

His person and policy. If on the one hand to accomplish a given result by the fewest possible means be an indication of high wisdom, it is no less an indication of the same to accomplish it even though by a very cumbersome apparatus of means, if the workmanship had to be done on unlikely and unpromising materials. Still it remains a mystery why such should be the materials—and it is a mystery that we cannot unravel. The face of visible nature may be regarded as an impenetrable canvas, behind which its Author has withdrawn Himself from the view of mortals—yet not without imprinting such curious and high wrought embroidery upon it, as bespeaks a great force of intelligence and power within the veil. We can offer no absolute solution of the question why it is that He should so hide Himself, or why it is that the matter which Himself has created should require a treatment so very operose ere it can subserve His own purposes. On whichever side we turn, we feel ourselves treading on the confines of darkness. We may walk in light or in twilight, through what in the book of Job is called parts of His ways. But we soon come to a region of deepest secrecy—an impassable limit beyond which lie the depths and the mysteries that we cannot comprehend.

14. We have already said that the enlargement of astronomical discovery, while it expanded our conceptions of the divine greatness, had just the effect of making the divine counsels more incomprehensible than ever—and we now say that the complex adaptations, the number of contingencies