word “providence” is from the Latin *providentia*, and the word “provide” comes from the Latin *providere*. Etymologically, the latter means (*pro*: before, and *videre*: to see), literally to see before; therefore, it expresses forethought and foresight, i.e. conveys the idea of provident care. The one time the word “providence” occurs in our English New Testament applies to a man and not God (Acts 24:21), yet the idea of God’s forethought and foresight in making provision for man’s need and His ability to hear and answer man’s prayers run throughout both testaments. This is the proposition before us.

Two parallel Greek words express the same idea: The verb, *pronoeō*, which occurs three times in the New Testament, means to have regard for and is translated “take thought” twice (Rom. 12:17; 2 Cor. 8:21) and “provideth” once (1 Tim. 5:8). The noun, *pronoia*, occurs twice and expresses the idea of forethought, foresight, care, provision for something. It is translated “providence” (Acts 24:2) and “make provision” (Rom. 13:14). When applied to God, the word means His foresight and forethought in creating the universe whereby He would be in control and could carry out His purpose to its ultimate consummation.

Providence presupposes the divine creation of the universe and God's government in and over that which He created. This presupposition rests on the postulate that God is eternal in His being and infinite and absolute in all His attributes. I accept these as axiomatic. Possessing these qualities of absolute and infinite Being, God cannot make a mistake; what He does is right, and it cannot be otherwise.

These infinite attributes are clearly manifested in the creation. The Scriptures most appropriately open with the activity of the eternal God: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). This carries us back to the absolute beginning of all things which pertain to our known universe and declares that God is the Creator. The creation of the heavens and the earth expresses an absolute or infinite power; and bringing a *kosmos* out of the original *chaos* further reveals that absolute power which was guided by an infinite intelligence who had absolute knowledge of what He wanted and the absolute wisdom to provide for what He intended to do. Wisdom affirms that, as a master workman, she with Jehovah was "set up from everlasting, from the beginning, before the earth was," and that she "was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him" (Prov. 8:22–31).

Jehovah's creative power was expressed through His word: "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth . . . For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33:6, 9; cf. Ps. 148:5). In bringing forth these

by His word, God demonstrated not only His power but also His will. In ascribing glory and honor and power to the Lord our God, the twenty-four elders said, “For thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created” (Rev. 4:11). According to this, the creation of all things is an expression of God’s divine will; they existed in His mind or purpose before the creation; and, instead of coming through a process of evolution, they were spoken into existence by His will. Not only did He bring them forth by His Word (John 1:1–3), which became flesh (v. 14; Col. 1:17–25), but also He now upholds “all things by the word of his power” (Heb. 1:3).

In this light, we can conclude that the laws by which all things operate are expressions of God’s will; He is the lawgiver and the governor in His universe. The expression “laws of nature,” appealed to by those who would leave God out of this control of His universe, are meaningless unless they are expressions of will. There can be no real cause for things created or made except for divine or created will. In His divine foresight and forethought as Creator and source of the universe, God created His universe so that He has complete control over all, except where He has created free beings (angels and man). Over these His sovereignty is exercised by moral suasion through moral government; there is no other way by which He can control a moral being.

There are at least four truths concerning His providence: (1) Man under the natural order is subject to all natural laws and consequences—blessings, accidents, suffering, and death. (2) The natural order is adapted to

the moral and spiritual training of free beings (Jas. 1:3–5; 1 Pet. 1:5, 6). (3) God has the power of guiding free beings from above their freedom without interfering with it; this includes nations and individuals. (4) If He wills, God can directly alter the course of events in answer to human prayer or without it (William N. Clark, *An Outline of Christian Theology*, pp. 148–152).

Purpose

God's foresight and forethought implies a definite purpose in the creation, and the idea of providence involves a practical arrangement by which the purpose may be achieved. The Scripture does not tell us whether God knew or did not know that man would sin; but we know that when God created man as a free being, capable of choosing to obey or disobey Him, He knew that he could sin or refrain from sin, and that either he would or would not sin according to his own choice. We are not told what life would have been like on earth in a sinless state or what God's plan for man was in such a state, and, furthermore, it is idle to speculate on this point. The fact is that when man sinned, he brought upon himself separation from God and ultimately death. But we believe that as God had a plan for man had he not sinned, so He also had a plan or purpose for his redemption if he should sin. The unfolding and carrying out of this purpose in His providence is the central theme of the Bible. This is the theme of our next lecture.

Evil

The problem of evil in a beautiful world pronounced “very good” by its Creator has always presented a challenge to the thinking of man. In the Old Testament *evil* (Hebrew *ra'*), may refer to what is bad physically, that which is undesirable, such as disease, calamity, and destruction from such forces as tornados, earthquakes and the like, the causes of which are often unknown. The word also refers to that which is morally wicked or sinful in the sight of God. The last six commandments of the decalogue relate to moral behaviour; the violation of these principles set forth by God constitutes moral evils or sins. In the New Testament, *evil* (Greek *ponēros*, *ponēria*, and *kakos*) usually refers to moral evil-sin, disobedience to God, with suitable results.

Those things which we designate evils in the natural world are more difficult to explain or understand than those in the moral realm. In the beginning, “good and evil” were set side by side before Adam when God placed in the garden “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” with the instruction that he was not to eat of it (Gen. 2:9, 17). This by no means indicates that God was tempting the couple to sin, “for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man” (Jas. 1:13). This would test his loyalty to God, but temptation would come from a different source.

The temptation to sin or to commit a moral evil was wrought by Satan. This raises the question of his origin as to whether he is eternal or was created. Paul says of

Christ, “For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist” (Col. 1:16, 17). These principalities or powers which include Satan are supermundane beings who exercise rule in certain realms. Being created by, and unto, Christ, Satan must have been created good to serve a good purpose. However, Peter says, “God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness” (2 Pet. 2:4); and Jude says, “And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness” (Jude 6). Jesus indicated that these are angels led by Satan when he said of the wicked at the judgment, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41).

Jesus said of the devil, “He was a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44), and John says, “He that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning” (1 John 3:8). When we go back to the beginning, we find that the devil was there as a murderer, a liar, and a sinner—one who sinned by having left that for which God created him. Satan was the adversary and tempter of our first parents, who, when tempted by him, ate of the tree’s fruit as both desired to become like God (Gen. 3:5, 22). Their act was one of free will; as a consequence, the

curse of Jehovah was laid upon the land which would now bring a degree of evil or badness upon it (3:16–19).

The extent to which Satan is involved in the natural calamities of life may be beyond our total comprehension, but there are a few passages which give us glimpses of his involvement. In the debate with Jehovah over the integrity of Job, Jehovah allowed Satan to act within certain limitations: First, “Only upon himself put not forth thy hand” (Job 1:12). Through the instrumentality of men, Satan destroyed or had carried away all of Job’s livestock (vv. 13–17); this was followed by a great wind, a force of nature, which destroyed the house in which the patriarch’s sons and daughters were eating and drinking and resulted in the death of all ten of them. Second, in response to Satan’s next challenge, Jehovah said, “Behold, he is in thy hand, only spare his life” (2:6). With this permission, Satan smote him with sore boils from head to foot (the evil of disease); Job became an outcast, sat in the ash-heap, and was rejected by society (cf. Job 17:6; 19:13–22) (This is social evil). His wife lost faith in Job’s God and urged him to curse God and die (This is the evil of unbelief and disloyalty). Then when Job’s friends “heard of all this evil that had come upon him,” they came to console him; but, instead, they became his accusers (This is religious or philosophical evil) (2:7–13). In both the physical and moral realms, Satan caused the evil that plagued God’s faithful servant.

When the remnant had returned from Babylon and Jehovah would cleanse the priesthood that it might serve its proper function, Satan stood at the right hand of

Joshua the high priest “to be his adversary.” “And Jehovah said unto Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan; yea, Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee” (Zech. 3:2). The Lord then had them put clean garments upon the high priest that he might function properly and thus overruled Satan’s effort to prohibit such. For he was acting as the archenemy of God and man.

The cures and miracles of Jesus further indicate that all evil is the result of an intruding power and is contrary to God’s goodness and desire. After He had healed a woman of her infirmity, He was challenged by the ruler of the synagogue for healing her on the sabbath. The woman is described as having had “a spirit of infirmity eighteen years; and she was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up.” Jesus’ response to His accuser was that any one of his hypocritical associates would loose an animal on the sabbath and lead it to water. He then said, “And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom *Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years*, to have been loosed from this bond on the sabbath?” (Luke 13:10–17) However, we may attempt an explanation of this, for, according to Jesus, it was Satan who had bound her.

Although we may not be able to determine the extent to which Satan acts in the natural world to bring various calamities and evils upon man, we can know that in the past he has done this, and that even now he probably continues to act within divinely prescribed limitations. From all the Biblical evidence, we may conclude further that the violation of God’s laws by man, having been

seduced by Satan, affects the operation of the natural laws by causing evil results. It appears that Satan is an instrument in God's hand whom He will use and allow to operate until the end of time when he shall be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). Though our curiosity leads us to wish we knew more, let us content ourselves with the trust that God "hath made everything beautiful in its time: also he hath set eternity in their heart, yet so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end" (Eccl. 3:11), and that "God hath done it, that man should fear before him" (v. 14).

We must also consider those passages which ascribe evil to God. Just before Moses's death, Jehovah spoke to Israel through him, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil" (Deut. 30:15). In what sense could Jehovah set evil before His people? It can be only in that when life and good are rejected, death and evil are inevitable consequences; it is the law of cause and effect. Again, God's prophet asked, "Shall evil befall a city, and Jehovah hath not done it?" (Amos 3:6) This is also the evil or bad results brought about by divine judgment because of the rejection of God's law and righteousness. In revealing the deliverance of His people from Babylon by the hand of Cyrus, Jehovah said, "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I am Jehovah, that doeth these things" (Isa. 45:7). In rebuking the house of Judah for seeking help from Egypt instead of turning to Him, the Holy one of Israel, Jehovah said, "Yet he [Jehovah] is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words" (Isa. 31:2). In each of these instances,

the evil from Jehovah is the evil of judgment brought upon man in consequence of his violation and rejection of divine law=his rebellion against God.

The problem of evil is easier to deal with in the moral world than in the physical realm. Sin, wickedness, and rebellion against God began in Eden when Adam and Eve listened to Satan and desired to become like God; it began as an expression of the heart's desire. It is said, "And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Evil thoughts and imaginations led to evil deeds which brought the evil consequences of the flood and destruction. Jesus restated this principle when He said, "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man" (Matt. 15:19; see also Matt. 12:34, 35; Mark 7:20-23). The heart is the workshop in which the deeds of life are wrought.

In the Roman letter (1:18-32), Paul points out that man is responsible for the evils encountered in the moral realm. The apostle charges that God left ample witness of Himself (vv. 19, 20), that "knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks" (v. 21), and that "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (v. 22) and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for that which is corruptible (v. 23). Also, he insists, "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped the creature rather than the Creator" (v. 23); "their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature;

and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working unseemliness” (v. 27). All of this they did because “they refused to have God in their knowledge” (v. 28).

Therefore, evil consequences followed: “They became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened” (v. 21); “God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves” (v. 24); “God gave them up unto vile passions” (v. 26); they received “in themselves that recompense of their error which was due” (v. 27); and “God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting” (v. 28). The things “which are not fitting” are then set forth in verses 29–31, as works of evil (2:9), which bring the wrath of God upon such evil-workers (1:18, 19).

Man does not have to continue in this condition; he can cease to do evil and turn away from it as the Lord calls upon him to do. Through Isaiah, Jehovah cried to the people before the captivity, “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil” (Isa. 1:16). During the captivity, Ezekiel spoke the word of Jehovah to them, “As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezek. 33:11) The grace of God makes this possible.

Even when one ceases to do evil, the guilt of his sin remains and must be forgiven by Jehovah who has been sinned against. Therefore, in turning from evil, one must turn to the Lord in penitence for the evil. In the Old Testament, the word is, “Turn ye unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God, for he is gracious and merciful” (Joel 2:13; cf. 1 Thess. 1:9, 10); and in the New Testament, it is, “Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

In the New Testament, Christians are commanded, “Abhor [hate] that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Rom. 12:9), and, “Hold fast that which is good; abstain [keep or hold oneself] from every form of evil” (1 Thess. 5:21, 22). The Christian’s attitude toward evil is further emphasized by Peter, who said, “Not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing ... For, He that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; and let him turn away from evil, and do good ... [for] the face of the Lord is against them that do evil” (1 Pet. 3:9–12).

Conclusion

Regardless of how we explain evil, it is definitely in the world and must be opposed and eradicated. In our next lecture, we shall deal with providence as God provides for redemption from the guilt of sin and evil

Providence in God's Redemptive Plan

Homer Hailey

In my former lecture, the word "providence" was defined as God's foresight in which His infinite forethought enabled Him to create a universe that He could control through laws which express His will. This control includes both the inanimate and the animate worlds as well as man and the nations, both heathen and His own. And, by this control, He achieves His divine purpose.

It was also pointed out that because man was created a free being, subject to law, he is capable of making his own choices; that is, he can obey or disobey the law under which he is placed and can thereby enjoy or suffer the consequences of his actions. Since man can obey or disobey, God's foresight and forethought had a plan for him if he should not sin (unrevealed) and a plan for his redemption should he sin (revealed). Therefore, the Bible is the revelation of God's redemptive plan for sinful man and also of the overcoming and destruction of Satan who enticed man to sin. God's providence in achieving the object of His plan is the topic of the present lecture.

Purpose

Providence implies purpose, for the exercise of foresight necessitates a plan of some sort in which forethought operates. The noun *prothesis*, from which our word *purpose* is translated, is defined as “a setting forth, plan, purpose, resolve, will”; the verb *protithēmi* is defined as to “plan, purpose to do something” (*Arndt & Gingrich*). The Scriptures clearly declare that, predetermined in His own mind even before the creation of the world and man, God had a plan or purpose (i.e. the setting of something before Him).

One of the clearest and most thorough presentations of predetermined purpose is found in Ephesians 1:3–14; However, time permits consideration of only a few points of this impressive passage. After his saying, “We have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace” (v. 7), Paul continues by speaking of God’s “making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth; in him, I say, in whom we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will” (vv. 9–11).

Several points in the passage are pertinent to our theme: that which God purposed was an expression of His will, which remained a mystery—something unknown and unknowable until fulfilled or revealed by Him who so

purposed—“unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times.” *Dispensation* is used here to designate God’s arrangement, or administration, of His redemptive plan for man, which was fulfilled and revealed in the “fulness of the times.” Also, the whole of His purpose, which involved heaven and earth, is summed up in Christ. The whole of the divine plan was “foreordained [predetermined] according to the purpose [a setting before one] of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will.” In short, His own will determined the entire plan.

This plan of God has now been revealed and preached in, and through, the gospel. Paul says that unto him was this grace given to preach the mystery to the Gentiles, “And to make all men see what is the dispensation [the arrangement or administration] of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places [supermundane spirit beings in a spiritual realm] might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God.” These had not been taken into the confidence of God in His plan for man’s redemption, but they were learning the full purpose as they beheld its now being fulfilled in Christ and the church “according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:8–11). This eternal purpose which included the church and was fulfilled in Christ was God’s purpose or plan for man’s redemption, set before Him before time, somewhere in eternity.

Paul, further, says of God and His plan that He “saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:9, 10). Obviously, this statement places the origin of the plan long ages ago before time began.

The fulfilling of the purpose was so certain that Paul could speak of it as though it were already consummated even as it lay a silent plan in the mind of God in eternity. Thus the apostle wrote to the Roman saints, “And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28). The “all things” are things that pertain to the gospel, and “the called” are the saved according to the redemptive plan of His own will and wisdom (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18–25). We must keep in mind that what Paul says in this and the following two verses must be interpreted from the viewpoint of what God saw as fulfilled in the plan which lay before Him. The apostle’s meaning may be illustrated by one who draws a house-plan. In the plan, he sees the house completed and each room with its furniture and furnishings completed as intended. However, when the plan is drawn, there is not a stick of lumber, a block, a brick, or a nail on the lot, and, perhaps, even the lot has not yet been provided. So, according to God’s purpose, Paul could say, “For whom he *foreknew*, he also *foreordained* to be *conformed* to the

image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren; and whom he foreordained, them he also *called*; and whom he called, them he also *justified*; and whom he justified, them he also *glorified*" (vv. 29, 30). This is not to say that God selected certain ones and rejected others on an arbitrary basis because Jesus explains and exclaims respectively, "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 21:14), and "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not!*" (Matt. 23:37). Hence, man's will determined the selection. Further, God would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4); therefore, the gospel was and continues to be preached to all men. The "called" of verse 30 are those who hear and heed the word. In conclusion, Paul is looking at the completed purpose from God's point of view before the world was and sees it as if completed in eternity.

This position is further verified by Paul when he says, "He chose us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love; having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:4, 5). The conclusion is obvious that since the foreordained of God, whom He would choose and adopt, would be those who would choose to be in Christ, man's will and choice must conform to God's choice and will.

It should be noted that He chose us in Christ "before the foundation of the world." This precise phrase occurs

three times in the New Testament and refers to eternity, that period of duration before the cosmos [the orderly world] was brought into being. In His prayer to the Father, Jesus said, “For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24), i.e. in the period which extended back into eternity. And Peter saw Christ as Him “who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times [plural] for your sake” (1 Pet. 1:20). At some point in eternity, God foreknew what He would do in Christ to redeem man in Him and, in that foreknowledge, chose those who of their own will would choose to be His in Christ.

The expression, “from the foundation of the world,” also occurs several times in association with God’s plan or purpose. At the final judgment, Jesus says to those on His right hand, “Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34). This eternal kingdom (cf. 2 Pet. 1:21), in which the saints share the glory of Christ (Rom. 8:17), has been in God’s eternal purpose from this point in eternity before time. John writes of the Lamb that has “been slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8, margin ASV) and also of those “whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 17:8). These expressions, “from before the foundation of the world” and “from the foundation of the world,” carry us back to the redemptive plan for man which God had before time and the world were.

This heaven-born plan of God was “a mystery” until fulfilled in Christ and revealed by the Holy Spirit through the apostles (Rom. 1:1, 2; 16:25–27; 1 Pet. 1:10–12), which was announced to the world through them (Eph. 1:9–11; 3:1–13).

When the scheme of redemption was fulfilled in Christ, it became the Holy Spirit’s work to reveal this purpose to all mankind. Jesus promised that the Spirit would bring to the apostles’ remembrance all that He had said unto them (John 14:26), and that He would guide them into all spiritual truth as He would declare the things that were to come (John 16:12, 13). Paul affirms that the mystery was made known unto him by revelation “in the Spirit” (Eph. 3:1–7), “for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God ... combining spiritual things with spiritual words” (1 Cor. 2:9–13). Thus, in God’s purpose, the three persons of the Godhead were involved: God purposed the redemptive plan, Jesus (the Word become flesh) fulfilled it, and the Holy Spirit through the apostles revealed it in its fulness.

God’s Providential Control of His Creation

In order to accomplish and bring to consummation His eternal purpose, God must be able to control His universe—inanimate, animate, and moral. Divine foresight was exercised in the whole creation that He might control it through His laws without violating or invading the will of man, the moral creature. Time does not permit an adequate discussion of this great theme; therefore, a brief summary will have to suffice.

In his bewilderment over the evil that had befallen him, Job said some harsh things about God (e.g., Job 9:23, 24); more precisely, he sat in judgment on God and His operation of the world. Jehovah responded to Job's complaint by bringing before him an array of His inanimate and animate world and asking him a series of questions. First, the Lord asked questions involving nine categories of the inanimate world, but Job could answer none of these (Job 38:4–38). Second, He followed with questions concerning nine categories of the animate creation in regard to God's care for, and use of, these. Again, the patriarch completely failed the test (38:39–39:30).

In presenting this array of questions, Jehovah impressed upon Job the majesty of the creation and its Creator and showed him that there is purpose in all causes and effects, or consequences, in the creation. Jehovah so controls the inanimate world that He can provide for the animate creatures of earth. In all the experiences of life, man must recognize that he is a small unit in a vast, complex universe; that is, he may study to learn *what* God does, but he will never be in a position that allows him to judge *why* God does what He does. Man must also recognize that the God who created the universe also controls it, and that, in His providence, He is directing the whole toward the ultimate realization of an infinite and eternal purpose.

Providence in the Moral Realm

Another facet of our subject that must be considered is Jehovah's provision for His control of man, the moral creature, toward accomplishing His divine purpose. God made man of such a nature that He cannot force him to do anything, for free beings can be moved only by the exercise of moral suasion. And yet, throughout history, we see God using men and nations without violating the autonomy of free will. This we accept by faith based on the evidence of fact. Briefly, we point to His use of the Hebrew nation, who were His people, and the heathen nations whom He used and then destroyed.

The development of the Hebrew nation began with the call of Abraham, through whose seed the families and nations of earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:1–3; 22:18). From Abraham's descendents, God selected Isaac and not Ishmael, Jacob and not Esau, and, from the twelve sons of Jacob, He selected Judah, not Reuben the first born. Jehovah used the providential events in the life of Joseph as His means to bring the family of Jacob down into Egypt (for excellent discussion of God's providence concerning Joseph, see J. W. McGarvy, *Sermons*, pp. 215–231.). When the family had become a nation, the Lord raised up Moses to deliver them out of Egypt. The story of the deliverance, the wilderness wanderings, the conquest of Canaan, the apostasies, the raising up of deliverers, the development of the nation into a kingdom, the apostasy of the kingdom, the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, and the return of the remnant are all too familiar to spend time here discussing them. In all

of those events, we see the providence of God controlling, directing, and achieving His purpose in spite of the apostasies, rebellions, idolatry, and sins of the people. God never invaded or violated the sanctity of their will, and yet He so controlled His inanimate, animate, and moral creation that He brought the Saviour into the world through the seed of the woman by way of the seed of Abraham.

Besides His own nation, there were (and are) the heathen nations who refused to have God in their knowledge, and who were determined to destroy Israel and eradicate any knowledge of the true God. Jehovah had to control these so as to bring His son into the world through Israel according to this purpose. Jeremiah addresses Jehovah as “O King of the nations” (Jer. 10:7); Daniel says of Him that “He removeth kings, and setteth up kings” (Dan. 2:21), and that “The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the lowest of men” (4:17).

Jehovah claims that He raised up Assyria and brought them against Israel and Judah as the rod of His judgment, but He adds, “Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few” (Isa. 10:1–12). Therefore, God would use the Assyrian according to what he had made himself. After He had so used him, God would set His hand to destroy Assyria (v. 25). Also, He raised up the Chaldeans to punish Judah for her wickedness (Hab. 1:5–11) and then decreed five woes of judgment upon such a character as the Babylonian king (Hab. 2:4–19). Then,

Cyrus of Medo-Persia was Jehovah's anointed to overthrow Babylon and to allow the Jews to return to their homeland (Isa. 44:28–45:7), and Alexander of Macedonia, in turn, was God's instrument to destroy Medo-Persia (Dan. 8). Even the Romans played an important role in God's providential preparation for the preaching of the gospel and the destruction of the Jewish nation; but when the time came, Jesus judged Rome and brought it to an end (Rev. 19:11–21). How God did all this I do not know, but I know only that He did it according to His providential rule over His creation in order ultimately to redeem man.

Satan's Defeat

In my former lecture, I discussed briefly the origin of Satan and his work in the realm of evil. God's redemptive plan made provision for his defeat and ultimate destruction. When Jehovah said of the seed of the woman, "He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15), the doom of Satan was sealed. By comparison, the bruising of the seed's heel in death would result in the crushing of Satan and his power. Though little is said in the Old Testament about Satan, he is set forth in the New Testament as a powerful spirit being, who wields great influence for evil in the world. In Isaiah's grand description of the sacrifice of Jehovah's Servant for the redemption of man, Jehovah says of the Servant, "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong: because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with

the transgressors: yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isa. 53:12). This conflict between the Servant and the strong one who held the captives as spoils would result in the Servant’s triumphal gathering in of the wicked one’s spoils.

This conflict began in the wilderness immediately after Jesus’s baptism. Satan lost this first skirmish as Jesus was the complete victor (Matt. 4:1–11). In the exercise of divine power by the seventy whom Jesus sent before Him and to whom the demons were subject, Jesus saw ultimate victory as He said, “I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven,” for He had given them authority even “over all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:18, 19). When charged by some that He was casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, Jesus spoke a parable which apparently looks back to Isaiah’s statement, “When the strong man fully armed guardeth his own court, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from his his whole armor wherein he trusted, and *divideth his spoils*” (Luke 11:21, 22; cf. Matt. 12:29; italics mine, HH). Christ would bind Satan, the strong man, and then divide the spoils which he had held captive.

Just before His death, when Jesus ate the last supper with His disciples, He said to them, “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (John 12:31; see, also, 14:30; 16:11). The victory of Christ and the defeat of Satan were determined.

In a symbolic picture, John described this great spiritual conflict between the forces of God and those of Satan under the figure of Michael and his angels' warring against the dragon (Satan) and his angels. This is not a physical military war but a spiritual conflict, which extended from Eden to the cross. In the conflict, Satan and his angels were cast down to the earth (Rev. 12:7–9). The following statement of the great voice in heaven concerning the outcome indicates that this is the correct view of the passage, “Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, *and the authority of his Christ*” (v. 10; italics mine, HH). The authority of God's Christ was not claimed until after the resurrection (Matt. 28:18), which demonstrated Satan's defeat.

Through this victory, Christ had accomplished all for which He came. For Hebrews explains, “Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14, 15). And John says, “To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). Paul affirmed that this was accomplished in the cross when he said, “Having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it [the cross, v. 14]” (Col. 2:15).

Jesus bound Satan that He might divide the spoils with him; He brought him to nought that He might deliver all who through fear of death were subject to bondage. Thus He destroys the works of the devil in redeeming mankind. Saints can now overcome in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 12:11), but the end of Satan occurs when the Lord returns and casts him into the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:10). The purpose will have been consummated when the devil is cast into the lake and the saints are ushered into the new heaven and new earth.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let us say that when God created the universe and man, He had in mind an “eternal purpose,” a plan for man’s redemption should he sin. In order to achieve that purpose, He must, of necessity, have exercised divine foresight and forethought in the creation so that He would be able to control His inanimate and animate creation and man and the nations of men. The history of the achievement of His purpose verifies the claim to His divine providence and rule in all realms.

Satan, the great enemy of God and man, must be overcome, defeated, and destroyed. He has been overcome, defeated, and bound, and it remains only for him to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. This will come! God’s purpose will be fully achieved!

Providence in the Christian's Life

Homer Hailey

Although “Providence and the Problem of Evil” and “Providence in God’s Redemptive Plan,” which have been discussed, affect and touch the life of each of us, Providence in the Christian’s Life is more personal and intimate. In this particular subject, Christians are prone to extremes: one sees no providence working in his life other than the natural processes of nature; another sees the hand of God in every minute detail of life. Even those of us who believe in God’s providence find it difficult to say that this or that event or incident in life was a specific act of providence; yet I must believe that God’s hand has been at work in my life, for there have been too many special occurrences for me to think otherwise.

Though we all have questions we would like to have discussed, I shall find it impossible, in the short time allotted, to examine many phases of the subject. Even if we had the time, there are many I could not answer. In considering what seems to me to be the most helpful portions of Scripture that offer a basis for each individual’s study, I have selected two from which to point out Biblical teaching on the subject: the wise man who spoke in the book of Ecclesiastes and Jesus in Matthew 6. In my judgment, each of these deals with the providence in the individual’s life. All that I know about God’s operation in His world I have learned through what He has said; therefore, I will devote most of my time reading from what He has said on the subject.

Ecclesiastes

Some students of Ecclesiastes arrive at opposite views of the book. One finds it a book of pessimism; that is, nothing seems to be right in the world. Another finds it a book of optimism; that is, all is under the control of God, and He is encouraging His people. To me the book presents a strong, optimistic view of life. However, from a worldly viewpoint, it is quite pessimistic, for, of that which is earthly, he insists that “all is vanity and a striving after wind.” But, in spite of this, optimism prevails, for all is in the hand of God. In other words, God stands out in every event as the One who is in control.

The word “God” occurs forty times in the Hebrew text, and once it is supplied even by the translators. This strongly indicates that God is the emphatic power in the writer’s mind; for example, He is in the world of the individual and controls events and destinies of man for his good. The book deals with the present earth-life, for the phrase “under the sun” occurs twenty-nine times; “upon the earth,” five times; and “under heaven,” three times. This earth-life and all that pertains to it are transitory; in fact, “vanity” occurs thirty-two times (thirty-six, TWOT), and “vanities,” four times. The word means transitory, fleeting, and, at times, empty.

The Search, chs. 1, 2. Without discussing the question of authorship, I must note that Solomon is definitely the character before the writer’s mind in chapters 1 and 2. Early in the book, two questions are raised: “What profit hath a man of all his labor wherein he laboreth under the sun?” (1:3); and “What is it good for the sons of men that

they should do under heaven all the days of their life?” (2:3). The first is answered immediately, “And there was no profit under the sun” (2:11); that is, there was nothing of happiness or pleasure that one could lay up for tomorrow, for he must find his enjoyment and fulness of life today. The second is answered in a number of conclusions reached by the wise man as he contemplates various aspects of life. This will be emphasized in the development of our study.

In his search to find out what profit a man has of all his labor under the sun and what it is good for a man to do all his life of vanity, Solomon began by searching out, through wisdom, all that is done under heaven. In the search, he acquired wisdom, only to discover that “in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow” (1:12–18). From wisdom, he turned to pleasure: building houses and planting gardens, gathering musicians and entertainers of all kinds. In the meantime, he accumulated great riches, silver and gold, and the treasures of kings. He had all the power that one could ask for; therefore, he was able to acquire and build whatever he desired. But, in the end, he had to confess, “Behold, all was vanity and a striving after the wind, and there was no profit under the sun” (2:11).

Time and purpose, and a Controlling Providence. The wise man proceeds by introducing a situation in the realm of creation that demands our recognition of providence, “For every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven” (3:1). This is followed by

fourteen pairs of opposites, each having its own time in the scheme of things (3:2–7). Since a man lives under these times and seasons which man, as an individual or a nation, cannot alter or change, each must accept these and recognize a controlling power behind them. God has given to man the occupation or task (travail) of learning and acknowledging these so that he can live under them in such a world (v. 10); but, in his search, God says, “Yet so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end” (v. 11). All that man can know of either the beginning or the end and of the work that God is doing in the period in between is what God reveals to him.

In this same vein, the wise man continues, “I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever [i.e., final]; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God hath done it that man should fear before him” (v. 14). Since one cannot alter in anyway God’s purpose and plan or change the time of His action in that purpose, man must learn to “fear before him”; that is, reverence and trust Him and His providence.

Another problem in life that we must face is the existence of evil and its effect upon man (discussed briefly in the first lecture). The Preacher says, “And moreover I saw under the sun, in the place of righteousness, that wickedness was there” (3:16). The problem is that wickedness is like the forces of nature because the individual cannot control it, yet he must learn to live under its influence and look to God to remedy the situation. For this reason, the Preacher

concludes, “I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work” (v. 17). One must look to God in His providence to deal with that which we cannot. But why does He allow such conditions to exist? “I said in my heart, It is because of the sons of men, that God may prove them, and that they may see that they themselves are but as beasts” (v. 18). The Preacher sees himself in a world which is so made by God that man cannot know His work from beginning to end, and in which God allows wickedness and injustice, although brought on by man, to dominate its people that they may be proved and tested thereby.

In pursuing further the principle of man’s inability to alter or change that which God has predetermined, the wise man says, “Consider the work of God: for who can make straight, which God hath made crooked?” (7:13). For a practical application of the principle, he says, “In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider; yea, God hath made the one side by side with the other, to the end that man should not find out any thing that shall be after him” (v. 14). Inasmuch as one cannot change the order of God’s provision, how should he react to the various experiences of providence? The answer is to use them. Both adversity and prosperity usually come into each life at some time, or prosperity comes to one at the same time when adversity comes to another. When prosperity comes, rejoice; when adversity comes, use it as an occasion to reflect, meditate, and learn. But, in either case, one does not know how God will

use it or when change will come; each must look to and trust in the providence of God.

Of this and other things which we must pass over, the writer says, “All this have I proved in wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me. That which is, is far off and exceeding deep; who can find it out? (7:23, 24). God intends for us to learn all that we can of His universe and then to use that knowledge of the world in which we have been placed, but man must realize the limitation of his ability to know and fathom the mysteries of God. So long as the scientist stays within the realm of the order as God created it, he can learn much of its secret workings; but when he attempts to invade the realm of the divine mysteries, he finds himself in trouble.

As a final word on the subject of man’s inability to find out all that God is doing behind the scene, the following statement is quite explicit, “When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth ... then I beheld all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because however much a man labor to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea moreover, though a wise man think to know it, yet he shall not be able to find it” (8:16, 17). Giving heed to this, the scientists of today could save the taxpayers billions of dollars in not probing the universe for answers that either cannot be found or can be found simply by reading the Scriptures. One’s acceptance of the principle of God’s providence and providential working in His universe does not demand that he be able to explain it, for he cannot; but one must accept it as a

matter of faith by resting on what God has said. The writer continues, “For all this I laid to my heart, even to explore all this: that the righteous, and the wise, and their works *are in the hand of God*; whether it be love or hatred, man knoweth it not; all is before them” (9:1). The love and hatred demonstrated by man will affect God’s action in the world. Not knowing all the forces involved (prompted either by love or hatred) and not knowing what God is doing in the background, I can be content with the assurance that these are “in the hand of God.” So long as I recognize this, I shall not worry but find peace; for I know that He can, and will, handle the matter.

Conclusions Reached. The Preacher has pointed out that there are times and seasons and a purpose under heaven which man is subject to and cannot control. Neither can man know the beginning or end of matters which God controls, but he must recognize that all is in His hand. What conclusions does he reach in relation to what is “good for the sons of men that they should do under heaven all the days of their life?” Let us learn from the following.

The preacher looks upon good (enjoyment) as the gift of God, for he asserts, “There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labor. This also I saw, that it is from the hand of God” (2:24). It is certainly not inconsistent with God’s will that we enjoy the fruits of our labor, for the ability to enjoy these is from the hand of God. God’s providence makes this possible. Further, the writer even traces the sinner’s misery to God, “For to the man that

pleaseth him God giveth wisdom, and knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that pleaseth God. This also [the business of travail to gather and to heap up] is vanity and a striving after wind” (v. 26). This acknowledges the providence of God in the life of both the one who pleases God and the sinner; He controls the portion of each in life according to the character which the man has developed, without controlling his will. The ability to enjoy life “is the gift of God” (v. 13).

The days of one’s life in which to enjoy the good things of God’s beneficence are also a gift from God. Note the place of *God* in the following passage, “Behold that which I have seen to be good and to be comely is for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy good in all his labor, wherein he laboreth under the sun, all the days of his life which God hath given him: for this is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God. For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart” (5:18–20). God gives one his days; God gives him riches and wealth; and God answers one in the joy of his heart so that he does not remember the bad days of life. But there are those to whom God does not give this power to enjoy that which they possess, “but an alien eateth it” (6:1, 2). Providence plays a role in the life of each individual, the good or the evil, whether or not he acknowledges it.

Death closes man's relationship to this life; he has no more a portion or part in anything that is done "under the sun" (9:4-6); therefore, the writer gives a closing exhortation concerning this life on earth. The exhortation is set forth in four imperatives: (1) "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart"; that is, enjoy the present life with its blessings but within the bounds of divine moral decorum, "for God hath already accepted they works," the works of the individual through which God has provided the blessings. (2) "Let thy garments be always white; and let not thy head lack oil." This is a further admonition to enjoy the good things of God's provision. The white garments are festive robes, and the oil rejoices the heart (Prov. 27:9). This in no way advocates a luxurious sensualism but a joyous life before God. (3) "Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of thy life of vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all thy days of vanity: for that is thy portion in life, and in thy labor wherein thou laborest under the sun." Life is fleeting and transitory; therefore, find joy in the wife of one's love, not in putting away and seeking another. Find joy in the benefits of one's labor, for this is according to God's will. (4) And, finally, find joy in doing your best in every labor of life, physical and spiritual, for the author encourages, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest" (9:7-10). Fulfill God's law of work by doing with your might the task at hand, for thereby God provides

for a full and complete life here. Let each one put his trust in God and His providence, work with his might, and enjoy to the full the riches of His blessings.

The final conclusion announced by the Preacher is that God will be the final judge of our response to His will and providence, “This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or evil” (12:13, 14).

Jesus and New Testament Teaching

There is probably no passage in the New Testament that gives greater emphasis to the providence of God in the individual life than Matthew 6. The word “Father” occurs twelve times in the chapter; the word “God” occurs twice. This frequent occurrence of these terms for Deity focuses attention on the Father and His concern for His own, and further, His ability to act on their behalf.

In giving to the disciples a model for their praying, the Lord taught them to ask, “Give us this day our daily bread,” i.e. the physical necessities of life, not spiritual. Jesus’ teaching concerning anxiety in verses 25–34 will fully establish this view. Where the KJV translators employ the word “thought”—take thought, give thought, etc., the ASV translates the Greek with the word “anxious.”

The noun *merimna* means anxiety, worry, or care. In explaining to His disciples the meaning of the Parable of the Sower, Jesus said of that which was sown among the thorns, “This is he that heareth the word; and the care of the world ... choke [s] out the word” (Matt. 13:22). Mark uses the plural, “the cares [worries] of the world” (4:19); Luke says, “the cares [worries] of this life” (Luke 8:14). Anxieties or worries of the world and of life choke out the word so that the individual fails to develop fully as a Christian.

The verb *merimnaō* means to have anxiety, to be anxious, or to be unduly concerned. This word, occurring six times in verses 19–34, emphasizes Jesus’ concern for His disciples’ worry about matters of everyday life and points them to the Father who makes provision for all their necessities. He begins with the command, “Be not anxious,” then continues by specifying the things about which they are not to worry—food, drink, and clothing, for the essential thing is the life (v. 25). The Lord uses three illustrations to emphasize His point: (1) “The birds of the heaven ... they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not of much more value than they?” (v. 26). Surely, if God feeds these, and Jesus says that He does, will He not provide for His children? (2) “And which of you by being anxious [by worrying] can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?” (v. 27).

Jesus does not refer to the heightening of one's stature but to the extension of one's life, for an additional foot and a half on some would be ridiculous. Worry tends to shorten rather than to lengthen life. (3) And concerning worry about raiment, He says, "Consider the lillies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (vv. 28, 29). Worry provides none of the essentials of life; and since it is forbidden by the Lord, anxiety about these necessities of life is sin, i.e. a form of unbelief.

The Lord summarizes His discussion on worry by pointing out that the Gentiles (unbelievers) may seek after these things by placing undue emphasis on them, but you are not to do so, "for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (v. 32). Jesus promises the disciples who seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness that "all these things shall be added unto you" (v. 33); the Father just throws these things in as part of the blessings which He bestows. And, finally, do not worry about the morrow; for when tomorrow comes, there will be its needs to be concerned about, and God will take care of them as He does today. Jesus is giving His endorsement and guarantee to the things preached by Koheleth in Ecclesiastes and even is enlarging upon them.

Thus, according to Jesus, the things about which we worry and for which we become anxious and distracted are things that pertain to the physical life—food, drink, raiment, social obligations, and the like. Through Paul, the Holy Spirit said, “In nothing be anxious; but in everything”—those things just mentioned about which we become anxious—“by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6). This most certainly teaches that one may pray about the material necessities of life as well as about the spiritual; and since the provision of these things depends on work (1 Thess. 4:11, 12; 2 Thess. 3:6–12), one can and should pray about his work, job, or business. And though the kingdom must come first and these second, we should pray about both not neglect either. Peter adds his word to the matter of worry, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:6, 7).

Conclusion. Yes, God’s providence works in the life of each individual! In creating the world and man, He made provision so to control both that He could answer the petitions of His saints and direct the whole to the consummating of an ultimate purpose. Let us believe in that providence and see God’s hand in all the affairs of life—international, national, social, religious, and individual. Such a belief will give meaning to life!¹

¹ Hailey, H. (1987). [Providence in the Christian’s Life](#). In M. D. Curry (Ed.), *Praise, Prayer and Providence* (pgs. 138 - 165). Temple Terrace, FL: Florida College Bookstore.

