

clumsy, that had it not been the product of a great mind, it never would have received so much notice, or called forth such mighty efforts for its refutation, as have been bestowed upon it.

Two varieties of opinion exist among those who believe the world governed and sustained by natural laws, established by the Deity. Some maintain that these laws are general, not particular; not extending to minor events, but only the more important; not providing for species, but only for families. Hence they suppose that these general cases may interfere with one another, and produce results apparently repugnant to the intention of their Author. Others, shocked at the absurdity of such conclusions, believe the laws of nature to extend to every event, and never to interfere with one another, and always to act in accordance with the divine will and appointment, but without any direct agency exerted by the Deity. They suppose these laws, in other words, secondary agencies, to have the power of producing all natural phenomena.

In the third place, there are others who believe that a law can have no efficiency without the presence and agency of the lawgiver. They, therefore, suppose every event in the natural world to be the result of the direct and immediate agency of God. What we call laws are only the uniform mode of his operation. They agree with the advocates of the last named theory in supposing the laws of nature to extend to every event, and to be in accordance with the ordination of the Deity; but they differ in maintaining that the presence and direct efficiency of a lawgiver are essential to the operation of natural laws.

I should then define a special Providence to be an event brought about apparently by natural laws, yet, in fact, the result of a special agency, on the part of the Deity, to meet a particular exigency, either by an original arrangement of natural laws, or by a modification of second causes, out of sight at the time.

The doctrine, which supposes the Deity to exercise a superintendence and direction over all the affairs of the universe, in any of the modes that have been mentioned, whether by a subordinate agent, or by laws, general or particular, with inherent self-executing power, or by the direct efficiency of the