

When this reckless spirit invades our moral reasonings, and sets the heart loose from all the claims of duty, and all the pleadings of conscience, how melancholy the result. What a wreck of every thing valuable in the hopes of man—what desolation on the shores of a limitless eternity. One master-mind has described the sad catastrophe, and another has traced it to its more awful consequences. "As I know not whence I came," says Pascal, personating a miserable sceptic, "so neither do I know whither I am going. I only know that, upon leaving this world, I fall for ever into a state of annihilation, or into the hands of an incensed God; without comprehending to which of these two states I am to look forward as my eternal heritage. Behold, then, my condition; replete with wretchedness, weakness, and obscurity! Nevertheless, upon the review of all this, I conclude that I have nothing to do but to pass my days without giving myself any concern about my future destiny." "But what," enquires Mr. Hall, "if it be lawful to indulge such a thought, what would be the funeral obsequies of a lost soul? Where shall we find the tears fit to be wept at such a spectacle,—or, could we realize the calamity in all its extent, what tokens of commiseration and concern would be deemed equal to the occasion? Would it suffice for the sun to veil his light, and the moon her brightness; to cover the ocean with mourning, and the heavens with sackcloth; or, were the whole fabric of nature to become animated and vocal, would it be possible for her to utter a groan too deep, or a cry too piercing, to express the magnitude and extent of such a catastrophe?"

From this comparison, which might have been much extended, between the two evils of credulity and scepticism, it will not be difficult to decide which is the more injurious to the

individual and to society. Every thinking and conscientious man will be desirous to be delivered from both extremes, and to "possess his soul in patience" as to what he admits and what he disbelieves. It is wise and important so to cultivate the mental powers as to leave the mind open to conviction; to enable it to discern the quality and weight of evidence, and to yield to its force; to receive nothing upon trust which is capable of proof, or where it can be obtained; and in every case to hesitate no longer than to determine on which side the evidence preponderates. Of the two, however, it appears that scepticism is far more dangerous and pernicious than credulity, with all its weakness and frivolity, and ought to be guarded against with the utmost care. Though it is probable that Pyrrho, the founder of the sceptical system in the schools of philosophy, foresaw not the absurd extent to which it would be carried, it is not reasonable to suppose that a system thus founded on doubt and clouded with uncertainty, could either teach tenets of any importance, or prescribe a certain rule of conduct; and accordingly we find that its followers were entirely guided by chance and feeling. Credulity may believe too much,—may imbibe many errors together with important truth,—may disquiet herself with unnecessary fears,—and sometimes deprive herself of permitted pleasures. Scepticism believes nothing, realizes nothing, enjoys nothing; equally destitute of fears that deter from vice, and of hopes that allure to virtue,—having no true enjoyment of the life that now is, and no promise of blessedness in the life that is to come. B.

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THE HEART.—In the worst of times there is still more cause to complain of an evil heart, than of an evil and corrupt world. Prov. xxx. 2.