

the hope of yet seeing her son returned, reformed, and becoming a useful man. And at length, rescued from the storm and shipwreck, and the carnage of battle, and the yet more dangerous snares of sin, that youth returns, a renovated man, and cheers that mother's setting sun by an eminently useful life. Now, all this may have happened simply by the operation of natural laws. But it may, also, have been the result of divine interference in answer to prayer; and hard will you find it to convince that rejoicing mother that the hand of God's extraordinary providence was not in it.

The devoted missionary, at the promptings of a voice within, quits a land of safety and peace, and finds himself in the midst of dangers and sufferings of almost every name; "in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in weariness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." The furnace of persecution is heated, and he performs his duties with his life constantly in his hand. But he uses no weapon save faith and prayer. He feels that "he is immortal till his work is done." And, in fact, he outlives all his dangers, and in venerable old age, surrounded by the fruits of his labour, (a reformed and affectionate people,) he passes quietly into the abodes of the blessed. Here, again, why should we hesitate to refer his protection and deliverance to the special interposition of his heavenly Father, in the manner I have pointed out?

On the other hand, the history of dreadfully wicked men is full of terrible examples of calamity and suffering, as the consequence of their sins. True, the evil came upon them apparently by the operation of natural laws; but shall we hence infer that God in no case has so modified these laws, by an agency among the hidden causes of events, as to make the result certain? He certainly could do this; and to say that he never has done it, is to remove one of the most powerful restraints that operate upon the wicked.

In several examples recorded in the Bible, both of deliverance for the virtuous and of punishment for the wicked, so many natural agencies are concerned, that we are left in doubt whether the events are to be regarded as miraculous or not. Let the deluge, the destruction of Sodom, and the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, serve as examples.