

14. Every thing has its philosophy, which is neither more nor less than the rationale or the true state of that thing. It may perhaps be felt as rather an adventurous expression when we speak of the philosophy of prayer. Nevertheless it is a subject which like every other possible object of contemplation admits of academic treatment—the treatment which is proper for it when, on the principle of being all things to all men that we might gain some, the design is if possible to soften the antipathies of academic men.

15. First of all, then, let it be observed that the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer but introduces a new sequence to the notice of the mind—whereas it seems to be quarrelled with by philosophy, on the ground that it disturbs and distempers the regularity of all sequences. It may add another law of nature to those which have been formerly observed—but this surely may be done without invasion on the constancy of nature. The general truth may be preserved, that the same result always follows in the same circumstances, although it should be discovered that prayer is one of those influential circumstances by which the result is liable to be modified. The law of magnetism does not repeal, it does not even interrupt the law of gravitation, although the loadstone should keep the iron weight that is suspended beneath it from falling to the ground. There is still a certain and invariable effect produced, in this instance, by the action of two forces, each of which is certain and invariable. There is nothing in this to disturb the actual mechanism of nature—but only to