

mined the laws by which it might be accomplished. The fact that he did this beforehand, even from eternity, no more precludes his agency, than the special interference of a father to help his child through a dangerous pass is disproved, because he foresaw the danger and provided the means of defence even before the child was born. If the father was actually with the child as he went through the danger, and held out to him the requisite help, what difference could it make, though the father purposed to do so a long time previously? And if we admit that God's efficiency alone gives power to the ordinary laws of nature, we shall admit that in every special law he is as really present with his energy, as a father who should lead his child by the hand through the dangerous path. So that, practically at least, the difference between these two views of the subject is very great; the one removing God far away, and putting law in his place; and the other bringing him near, and making him the actual and constant agent in every event. The one view is practical atheism, although often adopted by religious men; the other is practical Christianity.

By the principles of physical science, then, the Scriptural doctrines of miraculous and special providence are proved to be in accordance with philosophy. The miracles of revelation are shown to have been preceded by the miracles of geology; and are, therefore, in conformity with the principles of the divine government. The modifications which God can make in the causes of events out of human view, or the changes which he can produce by lateral influences upon the final result, (all, it may be, in conformity to an eternal plan, reaching the minutest of human affairs,) enable him to execute every purpose of special providence so as to satisfy every exigency.

The sceptic may say, that we cannot prove by facts that God does so modify and arrange the laws and operations of nature as to adapt his dealings to the case of individuals. But on the other hand, neither can he show that God does not thus interfere with nature's uniformity. It is enough to show that he can do it without a miracle, in order to establish the doctrine of special providence. How often he exercises this power, we cannot know; but we may be sure as often as is desirable.

A most important application of these principles may be made to the subject of prayer. For in answering prayer, God is, in fact, merely executing some of the purposes of his