

# Cosmology

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

COSMOLOGY

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# COSMOLOGY

## THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF COSMOLOGY is the study of the world primarily as the sphere of redemption. The word Cosmology comes from the two Greek words, "Kosmos" meaning world, or world order, and "Logos" meaning speech, or reason. Hence the treatise or reasoned discourse on the world, especially as concerning creation and preservation.

The various meanings of the word world in the Bible denote a varied sum of things. (1) Of the Greek word - "Kosmos", Cremer in his lexicon says in the general sense it denotes the "ordered sum total of what God has created." Thus, "the heavens and the earth" of the Old Testament. For in the Old Testament there is no word denoting the sum total of creation. (2) There is a second usage of the word world - the Greek word oikoumene equaling "the habitable earth" as Luke 4:5 - "all the kingdoms of the world". In a narrower sense of the word world is used to denote the sphere of human activity, a human system, world order of things, as lying in the wicked one, belonging to the sphere of Satan's usurped authority. As I John 2:15 said, "Love not the world, neither the things~ that are in the world" meaning not the trees, flowers, nor geography of the earth, but the worldly system opposed to God. (3) Again the word is used as a translation of the word "aeon", or age. As the world of time, the progression of the world as a movement, "ages". This study shall be primarily concerned with the Universe as a whole and this earthly sphere in redemption, and an outline of the sum total of creation.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EARTH.

The Christian viewpoint of Cosmology, or the study of creation, is in the light of God's plan of creation. The Scriptures affirm that this earth is the center or focal point of all creation as far as the universe is concerned, and man is the center of this earthly

interest. The earth was made for him, and in a real sense the heavenly bodies were made for him. Gen. 1:14-18. The sun was to give light and life to the earth and man, to divide night from day, for signs and for seasons. Yes and with the renovation of the earth with fire, the heavenly bodies shall also perish with this present order. II Pet. 3:10, to prepare for "the new heavens and the new earth" Isa. 66:22; Rev. 21:1,5. But greater than this, the paramount importance of earth is the advent of God's Son upon it to accomplish redemption here. The Scriptures affirm that the earth and all within it was made by Christ and for Him. Col. 1:16. It was made to be the theatre of God's crowning work of recreation. Upon no other planet or within no other universe would God die upon a cross to save sinners. This earth and its redemption, with God's Son dying upon a cross certainly constitutes the central theme of God's creative power and wisdom. Herein lies

our interest in Cosmology. Heb. 9:28 is plain Christ was but "once offered to bear the sins of many" and it was on this little planet exalting it forever, over all of the galaxies of the heavens. The addition of that word "once" = hapax = "once for all" and equals "never before and never again".

## I. CREATION -- GOD'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD

### A. THE NATURE OF CREATION (The Philosophy of Creation, or Some Cosmogonies.)

It would be strange indeed if the inquiring mind of man has not wondered at the origin of the ordered universe as he sees it. The Bible has not been silent, and in fact gives the only satisfactory answer to the question of creation. Heathenism has grappled with the problem only to arrive at no more satisfactory theory of cosmogony than the theory of the shape of the world, as flat, resting on the backs of 4 elephants who stood on the backs of 4 turtles, who swam in the sea. Some of these non-Scriptural theories of creation might be worth mentioning.

#### 1. Theories of Creation (or really a denial of any origin or Creation of anything.)

##### a. THE MECHANICAL THEORY - or Atheistic theory It is patterned to postulate the

abundance of "the eternity of matter."

As taught by the early scientists, the theory is not in itself anti-Scriptural, or against God, but as held by those who hold to the eternity of matter as the only thing there is, its forces are eternal without any personal power behind it all directing it, it certainly is atheistic. And as illustrated in Charles Darwin, it leads to a denial of a personal God. The scientist in seeking for a theory of creation or origin came up with the so called Nebular Hypothesis, which in simple form stated that all was a gaseous chaos, which gradually evolved into the ordered universe. (The "Spiral Nebulae cloud" was supposed to be the proof. They said they were worlds in the making, but the more powerful telescopes proved the spiral shapes to be in truth other universes such as Andromeda already formed and perfect). Anyhow the theory goes on like this: Matter and forces of nature are eternal. The Universe, all the forms of vegetation, animal life and man, and mind itself, are all outcomes of these blind unconscious forces of nature. Natural selection, and adaptation to environment account for the endless variety and seeming organization according to a seeming plan. But in reality there was no plan, nor purpose, the world being no expression of any idea, or purpose of intelligent design. All causes were unintentional, and purely accidental, and unconscious. There is no room for any interference of any supreme intelligent being.

Haeckel admits one difficulty for the theory (I can think of many more), that is, "The manifest impossibility of the mind's thinking of a beginning to the action of those eternal forces on this eternal matter," but they try to escape this difficulty by the strange affirmation that the conservation of force and energy and matter admit of no beginning, therefore we need not to account for any. But I cannot conceive of an eternal infinite non-commencement. This theory may push the question of origins back in the dateless past, but it doesn't answer them at all. We still want to know where the first circular spiral came from that started twisting the gases around to form the world. I want to know if it was a force before it started twisting; if it was, why didn't it start twisting sooner; since it didn't, was it a force before? It may be called a scientific theory of creation, but is very unscientific in many respects. Science knows "the law of inertia". Any body standing still will stand still forever, and any moving body will continue in a straight line

with uniform velocity, unless a force outside of itself stops it or turns it. And the two laws of thermodynamics called Entropy - no Self Creating-Self Planning-Self Sustaining- & Self evolving substitute or life resident forces, by theory in all of nature. The atheist has no explanation of the beginning of anything. You could have no Survival of the Fittest until you had the Arrival of the Fittest.

Scientists now know that all nature is expending itself, -The second law of Thermodynamics- not winding itself up as they used to think. Energy has as an end product the wasting away of the universe, as the dead and dying stars testify. The breaking down of the atom into simpler forms releasing energy in the process. But when and where and how did it get the energy to wind itself up? The inquiring mind still is unsatisfied asking the question, "where did the force come from?" Rather than a theory of creation or origin it is a sidestepping of the question.

#### b. THE EMANATION, OR PANTHEISTIC THEORY

Most of the religions of the Orient were pantheistic, so were some of the early Christian sects. Swedenberg taught it. Christian Science is distinctly pantheistic, and so are most modern philosophy as they deify the forces and laws of nature - endowing them with innate wisdom and power from the early. German philosophy to the present day. Spinoza was probably the father of modern Pantheism in philosophy. Born in 1632 and dying at the age of 45, he exerted a vast influence upon the thought of modern times. Claiming not to be an atheist, yet in fact denying any real personal God other than nature, he was more of an atheist than some professed atheists.

The God of Spinoza was eternal substance, which was neither mind nor matter. But thinking was one of its attributes and extension another, and these two were the only ones Spinoza emphasized. Hence, to him God was a thinking extended being, the universe which thinks and the universe which is extended, together constituting God. All things are effects of God, but not distinct from God, but parts of Him. They remain eternally identical with their cause, as the water of the stream is identical with the water of its fountain. (But as I write these words, there is no sense in which they can be said

to be an identical part of the brain, which issued them. So how can God be identical to the Universe He caused?) But according to the philosophizing of Spinoza, the flow or emanation from God along the line of extension in the material universe and that along the line of thought is the world of mind.

Therefore, to speak of any beginning at all in time is no more contradictory than to say that 2 plus 2 ever began to equal 4. It was always so, it is a fact of necessity, so matter and God was always existing as one and the same substance. God does not love, will, understand. Therefore, the theory outlaws any concept of the Bible Doctrines of the freedom of man, morals, responsibility, reality of sin, Providence, immortality, etc. It is a thing which outrages every intuition of mans personal consciousness, of right and wrong, moral responsibility, sin and human freedom.

It postulates, and axiomizes, without proof its assertions of origins. Apart from the Divine Revelation in the Scriptures against such a theory, let us see if it can stand up under pure reasoning.

Pantheism assumes that the world has no substantive reality or a real distinct existence. It is a philosophical speculation contrary to human consciousness.

1) Consciousness emphatically avers that the world has a real separate being. In every perception I know two things: that I perceive, and that I perceive something real. Therefore, consciousness reveals matter as substance, and mind that perceives matter as having substance. To annihilate these two separate cognitions is to repudiate all intelligence, and knowledge. Only a philosopher would.

2) That the world is finite. The world is bound by time and space. It presents aspects of mutability (change) a successive influence of cause and effect. Its history is a history of vicissitudes. The world is finite. It is the testimony of consciousness, as much so as that the world really exists. It has no principle in it that resists succession and change. "It waxes old like a garment." How then cans it be anything implying Godhood?

3) These two facts, that the world exists, and that it is finite, implies another; that it must have begun. A succession without a beginning is a contradiction in terms. It is equivalent to eternal time. Any being of whose existence time is the law cannot be eternal. An infinite series of finite things is a contradiction. According to the pantheistic theory, everything in the series had a beginning, but the series itself had none. What is true of all of its parts is not true of the whole. A chain without a first link is impossible. But a first link annihilates the notion of its being eternal. The world therefore had a beginning.

4) Thus we are led to this inevitable conclusion. If it had a beginning, it could not have begun spontaneously. It had a cause. An absolute commencement is inconceivable, and contrary to the law of intelligence which demands that every effect must have an adequate cause. This commencement must have been a creation. Thus it is a logical deduction from pure reason and from the facts of consciousness to deduce that the world has reality subject to the law of time which being finite must have begun, and therefore must have had a creator. (From Thornwell's line of reasoning). James Henry Thornwell "The Collected Writings" Vol I, pages 217-220, Presbyterian Committee of Vol I 1901. Pantheism is but materialism and the mechanical theory made into a religion. There is nothing to choose between the two. Both make nature their God, and annihilate all, conception of a personal loving God to whom man is responsible to love and obey.

### 3) THE DUALISTIC THEORY

In one form or another, this theory has been held by different sects since very ancient time. It divides itself into two distinct forms.

(a) The first affirms the self-existence of two eternal antagonistic spirits, one good and the other evil. Matter is the work of the evil one, therefore all matter is evil. Hence, some of the early Christian sects who, like the Fakirs of India, believed only eternal bliss could be attained by the complete humiliation and suffering of the body. Some modern saints practically regard Satan as a second God equal to God Himself. It was supposed to

relieve God of the responsibility for the existence of evil, but it does so at the expense of God's supremacy, placing in the universe an equal rival of evil.

(b) The second form of dualism affirms not the eternal existence of two God's but the eternal existence of both God and matter. Out of this eternal unconscious matter God made the world. He didn't create the world but only patterned or formed it. He was not the creator, but the architect, the skillful workman, the wonderful mechanic. It was supposed to help out the difficulty of supposing that God could make something out of nothing. It would seem that the ynostics in Colossae to whom Paul wrote the Epistle to the Colossians held this theory.

Dualism is a disguised atheism. It reduces God to the status of man, a finite creature who must learn in the same manner as we do. For if matter is self-existing and independent of God, then, God's knowledge of it must be learned. He ceases to be self sufficient. He is only man on a large scale, and ceases in truth to be God at all.

It would seem that man's inability to comprehend how God could make something where nothing was before has conditioned all of his thinking in trying to explain completely a theory of creation. The Pantheists have tried to argue that nothing is the material used to make something, therefore, if it is the material used to make something then itself must be something. Nothing is not the material of creation, but only the expression to state that where before there was nothing, by the fact of creation God causes something to appear. (exnihilo)

Paul says in Heb. 11:3, "Through faith (not philosophic vagaries) we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen (the physical realities) were not made of things which do appear." (Out of any real physical reality.)

### c. THE ETERNAL THEORY

Probably first taught by Origin. It holds to the world as being created by the will of God, but in endless cycles. Men seem to have difficulty imagining God dwelling alone in

solitary spender from all eternity without physical matter upon which to work His will. They have said "It is too much to believe that God was idle up to only a few thousand years ago when this present world began." Therefore they have concocted this theory of God, making one world after another. Creating one world, destroying it, then making another, all in an endless chain. But to him that inhabiteth eternity, whether the world is 6000 years old, a million or if He has been making them for a hundred billion years, they all had a definite beginning, and before that, WHAT? One eternity is not longer than another eternity.

## B. THE THEISTIC TEACHING OF CREATION

From the Mosaic account Gen. 1 and 2 and other Scriptures such as John 1:1-4, Heb. 11:3, and Cal. 1:16-17, we gather the theistic argument, that God by a fiat of His will, created the world without any pre-existing material termed "exnihilo". Where there was nothing, now by an act of God's infinite will, there is a perfect creation. Matter being finite had a definite beginning in time, and only an infinite all-powerful God could bring something into existence where there was nothing before.

## C. THE TIME OF CREATION

### INTRODUCTION:

For over a thousand years man was content to believe that the world and man began existence at the same time, but then science began to study the rocks, in the infant science of geology, proof began to accumulate that the earth anti-dated man by a vast period of time. Theology began a re-examination of the Scriptures regarding man's creation. Archbishop Ussher's (from Ireland) chronology asserts man's age upon the earth as around 6000 years. While his chronology is not inspired, still it follows closely the Scriptural history of man. Evolution laughed at his dates, dogmatically guessing man's age to be a few hundred million years of growth and development. But more mature scientific exploration and fact-finding has brought the dates down to 10,000 years and some even 6000 years. (Townsend)

Taking the rate of increase of the population of the earth per generation, and it can be seen that if man has been here for a billion years, there should be untold billions of inhabitants. But the argument the atheists hurled at the Bible was that it taught the earth to be only 6000 years while Geology shows it to be millions of years old. Theology in trying to reconcile the Bible with Geology has tried several explanations.

1. The 6 days of Gen. 1 are 6 ages, not literal days but maybe thousands of years long. (Theistic evolutionists).

a. Unrealistic as History (pure guess work) No theory of creation.

b. Topical pictures - dreams, visions, not literal history, spiritualize first 10 chapters of Genesis. Neo-orthodox - believe idealistic - God reveals in pictures six days - they are figurative days

c. Early church myth. Not real events, just spiritualization

d. The 6 days are geological ages

e. The 6 days literal 24 hr. days. Original Creation itself Whitcomb & Morrjs (Genesis Flood) Good Christian men

f. Creation, destruction, reconstruction Gap or Catastrophe theory

2. Another explanation is that God could have created the geological ages in a moment of time without ages to accomplish. He gave Adam a full grown physique without having to grow. A mature adult with knowledge, wisdom, memory without having to learn. Why then couldn't he do the same with creation? (If there were no other explanation in the Bible for the geological ages I would accept this one rather than disbelief, or questions and uncertainty.

\*SUPPLEMENT NUMBER I - "SIX THEORIES TO EXPLAIN THE SIX DAYS OF GENESIS ONE."

\*SUPPLEMENT NUMBER II - "THE WHEN OF CREATION." (The old earth vs the young earth theories)

3. But the most plausible and certainly the theory that fits all the Scriptures is the one

that states that the geological ages came in between Gen. 1:1, and Gen. 1:2, it is called "The Gap Theory".

In the first verse of Gen. we read "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." As creation sprang from the creative hand of God, it is inconceivable that it was a chaos, a void, but it must have been a perfect creation. Such is the statement of Ecc. 3:11 "He hath made everything beautiful in his time". Time of its making. "Beautiful" is the same Hebrew word for "Good" (Trans. AV "Very Good") in Genesis one. (Strong) Such is the distinct statement of Isa. 45:18 "He created it not in vain, (void) he formed it (fashioned it) to be inhabited. The Hebrew is "tohu" meaning waste, empty, void, so chaos. Job 38 also proves it - Job 38:4-7. When God made it, it was beautiful, perfect the original Eden or paradise in which Lucifer, son of the morning, walked and over which he was appointed ruler. Ez.28:12-18. How long this earthly Paradise existed is not stated. Here is the pre-historic geological ages, maybe millions of years. Then comes the second verse of Gen. 1, which the Rotherham translation renders, "Now the earth had become waste and wild (tohu and bohu) which Isaiah said it was not so created in the beginning, and darkness was upon the face of the roaring deep." The verb translated 'was' here is translated in 68 different portions of the Old Testament "to become". Therefore, to reconcile this portion with Isa. 45:18 where Isaiah said God didn't create it wild and waste, we must read Gen. 1:1 and 1:2 this way: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth became without form and void (wild and waste)".

Moses, by inspiration, passed over the geological ages without noticing them except to indicate that a cataclysm had taken place that transformed this world from an Eden to waste and roaring deep. Geology bears abundant testimony to some pre-historic awful cataclysm which changed the whole topography of the earth, forming mountains, burying the great vast vegetation of the earth's surface thousands of feet under the earth, forming the great coal deposits and oil beds, putting fossil remains far under the earth, separating continents, raising high plateaus. The Bible also mentions this great cataclysm in Jer. 4:23-26 and Isa. 24:1.

This much is Scriptural and indisputable, but there can be a certain amount of speculation as to the events around this cataclysm. I personally believe it took place when Satan fell, and involved the whole realm of personal agents, angels and maybe demons, in his ruin. Remember he is the god of this present world. Christ three times calls him the Prince (ruler) of this World. God put him over this part of His creation. In Job we find him having to appear before God to give an account of his ruler ship. The inference is this: If when Adam fell he involved the world in his ruin and it was cursed for his sake, then it is very reasonable to suppose that when Satan fell he involved the original creation over which he was placed as overlord in his own ruin.

**\* SUPPLEMENT NUMBER III - "THE CANOPIED EARTH."**

D. PROVIDENCE, GOD'S PRESERVATION OF CREATION (God's continuous relation to the world He created)

INTRODUCTION:

God did not make all things and then leave them to their individual devices. This Universe is no perpetual motion machine without the regulation of God's continuous will. There is a very close relationship between the course of nature and the events of history on the one hand and a definite plan of God on the other.

1. God's plan for the world.

A. The fact of the plan

1) Proven from the fact of the intuitional knowledge of God.

The whole universe in its entirety, every microscopic speck, every passing event of time from the beginning of time, throughout every second of time, was known in perfection by God before there was ever one in fulfillment. With this in mind how can we but believe that He had a wonderful plan, and carries the course of events toward the fulfillment

of that plan.

2) Proven from Science and the course of History. Certainly every Science can add its testimony to the fact of order, and design in nature. The most minute plant life or animal life lives out a cycle, according to fixed progressive laws, fulfilling its destiny and filling an otherwise gap in nature. But history is also a proof. The grand sweep of the history of nations. Especially since the advent of Christ into the world, and the so-called advancement of civilization in the wake of the Gospel. Any student of History feels that civilization is headed for something, is going somewhere. The sad part is that few know where, or to what. Having left God out of their accounting, they have history without a goal, a broad highway without a destination.

3) The Scriptures give abundant testimony to God's plan for human redemption. His continuous working with individuals, nations and finally world wide, ever leading toward a dissemination of the knowledge of the Lord throughout the earth, and the final establishment of His theocratic rule over all men. All prophecy is God's blueprint for all of history.

## B. SOME OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN.

1) The Moral Element of the plan.

This is the crowning characteristic of the plan. For if God is Whom HE really is, and projects into space and time a world plan, it must be patterned after His own nature. Here is the difference between the ruler ship of God over His universe and the ruler ship of man over a kingdom. A man may rule wisely without being a wise ruler. He may administrate moral laws while he is himself immoral in character.. He stands apart from his own laws. But the laws of God find their character from the very nature of God; and in fact all laws of any intrinsic worth morally derive their worth from God's law, and God's own Holy nature.

As we discussed previously, "Right is right, and wrong is wrong because God is what he

is." Here is explained the sense of right and shunning the wrong; further, the feeling is there that if we escape the censorship and punishment of men for wrong doing there is still within us the condemnation of a higher tribunal. It is inconceivable that God should make a universe, which did not represent His own nature, as Holy. All sense of obligation testifies to the moral element in God's world plan. Not just to make intelligent creatures, powerful creatures, but holy creatures. Hence, the first man was "made in the image of God."

2) Another element of the world plan is free will.

Some answer the question of free will by denying that there is such a thing as free will. But free will is evidenced from the facts of consciousness and from the many invitations of Scripture to the whosoever wills and the warnings of a possible contrary choice. God foresaw with infallibility every choice that free moral agents would choose. And their choices were included in His plan. Many quibble as to how God could be all powerful, etc., if there are other agents who can choose, against Him. It does not detract from God's omniscience or omnipotence but is a self-limitation on God's part. He sees that there should be other beings with free choice, and as a self-limitation does not subtract from His own decrees, nor sovereign will.

3) Another element of the world plan is sin.

This does not imply that God either is the author, or originator, of sin because He foreknew and included in His world plan the fact of sin. He certainly foreknew the advent of sin into His universe, and foreknowing it could have prevented it, but must have allowed its entrance; and in conclusion must have willed it to be a part of His plan. The mysteries as to why He allowed it in His plan, and included it, belong to another phase of Doctrine and has been a fertile field of argument for contending theologians.

4) But that brings us to another element in God's world plan, namely that of redemption.

This is natural; if sin is a part of the plan, then redemption follows. Christ is the "Lamb

slain from the foundation of the world," a part of "the ever lasting covenant". God's allowance as a part of His world plan, the entrance of sin into the world, was for the sake of His saving grace and mercy toward the fallen men. Some day from eternity's viewpoint we shall understand the grand sweep of God's full world plan and know the unsearchable wisdom and grace of God in its execution.

NOTE: The interest that Cosmology has in the idea of God's world plan is in His continuous relationship to the world of His creation. He had a reason for making the universe. That reason is revealed in His plan.

### C. SOME THEORIES OPPOSED TO GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

1) Fatalism. Fate has no freedom of will, but is blind, possessing, neither will nor intelligence. Its dictum is, "What is to be will be." The "determinism" of ultra-Calvinism would make God to decree every minute detail of life, or they could not come to pass. They all make the statement, "God could not know with certainty what will come to pass unless He makes it certain by making it come to pass." (Ties the hands of God to only His decrees and hidebound predestinarianisms and foreordination which is not some steel rail God is forced to travel but His foreplanning based upon foreknowledge so "elect according (kata) to foreknowledge of God," as Peter and Paul say. While others make everything the result only of "Blind Force", they ignore the fact of order, design and purpose in all of nature, and in human affairs. "Accident, capricious chance, without reason or control is the order of all." But whether ties the hands of God by His Divine Sovereignty, making NECESSITY God, or make only NATURE, without intelligence, God, they both ignore God's Love; His care, His provisions, and His absolute freedom of will to control all according to His infinite wisdom and love. They make God as bound as His creatures.

An absolute fatalism contradicts the experience, and sense of obligation and responsibility, which every human feels and owns for their own actions. This is the very cornerstone of all human government, as well as moral action and accountability. Everyone knows they are accountable for their actions as well as their choices. It is why

the law recognizes the difference between the insane and the sane. It contradicts every Scripture, which requires from all men an absolute obedience to the revealed will of God, and a final judgment for disobedience. How could God judge all men "according to their works if their works were fatalistically decreed and predetermined by God? And they were absolutely incapable of changing them? The Law of God said, "Do and live, disobey and die." Punishment could not be according to the exercise of our wills if our wills were not free to choose, but inexorably fixed by Divine Sovereignty. Ultra Calvinism's Determinism, is no better than Mohammedanism's "Kismet" or Hinduism's "Karma." They all make God a tyrant and man a machine of necessity. The word Moslem means "submitted" as "Kismet" means fate, destiny, portion and lot. It is why the Mohammedan is so fatalistic in battle, and won't take medicine to alleviate suffering or disease since it is appointed of God. At least he is more consistent than a lot of theologians, even if he is consistently wrong. Like Freudian psychology and the "Behaviorist's School of Psychology", man as a machine is but the product of the sum total of His physical nature-as purely only a machine. That is only the Eastern completely fatalistic pessimism introduced into many religions and cults today.

2) Chance. Chance is the very opposite of fatalism As fatalism would preclude any variety or possibility of change, so chance would preclude any uniformity or plan at all. Given the fact of an omnipotent, all wise God, then He would make "all things work together" for that plan. But chance says "there is no plan at all." Like evolutionists today, who make it all by infinite trial and error, success and failure all the order and design in nature evolved by pure chance, from nothing. Something called "nature", kept the good and threw out the bad. All Atheism is forced to postulate that all is chance, since they deny any all-wise God at all. To them there can be no plan, purpose or providence at all.

There are unnumbered occurrences in life for which we can see no reason, but who can know the designing hand of God in back of the most casual event? To say that we see none is not to say that there can be none. How much of God's dealings in my life do I understand? Psychologists tell us that we are a part of everyone we have ever met, or ever talked to, or passed casually on the street. The chance encounter left a lasting

impression, adding to the sum total of our lives. "We are a part of everyone we have encountered." Who can know the mind of God or His everlasting purpose behind the smallest incident of our lives? How often has something "HAPPENED TO US" (?), vexing us seemingly purposelessly, trivially, accidentally. We often call it chance, bad luck only sometimes to find out it WAS AN ANGLE OF PROVIDENCE TO GUARD US FROM GREAT LOSS, HARM OR EVEN DEATH.

3) General providence. All too many believe that God's providential care runs the stars but forgets us. He runs the affairs of the nations but not the individuals in the nations. He controls the species but not the individual. Like saying God only controls the individual by His general laws of nature incidentally. This is the idea of the New England Deists of an "absentee Landlordism." Even Jerome, the Vulgate translator said, "It is a shame to believe that God should know just how many gnats and cockroaches there were in the world." But can we conceive of the omniscient God not knowing?

Who knows the far-reaching effects stretching to eternity of the smallest choice I make or the most insignificant event in my life? The smallest turning in the road makes a lifetime of divergency. We can never go back and remake the identical turning to correct it.

How can there be a general providence without specific particulars? The smallest incident may change the course of a nation. For illustration, in the First World War a miscalculation of the weather report by the Germans blew the Mustard gas back upon the surprised Germans instead of the unprepared Allies. A spider's web saved the life of Mohammed and made the scourge of Moslem to curse a thousand years of history. Hiding in a cave, spiders wove a web across the mouth of the cave; the pursuers thought he couldn't be in it so did not bother to investigate the cave. Millions of people have cruelly died and Israel suffered ever since, by the "sword of Moslem." It is said, "Large doors swing on little hinges." See the "bow drawn at venture" (I Kings 22:34). Yet it fulfilled the prophecy of the prophet Micaiah, killing Ahab, to fulfill the will of God and dispose of one of Israel's most wicked kings. How can you believe in the general love of God and not to you in particular?

When I think of the far-reaching results often of the smallest of my decisions, of the smallest incidents, yet shaping my whole future, I cannot think of God not caring, nor bringing His gracious influence to bear to influence that decision. "Roll all your care upon Him for He careth for you." "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths." "Is His protection only in the great things in life?"

The Son of God, while hanging on the cross, accomplishing the ultimate purpose for which He came into the world, bearing the sins of the whole world, yet He cared for the future of His mother, committing her to the care of John. Small, seeming insignificant in the sight of His dying for the whole world, but oh so indicative of His infinite love, which won't forget me. Christ could weep over a rejecting city and nation, yet not forget a dying thief. "A sparrow doesn't fall to the ground without God's taking note of it," and "The very hairs of-your head are numbered." (Matt. 10:21-31; Lk. 12:6,7)

#### D. SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

A. Providence is one side of the two parts to providence or fore providing--preservation is the other. Both are seen in the all wisdom of God. Given the Bible presentation of the omniscience and omnipotence of God, His all knowledge and His all ability, it is inconceivable as well as unscriptural to deny God's wise provisions as well as His wise planning to accomplish His eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ before the foundation of the world (cf. Eph. 3:10,11).

God's providence is probably the most all-encompassing term of all of God's eternal purpose in creation, though it isn't a word in our English Bible. There is no doctrine of the Word of God, no revelation of God in the Bible, not built upon and recognizing His providence, His wise provision. What God has ever done in creation, is doing and will ever for all eternity do, is all His own wise loving provision i.e. HIS PROVIDENTIAL PLANNING. Providence shows the triune God as "the Author and the finisher of our faith." There is hardly any passage of Scripture nor truth taught in Scripture not associated with, and controlled by, God's providence. God being who He is and who the

Bible everywhere states Him to be, it could not be otherwise. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world (ages" Acts 15:18;) i.e. before there were ever any of them. The starting of the whole program of creation is illustrated by the master architect and his planning of a great edifice, this blueprint. The same idea is seen in Is. 45:21 "told it from ancient time." Rotherham's trans. - "Yea, let them take counsel together, who let this be known a foretime, in time past declared it. Was it not I Jehovah, and there is none else that is God, besides me."

While creation explains the origin of the Universe and preservation explains the continuation of the universe, PROVIDENCE explains the reason for its existence. It shows that there is a plan or purpose behind all of creation. Creation is not an accident, of chance, a "fortuitous concourse of atoms", but an orderly result of God's creation according to a plan. It also shows that it is also under the immediate government of God. Though it may not always be perfectly apparent that there is purpose, or Divine supervision in every effect of nature (since the fall has entered) yet after careful consideration it is the only conclusion from both Scripture and reason. It shows God's attention to the microscopic as well as the macroscopic. The infinitely small as well as the infinitely large are under His care and supervision.

Note some deductions from the Scriptures. They are, of course, innumerable as we have already intimated, it is the whole teaching of Scripture. God could not do any- thing nonsensically or haphazardly. The whole Bible is the story of God's supervision in the affairs of men - all of its history, biographies, teachings, doctrine, prophecies, from the "making of man in His own image", to the prophetic destiny of "every man judged according to his works." "As has been said, "History is His-Story."

1) God's providence is over the whole of physical and brute creation. One of the most classical texts is Ps.104. As Christ's sermon on the Mount in Matt. 5, 6 is in the New Testament. (Turn to Ps.104) Note a few verses, 4-30. Creation, grass, trees, feeding, all made "in wisdom." Matt. 5:45: "Your Father . . . He maketh His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." Matt. 6:26◆30: (See the logic, from the lesser to the greater) "If God so clothed the grass of the field", "Feedeth

the sparrows" God noting the least of them falling to the ground.

2) God's providence over rational beings as the nations, their histories and destinies (all of prophecy shows). Job 12:23: "He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: He enlargeth the nations and straighteneth them again." Ps.22:28: "For the kingdom is the Lord's: and He is the governor among the nations." (cf. Ps. 2) Acts 17:26: "And hath made of one Blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations." (Cf. Deut. 32:8, "Divided the nations according to the number of the children of Israel.") Dan. 4:17: Nebuchadnezzar found this out the hard way. "To the intent (purpose) that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."

3) God's providence over the common destiny of men. Ps. 75:6, 7: Against big talk, and exaltation of self, lift not up your horn (Hebraism, for trying to advance your stock, better your position, seek rulership) on high, speak not with stiff neck (arrogance) for promotion cometh neither from the east, nor the west, nor from the south, but God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another." Lk. 1:52: (The Magnificat of Mary) "He hath put down the mighty from their thrones, (Thronon); and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent away empty."

4) Over the most minute, seeming insignificant of things, and seemingly accidental. Matt. 6:8, 32, 33: "Your Father knoweth you have need of them before you ask Him. So not to be anxious over things. And again His taking note of the falling of a sparrow to the ground, and feeding them. (Vs. 26,27): Are ye not much better (excel in greatness-greater value) Lk. 12:7: "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." Matt. 10:30: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered much more the head." Pray. 16:33: "The lot is cast into the lap (man trying his luck at chance) but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord. His is the final say, as (vs. 1) "The preparations (dispositions, schemes) of the heart in man and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord (Cf. vs.9).

5) God's providence much more is over the righteous. Rom. 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." (kata) Ps. 37:23: "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord" etc. many more.

6) God's providence is even over the free acts of men (as in all of prophecy where God foretells what He shall make the nations do.) Ez. 29:4: "Putting hooks in Pharaoh's jaws to make him do God's bidding." Ez. 12:36: "Lord giving favor of the Israelites in the eyes of the Egyptians." Prov. 19:21: "There are many devices in man's heart: nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." "Man proposes but God disposes."

7) God's providence is over evil men and nations. (His enemies) He used His very enemies to scourge His enemies. As Hitler, as the Canaanites, Nebuchadnezzar. Ex. 9:16: "And in every deed for this cause have I raised thee up, (Pharaoh) for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout the earth." In fact, AGAIN ALL THROUGH THE BIBLE, we see God's controlling hand on His enemies, causing "even the wrath of His enemies to praise Him" (Ps. 76:10) A.H. Strong, Systematic Theology. pp 423 - Lists four ways:

(a) Preventive. Gen. 20:6 "I also withheld thee from sinning against me" Case of Abimelech and Isaac.

(b) Permissive (2 Chron. 32:31) "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways" Acts 14:16) Rom. 1:24-three times, "God gave them up."

(c) Directive i.e. to unforeseen ends. Best illustration, Case of Joseph. Gen. 50:20: But as for you, ye thought evil against me: but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." See also the providence of God over Joseph, over Israel, over His own covenant to Abraham, etc.

(d) Determinative. Limiting (as Ps. 76:10). See the limiting of the devil in the trial of Job. Job chapters one and two. I Cor. 10:13, "He'll not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." The restraining of the wicked one in 2 Thess. 2:6.

The same God who can make all things work together for good for the God-lovers, can

control all of history, and all of nature, and all of ungodly men, toward a desired, foreseen, prophesied end. That is Divine providence.

## B. PRESERVATION (True & False)

### 1. False Theories of Preservation

In its broadest sense the doctrine of God's providence includes both His government and His preservation of all things. There is not only the ruling of God over His creation but of necessity there must be His continuous preservation; that is, "Upholding all things by the Word of His power." Heb. 1:3 Unlike the machinists who makes a machine pretty much containing in itself the principles of operation, so that all it needs is the energy source. But in all of nature, through secondary laws or forces, there is the control or regulation of the how and why of certain results - still there must be a continuous momentary upholding by God's power. For God to but for an instant revoke His preserving power would be the annihilation of all things. Without His momentary preservation no person or thing could exist the next moment. There are unnumberable illustrations everywhere of the operation of natural law to prove His preservation. (In fact the very term, "Law" as applied to all of nature proves the point). Seed time and harvests, the germination of the seed, growth, reproduction and fruit, after fixed laws along with the whole process of reproduction in the animal and human kingdom all prove an all-wise, all powerful Person controlling the whole.

There are three false theories as to Preservation of the universe. i.e. Primary basic types -see Strong-Sys. Theo. Vol. II under subject "for further treatment."

a) The continuous creation theory. This was taught by a number of New England theologians. In this theory nothing in creation lasts but the second of its creation, and must every second be recreated as distinctly as the first creation. Preservation, to them, is a continuous repetition of the creative act of God, as though there had been no creation before. This theory was supposed to relieve God of having to use secondary

causes. Thus, God is supposed to each second repeat the creative act. This is very close to Pantheism, making only one reality, God.

Jonathan Edwards said, "God's upholding created substance or causing its existence is, each successive moment, altogether equivalent to an immediate production out of nothing at each moment. That the past existence of a thing cannot be the cause of its present existence." (Vol. 2:486-489). This led him into the error of, in reality, denying freedom of will. If my whole existence this moment is a new creation of God, and no relation to the "I" of a second ago, then I'm not responsible for that fellow's action a few seconds ago.

b) On the opposite pole from this theory is the mechanical theory, of a number of shades. This was held by the deists of England and Europe, and adopted, naturally, by some Americans. It seems to come close to most so called Christian or Theistic Evolutionists. God created everything, but endowed creation with a purely self-propagating, and self-perpetuating, self-sufficient to self-solve everything, and self-evolving to a completion of whatever result God had in mind. All by natural built in laws. God built into natural law all the providence and preservation necessary, and all God's supervision is a preservation from self-destruction. He only keeps it from stopping to self-preserve and self-perpetuate. It still is a fatalism of the grossest kind, and untrue to all Scripture.

c) Pantheism. (We have already considered it somewhat) Nature is preserved, because nature is God, and there is nothing else. There is not one Scriptural proof for it. It robs God of His infinitude., and His personality. It is not a theory of preservation, since it denies there is anything infinite to preserve.

## 2. True Preservation (There could be no providence at all without Preservation)

The Christian, from the Scriptures, and His own personal relationship to God, has the only cheering belief in God's personal immediate preservation. God's own love and care, as revealed in His word, "Roll all your care upon Him, for He careth for thee". No

absentee landlord, nor hurricane can. The Scriptures testify on every page, of God's creating all things, upholding all things, caring for all things, and preserving all things, all by infinite wisdom, toward a desired end, "according to a plan of the ages which He planned for His son." Eph. 3:11 Mt. 6:26: "The Father feeds the birds." Luke 12:6: "Not one sparrow forgotten." Neh. 9:6: "Thou, even Thou, art Jehovah alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens (third heaven), therein, the seas and all that is therein, AND THOU PRESERVETH THEM ALL." Ps. 104:30: "Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created: Thou renewest the face of the earth." Acts 17:28: "For in Him we live (our starting) and move (continuation) and have our being (consummation, end of purpose), preservation."

Col. 1:17: "By Him (Christ) all things (no exceptions) consist" (Hold together, lest they fall apart (Thayer) why there are Laws of Nature, They are Christ sustaining all by the Word of His power).

Heb. 1:2, 3: "By whom also He made the worlds.. Upholding all things by the Word of His power." In fact to deny God's Creation, Providence, and Preservation of all things is to deny the whole Bible.

This is the true doctrine of God's providence, Gods Government, and God's continuous preservation of all things, by the Word of His power. His omniscience, His omnipotence, His omnipresence is sufficient explanation for all effects, as to creation, providential supervision and superintendency.

This includes not only the original Creation in Genesis 1:1, but the destruction after Lucifer's fall, the reconstruction requiring Creative Power in Gen. 1:2, plus the Creation of the man and woman in restoration of creation in the 6 day period, made in God's image and likeness, and extends to the reconstructed Creation at the beginning of the Millennium and the creation of a new heaven and a new earth at the end of the 1000 year reign of Christ and its eternal preservation. That is the omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence of our Almighty - Loving Heavenly Father All Praise to Him.