

print of purity and holiness upon his mind, and their accompaniments of truth and justice upon his character.

The tincture of infidelity goes further with the generality of mankind than the essence of bible truth. Why is this? If man is a religious being, why does he reject biblical literature more readily than skeptical? The reason is easily understood, because it is found by taking an irresponsible view of self. While man is a worshipper, he finds within a tendency that leads him to the adoration of a God of his own creation rather than the one whose character is set forth in divine revelation. In fact, man finds within an indisposition to accept revelation at all, and also all other evidence which he cannot explain or understand. Thus Hume argues against miracles. Born a skeptic he seeks for a human explanation of the divine. But even his mental power could not fathom the mysteries of divinity; he therefore sought security behind the curtain of skepticism, and made it known by his "Essay on Miracles." He argues less against the possibility of a miracle than against the probability of the testimony. Men are so easily duped, he says, that their accounts at the end of two thousand years are not to be accepted. He therefore impeaches the witness; accepts the dictates of a depraved soul, and gives to the world the result of his speculations. Hume was, indeed, a learned man. He was in search of truth and meant no harm.

But who can compute the influence of such a work? Men grasp after and accept such ideas. A few search for themselves, but the multitude accept their opinions.

Some argue that skeptical literature stimulates inquiry, and is therefore beneficial. We think, however, that this stimulus, if such it can be called, tends to controversy for the sake of itself, rather than for the discovery of truth.

Among the lower classes are many who accept such opinions almost without question. If they attempt an investigation

they only go far enough to lose themselves in confusion. The cultured and the learned are not urged to inquiry by the attack of some infidel writer, but by the force of an investigating mind, augmented by the training and culture of years of study. Thus armed, the search is broad and deep, and is not to undermine a long established system of religion, but to find the truth.

Who will hold that the scientists of any department are urged on by the suggestions of the infidel? It would do violence to the memory of Newton to say it of him; it would be a foul blot upon the record of Agassiz or Dana. We do not deny that some good may accrue from skeptical writings; but the evil so far preponderates, that the good intentions of the writer are seldom or never realized.

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III

Skeptical writers have indeed assailed Christianity with all the force which extensive research, profound logic and subtle discrimination can furnish. Yet their attacks, so far from destroying, or even seriously weakening, that belief, have usually given it new strength. This result, though at first sight paradoxical, is true of every attack upon a well-founded principle. Any human creed or theory must indeed rest upon a sandy foundation, when the investigations of the doubter can overthrow it, or even effect upon it any material impression. If false, it must eventually be undermined; if true, it will be established upon a stronger foundation, because investigation will make it better understood. That such is the legitimate result is evident, even though the history of creeds presents many instances of illogical, and at the same time successful, resistance to the iconoclast.

Let us see how our proposition applies in respect to Christianity. The skeptic has labored to disprove the principles of this belief, and in this way to overthrow the whole fabric. Yet he cannot but ad-