

divine will, is called the doctrine of divine providence. If the superintendence extend only to general laws, it is called a general providence. If those laws reach every possible case, it is called a particular or universal providence.

By a *Miraculous Providence* is meant a superintendence over the world that interferes, when desirable, with the regular operations of nature, and brings about events, either in opposition to natural laws, or by giving them a less or greater power than usual. In either of these cases, the events cannot be explained by natural laws; they are above, or contrary to nature, and, therefore, are called miracles, or prodigies.

There may be, and, as I believe, there is another class of occurrences, intermediate between miracles and events strictly natural. These take place in perfect accordance with the natural laws within human view, and appear to us to be perfectly accounted for by those laws; and yet, in some way or other, we learn that they required some special exercise of divine power, out of human view, for their production. Thus, according to the views of most Christian denominations, conversion takes place in the human heart in perfect accordance with the laws of mind, and could be philosophically explained by them; yet revelation assures that it "is not of blood," natural descent, "nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Divine power, therefore, is essential to the change, although we see only the operation of natural causes. So a storm may appear to us to be perfectly accounted for by natural laws, and yet divine efficiency might have produced a change in some of those laws out of our sight, and thus meet a particular exigency. Such events I call *special providence*; and I maintain that we cannot tell how frequently they may occur.

It is chiefly the bearings of science, especially of geology, upon the doctrine of miraculous and special providence, which I wish to consider. But it may form a useful introduction, to state the evidence, which goes to show that the agency of the Deity, in the ordinary operations of nature, is a direct efficiency; or, in other words, that the laws of nature are only the modes in which divine agency operates.

In the first place, if we suppose ever so many secondary causes to be concerned in natural events, the efficiency must, after all, be referred to God.