

vices, but with the force of truth alone, and denouncing all the vices. Let them, I say, consider this body and weight of evidence; which, if considered aright, is more than enough to weigh down all their objections, and which, if rejected, exposes them most justly to the charge of unreasonable unbelief. But our religion, they allege, contains in it so many MYSTERIES, and that these ought to lead them to its rejection. But this very circumstance, we say, is an additional argument for faith. If Christianity told us nothing but what the book of nature teaches, it could not be from God. Surely, if God write a book, it must contain something of which the ear hath not heard, which the eye hath not seen, and of which the human heart hath not conceived. As in the earth, while surveying the works of nature, and perceiving their peculiar skill and adaptation, we infer that they are the produce of a Divine hand; so, in what are termed the mysteries of religion, we see abundant proofs of a Divine hand. And besides, if we are to doubt because of what is mysterious, where is scepticism to end? We see mystery all around us; and if we are not to believe till we can comprehend, we shall never believe at all. It is absurd, it is monstrous, to reject the truth of God, because it teaches us something which, but for it, we could not understand! And further *peculiar* criminality and unreasonableness attaches to modern than could attach to ancient infidelity. On us "the ends of the world are come;" to us the system of Christianity is more fully explained, and the glory of God shines forth with greater radiance, in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The beneficial effects of the system have been illustrated by many striking facts in our days, which were not known to our fathers. The argument for Christianity is stronger; it has grown, and is still growing, with the growth of information. On the infidels of these days, therefore, the benevolent Savior may well look down with mingled emotions of surprise and indignation; he may well be alike grieved for the hardness of their hearts, and surprised at the strength of their infatuation!

*Secondly.* And what shall I say of the unreasonableness of the next class,—a *disbelief of the principal doctrines of Christianity*? Is not this *unreasonable*? When a man writes a book for his fellow-men, if his object be to instruct philosophers and the learned, he adapts his style to them: but if he be anxious to instruct the mass of men—if he would benefit the unlearned, and those who are incapable of deep and critical enquiry,—then he writes in a plain and popular style, that all who read may at once comprehend its meaning. Now, apply this to the book which God has given. The poor and uneducated form the mass of the people; *their* instruction and benefit must therefore be regarded; and if he be a good and gracious God, then a plain and simple man will be able to collect his mean-

ing from the plain language and letter of his word. Those who reject the great truths of the Bible pretend to say that a great part of the Bible is not to be understood according as the words appear on the surface. They tell us about corruptions; and they explain much of its contents away into Eastern similes. But let any plain, unsophisticated man whose mind is not prejudiced and perverted by tortured criticisms,—let any honest man regard the *corruptions*, as they term them, of the Scriptures, and he will find them to be the very vital and important truths of the system. But there is some reason to think that men are beginning to get tired of this *rational* system; and to see that they must either follow Scripture, *as it is*, or go at once to Deism: they begin now to find that the half-way house, as it has been termed, between Deism and Christianity, is untenable. And let those who attempt to take refuge there, let these half-way-house-men take care lest God should say to them, as he said to ancient Chaldeans—"Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee!"

3. But the form of unbelief which is the most extraordinary, is that of the *neglecters of salvation*: those who hold the truth, but hold it in unrighteousness. You will not surely account us your enemies if we tell you the truth. We say that there are many who admit the truth of the gospel, and yet neglect its great salvation. If we speak of such characters, we must speak in the terms which belong to them: we accuse you of conduct which, if it were exemplified in the common affairs of life, would justly expose you to the charge of inconsistency and irrationality. I will endeavor to set out your conduct before you, and I entreat you to let your consciences go with me. *You say* that you believe the gospel to be of God; that "at the first it began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will;" you say that you believe in his Scripture;—and yet—you live in habitual opposition to what you know to be the requirements, and what you know to be the privileges of this gospel! *You say* that you believe in the existence of a God; a God who is present in all places: who is intimately acquainted with all your thoughts, and words, and actions;—and yet—you go on, day after day, in a career which you know he must hate! *You say* that you believe him to be a just God; and that he who is the Maker of all the earth shall be the Judge of all the earth; and that he has prepared the thunderbolts of his wrath, that he may take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not his will;—and yet—you continually defy this authority, and expose yourselves to this vengeance! *You say* you believe that you have immortal souls; that when you leave this world you must go