

only one to six, is as one to one. Again,—in accordance with an expectation so general among the human family as to form one of the great instincts of our nature,—an instinct to which every form of religion, true or false, bears evidence,—it is in no degree less probable that this God should have revealed himself to man, than that he should *not* have revealed himself to man; and here the chances are again as one to one,—not, as in the second stage of the calculation on the dice, as one to thirty-six. Nor, in the third and last stage, is it less probable that God, in revealing himself to man, should have given miraculous evidence of the truth of the revelation, so that man “might believe in Him for His work’s sake,” than that He should *not* have done so; and here yet again the chances are as one to one,—not as one to two hundred and sixteen. No rational sceptic could fix the chances lower; nay, no rational sceptic, so far as the *existence* of a Great First Cause is concerned, would be inclined to fix them so low: and yet it is in order to annihilate all belief in a possibility against which the chances are so few as to be represented—scepticism itself being the actuary in the case—by three units, that Hume and La Place have framed their argument. Miracles *may* have taken place,—the probabilities against them, stated in their most extreme and exaggerated form, are by no means many or strong; but we are nevertheless not to believe that they *did* take place, simply because miracles they were. Now, the effect of the establishment of a principle such as this would be simply, I repeat, the destruction of the ability of transmitting certain beliefs, however well founded originally, from one set or generation of men to another. These beliefs the first set or generation might, on La Place’s own principles, be compelled to entertain. The evidence of the senses, however wonderful the