

Job : « Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth ? Tell me if thou hast understanding, upon what are its bases grounded ? or who laid the corner-stone thereof ? By what way is light spread, and heat divided on earth ? Who is the father of the rain, or who hath begotten the drops of dew ? Dost thou know the order of heaven, and canst thou set down the reason thereof on the earth ? Tell me if thou knowest these things ? »

And this holds good just as well in regard to religious knowledge. Reason teaches us that there is a God, and it tells something of His Nature ; but it speaks to us about Him only in riddles. God is immutable, and yet He is perfectly free : who shall reconcile these together ? God is infinite, infinite in Essence, infinite in all His attributes — try to comprehend infinitude if you can. Again, what a mystery there is in the creation of this world. What a mystery in the union of spirit and matter. Everywhere mystery in the necessary attendant of knowledge ; and the more we know, the more mysteries will we have. If then God reveals to us anything about Himself, additional to that which reason can ascertain, mystery must still be the consequence. The wider the view, the more indistinct and shadowy the outline.

Men talk of the simple doctrines of the Gospel. There are no such things. The Gospel, as a scheme of doctrine at least, is a mystery. St. Paul called it so, and so it is. It is a mystery, because it reveals so much. If we did not know that God is both One in Substance and Three in the mode of Subsistence, our difficulties would be less, but so would our knowledge. Well does the prophet exclaim : « Verily Thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Savior. » (Isai. C. 45-18.) — What, the God of Israel a hidden God ? Did He not manifest Himself to the Patriarchs ? Did He not speak face to face with Moses ? Yes, but He is all the more hidden, the more He has manifested Himself. The secret is too deep. Language is too weak. Thought too slow. Reason too narrow. They are dark... Nay, they are only dark from excess of light. — The very means He takes to reveal Himself, conceal Him. Clouds and darkness gather around Mount Sinai as He descends upon it.