

appreciation of things be rendered adequately concurrent with the state in which the things really existed.

Nor is the case different when, for a *possibility* which the arithmetician can represent by figures, we substitute the *miracle* proper. Neither Hume nor La Place ever attempted to show that miracles could not take place; they merely directed their argument against a belief in them. The wildest sceptic must admit, if in any degree a reasonable man, that there *may* exist a God, and that that God *may* have given laws to nature. No *demonstration* of the non-existence of a Great First Cause has been ever yet attempted, nor, until the knowledge of some sceptic extends over all space, ever *can* be rationally attempted. Merely to *doubt* the fact of God's existence, and to give reasons for the doubt, must till then form the highest achievements of scepticism. And the God who *may* thus exist, and who *may* have given laws to nature, *may* also have revealed himself to man, and, in order to secure man's reasonable belief in the reality of the revelation, *may* have temporarily suspended in its operation some great natural law, and have thus shown himself to be its Author and Master. Such seems to be the philosophy of miracles; which are thus evidently not only *not* impossibilities, but even not *improbabilities*. Even were we to permit the sceptic himself to fix the numbers representative of those several *mays* in the case, which I have just repeated, the chances against them, so to speak, would be less by many thousand times than the chances against the hundred dice of La Place's illustration all turning up aces. The existence of a Great First Cause is at least as probable — the sceptic himself being judge in the matter — as the *non*-existence of a Great First Cause; and so the probability in this first stage of the argument, instead of being, as in the case of the single die,