

the throne of England did not lay themselves open to this charge. They were definite enough in their petitions, and would have been quite satisfied with ordinary acts of Providence in their favor, such as are the staple of the world's history. And this is the point as to which, I think, they give us a second lesson for our own profit. I consider, then, that when we pray we do not ask for miracles, and that this limitation of our prayers is neither a prescribing to Divine mercy nor any want of faith. I do not forget the displeasure of the prophet Eliscus with the King of Israel, who smote the ground only three times with his arrow instead of more times. "If thou hadst smitten five, six, or seven times," says the prophet, "thou hadst smitten Syria, even to utter destruction; but now three times shalt thou smite it," but in this case there is no question of miracles. Nor will it be to the purpose to refer to the parable of the importunate widow, for that has nothing to do with miracles either,

WHAT I WOULD URGE IS THIS :

the Creator acts by a fixed rule, which we call a system of laws, and ordinarily, and on the whole, He honors and blesses His own ordinance and acts through it, and we best honor Him when we follow His guidance in looking for His presence where he has lodged it. Moreover, what is very remarkable, even when it is His will to act miraculously—even when He oversteps His ordinary system—He is wont to do honor to it while overstepping it. Sometimes, indeed, He directly contradicts His own laws, as in raising the dead; but such rare acts have their own definite purpose, which make them necessary for their own sake; but for the most part His miracles are rather what may be called exaggerations, or carrying out to an extreme point, of the laws of Nature, than naked contraries to them; and if we would see more of His wonder-working hand we must look for it as thus mixed up with His natural appointment. As Divine aid given to the soul acts through and with natural reason, natural affection, and conscience, so miraculous agency, when exerted, is in many, nay, in most cases, a co-operation with the ordinary ways of physical nature. As an illustration, I may take the division of the waters of the Red Sea at the word of Moses. This was a miracle, yet it was affected with the instrumentality of a natural cause, acting according to its nature, but at the same time beyond it. "When Moses," says the sacred writer, "had stretched forth his hands over the sea, the Lord took it away