

ever pray? After some hesitation, his countenance at the same time betraying the emotions within, he answered, "No, I do not pray." Then I think reason must decide that that religion which leads the soul to God must be right, while that which leads it away from the Source of all good must certainly be wrong.

I placed in his hands Faber's *Difficulties of Infidelity*, Leslie's *Short Method with the Deists*, &c. Paley's *Evidences of a Divine Revelation* he told me he had read. But, after all that had passed between us, the details of which, if written out, would fill a large volume, he still remained inflexibly firm. He appeared to be as immovable as the man who had placed his foundation upon a rock.

Believing further discussion unprofitable, I told him it must be left to affliction and death to test the truth and value of our respective principles; and here we ceased to agitate the question. In the meantime, a disease with which he had been afflicted increased, and finally assumed the consumptive form. He was constrained to relinquish business, and was soon entirely confined to the house. During his confinement I called several times to see him, inquired after his health, and conversed with him respecting every thing else than that which held the deepest place in my heart. From a few hints which he inadvertently dropped in the course of these conversations, I perceived that his views were unchanged. As the spring advanced, the disease made alarming strides, he was thrown on the bed, and all hope of recovery was given up. He had been one week in this situation when I called on him. On entering the room I readily perceived that the hand of the last enemy was upon him, and taking my seat by the side of his bed, I affectionately inquired how he was. Said he, "I am fast sinking; it is impossible that I should recover; but I am resigned to my fate, or to the disposal of the great God of nature." I observed that resignation was good under such circumstances, if it were well founded; but in order to have any thing valuable in it, it must rest upon some sure foundation. A resignation founded upon the word of God, the hopes and promises of the Gospel, must surely be good for a dying man; but if you cast away the Bible, your resignation rests upon nothing but your own carnal reasonings or vain imaginations. "Every man has his own opinion," said he; "the Mahomedan has his opinion, the Jew has his, you have yours, and I have mine." That may be, I replied, but still it does not make all our opinions equally wise or safe. As these opinions are contrary to each other, some of them must be wrong; and now, if yours are right, David, all the rest of us are just as safe as you are; but if yours are wrong, O! how awful the thought! What a mighty difference death must make between you and us! "Hush! hush!" he exclaimed with vehemence, averting his face to the opposite side of the room, his whole system at the same time becoming greatly agitated. His anxious mother, agonizing for the salvation of her son, cried, David! David! why will you do so? Turning again, he replied to his mother, "What else can I say? I am too weak to listen to such things now." Waiting until his feelings had in some measure subsided, I said, David, this is not weakness, it is conscience; I have

often seen Christians much weaker than you are, converse for a whole hour upon the promises and the hopes of the Gospel; I have seen them contemplate with delight the glory hereafter to be revealed: but you seem to be easily disturbed; you appear to have but little confidence in your own system: it does not bring you any comfort in the prospect of death. "Trouble me no more," said he; "you could not convince me when I was well, it is in vain to think of doing it now I am sick; do not come here to disturb a dying man; let me die in peace." I told him I had not come to argue, I had come to preach Christ, and him crucified, the only way of life, the only hope of a resurrection from the dead and eternal blessedness beyond the grave. I have not come because I am desirous of giving you pain; I came to seek your eternal good. I never have felt any thing but kindness towards you; in all our arguments you never saw me manifest any other feeling. "That is so," said he, "I never did." And now, David, with regard to your dying in peace, that cannot be. For you to die in peace, as you now are, is utterly impossible. There can be no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. "You ought to have charity," said he, with emotion; "it is a poor religion that does not produce charity." I would most gladly have charity for you if I could, I would; but I cannot have it; my Bible will not permit me to do it; my Bible declares, he that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned. "That is hard," said he. I continued my discourse, applying to him, I would take great pleasure in administering comfort, if it were in my power so to do; but I know of no way in which a minister of Christ can comfort a dying man but by presenting the consolations of the Gospel. These, David, you have cast away—you have cast away the Saviour, and trampled the blood of the covenant beneath your feet. How can I comfort you? Strong as is my desire to do so, you place it entirely beyond my power to offer you one drop of consolation. "I hope then," said he, "you will not distress me." Perceiving his feelings much agitated, I desisted. After pausing until he was somewhat composed again, I said, David, shall I pray with you? He hesitated for a moment, and then answered, "No. The great God of nature cannot be changed by man's prayers. He is immutable." Nevertheless, said I, he has declared himself to be the hearer of prayer and the rewarder of those who diligently seek him. He has said, they that seek shall find—they that ask shall receive—and unto them that knock it shall be opened. "You may think so," said he, "but I think otherwise." After another considerable pause, in which not a word was spoken by any person in the room, nor any thing heard but the sighs occasioned by a mother's and a sister's anguish, I said to him, David, I must now take my leave of you. But shall I ever come to see you again? He looked earnestly in my face, and with an expression of kindness, he slowly said, "If you will come and see me as a friend." Then do you not wish to see me as a minister of the Gospel? He answered distinctly, "No." But seeing I sustain that office, I replied, I cannot reconcile it with my sense of duty to visit a dying man without presenting the only hope God hath provided