THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

This issue overlaps with many other related doctrines: sovereignty, human freedom, problem of evil….

Missing (no) Providence	*Mas o Menos* (general) Providence	Meticulous Providence	Mechanical Providence
(at best) In response to / in reaction to what's going on	In charge not in control	In charge and in control	Controlling and/or in control
God is part of the… mess much like us only bigger, smaller, faster	God is passive and permits	God is active and permits - using secondary causes	God causes all things – He doesn't permit
Frustrated Participant	Spectator	Father In Heaven	Distant Sovereign
God's will is, at the most, God's wish/desire	God can't interfere with our libertarian Free will	God works with, without, and above our will!	God forces our will – we have no real choices

This issue is obviously complex (God, man, nature, life….) with dangers of ignoring what we don't like!

1. God is actively and intimately working all things after the counsel of His own will!

Romans 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.

Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated **according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:**
Ephesians 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, **Ephesians 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:**

2. God stands in some providential relationship to all things:

- **Behind it! (Judges 14:4; Psalm 148:8, Rev. 17:17)**
- **Beneath it! (Deut. 33:27)**
- **Above it! (Psalm 115:3; 135:5,6)**
- **Before it! (Psalm 145:1-9)**

Judges 14:4 But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

Psalm 148:8 Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

Revelation 17:16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. **Revelation 17:17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.**

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

Psalm 115:3 But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Psalm 135:5 For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. **Psalm 135:6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.**

Psalm 145:1 I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. **Psalm 145:2** Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. **Psalm 145:3** Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. **Psalm 145:4** One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. **Psalm 145:5** I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. **Psalm 145:6** And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. **Psalm 145:7** They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. **Psalm 145:8** The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. **Psalm 145:9 The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.**

Proverbs 16:1 The preparations of the heart in man, **and** the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.
Proverbs 16:4 The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.
Proverbs 16:9 A man's heart deviseth his way: **but** the LORD directeth his steps.
Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap; **but** the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.

Isaiah 14:27 For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, **and who shall disannul it?** and his hand is stretched out, **and who shall turn it back?**
Isaiah 43:13 Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?
Isaiah 45:7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.

Isaiah 46:9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, **Isaiah 46:10** Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: **Isaiah 46:11** Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

Amos 3:6 Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? **shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?**

Daniel 4:17 This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: **to the intent 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.**
Daniel 4:25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, **till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. Daniel 4:26** And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, **after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.**
Daniel 4:34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, **and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: Daniel 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?**

3. God providentially accomplishes His will using secondary causes such as:

- **All things**
- **Our wills**
- **Evil intentions**
- **Man's wrath**
- **Numerous (maybe innumerable to us) agents**
- **Inanimate**
- **Animate**

Genesis 50:19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? **Genesis 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.
Psalm 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

Romans 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.

Acts 2:23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:
Acts 4:27 For of a truth **against** thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, **both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, Acts 4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.**

Luke 19:37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; **Luke 19:38** Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. **Luke 19:39** And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. **Luke 19:40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.**

Psalm 148:8 Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind **fulfilling his word:**

Jonah 1:4 But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.
Jonah 1:17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.
Jonah 4:6 And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.
Jonah 4:7 But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.
Jonah 4:8 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, **that God prepared a vehement east wind**; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.

4. God's providential will and work **appears** to include…luck &/ …chance!

Ecclesiastes 9:11 I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; **but time and chance happeneth to them all.**

1 Samuel 6:9 And see, **if** it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, **then** he hath done us this great evil: **but if not**, **then** we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us: **it was a chance that happened to us.**
1 Samuel 20:26 Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, **Something hath befallen him**, he is not clean; surely he is not clean.

Ruth 2:3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: **and her hap was to light on (**נִיֶּקֶר מִקְרֶהָ**)** a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

2 Kings 8:5 And it came to pass, **as** he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, **that**, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.

Esther 2:21 In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.
Esther 3:1 After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.
Esther 6:1 On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

Esther 6:4 And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

Esther 6:14 And while they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Esther 3:7 In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, **they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar.**

Esther 9:26 Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. Therefore for all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them, **Esther 9:27** The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year; **Esther 9:28** And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed. **Esther 9:29** Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, **to confirm this second letter of Purim. Esther 9:30** And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth, **Esther 9:31 To confirm these days of Purim** in their times appointed, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry. **Esther 9:32** And the decree of Esther confirmed **these matters of Purim**; and it was written in the book.

Thoughts:

- **Stuff happens**
- **Sometimes we can smile and give thanks**
- **More times we just scratch our heads and wonder why**
- **A few times we might become frustrated &/ angry**

Ecclesiastes 2:14 The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness**: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.**

Ecclesiastes 2:15 Then said I in my heart, **As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise?** Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity.

Ecclesiastes 3:19 For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; **even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.**

Ecclesiastes 9:2 All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.

Ecclesiastes 9:3 This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, **that there is one event unto all:** yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

- **At all times we know …even if we can't explain**

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

Romans 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Romans 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.

2 Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: **for I know** whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

5. God's providential will and work never provides us a full understanding

2 Corinthians 5:1 For we **know** that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. **2 Corinthians 5:6** Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: **2 Corinthians 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight**:) **2 Corinthians 5:8** We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

We see through a glass darkly but we see!
God's providences are like Hebrew words – best read backwards.

6. God's providential will and work always requires we trust & obey.

Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform; He plants His footsteps in the sea And rides upon the storm. Deep in unfathomable mines Of never failing skill He treasures up His bright designs And works His sov'reign will. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; The clouds ye so much dread Are big with mercy and shall break In blessings on your head.	Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust Him for His grace; Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face. His purposes will ripen fast, Unfolding every hour; The bud may have a bitter taste, But sweet will be the flow'r. Blind unbelief is sure to err And scan His work in vain; God is His own interpreter, And He will make it plain.