

our preference for any of these suppositions; and we are not called upon to do so. We are engaged with one objection to the efficacy of prayer grounded on the constancy of nature's successions, as far as they are visible. We hold this to be effectually met by the consideration of there being one or two or any indefinite number of methods, whereby a reconciliation may be made between this doctrine of faith and the phenomena of experience. This, in all good logic, is enough for the question between us and our adversaries. A thousand possibilities do not warrant a specific or positive assertion on our side. But one possibility is of equivalent power to displace and nullify the objection on their side. We could not, without the transgression of sound philosophy, select the one which is certain out of

direction, in virtue of the lateral impulse that has come upon them. When an individual receives an answer to his prayer, the interposition might be made not in the line which he himself is describing, but in one of those which are to meet him on his path; and at a point therefore, where even though the visible constancy of nature should have been violated, yet, as being at the time beyond the sphere of his observation, it is a violation not visible to him. In one respect this hypothesis has an advantage over the one which we have ventured to propose. In ours the interposition, as being made at an anterior place in the scale of causation, might require at times to be made, not in answer to the prayer, but in the anticipation of it. By the other, the interposition, if made at however little a way from the point of junction, might be made both after the prayer and beyond the direct cognizance of the suppliant. This tallies better with our actual experience of those fulfilments, by which relief is often made to come to us from an unexpected quarter; and also with such declarations of Holy Writ as "God being a *very present* help in time of trouble." By either hypothesis the answer might be effectually made, but without any infringement on the constancy of nature noticeable by us; and so therefore as to leave inviolate, all the benefits of experience and the obligations of man to conform himself to its lessons.