

of the idea that, in his processes of thought and action, God is altogether such a one as ourselves. But there are certain principles, true of the divine mind and divine action, that cannot enter at all into human powers and human conduct. One is, that no new plan or motive of action can ever enter the divine mind ; and, consequently, whatever plans we find developed in God's government must have been perfectly formed in the counsels of eternity. Another principle is, that God never acts except under the guidance of those fixed principles which we call law. Hence miracles are brought about by fixed laws as much as common events ; that is, in the same circumstances we may expect the same miracle. The law of miracles does, indeed, differ from all others ; and this constitutes a miracle. But to suppose that God ever acts without the guidance of a settled principle is to impute to him a want of wisdom and character which we should be slow to charge upon an eminent man. No less absurd is it to suppose the Deity ever to act by the impulse of after thoughts, as men do ; or that he ever does any thing which he had not, eternal ages since, resolved to do in manner and time exactly as it takes place.

If these are correct positions, what possible difference can it make whether we suppose God to have arranged the agencies of nature at the beginning so as to meet every exigency, or to interpose whenever necessary to accomplish specific purposes by some new force or law ? Why is not the one as special as the other ? If he did in eternity arrange and balance the forces of nature in a particular manner, with the express design of meeting a particular exigency, what matter how many ages intervene between the arrangement and the event ? If a miracle was needed at a particular moment of human history, and God originally so arranged