

But what can the unbeliever himself expect to gain by its destruction? "I have nothing to do with consequences," may be his reply, "but with truth only; let every lie be tested and exposed, whatever may be the real or imaginary gain or loss to myself or others." Brave words! with which we have the deepest sympathy; for if they are the utterance of a truly sincere heart, they evidence belief and not unbelief; they assume that there is an order and government in the universe, which is on the side of truth, and that we may therefore, at all hazards, discover what is true, and cling to it in the full assurance of faith, that ultimately the right and true are in harmony with all that is worth loving and worth living for. Amen! we say from our heart. At the same time, it is well to look at some of the consequences which the destruction of Christianity would involve, even to him who destroys it. It is obvious, for example, that should it cease to exist to us as a reality, other realities would remain irrespective of our belief. Existence would remain, and it *may* be one as eternal as the life of God; sorrow and suffering would remain, in all their endless forms, to gnaw the heart, darken the world, and cast deep shadows over a life, which must end with that event death, and the passing away of ourselves and of all we have from the memories of mankind, as if we had never been; and whither? Worst of all, *sin* must remain—dark, mysterious, and terrible! And "obstinate questionings" must remain to disturb and perplex the mind in moments of earnest and silent thought. Men will still ask. What if we are responsible to God for this whole inner and outer life of ours, with its beliefs, purposes, and actions? What if sin and its consequences continue beyond the grave, with no remedy there unless found here? What if there is no possible happiness but in fellowship of spirit and character with God; and what if this is morally impossible for us to attain without a Saviour and Sanctifier? What, in short, if all the evils which Christianity professes to deliver us from remain as facts in our history, just as diseases remain, though the aid of the physician, who reveals their nature, and who offers to cure them, is rejected? or, as a vessel remains a wreck in the midst of the breakers after the life-boat which comes to save the crew is

dismissed? or, as the lion remains after the telescope is flung aside which revealed his coming, and revealed also the only place of safety from his attack? For let us but remember what is so obviously true, that Christianity does not create the evils and dangers from which it offers to deliver us, and that these must remain as facts should it be proved a fiction. So far, then, the infidel has gained nothing by the overthrow of our religion. "Except truth!" does he exclaim? Yet we again repeat it, truth in its negative form, only as destroying supposed falsehoods, but not in its positive form as establishing something to rest upon.

Is there any other conceivable gain then which would accrue to the unbeliever by his supposed success? Does he wish, for example, to relieve oppressed souls of some great burden which crushes them? But what alleged truths or doctrine of Christianity, if blotted out to-morrow from the circle of belief, would ease a single soul, while it would unquestionably be an irreparable loss to millions? Would a God be more acceptable, and appear with greater moral beauty, who was different from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Would he be more attractive to our hearts if he did not forgive our sins fully and freely, or if forgiveness was not offered through such divine self-sacrifice? Would it be a relief to our moral being to be freed from the privilege or duty of supremely loving Jesus Christ? Would it lighten our hearts to be freed from the burden of having communion with him in prayer? Would we have more security for light, life, strength, holiness, peace, or comfort, if there was no such Person revealed as the Spirit of God, who freely imparts his aid to all? Would it be glad tidings to hear that men were not to be born again, nor to repent, nor to deny themselves, nor to do God's will, but their own? What is there which a good man would gain by the destruction of the Christian religion?

We have one question more to suggest with reference to the duty of an unbeliever towards us as Christians, and it is this. Why should he disturb our faith, or as he might term it, our superstition? If he resorts by asking why we should disturb his unbelief, our answer is ready—because we wish, with our whole soul, to share with him the blessings which God our common