

children and the generosity of His own nature? Will He not know how to dispose kindly and mercifully, of those petitions which ascend to the pavilion of His residence, without introducing misrule and mismanagement into nature—or breaking in upon the well arranged and orderly successions of that universe which He has formed?

19. We are aware of a difficulty here, related to the metaphysics of the divine nature—a subject which in our present state, and with our present faculties, is wrapped in hopeless obscurity; and yet by which the attempt is often made to speculate away all those mental acts and exercises in reference to God, which constitute the very essence of Religion. One ground, indeed, on which antipathy is felt to the obvious and ordinary conception of prayer, is that it implies the imagination of a certain state of mind in the Deity being the consequent, to a certain state of mind in the creature who addresses Him. Now on this yet inaccessible mystery we will not dogmatize. We will not venture to speak of the affections of the Deity as related to time or succession at all. But surely we may so speak of the palpable acts of the Deity—and we may also regard these acts as the expression of His mind and character. We will not dare to lift the curtain which hangs over the thoughts and processes of the Supreme Intelligence—but surely it is competent for us to observe and to reason on the visible forth-goings of the Divine power; and to regard them as indications of the divine character. When he causes a certain consequent to follow in the train of a certain antecedent, he