

2. This important function in the business of intellectual warfare can be discharged by an hypothesis, though in itself of no higher character than an unsupported imagination; and that, to a much greater extent in theology than is commonly imagined. We have already offered one specimen of its efficacy in repelling an objection that has been made against the theological system in general. We now proceed to another in which we hold it to be alike effectual for the vindication of a specific doctrine in theology—even the doctrine or rather doctrines of a special providence and the efficacy of prayer.

3. We select these doctrines all the more willingly, that, if we succeed in our proposed vindication of them, it will serve to counteract a tendency which is very prevalent, though incident chiefly to minds of a speculative and philosophical habitude, and to rectify, in fact, the whole character of their theism. The tendency of which we speak is to regard the Deity as a principle, rather than as a person. They look to Him more in the light of a physical energy than of a living agent—of one whose pervading force moves and upholds and regulates the whole economy of nature throughout its countless diversities of operation; but not of one who thinks, and wills, and purposes, and is affected as our minds are by the impulse of emotions that vary with the objects which we contemplate. When we look upward to the Supreme and Eternal spirit, we lose, in the thought of a great and comprehensive agency, those features which serve either to individualize the character or to liken the