

vague impression of his folly and guilt, and a conception of the existence of a gracious Being who had restrained him from evil. But in the deep retirement of his cell, and during the heavy hours that passed away, he was led to serious thought and reflection on the subject of religion, aided, no doubt, by the counsel and suggestions of the excellent minister, who never forsook him. At this period, an incident occurred which fell in precisely with his state of mind, and appropriated the powers that had been so wonderfully preserved, in a direction that could never have been anticipated.

A benevolent Englishman, at that time in Paris, struck with the ungodliness of the place, and anxious to do what in him lay for the removal of it, suggested to a pious friend the expedient of translating one of our most popular works against deism and infidelity into the French language, for the purpose of gratuitous distribution, intending to defray the expense himself of a small impression. But a translator who understood both languages sufficiently well to be faithful, and yet spirited and elegant enough to please a Parisian ear, was a great desideratum. Our young prisoner was immediately thought of, as possessing, in an eminent degree the requisite qualifications; while the work itself, it was thought, if it could engage his attention, would agreeably beguile the remaining period of his confinement. He caught at the proposal, and entered into it with great ardour, but, at the same time with the greatest seriousness. The reading of the book repeatedly over, for the purpose of making himself well acquainted with it, ere he began to translate, was attended with the happiest effects. The doubts that had lingered in his mind, of the authority of revelation, fled like vapours before the rays of the morning sun. His labour now became his joy. The translation, when finished, being shown to competent judges, elicited the warmest approbation; and a society in this country for assisting in the distribution of religious works being applied to, by the friend already mentioned, to aid in the distribution, generously consented to patronize a large edition of it for that purpose. The young translator has craved permission to write a preface expressive of his own convictions and gratitude, and appealing to individuals of his class, on behalf of the claims of inspiration. The effects of this work, who shall trace? Who can tell to what noble ends, the existence thus preserved by the recollected fragments of a single discourse, may yet be applied? How wonderful is God in counsel! how mighty in working! "There are many devices in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand, and He will do all his pleasure."—*English Periodical*, Nov. 1837.

CONVERSATION WITH A YOUNG SCEPTIC.—In a party of Christian friends, a young man was introduced, shrewd, well read, and amiable; but a professed sceptic! He had engaged a part of the circle in the details of the objections against Scripture. "How unlikely the story of the temptation, the universal darkness at the crucifixion, the dead coming out of their graves into the city, &c.!" Embarrassment sat in the faces of some, while others were endeavouring to make the account appear to be very probable.

I found it necessary to expose him. "You have doubts, then, Sir, respecting the Christian Revelation; may I ask the ground of these doubts, and to what parts they refer?" "To the whole," he replied, with a smile of apparent satisfaction and confidence.

"Nay, but we must descend to particulars. Do you doubt whether the books of the New Testament were written by the persons whose names they bear?"

"I do."

"Do you then believe that the works which are ascribed to Cicero and to Virgil, were written by them?"

"Certainly; they have been in the world a very long while; we can go back to very early editions of them, and these refer us to earlier ones still. And the learned have admitted them to be genuine. They could not have been written by other men, for they must have been clever men who wrote those works, and could not be unknown and deprived of their fair fame."

"Why" said one of the company, "we have just all these grounds for believing the Scriptures to be the work of the parties who are said to have written them; so we must take all or none."

The young man was silent.

"Then Sir, it seems pretty clear the books are genuine, what sort of persons do you suppose their authors to be? Were they bad men?"

"They might be," said he, "for aught I know."

"But could bad men be the authors of such a system of morality? I believe you can mention no vice which they have not reprobated in the severest terms, nor any virtue which they have not placed in the clearest and most attractive light. Were they impious fingers which drew such a portrait?"

"Well, they might have been very good sort of men, and copied their system from other works."

"But, if good, they were inspired, for they declare they spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; under the teachings promised them by their Master. Now, it is incompatible with the character of good men to lay claim to so high a matter, if they were not fully assured of its truth."

"Oh, they are a set of enthusiasts."

"Pray, Sir, what is enthusiasm?"

"Why,—it is a heated imagination, a set of wild incoherent notions; and this is what they have uttered."

"But what has this to do, Sir, with the facts which they relate? Enthusiasm does not deprive a man of eyes, ears, touch, memory. They declare what they saw, heard and felt; and being good men, the facts were so; the miracles they relate, did take place; then their author must have been divine; then their inspiration true; and the christian revelation imperishable."

"Well; he had his own opinions, he did not wish to press the subject further, nor to be so obtruded on the company."

"Nay, young man, you ought to be ingenious; you ought to own you were wrong. You have taken upon you to determine concerning a matter which you have not explained. Why not yield to conviction? Abandon sceptical modes of thinking; they have a direct tendency to beget captiousness and conceit; to destroy whatever is candid and generous in controversial warfare; to lead the mind to view questions of great and acknowledged interest to our whole species, with coldness, apathy, and distrust. In one word, the general and most valuable of our mental principles, become paralyzed and enfeebled by a constant habit of frivolous doubting and minute fastidiousness; as to the degree of evidence required to produce firm and internal conviction, on subjects of vital importance."

DODDRIDGE AND ROSSEAU CONTRASTED.—These names are well known to Society—Rosseau, all pride, selfishness, fury, caprice, sensuality; casting abroad firebrands, arrows, and death; possessing no rule of morals but his feelings; abusing the finest powers to the dissemination of, not merely objections against Christianity, but of the most licentious and profligate principles. Doddridge, all purity, mildness, meekness and love; ardent in his good will toward man, the friend and counsellor of the sorrowful; regular, calm, consistent; dispensing truth by his labours and his writings; living, not for himself, but for the common good to which he sacrificed his health and life.—*Br Wilson*.