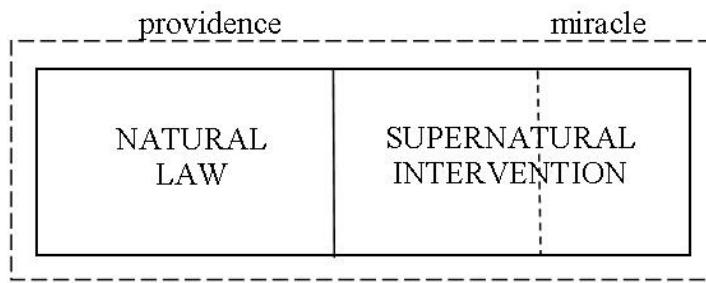


MANAGING THE CREATION

Virgil Warren, PhD

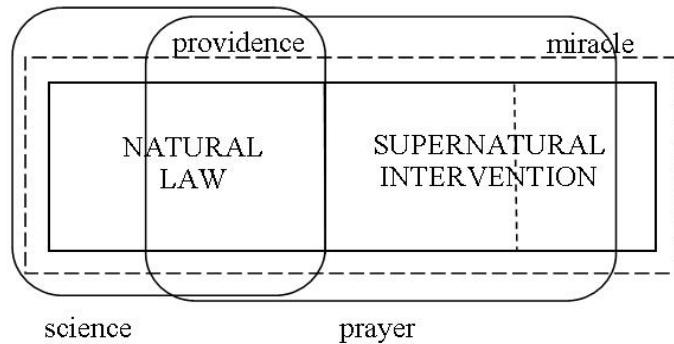
NATURAL LAW	SUPERNATURAL INTERVENTION
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God maintains contact with his creation and control over it. Especially in contrast to deism, God did not create the universe and leave it to operate entirely according to built-in laws for self-perpetuation. God is actively involved with what he made. There is built-in NATURAL LAW such as gravity that apparently operates “on its own” now that God has set it up to work in a particular way. But in addition, there is SUPERNATURAL INTERVENTION, where God enters the natural process and brings about results that would not have occurred had he not intervened.



“Providence” refers to God’s supervision over the flow of events in his creation so that the course of history stays within the boundaries of how he intends it to go. Largely through natural law God accomplishes his purposes indirectly in the natural order of chemicals, forces, plants, and animals and even in the social order of people. The paradigm for in-built natural law (vs. direct divine choice for each “movement” in nature) is the Genesis formulae “*whose seed is in itself*” (1:11; cp. 1:29²) and “*after their kind*” (1:11, 12, 21, 24, 25³). In-built natural law operating deterministically “on its own” is what is assumed in drawing a distinction between intervening and not intervening. But beyond natural law, from time to time God intervenes directly in invisible ways to adjust the course of events to keep them in the proper channel. As used here, the term “providence” consists of natural law plus invisible intervention. We have reserved the word “miracle” for God’s direct, visible intervention. Often “providence” covers

everything God does in overseeing his universe whether direct or indirect, visible or invisible. “Miracle” becomes a sub-unit under providence and indicates the visible manner in which God breaks into history.



Finally, science and prayer access the resources available to us in our need. Science makes us aware of how the built-in laws operate, and we use them to meet as many of our needs as they can serve. Prayer may be answered as an outgrowth of natural operations, but Christianity teaches that God also answers prayer by invisible intervention to produce effects that would not have happened otherwise. That intervention may take the form of a visible miracle as well. Often the expression “answered prayer” covers just the invisible portion of intervention.

By combining these ways of operating, God accomplishes his goals and provides for his people in the ongoing flow of history.