

(says Sir Philip Sidney) who hold themselves contented with the knowing of untruth, without seeking after the truth; and with the mockery of superstitions, without seeking the pure and true religion." Thus do infidels trifle still. They endeavour to shake all testimony, to darken reason, to discredit revelation, to blot out the hope of immortality, and banish the deity from his own creation. "Eternal God," exclaims the eloquent Robert Hall, "on what are thine enemies intent? What are those enterprizes of guilt and horror, that, for the safety of their performers, require to be enveloped in a darkness which the eye of heaven must not pierce? Miserable men!—proud of being the offspring of chance,—in love with universal disorder, whose happiness is involved in the belief of there being no witness to their designs, and who are at ease only because they suppose themselves inhabitants of a forsaken and fatherless world!"

From a state of mind so unfavourable to the investigation of truth, some have been happily recovered; and their confessions, after the change, have clearly shewn the origin of their infidelity. The notorious Earl of Rochester confessed to Bishop Burnet that his licentious practices prepared and disposed him to embrace infidel principles; and that even when disputing against the being of a God, to please his dissolute companions, his conscience would often revolt against his practice. Of the Bishop's Life of this nobleman, a monument of converting grace, Dr. Johnson affirmed that "the critic ought to read it for its elegance, the philosopher for its arguments, and the saint for its piety."

Count Struensee, once a determined infidel, afterwards a humble Christian, ingenuously owns—"My unbelief and aversion to religion were founded neither upon an accurate

inquiry into its truth, nor upon a critical examination of those doubts which are generally brought against it. They arose, as is usual in such cases, from a very general and superficial knowledge of religion on one side, and much inclination to disobey on the other, together with a readiness to entertain any objection which I discovered against it." This is the true secret of all pretended rejections of the truth upon conviction: "infidels are against the Bible, because the Bible is against them." Another instance in point is that given by Mr. Cecil, who, in referring to that part of his life which was spent in dissipation, declares that while he felt that though company kept up his spirits, solitude shook his system to its base and rendered him wretched. He says, "When I was in the depths of infidelity, I was afraid to read any author who treated Christianity in a wise, dispassionate, and searching manner. He made me uneasy; conscience would gather strength. I found it more difficult to stifle her remonstrances." These are testimonies of inestimable value, as indicating the mental and moral process in the case of those who, having examined *both* sides of the question, and brought the opposing principles to the test of reason and experiment, are enabled to render a true account of the whole matter.

How heartless and discouraging is the morbid confession of Hume, the most subtle and ensnaring of modern unbelievers: "The intense view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason, has so wrought upon me and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another." What a brilliant light to dispel the obscurities of philosophical speculation! What a trust-worthy guide through the mazes of historical research!