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THE SCEPTIC UNREASONABLE

Infidels are heard to boast that they are wiser than the Bible, which they affirm they know to be untrue, and yet when interrogated they will candidly confess that they have never put its sacred truths to the test. Is it not reasonable to expect that they would "ask," "seek," and "knock," before they be heard to denounce the whole system of religion a fable and a deception?

Indeed, we well know that if they would but make the trial of the truth of God's word, they would at once confess that their boasted candor in opposition to the Bible were but mere pretences, held forth to conceal the reality of their enmity against God. Until they have tried this test, may not the terms fanaticism and delusion with far greater reason be used to designate their rejection than our belief of Christianity?

And even supposing the Bible to be false, we lose nothing by having brought it to this touchstone; for if the trial should foil it will only leave the unbeliever where he was before. On the other hand, if the Holy Scriptures be true, how immensely will he gain by the experiment! Instead of a few vague, ill-defined notions of God, he will then be able to say, "*I know in whom I have*

believed" (2 Tim. i. 12); "*This God is my God for ever*" (Ps. xlviii. 14). His short-lived participation of unholy mirth will be exchanged for a "joy with which no stranger intermeddleth" (Prov. xiv. 14); his cold and sullen fortitude, for a peace which the world can neither give nor take away; his comfortless prospects of annihilation, or something uncertain, for a hope full of immortality.

And this is the only fair test by which the Bible can be tried; for if it be true its author is God; and there is between our mind and his the most inconceivable distance. We are therefore to expect that many things will appear to his infinitely comprehensive understanding in a light totally different from that by which they are viewed by our limited reason. To use the very words of the Bible itself, it is possible that "God's ways may not be as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts" (Is. lv. 8). If then his book should turn out somewhat different from the bible the sceptic would have written we cannot see that this is a sufficient reason for rejecting it, for we are infinitely less capable of judging of what ought or ought not to be the mind of God than