

of truth and candor which nothing can imitate, in fine, feeling themselves in their inner nature moved, changed, renovated by the mysterious influence of these Holy Writings, they shall acquire, by such means, a conviction of which they cannot always give an account to others, but which is not the less legitimate, irresistible, and immovable. Such is the double road by which an entrance is gained into the asylum of faith. But it was due from the wisdom of God, from His justice, and, we venture to say it, from the honor of His government, that He should open to man this double road; for, if He desired man to be saved by knowledge, on the same principle He engaged Himself to furnish him the means of knowledge.

Behold whence come the obligations of the Deity with reference to us—which obligations He has fulfilled. Enter on this double method of proof. Interrogate history, time and places, respecting the authenticity of the Scriptures; grasp all the difficulties, sound all the objections; do not permit yourselves to be too easily convinced; be the more severe upon that book, as it professes to contain the sovereign rule of your life and the disposal of your destiny; you are permitted to do this, nay, you are encouraged to do it, provided you proceed to the investigation with the requisite capacities and with pure intentions. Or, if you prefer another method, examine, with an honest heart, the contents of the Scriptures; inquire, while you run over the words of Jesus, if ever man spake like this Man; inquire if the wants of your soul, long deceived, and the desires of your spirit, long cherished in vain, do not, in the teaching and work of Christ, find that satisfaction and repose which no wisdom was ever able to procure; breathe, if I may express myself thus, that perfume of truth, of candor and purity, which exhales from every page of the Gospel; see if in all these respects, it does not bear the undeniable seal of inspiration and divinity. Finally, test it, and if the Gospel produces upon you a contrary effect, return to the books and to the wisdom of men, and ask of them what Christ has not been able to give you.

But if, neglecting these two ways made accessible to you, and trodden by the feet of ages, you desire, before all, that the Christian religion should, in every point render itself comprehensible to your mind, and complacently strip itself of all mysteries; if you wish to penetrate beyond the veil, to find there not the aliment which gives life to the soul, but that which would gratify your restless curiosity, I maintain that you should raise against God a claim the most indiscreet, the most rash and unjust; for He has never engaged, either tacitly or expressly, to discover to you the secret which your eye craves; and such audacious impertunity is fit only to excite His indignation. He has given you what He owed you, more indeed

than He owed you;—the rest is with Himself.

If a claim so unjust could be admitted, where, I ask you, would be the limit of your demands? Already you require more from God than He has accorded to angels; for these eternal mysteries which trouble you—the harmony of Divine prescience with human freedom—the origin of evil and its inef- fable remedy—the incarnation of the eternal Word—the relations of the God-man with His Father—the atoning virtue of His sacrifice—the regenerating efficacy of the Spirit-comforter—all these things are secrets, the knowledge of which is hidden from angels themselves, who, according to the words of the Apostle, stoop to explore their depths, and cannot.

If you reproach the Eternal for having kept the knowledge of these Divine mysteries to Himself, why do you not reproach Him for the thousand other limits He has prescribed to you? Why not reproach Him for not giving you wings like a bird, to visit the regions, which till now, have been scanned only by your eyes? Why not reproach Him for not giving you, besides the five senses with which you are provided, ten other senses which He has perhaps granted to other creatures, and which procure for them perceptions of which you have no idea? Why not, in fine, reproach Him for having caused the darkness of night to succeed the brightness of day invariably on earth? Ah! you do not reproach Him for that. You love that night which brings rest to so many fatigued bodies and weary spirits; which suspends, in so many wretches, the feeling of grief;—that night, during which orphans, slaves, and criminals cease to be, because over all their misfortunes and sufferings it spreads, with the opiate of sleep, the thick veil of oblivion; you love that night which, peopling the deserts of the heavens with ten thousand stars, not known to the day, reveals the infinite to our ravished imagination.

Well, then, why do you not, for a similar reason, love the night of divine mysteries—night, gracious and salutary, in which reason humbles itself, and finds refreshment and repose; where the darkness even is revelation; where one of the principal attributes of God, immensity, discovers itself much more fully to our mind; where, in fine, the tender relations He has permitted us to form with Himself, are guarded from all admixture of familiarity by the thought that the Being who has humbled Himself to us, is, at the same time, the inconceivable God who reigns before all time, who includes in himself all existences and all conditions of existence, the centre of all thought, the law of all law, the supreme and final reason of everything! so that if you are just, instead of reproaching Him with the secrets of religion, you will bless Him that He has enveloped you in mysteries.

2. But this claim is not only unjust toward