

an infant is to decide upon the thoughts and councils of the most eminent statesman or philosopher.

But the unbeliever will reply that supposing a father had written a book expressly for the use of his child, he would have taken care to accommodate it to his capacity; and that it is reasonable in like manner to infer, that if God had written a book expressly for our use, he would have stooped to the narrowness of our understandings. We admit the justice of this inference, but we may take the liberty to make another supposition. Supposing a wise father had written a book for his child's use, and that he were to warn him beforehand that he would find many things too difficult for his unassisted comprehension, which things if he would ask him, he would render perfectly intelligible to him; would the child then have reason to complain that the meaning of the book was obscure to him, and he would not therefore need it? Now this is what the Bible assures us God has done. He has written a book for the use of men which, by reason of their imperfect and incorrect views, they cannot of themselves fully understand. He has told them that if they will ask of him, he will make it plain and intelligible to them. Now whether this account be true or false, it can only be ascertained by making the experiment. To say the least of it this seems worth trying.

But besides this we have two books more which we know can have no other author than God—the book of Creation, and the book of Providence. Do these books contain nothing difficult to be understood? nothing that we cannot easily reconcile with obscurities, not to say apparent contradictions in every page.

Is not the book of Nature incomprehensible? How unaccountable to our ideas, that the burying of a dry,

diminutive seed should be followed by its resurrection in the shape of a lovely flower, or a stately tree! How strange that one day should behold the lifeless caterpillar wrapped in a winding sheet of its own making, and the next should present it to us winged with life and beauty, the gayest of the fluttering creation! There is not in the whole book of nature a single line that is legible to us, from beginning to end. We can read enough to wonder and adore, but not enough to understand!

And as for the book of providence, are not its contents still more dark, and mysterious? Does it not contain ten thousand articles, which to our weak judgment appear absolutely inconsistent and contradictory! How often are the righteous visited with one affliction after another, while the wicked are not in trouble as other men. These are some of the seeming incongruities of the book of Providence.

If now a third book be offered us even the Bible, professing also to be from God, shall we deny that it is genuine, merely because it is marked by the very same peculiarities of style which distinguish other works of the same author. Surely this remarkable coincidence of style is anything rather than an objection to its authenticity.

When the infidel objects to the Bible on the ground of its being opposed to his reason, we have yet to doubt whether *reason* is at all to be relied on in the matter. For if we take a view of the history of the world from the beginning, and observe the absurd, degrading notions which men entertain of the Deity, we *must* perceive that the human mind is little capable of forming sublime or even reasonable notions concerning him. As he too professes to be guided by unassisted reason, he can scarcely be sure, that his ideas of God may not be just as remote