

words, the invariableness of that order where, by a process sure as necessity itself, the same antecedents are followed up by the same consequents. He cannot give place in his creed to the efficacy of specific prayer—because he never has observed, and he scarcely can imagine that the firm concatenation of nature's sequences is in any instance broken. He will acquiesce in the doctrine of a general providence—if by this be meant the primary institution of a great mundane system, left thenceforward to its own evolutions. He will even acquiesce in the significancy of prayer, if by this be meant the homage of our exprest dependence, or if uttered for the sake of a reflex influence on the mind of the petitioner, and not for the sake of a direct influence on the mind of the Divinity. But prayer, in the obvious sense of it, as a thing of asking on the one side and of receiving upon the other—prayer as invested with a controlling force over the processes of nature and history—prayer as an engine by which to shift or to modify the succession of events—this were disturbing, it is felt, the regularities of the visible creation—and it is a feeling which gives painful disturbance to the enamoured student of these regularities. It is resented as a sort of breach or violence on all that went to regale his imagination and intellect; and thus, amongst the disciples of modern science, amongst physical inquirers, and that whether into the physics of matter or the physics of the mind, it is in dissonance with all their habits of conception—when told either of the doctrine of a special Providence or of the efficacy of prayer.