

INFIDELITY.

Infidelity is illogical, inexplicable, and pernicious in its influence on humanity. It is opposed to both reason and revelation; it is based upon falsehood, and produces darkness, deception, and ruin. The infidel is regardless of the moral character of actions, he acknowledges no law, either human, or Divine; he boasts of freedom of thought, but practically perverts that freedom, stifles the dictates of conscience, and closes his heart against the utterances of Divine truth. He recognizes no motives to justice, truth, and benevolence: whatever is commendable in his deportment is due rather to the restriction which public opinion forces upon him, than any sense of justice existing in his own breast. Infidelity sinks the mind far below the average standard of fallen humanity. It removes all sense of obligation and responsibility in reference to the claims of the Creator upon mankind, and excites the feeling of presumptuous independence. No feelings of gratitude for temporal blessings can exist in the heart that is influenced by infidel sentiments, for infidelity does not recognize the source whence those blessings flow.

Amidst the darkness of reckless unbelief, the heart becomes the receptacle of everything that is degrading to humanity, and emits its poisonous streams without restraint. The influence of infidelity upon the moral nature of man closes the avenues of benevolence, seals up the fountain of human sympathy, and destroys the tenure of social life. When the moral principle is thus contaminated, the intellect is so debased, that the talent with which it is endowed is employed in objects mean and pernicious. The most talented infidels whose histories are recorded, present nothing better than a dark picture of degradation. When infidelity was predominant in France, the moral character of the nation was prostrated to a lamentable extent: the sceptical and obscene publications produced by infidel writers in that country were industriously circulated, producing a demoralizing influence far and wide.

Infidelity eclipses the brightest prospects of the present life; it casts a shadow over every object of temperal enjoyment, and closes the eyes against the evidences of Divine revelation which are manifest in the works of creation. The sublimity of the firmament produces no attractive influence upon the infidel mind: it excites no sentiments of reverence in his callous heart. He ascribes all order in nature to laws over which no agency presides, and regards the acts of a Divine providence as events of mere chance: his mind is established upon nothing adapted to improve or elevate him: his actions are governed only by the dictates of a scared

conscience, and the unrestrained passions of his depraved nature: he loves darkness rather than light, and becomes an easy victim of temptation and an instrument of death, so far as his influence extends. The religious theories of heathens and pagans are in some respects preferable to infidelity. With all the absurdities and superstitious ideas of which those systems of religion are composed, they involve the sentiments of dependence and obligation. This may account for the fact that in heathen lands those who adhere the most strongly to the ritual of heathenism receive christianity more readily than those who have no faith in the religion of the country.

But the *darkest* feature of infidelity is the fact that it rejects the reality of human existence beyond the present life, and consequently rejects all the means of preparation for the eternal future. Annihilation, is the hope of the infidel; upon this he stakes the destiny of his soul: he lives without hope and without God in the world, and gropes in the darkness of unbelief until the realities of eternity reveal to him his fearful doom.

Who would wish to die the death of the infidel? Sceptical sentiments have been insinuated into the minds of persons who have indulged in critical speculation upon the sacred writings. They have found in those writings some apparent discrepancies, some statements which they could not reconcile with other texts of scripture, and some events recorded too mysterious for them to explain. Our limited knowledge of the works and ways of the Almighty, and of the principles of interpretation is the principle cause of this difficulty. When human pride prompts man to criticise and pass sentence upon the Holy Scriptures it is no marvel if the mind is wrecked upon the treacherous rock of infidelity. To search the Scriptures with humility of spirit and sincere desire to understand the truth will prepare the mind for the reception of Divine teaching, and prove a powerful means of repelling the criticism of infidels. Divine truth has been tested by the severest ordeal, yet it remains unmoved. It contains the elements of light, life, and power, and will finally triumph over every species of error. "The word of God abideth forever."

AN unnatural noise which accompanied a recent exhibition of the Hydrogen Harmonicon in the Science Room speedily led to the conviction that it was an unsafe place for *Freshmen*. One of the class was eventually persuaded to relinquish his desperate effort to escape the anticipated calamities, by an assurance from the Professor of the non-aggressive and harmless character of the fancied projectile.

ed in favor either of the right or the wrong.

The most remarkable effect of the imagination is that which a person may produce upon his own mind. A man in intelligent circumstances may become so inundated with pictures of imagination, as not to think himself on the threshold of prosperity by a course which he has marked out, and yet neglect the means for attaining his object, and so continue deceiving himself until the close of his life.

Fanaticism is the result of an extravagant imagination. Religious fanatics have in many instances been treated with the greatest severity when they should have been regarded as objects of pity. Many persons have been trained to a superstitious habit of thinking, and this habit of the mind has become so permanent that almost any picture of the imagination may appear to such persons as a reality. We do not suppose that even those who have experienced the saving influence of Divine truth are entirely free from imaginary ideas upon the subject of religion. Hence we frequently meet with persons who very sincerely believe that some remarkable phenomena which floated in their imagination was a reality, and consequently regarded it as an essential part of their christian experience.

There are many persons who imagine themselves far more important than they really are, and hold themselves in very much higher estimation than they are held by others, consequently they are looked upon with that contempt which their assumed position is sure to excite.

The ghost stories which are reiterated by the ignorant and superstitious originate in the imagination, and so demage the mind that frightful spectres are almost continually haunting them.

Many weak-minded persons indulge in forebodings, and portray in their imaginations the most fearful events, and such as are the least likely to occur. They observe some of the most trivial occurrences, and construe them as omens of coming evil. Thus the dark pictures of their imaginations cast a gloom over the mind, and in many cases lead to insanity and utter despair.

In cases of extreme insanity, the power to control the imagination is entirely destroyed, consequently it runs at random to the greatest extremes. A person in such a state of mind may imagine himself in any conceivable position. He may imagine himself in imminent danger when no danger is near, or perfectly safe in the greatest danger. He may imagine his most faithful friends to be his real enemies, and plotting to take his life. He may imagine himself at the head of an army in the battle-field, or chief officer on board a war ship; a king upon a throne, or a prisoner in a dungeon.