

the laws of nature, or doing violence to man's freedom, he, from time to time, so rules and modifies those results as to increase or to diminish the blessings with which he surrounds us.

Had those processes of nature by which the harvests of the earth are produced, been capable of no variation—had the results of those laws and processes been susceptible of no foreign or exterior influence—had the fruits of the earth been alike in every succeeding season, man would perhaps have gathered them with feelings but little higher than the instinct with which the lower animals satisfy their wants upon the repast which nature spreads before them. The returns of the soil would have come into his hands as a thing of course; and he would have been more apt to take them in that light, with less acknowledgment of the unseen hand that bestowed them: he would have had less sense of his own indebtedness not only to a system of beneficent natural laws, but also to the pervading government and direction of a most wise and bountiful Providence.

Almighty God has so ordered, that while the operations of nature seem to follow the track of certain fixed principles, still there is space for the intervention and action of Providence in completing and perfecting the results. This holds true throughout, that it is He "whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth." It is true both in the moral and material world: though the manner of God's intervention, and the exact mode in which His providence controuls and regulates all things, may to us be deeply mysterious.

While the philosopher and student of nature seek to penetrate into the secret chambers of her operations, tracing the continuous chain of causes and effects, and noting the sequence of certain results from certain previous conditions—while in viewing the wide range of secondary and material causes, and the adaptation of various means to specific ends, each cause under the like circumstances producing the like