

dred years infidels have been using against the Bible. Over these he pored by night and by day; he knew which were strong and which were weak. Indeed it is rare to find a Christian more thoughtful, or one who studies his Bible with so much care as he studied the arguments and objections which infidels have brought against it.

How long since he embraced these sentiments we are unable to say. Some time since, passing from his father's house after conversing with the family, I perceived him standing at a little distance by himself, and stepping aside, addressed a few words to him on the subject of religion. He immediately replied that his views on that subject were very different from mine. As time and circumstances did not then admit of discussion, and knowing his vigorous powers and unyielding nature too well to believe that he would surrender his opinions without an effort, I requested an interview with him at some future day. To this he assented. Having an errand soon after to the mill, I found him alone, and then, with no other ear to hear than the ear of Jehovah himself, and no other eye upon us than that which searches the heart, our discussions commenced. These were continued in the same place from time to time for several months, until we had travelled, step by step, over the whole system of infidelity.

Hume's argument, alleging that miracles were not susceptible of proof, he seemed to regard as his strong hold. After I had thought its philosophical soundness, even if its philosophical soundness, even if its philosophical soundness had been clearly exposed, he would still cling to it with a pertinacity plainly showing it to be his favourite. At one time, whilst engaged in the discussion of the external evidences of divinity, he was so marked with energy that he would not let the Bible to be the inspired word of God even if there were external evidence sufficient to sustain it. Why not? I inquired. "The matters contained in it, and recorded as facts," he replied, "are so unreasonable, so inconsistent, so foolish, and so much at issue with all our ideas of truth and propriety, that no man unblinded by superstition or prejudice can possibly believe them." What are these facts? I asked; will you name some of them? He mentioned several, but soon fastened upon the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, showing by his comments that he viewed it as the most extravagant of them all. I replied that it was a fact as well attested as any other fact in history, and although there was something unusual in the occurrence, there was certainly nothing unreasonable. As you acknowledge God to be the creator of the human soul, there can be nothing unreasonable in saying that he has power to renew or change that which he had power to form. If he fashioned it once, he must surely have power to fashion it again, or turn it whithersoever he will. Here he reverted immediately to the doctrines of Hume, saying that such a conversion must be a miracle, and that miracles were not susceptible of human proof.

In one of those excursions I was frequently making to the mill, the weather was extremely boisterous; the roads were filled with mud, and ice, and snow; a blackening train of crows were beating in the adverse

winds above, whilst endeavouring to make their way from the adjacent island to the main; every thing around was calculated to fill the mind with gloom. When I arrived, I said to my young friend, with a serious air, I was thinking, as I came along, what a gloomy world this is! It appears to be so full of difficulty and trouble, I had concluded that if your views were correct, it would be much better for us to administer to each other a portion of some fatal drug that would lay us asleep for ever; it will only be a sleep, you say, and why not sleep at once? After we have struggled through difficulty and sorrow for years, you tell us it will only be a sleep at last; if so, I can see no reason for continuing the struggle any longer. When he recovered from the first emotions of surprise, he replied, "We must take the bitter with the sweet." But the sweet is of short duration, the bitter seems to constitute by far the largest portion of the cup, I continued. Seeing to what conclusion it must inevitably come, he adroitly returned the question, saying, "Will you please to tell me first what sustains you?" Hope, I immediately replied—the hope of blessedness to come sustains us; but you have no hope, you are constantly looking into the earth as the end of your being; on your principles you can hope for no higher destiny than that which pertains to the mere animal creation; but we think our present afflictions are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed. At another time I asked him what advantage the world would gain, should these principles be universally embraced. They produce no hope, but take away many wholesome restraints. Taking away the Bible would be lifting the flood-gates of vice. "I know it," said he; "the world is not yet sufficiently philosophical to endure the change." Unless, said I, the fountain of vice in the heart is dried up by the operations of that Eternal Spirit whom the Bible reveals, I fear these days of philosophical liberty can never arrive.

On another occasion, whilst deeply occupied upon this all-absorbing subject, I asked him if infidels ever prayed. He said "he thought not; he never knew one that did, nor had he ever heard of an instance." Are infidels, then, independent of their Maker? He replied—No! Is it not then unreasonable, is it not contrary to the common sense of mankind, that dependent creatures should never thank that Being on whom they always depend? What would you say to see a poor suffering fellow-creature by the wayside, ready to perish, and a man of wealth and benevolence passing by, touched with compassion, kindly supplying his wants,—what would you say to see him receive the gift, and turn away with dumb sullenness from the giver? "I would say he was ungrateful, he ought to thank his benefactor," he replied. What would the common sense of mankind say? "It would say so too. But," continued he, "the case is not parallel; our thanks can add nothing to the glory of the Almighty, he is so far above us." Neither could the thanks of the miserable being add any thing to the wealth or respectability of his kind benefactor. But what is duty? And now, David, I wish to ask you a particular question, and I know your integrity too well to believe you will deceive me in the answer. Do you

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