

As the whole transaction at Beth-el was miraculous, we can easily conceive that God could communicate himself to the Patriarch in a dream, but surely we are not to be compelled to believe, even if our incredulity should endanger a beloved notion, that he repented of a life of prior iniquity in his sleep, that he experienced that godly sorrow for sin which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of while his faculties were locked in slumber, or entranced in heavenly vision, and that finally, he AWOKE JUSTIFIED!!

Without denying that men in particular cases may know the time when they first became the subjects of religious impressions, that they may specify with some degree of accuracy the time when by the grace of God, they "ceased to do evil and learned to do well," may we not deplore, as in the case above, that men for the sake of some darling theory, should press the word of God into their service at all hazards, "wrest it to their own destruction," and not only so, but endanger the salvation of those who hear them? How deplorable is it to see that Book which should be the bond of union turned by every teeming fancy into the very rallying point of division, and that which declares "*one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism*," forced in spite of truth and in spite of common sense, to support the baseless visions of every self-conceited enthusiast.—While Christians leave the "*Old Paths*," and fight and quarrel about new discoveries, and quote the Bible to prove that all before them, Apostles and Martyrs and all have walked in the road to hell; the infidel's hands by the while and smiles, and in the venom of these unholy animosities he dips his arrows and scatters among the mingled combatants indiscriminately desolation and death. If St. Paul was moved when he saw one city only given to idolatry, what Christian can avoid feeling intensely the same sensations when he sees almost the whole Christian world desolated by an evil more deadly than the superstition of others, where the idol worshipped is a new fangled system, the high priest,—self, and the sacrifice *peace, unity, and love* the very essentials of our holy religion.—And surely it is the duty of every humble and rational believer to expose, as he has opportunity, the presumption, and above all, the danger of moulding the Word of God to party and selfish ends, of teaching for sound doctrine what the apostles of Jesus never heard of, and by stirring up to groundless fears, and exciting to the more than useless research after the day and hour of conversion, of depriving sincere though weak believers of the consolations of religion.

If the perusal of the above imperfect strictures upon a very important subject should place only one individual more upon his guard when he hears the Scriptures boldly adduced as undoubted proof of party doctrines, and be instrumental in exciting but one "to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good," the Writer will deem himself abundantly rewarded.

AUDITOR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

Rev. Sir,

I was sorry to find by a paragraph in the 30th No. of the Sentinel, taken from the London Standard, that infidelity had again raised its demon head, and that it is now stalking through the land so openly, that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has felt itself called upon to make an appeal to all true Christians for contributions, to enable them to reprint large editions of books and tracts adapted to existing circumstances, in order to counteract these dreadful doctrines. From the contributions already received, (£1367 11s.) we see that the religious part of the community are not backward in advancing the "good cause," and it is to be hoped that these excellent publications, through the blessing of God, may be the means of stopping the mouth of the infidel and blasphemer.

It is really a matter of great surprise to me, how men who have the smallest pretensions to education and research, (if there are indeed any such among them) can be so ignorant of the writings of many of our best authors, as to deny, or even question what has been so ably discussed and clearly proved over and over again, by the first men of the age—I mean the authenticity of the Holy scriptures.

In fact, from a candid consideration of the character and habits of very many who profess unbelief and call themselves free-thinkers, the greater number will probably be found to have deceived themselves, or to be acting a part to deceive others. Their characters are a compound of licentiousness, ignorance and vanity; they are quite profligate enough to wish to be infidels, too ignorant however to be so from conviction, and nevertheless sufficiently vain to wish to appear to be unbelievers, because they think a profession of unbelief supposes an understanding above the common level. The doubts of these men are those of licentiousness, not of unbelief; it is their licentiousness which first caused their doubts, and not their doubts that gave rise to their licentiousness, it is to their passions and not to their doubts, that they are in bondage: they attack religion because its awful truths stand opposed to their vicious indulgencies: they have neither investigated the alleged difficulties, nor the strong and satisfactory proofs of religion: in fact they hate it, for how is it possible for them to love their own condemnation?

In order to check the rise and progress of such a class of men, we ought to shun and despise them; by that means they will be deprived of the deplorable glory after which they seek; from the moment they are despised and avoided, unbelief will be more rare among us, and the same vanity which prompts them to avow their scepticism, will soon induce them to conceal it, when impiety shall meet with the disgrace which it merits.

As to the writings of those men, who have endeavored to overturn the foundation of our faith, and who deny salvation, and the promises made to our forefathers—they have all been ably answered and refuted; the numerous objections* contained in them against Christianity removed, and the contradictory doctrines† proposed by the most eminent opposers of revelation in order to evade the reception of the Scriptures as a standard of belief "pointed out." The absurdity of their notions is well exposed in the following compendium executed by the author of the "Connaisseur" (one of those numerous collections of periodical essays, which reflect so much honor on British literature); who has thrown together a few of the principal tenets held by free-thinkers under the title of

"The Unbelievers Creed."

"I believe that there is no God, but that matter is God, and God is matter; and that it is no matter whether there is a God or no."

"I believe that the world was not made; that the world made itself; and that it had no beginning; that it will last for ever, world without end."

"I believe that man is a beast; that the soul is the body, and that the body is the soul; and that after death there is neither body nor soul."

"I believe that there is no religion: that natural religion is the only religion, and that all religion is unnatural."

"I believe not in Moses; I believe in the First Philosophy; I

* The late excellent Bishop Horne, upwards of forty years ago, when speaking of the disingenuity of infidels in bringing forward objections against the Scriptures has the following remarks:—"Many and painful are the researches usually necessary to be made, for settling points of this kind. Pertinence and ignorance may ask a question in three lines, which will cost learning and ingenuity thirty pages to answer. When this is done, the same question shall be triumphantly asked again the next year, as if nothing had ever been written upon the subject. And as people in general, for one reason or other like short objections better than long answers, in this mode of disputation (if it can be styled such) the odds must ever be against us: and we must be content with those of our friends, who have honesty and erudition, candour and patience to study both sides of the question."—*Letters on Infidelity*, page 82.

† A work has lately appeared entitled "Difficulties of Infidelity" by G. S. Faber, D.D. The learned author has therein most forcibly pointed out the difficulties and contradictions of that system, and clearly proved that they far exceed the alleged difficulties attendant upon Christianity. "Hence," says he, "results this plain and self-evident conclusion, that since Infidelity is encumbered by more and greater difficulties, than Christianity, to adopt the Infidel system evinces more credulity than to adopt the Christian system."—I would strongly recommend this work to all young men.