

lar, so constant, so progressive, so universal, can be based on any mere figment or dream of the imagination. It is one of the most solid results of scientific inquiry that no human faculty can develop or subsist unless it is what scientific men call in correspondence with its environment. That phrase means that no faculty can come into existence or maintain itself unless it is really useful, unless it really corresponds with some fact external to man, is in real relation with nature as it is. The eye could not have developed or subsisted unless there had been the reality called light to evoke it and to make it useful. And all this activity of prayer, seen in its various strange forms till it reaches up to rational consistency in the prayers of the Son of Man—all this activity of prayer could not have been evoked, could not have developed, could not have subsisted unless man by praying had been really in relation to the God who hears; unless all this activity of prayer had been in real correspondence with the fact, and the most fundamental fact on which the universe is built.

## II. *God and the Individual.*

There is no doubt that a great many people recognize in a vague sort of way that somehow prayer is a real activity of human life. They can not so far separate themselves from the inner man as to deny that. But to kneel down and pray for this or that seems to postulate a knowledge of God about me, and attention of God to me in particular which, when I consider the vastness of the universe, appears altogether preposterous to suppose.

Brethren, there are a great many cases in which we need to distinguish between our imagination and our reason. This is one. True it is that the imagination of man falls absolutely baffled before the task of imagining how the conscience of God and the activity of God which are over all things absolutely can still comprise an individual knowledge, and an individual

attention directed to every particular atom and part of that great universe. Our imagination, I say, is absolutely baffled. But you know quite well that if you take the elementary facts with which physical science deals, like the existence of ether, on which all modern theories of light and heat are based, or the vastness of the solar system, in the same degree your imagination is absolutely baffled. You may not be able to draw a mental picture of things which still your reason may postulate, may force you to believe. Now let your reason go to work, and you will find that it comes very near to postulating about God just this very thing which you find it so hard to imagine. For think a moment; in ourselves, as our knowledge or our activity grows to perfection, it passes out of being merely vague into being definite, detailed, particular. If I go into a schoolroom where there are boys, I know nothing about them except what vague and general knowledge I have of boys as a whole. But the schoolmaster knows them better; that means he knows them more particularly as individuals, with individual histories, with characteristics, and powers, and faults. Or ask in what the preeminent physician is distinguished from the ordinary doctor. It is, I suppose, in this, that he has, while possessing a broader experience, at the same time a more individual insight into particular cases. All human knowledge and action as it advances to perfection both widens in range, while at the same time it becomes more detailed in application. Carry up that thought until you can perceive the perfect consciousness of God, and you will find that it postulates that God's knowledge and action shall be at once over all His creatures whatsoever; but that the universal range and scope of the divine attributes shall diminish not one whit from their particular and personal application, so that God created us, and loves us, and knows us, and deals with us one by one as individually, as par-