

to take. We ought to know whether it is true and necessary; and once convinced of these two points, we ought, like the angels, to submit to the necessity of being ignorant of some things. And why do we not submit cheerfully to a privation which, after all, is not one?

3. To desire the knowledge of mysteries is to desire what is utterly *useless*; it is to raise, as I have said before, a claim the most vain and idle. What, in reference to us, is the object of the Gospel? Evidently to regenerate and save us. But it attains this end wholly by the things it reveals. Of what use would it be to know those it conceals from us? We possess the knowledge which can enlighten our conscience, rectify our inclinations, renew our hearts; what should we gain if we possessed other knowledge? It infinitely concerns us to know that the Bible is the word of God—does it equally concern us to know in what way the holy men that wrote it were moved by the Holy Ghost? It is of infinite moment to us to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—need we know precisely in what way the Divine and human natures are united in His adorable person? It is of infinite importance for us to know that unless we are born again we cannot enter the kingdom of God, and that the Holy Spirit is the Author of the new birth—shall we be farther advanced if we know the Divine process by which that wonder is performed? Is it not enough to know the truths that save? Of what use, then, would it be to know those which have not the slightest bearing on our salvation? "Though I know all mysteries," says St. Paul, "and have not charity, I am nothing." St. Paul was content not to know, provided he had charity; shall not we following his example, be content also without knowledge, provided that, like him, we have charity, that is to say, life?

But some will say, "If the knowledge of mysteries is really without influence on our salvation why have they been indicated to us at all?" What if it should be to teach us not to be too prodigal of our *wherefores*? If it should be to serve as an exercise of our faith, a test of our submission? But we will not stop with such a reply.

Observe, I pray you, in what manner the mysteries of which you complain have taken their part in religion. You readily perceive they are not by themselves, but associated with truths which have a direct bearing on your salvation. They contain them, they serve to envelop them; but they are not themselves the truths that save. It is with these mysteries as it is with the vessel that contains a medicinal draught—it is not the vessel that cures, but the draught; yet the draught could not be presented without the vessel. Thus each truth that saves is contained in a mystery which, in itself, has no power to save. So the great work of expia-

tion is necessarily attached to the incarnation, of the Son of God, which is a mystery; so the sanctifying graces of the new covenant are necessarily connected with the effluence of the Holy Spirit, which is a mystery; so, too, the divinity of religion finds a seal and attestation in the miracles, which are mysteries. Everywhere the light is born from darkness, and darkness accompanies the light. These two orders of truth are so united, so linked together, that you cannot remove the one without the other, and each of the mysteries you attempt to tear from religion would carry with it one of the truths which bear directly on your regeneration and salvation. Accept the mysteries, then, not as truths which can save you, but as the necessary conditions of the merciful work of the Lord in your behalf.

The true point at issue in reference to religion is this: Does the religion which is proposed to us, change the heart, unite to God, prepare for heaven? If Christianity produces these effects, we will leave the enemies of the cross free to revolt against its mysteries, and to tax them with absurdity. The Gospel, we will say to them, is then an absurdity; you have discovered it. But behold what a new species of absurdity that certainly is, which attaches man to all his duties, regulates human life better than all the doctrines of sages, plants in his bosom harmony, order, and peace, causes him joyfully to fulfil all the offices of civil life, renders him better fitted to live, better fitted to die, and which, were it generally received, would be the support and safeguard of society! Cite to us, among all human absurdities, a single one which produces such effects. If that "foolishness" we preach produces effects like these, is it not natural to conclude that it is truth itself? And if these things have not entered the heart of man, it is not because they are absurd, but because they are Divine.

Make, my readers, but a single reflection. You are obliged to confess that none of the religions which man may invent can satisfy his wants or save his soul. Thereupon you have a choice to make. You will either reject them all as insufficient and false, and seek for nothing better, since man cannot invent better, and then you will abandon to chance, to caprice of temperament or of opinion, your moral life and future destiny; or you will adopt that other religion which some treat as folly, and it will render you holy and pure, blameless in the midst of a perverse generation, united to God by love, and to your brethren by charity, indefatigable in doing good, happy in-life, happy in death. Suppose, after all this, you shall be told that this religion is false; but, meanwhile, it has restored in you the image of God, re-established your primitive connections with that great Being, and put you in a condition to enjoy life and the happiness of heaven. By means