

he established the laws of nature, did so arrange their operation as to bring about such results as the exigencies of every individual would demand, and at the exact moment desired. Human intellect is, indeed, confounded, when it attempts to conceive of a foresight so vast as to embrace in a glance the history of every individual of the race, and then so to arrange the countless agencies of nature, that every item in the history of the numberless millions of our race should be as carefully and exactly provided for as if only one individual were concerned. But we are certain that all this is perfectly easy to infinite intelligence. To suppose the contrary, is to destroy the idea of omniscience; and therefore we are bound to believe what we cannot comprehend.

It will help us to conceive how God might thus arrange and adapt the laws of the universe to meet particular exigencies, if we consider how it is that most events are brought about in our experience. We are apt to regard them as dependent upon a single second cause, or, at most, upon a few causes, just because one or two are the immediate antecedents. But how few events are there that have not been essentially modified, at least as to the time and manner of their occurrence and in intensity, by what may be called lateral influences! We see a given cause operating, and we are apt to feel that we know what will be its ultimate effect. But we forget that every event in the universe has a connection with all other events; that, in fact, the whole series of causes in the universe constitutes a plexus, or network, in which if you remove one of the fibres, you remove the whole. Every occurrence is, indeed, dependent mainly upon a leading cause; but the result may, after all, be prevented, or greatly modified, by any other cause. So that, as Bishop Butler remarks, "any one thing whatever may, for aught