

sort of still and contemplative gratitude. But it were deemed a monstrous violation of all philosophy to proceed any further—to think, for example, of looking for any interference in our own special behalf with a process that is deemed to be unchangeable, or of thwarting by the expression of human desire any one operation of that great mechanism which is animated throughout by an unchangeable Deity. And hence the wide imagination that it is the part of man in such a universe as this to submit to God but not to supplicate, to ponder but not to pray.

6. We may here perceive how the extreme of superstition stands contrasted with the extreme of philosophical impiety. The one would personify all nature; and treat with its various elements and powers as if they were so many distinct and living agents; and offer incense to the imagined spirits that reside in the air, and the ocean, and the thunder, and the luminaries of heaven; and fancy them as yielding to the entreaties of their worshippers, and with all the spontaneity of beings that had a will and could be prevailed over by the urgency of human solicitation, that they would vacillate in their courses at the mere utterance of a desire on the part of those who had propitiated their favour. Now in this our enlightened day we stand at the distance of **many** centuries from such a grovelling imagination. Nature has been purged, as it were, of all those mythologies by which it was conceived to be peopled throughout its various departments. The torch of philosophy has put **them** like so many spectres to flight; and the **dis-**