

to the final result, whether the answer to prayer be given by a responsive touch from the finger of the Almighty at a higher or a lower place in the progression; as a change upon any of the terms, wherever it may be situated, will have a controlling efficacy on all the succeeding ones. Let the change then be effected far enough back, and there will be the alteration of a sequence no doubt, but without violence to any ascertained law—because a sequence beyond the reach of all our philosophy. Prayer may obtain its fulfilment without any visible reversal of the constancies of nature—provided that its first effect is upon some latent and interior spring of the mechanism, and not among its palpable evolutions. Let but the touch of communication between the Deity and His works, when He goes forth to meet the desire of any of His creatures, be behind or underneath that surface which marks and measures off the farthest verge of man's possible discovery—and then, may there be many a special request which receives as special an accomplishment, yet without disturbance to those wonted successions which either the eye of man or his nicest instruments of observation shall enable him to ascertain. But it is not easy to make this matter perspicuous in the mere use of general terms—and we must therefore attempt the illustration of it by examples.

23. Let us, for our first example, make the supposition of prayer for a prosperous voyage. It does not appear why an answer to this prayer might not be given; and yet all the established sequences in our world be maintained in their wonted order, as far back as philosophy can dis-