

## ARTICLE VIII.

## THE RELATION OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE TO PHYSICAL LAWS.

"A few years ago, a rudely formed boat pushed out from one of the wharfs of Calcutta, and, after some days' sail on the broad bosom of the Ganges and the Bay of Bengal, entered the waters of the Brahmaputra. It was bound for Sadaiya, one of the principal towns of Assam, far up the river, near the foot of the Himmalah mountains. In it were two missionaries of the cross, who counted not their lives dear unto themselves, that they might win souls to Christ. They had come from a far distant country, and were bearing the light and knowledge and blessings of the Gospel to that still remote and benighted land. For many weeks their voyage was prosperous, and their hearts beat high with hope and Christian zeal. At length, when they had well-nigh accomplished it, when they were already near the scene of their expected labors, one of these devoted servants of Christ was stricken down by sore illness. The other hastened forward in a smaller boat to procure, if possible, medical assistance. Urged on by every motive which humanity, friendship, and piety could offer, he was within sight of the mission premises at the town whither they were going, when suddenly two trees, whose connection with the adjacent bank the winds and the stream had loosened, falling upon the boat and crushing it to pieces, he sank beneath the waters, and that heart, so true to all its obligations, was stilled forever. To the friends of the missionary and of the mission the event was a dark and mysterious providence. To the devotees of Budh, it was a manifest interposition of their deity, in protection of the faith which the infidel stranger had come to subvert and destroy.

"On the 16th of August, 1688, there lay in the harbor of Helvoetsluys more than six hundred vessels — transports and ships of war — waiting for an easterly wind to bear them to the neighboring coast of England. One of these vessels bore a flag on whose ample folds was embroidered the motto, 'I will maintain the liberties of England and the Protestant religion.' In it was William, Prince of Orange. On the evening of the 19th the entire armament weighed anchor and spread its sails to a favoring breeze. Before, however, half the distance between the two coasts had been traversed, a violent storm arose, which broke up and scattered the fleet.

"When tidings of the disaster reached the ears of King James, whose religion and crown the expedition threatened, he recognized in it a Divine interposition, in answer to the prayers of his Catholic subjects. 'What wonder,' he said devoutly, 'since the Host has been exposed for several days.' To many of the Protestants, who were looking to William and his noble armament for the protection of their liberties and their faith, its dispersion by the tempest, when approaching their coast, was a dark and

inscrutable providence. William himself, however, interpreted the disaster differently. He saw in it only the work of adverse elements. Collecting the scattered vessels and repairing the injuries which they had received, he prepared for renewing the expedition. With undaunted courage, a second time he committed his fortune to the waves; and now, after a four days' sail under a smiling sky and with favoring breezes, the whole armament rode safe in the harbor of Tor Bay. During the disembarkation, the water of the Bay was as smooth as glass. But no sooner had the landing been effected, than the wind rose from the west, and swelling into a fierce gale, drove back King James's fleet, already in close pursuit. It was now the Protestants' turn to claim the favor of Heaven. Many of them, 'men of more piety than judgment,' says Macaulay, 'fully believed that the ordinary laws of nature had been suspended for the liberties and religion of England. Exactly a hundred years before, they said, the Armada, invincible by man, had been scattered by the wrath of God. Civil freedom and divine truth were again in jeopardy; and again the obedient elements had fought for the good cause. The wind had blown strong from the east while the Prince wished to sail down the channel, had turned to the south when he wished to enter Tor Bay, had sunk to a calm during the disembarkation, and as soon as the disembarkation was completed, had risen to a storm and met the pursuers in the face.' In all this King James saw only the hostility of the elements."

These historical facts are cited by Professor Chace,<sup>1</sup> as illustrations of the mode in which men are inclined to infer the moral purposes of God from the events occurring under his government. The designs of God as a *natural* Governor we always know from *natural* phenomena, for all these phenomena are the results and indices of his individual purposes; for "he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." But as a *moral* Governor, what does he intend in the events which he causes to take place? From the historical occurrence we learn what he intended as a mere Sovereign; but how can we know what appeal he designed to make to the will of voluntary agents; what lessons he designed to teach; what spiritual impression to produce; in fine, what he aimed to effect as a Director of the choice, judgment, or conscience of sentient beings? There are some rules by which we may determine some things with regard to his moral intention in the phenomena of the universe.

<sup>1</sup> They are found on pp. 15—17 of "A Discourse delivered before the Porter Rhetorical Society of Andover Theological Seminary, August 1, 1854, by George I. Chace, LL. D., Professor in Brown University. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1854."

In the first place, we may ascribe an event to a moral purpose of the Deity, just so far as the Bible connects that event with that purpose. In the inspired record of his transactions we may learn somewhat with regard to the motives which prompt them. And we learn that his comprehensive design is to encourage holiness, and to discourage sin. "For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God," and that as a moral Governor, the Most High intends to persuade men to do right, dissuade them from doing wrong, and express his kindly interest in his friends by leading them into the wilderness in order 'to humble them and to prove them, by giving them manna, 'that he might make them know' their dependance upon him, by showing them many a 'manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that they may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which they also suffer.' We know that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and that 'all things are for their sakes,' and that 'whatsoever they ask, they (substantially) receive, because they keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.' See Gen. 50: 20. Deut. 8: 1—3: 16. Jer. 24: 5—10. Zech. 13: 9. Rom. 8: 28. 2 Cor. 4: 15—17. Phil. 1: 19, 20. 2 Thess. 1: 5. Heb. 12: 6—12. 1 John 3: 22. Rev. 3: 19, et al. We are not arrogant, then, for we have inspired authority, in saying that, in some mode or other, the dispensations of God toward his children are designed for his children's spiritual welfare. There are minute specifications which the Bible does not expressly and distinctively authorize us to make; but it allows us to believe that the general spirit of the Christian disciple will be favored by the particular and special Providence of God. From the Bible we derive no right to affirm that the missionary on the Brahmaputra was subjected to the afflictive dispensation of Heaven, for the purpose of accelerating or retarding the progress of his individual opinions on the subject of baptism, or the parity of the clergy; but we have a Biblical warrant for affirming that the event which befel him was designed to promote in some way or other the spirit of evangelical benevolence. As believers in the Gospel, we are logically bound to infer that the event was divinely intended to cherish a Christian fidelity, rather than a devotion to Budh. In like manner, we have no particular inspired authority for affirming that the dispensations of Providence toward the fleet of the Prince of Orange were morally

designed for an endorsement of his individual theories on the Episcopate, or of the tendencies of his army to favor the Zuinglian rather than the Lutheran view of the sacraments; but we have inspired authority for regarding these dispensations as designed, in some method, to purify the true friends of Christ, to cultivate a piety which consists in hearty obedience, rather than to encourage an empty and haughty formalism. Just in proportion to the evidence which the inspired word gives us in favor of the correctness and the importance of any doctrine, we have reason to expect that the humble, honest, cordial and consistent believer in that doctrine will receive benefit from the providences of God. On the great whole, he will present his word and his works in admirable harmony. The moral intent, then, of many divine dispensations is learned from the Bible.

In the second place, we may ascribe an event to a moral purpose of the Deity, just so far forth as that purpose is normally connected with that event by the established and appropriate tendencies of things. Thus, that God intends to dissuade men from intemperance by the accidents, and ill-health, which are consequent upon that vice, we believe, because these evils result normally from the vice, and by the laws which He has established they tend to deter men from falling into it. So the calamities which follow the gamester's arts, were designed to prevent men from the practice of those arts; as we learn from the two-fold fact, that the arts have obviously appropriate tendencies to induce these disasters, and the disasters tend normally to dissuade men from such ruinous arts. In fact, there is a tendency in every sin to work some evil, and there is a tendency in every evil to suggest motives against the sin from which the evil results; and these tendencies, being established by the Deity, indicate that he designs by them to cultivate our virtuous, and to discountenance our vicious, feelings. Just so far as we can trace these tendencies, we have a philosophical rule for ascertaining the moral intent of the phenomena resulting from them.

An event has recently occurred which affords an apt illustration of this rule. On the 17th of September, 1854, one of the strongest ships which ever sailed over the Atlantic, a ship which would have been uninjured by a collision with any ordinary vessel, was struck by a propeller of far inferior strength, and sunk. Perhaps that propeller was the only craft then on the

ocean, which could have injured the thick-ribbed Arctic by a collision. The propeller was long, and unusually low, and her bow was of iron and shaped like a wedge, just fitted to perforate the steamer which she struck. The Arctic, at the moment of the collision, was on the top of a wave, and her bows lifted above the water line. Therefore the Vesta drove her iron wedge into the Arctic *below* the water line, and perforated the Arctic's plank where it was impossible to repair it. A common steamer would have struck the Arctic at a higher point, where the "thick work" of the Arctic would have resisted the most terrific shock, and where any injury might have been more easily repaired. The firemen, engineers, and "underdeck-hands" of the Arctic, were the first to detect the disaster which had befallen their ship, and, availing themselves of their *private* knowledge, contrived means to escape, taking with them nearly all the apparatus which could have secured the safety of the passengers. The captain of the Arctic, apprehending no danger to his "irresistible" steamer, despatched for the relief of the Vesta, his best life-boat, and his first officer, the very officer who had the immediate command of the crew, and without whose vigilance the men would be unmanageable. Suddenly it was announced to all who were left on board the Arctic, that the vessel hitherto deemed impervious to assault, was penetrated in its most dangerous part; the passengers became frantic, the sailors ungovernable, and, in the midst of a long-continued, dense fog, the noble ship, and more than three hundred of her company, went down to the bottom of the sea. The attention of the civilized world has been directed to the fact, that on the wide ocean the paths of two such peculiar steamers should have intersected each other at just that point; that the vessels should have approached one another at the very angle where the collision would be most perilous, and at the moment when the impenetrable fog rendered it impossible to foresee the coming danger, and that the firmest as well as the most richly freighted of the two ships should have received the most fatal injury, and her captain, while ignorant of his peril, should have so singularly deprived himself of his most efficient helpers. What means this interwoven Providence by which so many hopes and plans of thousands have been disappointed forever! Did God intend to chastise for their peculiar sinfulness the three hundred who found a watery grave; to rebuke our nation for any of its political

delinquencies, for its infliction of wrong upon the Indian or the slave? How *do* we, how *can* we, be assured that such was his intention? We only *know* in the general, that He designed this dispensation, as every other, for the furtherance of good principles in some way, for the check of evil principles in some way; for the rebuke of those faults which have an appropriate tendency to occasion such a disaster. That carelessness of human life resulting from that haste to be rich, which allows the unwarrantable rapidity of the ship's movement, and the neglect of a hundred prudent maxims, of an alert watch, of the alarm bell, of the precautionary whistle, has received here a reprimand which is well fitted to deter men from a fault legitimately resulting in such a catastrophe. That selfishness which indisposes navigators and merchants to provide for the moral culture of seamen; and that habitual worldliness which leaves travellers unprepared for sudden emergencies, takes away their presence of mind, their energy, their practical tact whenever an imminent danger stares them in the face; in fine, all such iniquities as are in their own nature adapted to occasion so complex a disaster, are philosophically proved, and therefore were divinely intended to be reproved by this variously instructive Providence. That many other intentions animated the divine Mind, we are unable to deny; what they were we are equally unable to affirm.

"I do not believe," says Professor Chace, "that a careful collection of statistics on this subject would show, or render probable even, that the agencies of the natural world are directly employed by God in the administration of His moral government. I do not believe it would be found that as the inhabitants of any district or province have become more virtuous and more Christian, the elements of nature have shown themselves more kindly and beneficent — that the sun has shed his rays more genially — the clouds poured out their waters more abundantly or more uniformly — and the earth yielded its fruits in greater profusion, and with less labor from the husbandman. I do not believe it would be found, that as this same people have declined in virtue and piety, the heats have become more parching, the droughts more withering, the frosts more blighting, and the tempests more devastating. And yet it is in cases like this, if in any, that we should look for an interposition of the Divine power in bringing the natural world into relation with the moral. Occasionally, in the course of physical events, there are marked occurrences, which might seem to be specially ordered. But in by far the greater number of instances, there is nothing observable to indicate moral design or purpose."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Discourse, etc., pp. 12, 14.

We suppose that Prof. Chace means to deny, here, the *supernatural* interpositions of God in the physical world, but has no intension of disputing the natural, but the no less divinely intended, adaptedness of a virtuous life to promote peace of mind, and a consequent soundness of intellect, and innumerable blessings legitimately resulting therefrom. We do not understand him as disbelieving that a spirit of comprehensive obedience to the will of God has a normal fitness to promote health and vigor of body, as well as of mind, and thus tends, by philosophical law, to secure the numberless advantages that flow from the *mens sana in corpore sano*. The experience of individuals and of nations proves that the observance of moral rules, the fear of the Lord, the keeping of his Sabbaths, the reverence for his word, have an appropriate tendency to gain the countless benefits which result from industry, frugality, temperance and fortitude. The history of the race evolves no one truth more distinctly than, that, according to the established tendency of things as well as the special provisions of grace, "godliness with contentment is great gain," and "is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." The prevalence of Christianity has, in some respects, changed the face of nature even.

Although the two rules now laid down, are, as far as they extend, more decisive than any other, yet they do not extend far enough to remove all indeterminateness from our judgments concerning the particular moral intentions of the Deity. We still remain doubtful, not with regard to the general, yet with regard to the specific, design of God in many of his minuter dispensations. Hence we add an auxiliary remark :

In the third place, when any event strikingly coincides with any well-known plan of God, we may, in a modest spirit, ascribe that event to his intention to fulfil that plan. There must be a *striking* coincidence between the particular phenomenon and the general scheme of the divine government; and, just in proportion as the coincidence fails of being definite and marked, must the confidence which we build upon it with regard to the specific divine purpose be the less firm and strong. The plan of God with which the event coincides must be *well known*, and just in proportion as it fails of being clearly disclosed to us, must we be cautious and diffident in the inferences which we draw from an agreement of certain phenomena with it. If an

event have a questionable symmetry with a divine plan, and if the plan be conjectured or but dimly proved, we must reason far less confidently than if the event have an obvious agreement with the divine economy, and this economy be clearly unveiled before us.

It is, for example, a well-known plan of Jehovah to answer the prayers of his children. The Scriptures reveal this plan. The normal tendencies of things likewise prove that our requests for *spiritual* blessings will be answered, *always* answered. Perhaps no part of the divine economy is plainer than that our Heavenly Father will comply with the devout solicitations of his children. Still, his children supplicate for many temporal favors which are not granted. Prayers are offered for the recovery of the sick, and the sick remain unhealed; for the life of men in danger, and their life is lost. Two disciples entreat the Lord with equal intensity of love, the one for rain, the other for sunshine at the same place and at the same time. One or the other of the suppliants must be disappointed. When, therefore, and how, can we determine that a specific temporal favor which we receive comes from a divine purpose to answer a supplication which has been offered for that favor? Our faith that this blessing results from this intention, may be just as strong as our knowledge of God's plan to comply with the requests of his children is clear, and as the coincidence between the reception of this favor, on the one hand, and this well-known plan on the other, is exact and striking. So far forth as we doubt whether the supplication were humble and sincere, or whether the economy of God's government allow him to notice *such* cries as were addressed to Him for *such* favors, or whether the favor received correspond with the prayer offered, just so far forth must we hesitate to ascribe the event in question to his regard for the entreaty addressed to him. Sometimes the hesitation is greater, sometimes less; but there are such striking coincidences as will not fail to remove all practical distrust from the hearty suppliant. The churches of New England had a right to feel that their entreaties *for their own safety* were answered, when such decisive incidents occurred as are alluded to in the following quotation from Dr. Dwight and Dr. Wisner: "I am bound," says President Dwight, "as an inhabitant of New England, to declare, that, were there no other instances to be found in any other country, the blessings communicated to

this would furnish ample satisfaction concerning this subject, to every sober, much more to every pious, man. Among these, the destruction of the French armament, under the Duke D'Anville, in the year 1746, ought to be remembered with gratitude and admiration by every inhabitant of this country. This fleet consisted of forty ships of war; was destined for the destruction of New England; was of sufficient force to render that destruction, in the ordinary progress of things, certain; and sailed from Chebucto in Nova Scotia for this purpose."<sup>1</sup> "In the mean time," adds Dr. Wisner, "our pious fathers, apprized of their danger, and feeling that their only safety was in God, had appointed a season of fasting and prayer to be observed in all their churches. 'While Mr. Prince was officiating [in the Old South Church of Boston, says a writer in the *Columbian Sentinel*, of 1821] on this fast day, and praying most fervently to God to avert the dreaded calamity, a sudden gust of wind arose (the day had till now been perfectly clear and calm), so violent as to cause a loud clattering of the windows. The reverend pastor paused in his prayer; and, looking round upon the congregation with a countenance of hope, he again commenced, and with great devotional ardor supplicated the Almighty to cause *that wind* to frustrate the object of our enemies, and save the country from conquest and popery. A tempest ensued, in which the greater part of the French fleet was wrecked on the coast of Nova Scotia. The Duke D'Anville, the principal general, and the second in command, both committed suicide. Many died with disease, and thousands were consigned to a watery grave. The small number who remained alive, returned to France without health, and without spirits.' And the enterprise was abandoned, and never again resumed."<sup>2</sup> *Ne ressecandem ad vivam*. That the destruction of property and life was an answer to prayer, that the rising of any particular wave of the sea, or particular "gust of wind" was the result of a particular supplication therefor, we need not be confident; but that the *safety* of the Lord's heritage in New England, which was the supplicated favor, was vouchsafed in compliance with

<sup>1</sup> *Theology*, Vol. V. pp. 40, 41.

<sup>2</sup> See the *History of the Old South Church in Boston*, by Benjamin B. Wisner, D. D., pp. 29, 30, and "Recollections of a Bostonian," No. 8, in the *Columbian Sentinel*, Boston, 1821. Dr. Wisner adds some corroborative testimony from members of the Old South Church.

the supplication, we may rationally believe. The analogies of divine Providence warrant the belief. The peculiarity of the coincidence between the phenomenon and the whole scheme of divine government brings with it a self-evidencing light. The healthy feelings of the renewed soul prompt to such a faith. In his Eulogy on Adams and Jefferson, the late Mr. Webster has intimated the influence which our well-ordered emotions have on our interpretation of providential events. When noticing the fact that these two men were called from life on the same day, and that the natal day of our liberties, he says: "Both had been presidents, both had lived to a great age, both were early patriots, and both were distinguished and ever honored by their immediate agency in the act of independence. It cannot but seem striking, and extraordinary, that these two should live to see the fiftieth year from the date of that act; that they should complete that year; and that then, on the day which had first linked forever their own fame with their country's glory, the heavens should open to receive them both at once. As their lives themselves were the gifts of Providence, who is not willing to recognize in their happy termination, as well as in their long continuance, proofs that our country and its benefactors are the objects of His care?"<sup>1</sup>

We may or may not sympathize with Mr. Webster in his interpretation of this individual phenomenon. Men will differ, as their varying tendencies of mind, habits of association, experiences of life prompt them to differ in regard to some departments of the divine administration. We have disclaimed the pretension that all events can be traced definitely and precisely to the individual aims which prompted them. But while we must give a certain degree of latitude to the action of diversified temperaments, we are still persuaded that some events are so *peculiarly* harmonious with the known scheme of the divine government, as to authorize us in referring them to the same divine motive which prompted that scheme.

Let us now conclude this branch of our discussion with the remark, that we may ascribe many events, in part, to the divine intention of humbling men and making them submissive to the mysteries of God's will. It is his known plan to cultivate these lowly graces in the hearts of his children. There are many events

<sup>1</sup> Discourse in Commemoration of the Lives and Services of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, 1826, pp. 7, 8.

fitted to nurture the spirit of modest acquiescence in his sovereign pleasure. He causes these events, and, as we are authorized to believe, he causes them in subservience to the plan which they are adapted to fill out. For many phenomena we should be sinfully arrogant were we to assign a particular motive in the divine mind. They may have been devised with this motive, or with that. We have no right to *deny*, more than we have a right to *affirm*, that they were prompted by the first or the second motive. But we have a right to believe, that they resulted from *some* intent, and from the comprehensive design to make the inquirer lowly and deferential. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." And his design in "hiding himself in thick darkness" is to prompt the cry: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord [where the Lord hath not chosen to reveal it] or who hath been his counsellor?" We have no logical right to deny that the afflictions of Job may have been sent with either of several imagined purposes; but the history of Job authorizes us to believe that they were designed to humble men in view of men's inability to comprehend all the purposes of God. We have no logical right to deny that the slaughter of the Galileans by the Roman governor, was the consequence of one or another conceivable design of Heaven; but our Saviour's comment on that Providence justifies us in thinking that the event resulted from the general purpose to nurture a humble spirit in men who contemplate this sign of their Ruler's supremacy. The tower of Siloam did not fall upon the eighteen men for the purpose of designating them as peculiarly flagitious; still we cannot disprove that it fell for some particular moral end hidden from all survivors; and we may affirm that it fell for the general intent of cultivating in men that lowliness which leads to 'the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom.' We are expressly assured that the divine intention in afflicting a certain man with blindness, was not to designate either him or his parents as sinners; still there may have been various divine intentions in the Providence, and we are carefully informed that one of them was to reveal the ways of God in bringing good out of evil. If any man should assert that events do occur, affecting our condition in life, yet without any particular moral design on the part of the Deity, the assertion should be proved. But it

were difficult to prove such a negative. For even if there were no other conceivable intention for those events, they may have been in part designed to cherish our humble deference toward the mysteries of the divine government.

The Discourse of Professor Chace, to which we have already alluded, has been understood as denying that God has any moral intention in some of the phenomena which exert an influence over sentient beings. It is not our purpose now to inquire, whether he has been correctly interpreted in this respect, or whether his peculiar use of certain technical terms has exposed him to be misinterpreted. He has certainly used some expressions which involve the theory, that all the events affecting our interest proceed from a definite moral purpose of the Deity. He says:

“The Scriptures undoubtedly teach—and the doctrine is consonant with both reason and experience—that under God’s government no real harm can befall those who love and keep His commandments; that every condition in which they may be placed, every event and circumstance of their lives, rightly improved, becomes a means of grace and blessing.”<sup>1</sup>

Now if every circumstance in our life, even the most minute, may become the *means* of good to us, it was intended by God to be such a possible means. Again, he says:

“In the case of every dispensation of God’s Providence, whether joyous or afflictive, it is right and proper, and our duty, to inquire, what use we should make of it? how He would have us behave under it? what lessons derive from it? And if the inquiry be reverently and humbly made, we may hope to be guided to a right answer. But beyond this we may not go. Why the event was ordered, what ends it was intended to accomplish, whether it respects chiefly ourselves, or has other and higher relations which determined its form and occurrence—are questions pertaining to the secret things of God—to the immediate purposes of Him who giveth not account of any of His matters. It is vain and useless to ask them.”<sup>2</sup>

But if “every dispensation of God’s Providence” deserves this inquiry into its usefulness, it must have a divinely intended usefulness. If the intentions of God be hidden from us, the very concealment implies that there are intentions. If the event be mysterious, the very mystery implies that there are purposes of God wrapped up in it. Providences do not amaze a considerate Christian, except as they suggest a query with regard to the

<sup>1</sup> Discourse, pp. 38, 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* pp. 39, 40.

divine intention which prompted them. Prof. Chace distinctly affirms that "*any* future event in which we are interested and concerning which the will of God is unknown to us, is a legitimate subject of petition."<sup>1</sup> But how can we rightly pray for "*any*" favors, if they be not within the sphere of God's intentional providence? The doctrine of prayer involves the doctrine of a providential government, extending to every phenomenon in regard to which we may supplicate Heaven. Again, Prof. Chace inculcates the duty of "submission to the will of God, because it is His will; because such submission is right, and proper, and becoming us, as His creatures; because His will itself is perfect goodness, and because its appointments, although including much partial and incidental evil, all look ultimately to the securing of the best interests of His universe."<sup>2</sup> But how can we morally submit to the will of God, unless we believe that he has a moral intent with regard to the evils which call for our submission?

The fact that God designs to humble men by the inscrutableness of many of his dispensations, is sufficient to rescue the doctrine of his universal government from the abuses into which it sometimes falls. Prof. Chace thus describes the selfishness and "egoism" which induce a class of Christians to make exorbitant demands upon God's administration, and to be dissatisfied unless His Providence appear to culminate on themselves.

"Everything in nature as well as in human society, must minister to the safety and welfare of the favorite of Heaven. The winds are commanded to blow gently upon him. The lightnings and the tempests are charged to do him no harm. The sun is withheld from smiting him by day, and the moon by night. Disease and misfortune and calamity are turned from his dwelling, or if permitted to enter, they come not as ministers of wrath, but as angels of mercy, bearing with them hidden blessings. Every event is ordered with reference to his interests, and made tributary to his good. His conception of the Creator and Governor of the Universe, would seem to include little beyond the idea of an All-powerful Being, constantly attendant upon his steps, defending him on every side from accident and harm, holding over him continually the shield of his protecting power, and personally ministering to all — even the most minute and trivial of his wants. The same care is supposed to be extended — in a less degree, indeed, to all the objects in which self is interested — over which by a ready and natural expansion it spreads itself. Family, friends, brethren of the same faith, kindred and country, severally come in for their due share of the

<sup>1</sup> Discourse, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 48.

Divine favor. That many of the ordinarily supposed providences, are mere reflections of this lively interest which every man feels in his own personal welfare, I think no reflective mind can doubt. Indeed, such would seem but a natural inference, from the almost universal observation that these providences are seen only in events favoring the hopes, wishes or interests of the persons immediately affected, and are seen by them alone."<sup>1</sup>

But there is no inconsistency between a belief that all things shall work together for good to the individual who loves his Maker, and a belief that they shall also work out innumerable other benefits to innumerable other beings. Because a providence of our Father *extends* to the least of his children, that lowly child need not imagine that the Providence is *confined* to him. In the chariot of the Most High the prophet saw a wheel within a wheel. A single event may reach a variety of ends. It is not, then, a *use* of the doctrine of particular Providence, it is a *misuse* which results in the fancy that the individual thus provided for is "in the centre of the universe," and all other existences must revolve around him. In blessing one disciple God blesses all, and in blessing all, he blesses that one. Besides, the fact that multitudes of the divine dispensations are, and appear so, inexplicable, tends to convince every Christian that the divine government takes a broad range, is concerned with a large variety of interests, and therefore every individual, rejoicing in the minute care of that government over himself, ought to feel his own comparative insignificance, his short-sightedness, his liabilities to err in judging of a scheme so vast as the Divine. From the very fact that God is "ever attent unto the cry" of an individual so ignorant and so erring, flows a new motive for not only a humble, submissive temper, but also for admiration of the Ruler's condescending love, and for gratitude in view of every good and perfect gift which cometh down from Him.

It were vain, however, to conceal the truth that men do often pervert the doctrine of Providence, by fancying themselves to understand the secret counsels of Omnipotence, and especially by imagining that their own whimsical theories, or partisan schemes are the central objects of the divine care. A few weeks before his death, Gen. Jackson is said to have explained the reasons which actuated the divine Mind in permitting Gen. Harrison to be elected President of the United States, and then

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<sup>1</sup> Discourse, pp. 23, 24.

the reasons for calling the President from office and life. Mr. Harrison died so that Mr. Tyler might be enabled to save the country by his vetoes! When the last comet appeared in Russia, a Greek priest in the vicinity of Warsaw "summoned his congregation together, although it was neither Sunday nor festival, and, having shown them the comet, informed them that this was the same star which had appeared to the Magi at the birth of our Saviour, and that it was only visible now in the Russian empire. Its appearance on this occasion was to intimate to the Russian eagle; that the time was now come for it to spread out its wings and embrace all mankind in one orthodox soul-sanctifying church. He showed them that the star was now standing immediately over Constantinople, and explained that the dull light of the nucleus indicated its sorrow at the delays of the Russian army in proceeding to its destination." Says Professor Chace:

"The blood of the martyred saint, sacredly treasured through centuries, annually liquefies, betokening, by the readiness with which it flows, the smiles or the wrath of heaven. The silken veil of a Christian maiden, who had preferred the fagot to denying her Lord, turns aside the burning stream of lava, and saves from destruction the town which it threatened. The plague is miraculously cured at the tomb of a saint, and a whole city even is saved from its ravages by his effigy borne through the streets. The fires of the stake are quenched at the touch of the holy martyr; lions crouch as meek as lambs at his feet; and even the wounds which the unrelenting sword, or still more cruel instruments of torture, have inflicted, angels are sent with celestial medicines to assuage and heal."<sup>1</sup>

In many of these instances, we must presume, the spirit of imposture is mingled with superstition; but scores of instances might be adduced in which there is no chicanery, but an honest, though audacious, attempt to particularize the exact motives which prompted certain divine arrangements mysterious probably to the angels. Sectarian warfare, and even family discipline have been embittered by the arrogant claims of men to understand what "the Father hath kept in his own power." The objections of several writers which seem to be aimed against the *reality* of special providences, are strictly applicable to nothing more than *our ability to understand* these providences. We apprehend that some remarks of Prof. Chace which have

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<sup>1</sup> Discourse, p. 18.

been understood as gainsaying the doctrine that God accommodates certain events of his administration to our moral wants, were simply intended to teach that we cannot modestly presume to know the particular design of those events, — that they have no aim which we are authorized to interpret minutely.

As, then, we must admit the existence of God's particular designs, obvious or mysterious, in all the phenomena of the universe, the question arises: how are these designs executed? In what mode does the Universal Sovereign accomplish "his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth?"

There are various theories relating to the manner in which the providential scheme is conducted. Some of these let us now state.

First, we will allude to some of the theories which pertain to the Divine government over *material* phenomena. One of these theories is, that God has so arranged and does now so preserve the forces and tendencies of matter, as to secure all the events which take place, he having originally foreordained these events, and adapted his material universe to their occurrence. On this theory every event is the result of a *particular* providential act of God. Every event occurs in consequence of an arrangement made by the Creator, an arrangement which, as he foresaw, would lead to that event; an arrangement which in determining to adopt, he determined to secure that event. According to this theory he chose the occurrence of every phenomenon which does take place. He chose it either on account of its own nature or tendencies, as a good, or a means of good; or else he chose it on account of its dependence on some other phenomenon which was valuable in its nature or tendencies. He chose to cause or to permit everything which exists, rather than to give up his present system. He did not prefer evil to good, but he preferred to admit the evil rather than to abandon the system with which evil is connected. In consonance with this theory, there is no event so minute, none so evil in itself, as to be unworthy of God's providential care. His providence is not only general, extending to the main current of phenomena, but is universal and therefore particular, extending to every individual phenomenon, just as really as if every phenomenon were the result of a supernatural interposition of his power. I may move the index of a watch just as really by touching the

interior wheels, as by touching the index itself. If I impregnate the fountain lake, I may as effectually corrupt or purify the waters flowing from the pipes, in the mansions of the city, as I could do if I should impregnate the city reservoir, or the street aqueduct. In order to transmit intelligence from Boston to Washington, it is not necessary for me to begin my telegraphic communication at Baltimore. I may start the intelligence from Boston itself.

In a recent Essay by Prof. Hitchcock, of Amherst College, he speaks, as follows, of a theory in some respects like that now under consideration: "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?"<sup>1</sup> We do not understand Professor Chace as opposing the main principles of this first theory of a Providence extending to every event. His remarks, which have been understood as impugning the doctrine that a divine provision has included all the phenomena of history, were not intended to impugn the doctrine that such a provision was made *at the commencement* of the created system. He disclaims any such application of his words. He says distinctly:

"It will be observed that the question here, is not whether the course of events in the natural world was pre-arranged in view of the requirements of man's moral probation, but whether the Divine power is continually interposed in altering that arrangement to meet emergencies not provided for in it."<sup>2</sup> He says again: "In its wider and more general signification, the whole course of human actions and events—everything which has transpired in our world—may be said to be included in God's Providence; inasmuch as all has proceeded from the constitution of things which He established, and must from the beginning have been foreseen by Him. In this sense every occurrence in life may, with propriety, be spoken of as providential. Accidents originating in the grossest carelessness, death, although by the hand of the assassin, may still be regarded as providential."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. XI. p. 781.

<sup>2</sup> Discourse, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. p. 28.

In a published explanation of his Discourse, its learned author remarks that he "takes for granted a general, all-embracing providence, including the little as well as the great, the most minute as well as the most stupendous, the falling of a pebble, as well as the rolling of the spheres. The distinction which is made between this and God's particular<sup>1</sup> or special Providence, is, that, while the latter includes only such actions and events as are *specialy provided for*,—as hold the place of *ends* in the economy of the divine government,—the former embraces also all the incidental or collateral results developed by the means employed for their attainment."

A second theory with regard to the mode in which God's providential government over the material universe is conducted, differs from the preceding only in this respect: it teaches that, in particular instances, God interposes his supernatural influence, and changes the regular operation of the forces of nature. He preserves in existence all the powers of matter, with all their tendencies, and, if he should not interpose to prevent, they would ensure a certain phenomenon; but he does interpose, he does deflect them from their regular operation and thus, by his immediate volition, he ensures an entirely different phenomenon. On this theory, a special providence is an interposition of God to secure an event which would not have resulted from the appropriate working of nature's laws; and a common providence is His preserving of nature's forces so that they will normally produce a certain event. The definition of special providence, then, is different, on this theory, from the definition on the first theory. On the first theory, the providence is *special* in its direct intention to produce particular phenomena on account of their own intrinsic or relative value; and a

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<sup>1</sup> We have no disposition to condemn an author so select in his style as Professor Chace, for using the word "particular," as synonymous with "special," Providence. We have been accustomed, however, to speak of a *particular* Providence as referring to a care extending to every event, however minute; and of a *special* Providence as referring to that peculiar care which secures the occurrence of events fitted to arrest attention by their striking adaptedness to a moral design. On the theory that the Providence of God consists in the preservation of all the arrangements, forces, tendencies and activities of matter, in such a state that they will produce the phenomena which do occur, his Providence must be universal and particular. It must be particular in being universal. But it is not special, unless it be fitted to arouse attention by its peculiar and striking adaptedness to a moral design. Special is opposed to common, and particular is opposed to that which is *merely* general.

common providence is his incidental intention to produce or permit the phenomena which are not chosen on account of their own worth or usefulness, but which necessarily result from the phenomena specially provided for. Thus, on the first theory, the structure of a man's eye is a result of God's special providence; but the fact that his eye is one shade lighter or one shade darker, results from God's universal or particular providence indeed, but from his common or incidental, and not from his special providence. But, on the second theory, God has a special providence over the eye, only when he directly interposes and changes the action of its laws; and his other providences are particular and universal, but common. In this view, a special providence is of comparatively rare occurrence. Sometimes it is miraculous, when certain laws of nature are *manifestly* violated, and sometimes it is supernatural, when the action of these laws is changed by an immediate interposition, but still there is no *obvious* counteraction of them.

The main intent of Professor Chace's Discourse is to gain-say this *second* theory of Providence. He opposes, not the doctrine that all phenomena are made certain, *at the beginning*, by the structure of nature's laws, but the doctrine that "material agencies are *diverted* from their obvious *design* "by *interpositions* which *disturb* the order and harmony of nature;" that there is a "*modification* of natural phenomena, by a power acting *behind* the laws that govern them;" that there is "a *suspension* or modification of natural laws," a substitution of "the immediate and special exertion of the Divine power *in place of* a government carried on by general agencies, under general laws." Sometimes he makes remarks apparently hostile to the universality of Providence, but they are elsewhere explained as applicable to the doctrine of a Providence still interposing *supernaturally* or *miraculously* in the material world. His arguments against a special Providence are applicable to those interpositions merely which *alter* the arrangements of the physical universe "in order to meet emergencies *not provided for in it.*" That he does not intend to deny the doctrine of special providence as defined in the first theory, may be learned from his own published comment on his Discourse. "In indicating," he says, "what part of the Divine government we may suppose to be administered by special Providences, the Discourse proceeds by exclusion. Its first places without the pale of such providences, all moral evil

and also natural evil, so far as it is not dependent upon moral causes. 'To suppose either suffering or sin the object of design on the part of the Creator, or in itself pleasing to Him, is not more repugnant to every right sentiment, than it is inconsistent with the remedial provisions so generally introduced for their alleviation or cure. Only good and worthy ends can, therefore, be embraced in the Divine Providence.' It next removes from the domain of special Providences the unimportant as connected, incidentally with the important, and also the little as subordinate to, or involved in, the great. 'While the great, the true, the real, the essential, are secured by agencies and laws pressing on to their accomplishment with the resistlessness of fate, the little, the apparent, the formal, the unessential, are left to follow, in subordination to them, from the general provisions of the system.' After these two exclusions, the whole field of nature and human society is left to be occupied by special Providences, conceived each in infinite wisdom as well as goodness, and together so arranged and combined as to secure the best interests of God's moral universe. Even the events which are not included in these special Providences, furnish, nevertheless, means of human probation, and thus become indirectly subservient to his moral purposes."

A third theory pertaining to the method of God's physical Providence is, that He immediately and directly causes all phenomena which occur, and makes no use of material forces. Indeed, matter has no power, but all its apparent action is a reception of an influence from the great and only efficient cause in the heavens. On this theory, all common events take place by as real and direct an intervention of God, as do the so-called miraculous or supernatural events; and the special Providence of the Deity is simply his production of certain *peculiar* phenomena, such as are called wonders, miracles, etc.

A fourth theory is, that the powers of nature exert an energy, and God at the same time acts on, in, and with them, starting them, immediately directing and controlling them, sometimes counteracting them. This includes the various forms of the *Concursus*.

But, without lingering on other theories, we will simply allude to one (which has been sometimes termed the want of a theory), which is, that God controls the material universe so as to secure all the phenomena which ever occur, but he adopts, at different

times, different methods of control, and some of these methods, if not all, are entirely unknown to us and were designed to be kept mysterious.

We will allude, in the second place, to some of the theories relating to the method of God's Providence in the spiritual system.

The first is, that all the powers and tendencies of the mind are so made and adjusted and preserved in their activity, as to secure all the mental acts and states which are ever experienced. The second theory is, that, while many spiritual notions and conditions may be referred to the Providence of God, acting in the powers and tendencies of the created spirit, many other actions and conditions must be referred to the immediate and supernatural interpositions of God. Some who believe in his supernatural interpositions for altering the activity of material laws, believe that he thus interposes *far more frequently* in directing the agency of mind. Some who deny that he interposes in the physical system, cordially affirm that he interposes in the spiritual. They do not allow that he supernaturally changes the direction of the wind in order to direct a ship toward the endangered raft of the Arctic, but he supernaturally inclines the steersmen of several merchant-ships to sail near the frail raft. They do not admit any supernatural interposition in modifying the tempest which withheld its force until the Prince of Orange had reached his haven, and which then arose as a shield against his pursuers, but they will admit a supernatural interposition in persuading the Prince to sail at just the right hour and in just the right course to obtain all the advantages of the fluctuating winds and waves. The theory of Prof. Chace is, that God conducts his moral government, not by disturbing the course of nature, but in part by so interposing as to incline the soul to receive benefit from the *fixed* course of nature. He says:

"Having formed men, He immediately operates upon their hearts, by the influence of His Holy Spirit. He has only to touch, here, the springs of feeling, and desire and action, and these flow out in accordance with His most perfect will."<sup>1</sup> "By the union of these several modes in its administration, there is secured to the Divine government, at the same time, firmness and flexibility. While neither moral nor physical law bends to circumstances, the government, through the third and variable element embodied

<sup>1</sup> Discourse, p. 7.

in it, adapts itself to all the requirements of our moral and religious probation. Whatever ends, necessary to such probation, are not attained by constitutional provisions, are secured by the direct interpositions of His Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

The Scriptures definitely assure us, that God operates on the soul of man by direct and supernatural interpositions of his power. This fact seems, of itself, to be a sufficient answer to *some* of the *à priori* arguments adduced to disprove his supernatural interpositions in the sphere of matter. If the welfare of men is sufficiently important to justify his direct mental influence, why is not the same welfare important enough to justify his direct physical influence?<sup>2</sup> "Although the avalanche pause not," says Professor Chace, "in its precipitous descent, the traveller may be removed from the place overwhelmed by it."<sup>3</sup> But so far as the worth of that traveller's life is concerned, why may it not be just as seemly for Providence to interfere and stay the avalanche, as to interfere and delay the traveller? Again, if there may be interpositions of Providence in the realm of spirit without injuriously affecting the stability of mental laws, why may there not be equal interpositions of Providence in the realm of matter, without injuriously affecting the perpetuity of material laws? Professor Chace remarks:

"That which creates the difficulty in the one case, is wanting in the other; viz. invariability of manifestation. Did the same mind always act, under the same circumstances, in precisely the same manner—did the same truths presented to it at different times, produce invariably the same effects, then there would be no room for the supposition of Divine interpositions, modifying the mental phenomena. Or were matter like mind, subject to moods," . . . "there would be no difficulty in the supposition of Divine interpositions in material phenomena. On the contrary, the idea of such interpositions would naturally be suggested."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Discourse, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> With regard to events which are deemed too unimportant for a divine superintendence, Turrotin aptly asks: *Quid pediculis, ranis, locustis, vermiculis, caeterisque insectis abjectius? Hæc tamen Deus excitare dicitur ad excoationem judiciorum suorum, Exodus 8: 16, 17 and 10: 12; imo vocatur exercitus ejus robustus, faciens verbum ejus, Joel 2: 11.* On the contrary, Thomas Aquinas says, as if the Deity would be wearied by a universal care over the *mundiæ* of the world: "*Licet Deus sciat numerum individuum, numerus tamen bonum et culicum et aliorum hujusmodi non sit præordinatus a Deo.*"

<sup>3</sup> Discourse, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* pp. 64, 65.

But are not the operations of mind as regular as those of matter? May we not as easily explain the laws which lead to every particular volition, as the laws which lead to every particular rising of a wave, or every particular gust of wind?

The question appears to be one of pure revelation. Unless it had been revealed that God interposes in the sphere of mind, we should have been obliged to trust in the entire uniformity of all mental laws, and to withhold our faith from the theory of his spiritual interpositions. So unless it be revealed that God interposes in supernaturally counteracting some laws of matter, we must confide in the uniform operation of all material laws, and must withhold our assent from the theory of his physical interpositions. We doubt whether any *à priori* objection ought to influence us in the one case more than in the other, provided that the Biblical argument be as strong in the one case as it is overwhelming in the other. The details of the Biblical evidence on this topic we have not space now to examine, nor can we more than allude to the remaining theories which respect the method of God's spiritual administration; the third theory, which is that he causes our mental and moral acts without any concurrence with our own powers; the fourth (of which there are various modifications), that he uniformly concurs with our own powers and incites them to some kind and degree of activity; and the fifth, that his methods of controlling the mind are (far more than his methods of controlling matter) diversified, and some of them are entirely beyond our comprehension.

The requisites for every true theory of Divine Providence are, that it represent God as ever active in conducting the minutest as well as the greatest affairs of his universe, and the universe as always and in every part dependent upon him for its own activity and its very being; that God be represented as ever able and ready to interpose his supernatural influence, and as actually interposing it when and where the exigencies of his kingdom render such an interposition desirable; that he has interposed in the miracles recorded by inspired men and in every instance of regeneration and sanctification which has occurred, and doubtless in unnumbered other instances which have not been fully disclosed to us; and that all this constant agency of God was designed by him at the beginning. That these elements are involved in the doctrine, is evident from such Scriptures as Acts 14: 17. 17: 25—28. Eph. 1: 11. Heb. 1: 3. Col. 1: 17.

Prov. 16: 33. Matt. 4: 4. Luke 4: 4. Dent. 8: 3. Matt. 5: 45. 6: 26—30. 10: 29—31, etc.

Several passages teaching the doctrine of Providence, directly imply that of the eternal purposes of God. The truth of his eternal purposes makes the truth of his Providence the more emphatic and prominent. We are well aware that, when we speak of all providential events as having been "designed from the beginning," we use words which are often misunderstood by philosophers. There are scientific men who uniformly speak of God's design or plan, as implying that the purposed event is chosen as an end, as a good. Therefore they say that, in the structure of the human body, pain is not an object of contrivance; it is not the end for which the body was planned, it was not specially *designed* in the formation of the system; but all the *purposed* arrangements of the system are for happiness. So they affirm that the evils and the *minutiae* of the world were not fore-ordained by God as *ends*, and therefore were not objects of his eternal decree. But the doctrine of divine purposes is not defined by technical theologians, as implying that the *good* and evil of the universe are chosen for *their own sake*; that God made the wicked *on purpose* to destroy them, and predestinated their iniquity and their ruin *as a good in itself*. The doctrine of the divine decrees is technically explained as teaching, that all things are made certain by the purpose of God, some things as *ends*, good in themselves; some things as *means*, conducive to these ends; and some things as results incidental to these ends; that all things are predetermined either primarily, on account of their own intrinsic or relative worth; or secondarily, on account of their dependence upon the events which have an intrinsic or relative worth; that the phenomena which are good were chosen for their goodness, and the phenomena which are evil were chosen, not on account of their evil, but on account of their certain connection with good; that the evil was chosen not *in preference* to a good which was consistent for the Deity to substitute for the evil, but it was chosen *rather* than a greater evil, the abandonment of the very good with which this evil is certainly interwoven. We suppose that this use of the terms design, purpose, decree, etc., is conformed to reputable English usage. We have high literary as well as theological authority for saying that a patient chooses the pain of amputation *rather than* the continuance of a diseased limb; a traveller designs to

endure the inconveniences of a voyage *rather than* relinquish his plan of a transatlantic tour; a monarch purposes the exposure of his army to death *rather than* sacrifice the freedom of his country; and every man predetermines that which he foresees must attend any operation which he insists on performing.

Adopting the phraseology to which his favorite sciences have inclined him, the accomplished naturalist whose Discourse on Providence we have already noticed, makes repeated objections to the doctrine "that everything which occurs in our world is in accordance with [God's] will," and "is immediately ordered by God;" that "evil is as really provided for, as much the object of Divine contrivance and design as good; that suffering and sin spring as directly from the constitution of things and must have been as truly intended as happiness and virtue."<sup>1</sup> These and similar assertions will be understood as involving a direct denial of the Divine purposes. Are the assertions qualified or explained? They must be compared with the author's favorite phraseology with regard to the term Providence. As he uses the word in a restricted sense to denote "a system of *special* provisions for securing certain definite and specific *ends*," which are to be distinguished from "the actual and foreseen, but not desired or necessary *consequences*" of the plan adopted for the attainment of those ends; so he uses the words design, decree, etc., in a restricted sense, to denote a *special* purpose of securing an event as an *end*, and as a *good*. In agreement with this confined use of the term, he supposes that nothing is strictly "the subject of a divine purpose," unless it have an intrinsic excellence, or utility and importance. Still he admits that "there is a certain generalized and technical sense in which *everything* that actually happens, may be said to be embraced in the divine decrees or purposes,"<sup>2</sup> that "all the events of which the earth has been the theatre, moral as well as physical, have proceeded from God. They were all foreknown to Him at the time of its creation, as *destined* to follow from the laws under which He placed it."<sup>3</sup> "I do not suppose," says Professor Chace, "that any one will seriously contend for an interpretation that shall make the number of hairs on the head of a disciple of Christ, the subject of a divine decree or purpose."<sup>4</sup> Why not? 'Because' (would be the answer given by some philosophers), 'although the fact that hair covers the crown of the head results,

<sup>1</sup> Discourse, pp. 54, 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* p. 38.

as a special benefit, from a special Providence, and therefore from a special decree, yet the fact that the number of hairs on the head is precisely so great, and not one hair greater, is no special benefit, is of no consequence, and therefore has not been specially *provided for*, and hence not specially decreed; the body was not made on a plan different from what would have been otherwise adopted, merely for the sake of one additional appendage so minute, so unimportant. • Still, the number of hairs on the head of a disciple is foreknown as a result of his physical structure, therefore was predetermined as incident to that predetermined structure, and in the general, technical sense was as really foreordained as was the existence of the body itself.<sup>1</sup>

When we compare our own insignificance with the great scheme of Jehovah, and our own ignorance with the objects of scientific interest in the finest filament of the minutest leaf, we find ourselves incompetent to decide that any phenomenon is too unimportant for the Deity to foreordain or to provide for, and we learn to appreciate the celebrated Section of Bucan on the query: "Annon dedecet summam illam Dei Majestatem usque ad curanda etiam, haec infima, sese demittere?" The entire section consists of these terse words: "Non, quia sicut non dedecuit ea creare, sic non dedecet creata curare." Inst. Theol. Soc. XIV. † 21. How the whole can be planned without the particulars of which it is essentially composed, and how we can decide that any one of the particulars is unimportant, we are

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<sup>1</sup> We are not confident that this answer, given by many philosophers, would be given, in this sense, by the eminent Professor whose Discourse we have repeatedly alluded to in this Article. Some of his expressions (as that on p. 55, in which he opposes the view of election and reprobation "not as determined by character, but as determining character"), we cannot easily reconcile with any Calvinistic theory of the Divine decrees. It is the more difficult to interpret them, because he says, p. 38: "I have avoided, as far as possible, the use of technical expressions, whether derived from physical or theological science," and also because he disclaims the intention, which would otherwise be imputed to him, of controverting some doctrines which seem to be impugned. "There are a large number," he says, p. 66, "of theological questions clustering about the two main points of this inquiry — many of them presenting great difficulties — concerning which I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I say, and have intended to say, nothing. And I ask that any terms or expressions looking in these directions — if I have chanced to employ such — may be interpreted in accordance with the declared aim and purpose of the discussion." Every author has of course the right to shun the technical phraseology of theologians, if he will so apprise his readers.

unable to say. "Nothing great," says Count de Maistre, on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions, p. 73, "has great beginnings. There will not be found in the history of all ages a single exception to this law. Crescit occulto velut arbor aevo, is the immortal device of every great institution."

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## ARTICLE IX.

### NOTICES OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

#### I. HERODOTI ORIENTALIA ANTIQUIORA.<sup>1</sup>

We are here presented with selections from the first book of Herodotus, designed for the use of students in the earlier part of their classical course. "The plan of the present selection," says the editor, "has been, to take such parts as would give a connected history of the Asiatic countries and of Egypt. To this I was determined by two considerations: first, the growing interest in the history and antiquities of those regions at the present time; and, secondly, that the other Greek and the Roman authors, commonly put into the hands of students, do not cover this ground at all." "The present volume brings down the history of the East to the death of Cyrus the Great. The *Aegyptiaca* and the subsequent portions of the *Orientalia* will be completed at as early a day as practicable."

The text is preceded by an Introduction, which sketches briefly the life and times of Herodotus, and the character of his history, including his "reliableness," his plan, his political sentiments, and his style. A summary of the entire first book is also prefixed. Following the text is an account of the Ionic dialect, with "synoptical tables" of its euphonic changes and its forms. We have then a somewhat minute commentary, interspersed with fuller summaries of passages not contained in the selections, and occasional critical and historical remarks, "for the most part reserved to the end of the chapter, where they are placed in a separate paragraph, generally brief and calculated to awaken reflection and incite to further inquiry."

We think the plan and the general execution of the work will commend themselves strongly to teachers and students. The oriental history thus

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<sup>1</sup> *Herodoti Orientalia Antiquiora*; comprising mainly such portions of Herodotus as give a connected History of the East. By Herman M. Johnson, D. D., Prof. of Philos. and Eng. Lit. in Dickinson College.