

other science has its competent and its incompetent questions. It were well that we at all times observed the difference between them—and made the distinction between those which we might legitimately entertain, and those to which our best possible answer is that we cannot tell.

16. It is not to excite a spirit of adventurous speculation, but to repress it, that we have noticed one of those difficulties which belong to Theism—though, it must be admitted, that, instead of laying the restlessness of human inquiry, they have often acted as a provocative to minds of aspiring curiosity. It is to make evident how short the way of safety and certainty is, along which an excursive spirit can proceed on this high subject—and that, amid the multitude of unresolved and unresolvable questions regarding the methods of the divine government, we should be satisfied in keeping within the limits of accessible knowledge, and exploring with all diligence the truth that one may reach, instead of idly straining at the truth which lies beyond it. At most like Sir Isaac Newton in philosophy, if we do enter upon the exterior region of mystery at all, we should proceed no further than to the margin—where, instead of propositions in the form of confident dicta, we should plant the confessions of our ignorance in the form of queries or in the form of humble unpretending desiderata. To a rightly constituted spirit the ulterior darkness, instead of operating as a stimulus, will operate as a sedative—that is, will quell the appetencies of the mind after that which is hopeless and unattainable; and so leave its energies entire for all useful, for all