

We shall speak first of special providence, but only in a brief manner.

From the nature of the case it might be presumed that we should need a revelation to show that God had originally arranged, or directly modified, natural agencies so as to meet exigencies in the case of individuals or communities. For, as man sees it, such providence seems to be brought about by unmodified natural operations. It is hardly sufficient to prove special providence to find that great wisdom is shown in contriving and adjusting the laws and agencies of nature so as to meet the necessities of the animate creation. We want the proof that those laws and agencies have been so arranged and modified as to meet particular exigencies, and with those exigencies specially present in the divine mind. For all the purposes of religious faith, it is sufficient to show that God can do this; and therefore we need not expect that nature will offer many examples which clearly show it to have been done. But believers in special providence suppose that they can find proof in their own experience, or that of others, that God has thus interposed either to bless or punish them. When they perceive that various causes have conspired—causes, it may be, both remote and undesirable—to bring about a certain result, they call it a special providence. We know that we need to be slow and cautious in drawing such inferences; but not unfrequently the evidence is so clear and decided, that not to do it would be hurtful scepticism. We will mention one or two analogous cases in nature.

It is no longer a conjecture, but a settled fact, that our globe has been the seat of several distinct economies of animal and vegetable life; that whole races, if not over the whole globe at once, yet over wide districts, have become extinct, and been succeeded by new families; and the new species