

Christianity Vindicated,

IN THE

ADMIRABLE SPEECH

OF

THE HON. THO. ERSKINE,

IN THE

TRIAL OF J. WILLIAMS,

FOR PUBLISHING

PAINÉ'S "*Age of Reason.*"

24TH JUNE, 1797.

FROM THE TWELFTH LONDON EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY J. CAREY, No. 83, N. SECOND-STREET,
FOR
G. DOUGLAS, No. 2, SOUTH THIRD-STREET.

1797.

* * Often has the Public had occasion to applaud Mr. Erskine's efforts in the cause of LIBERTY and PAINÉ, when Paine was the friend of Liberty and Good Order—now that he has become the enemy of Revelation, and has tarnished his fame by an infamous apostacy, Mr. Erskine is no longer his advocate, and brings his unrival'd talents in support of CHRISTIANITY—The sincere Religionist, the pure Moralist, and the good Citizen, will rejoice to see this great Orator siding with the cause of RELIGION, and, with all the powers of a deep judgment, a refined imagination, and an irresistible eloquence, successfully stemming the mischievous torrent of Error, Impiety, and Infidelity.

COURT OF KING'S BENCH,

WESTMINSTER, JULY 24, 1797.

BEFORE LORD KENYON AND A SPECIAL JURY,

The KING v. WILLIAMS,

FOR PUBLISHING PAINE'S AGE OF REASON.

(ON THE PART OF THE PROSECUTION.)

MR. ERSKINE'S SPEECH.

“ GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY,

“ **T**HE charge of Blasphemy, which is put upon the record against the printer of this publication, is not an accusation of the servants of the Crown,* but comes before you sanctioned by the oaths of a Grand Jury of the Country. It stood for trial upon a former day; but it happening, as it frequently does, without any imputation to the Gentlemen named in the pannel, that a sufficient number did not appear to constitute a full Special Jury, I thought it my duty to withdraw the cause from trial, till I could have the opportunity which is now open to me of addressing myself to you, who were originally appointed to try it. I pursued this course, however, from no jealousy of the Common Juries, appointed by the laws for the ordinary service of the Court, since my whole life has been one continued experience of their virtues; but because I thought it of great importance, that those, who were to decide upon a cause so very momentous to the public, should have the highest possible qualifications for the decision. That they should not only be men capable, from their education, of forming an enlightened judgment, but that their situations should be such as to bring them within the full view of their enlightened Country, to which, in character and in estimation, they were in their own turns to be responsible.

* The prosecution was promoted by the “ Society for the discouraging of Vice, and the promoting of Virtue”—A similar institution has lately been set on foot in Dublin.—*Quere.* Would such a Society be useful in Philadelphia?—
AM. EDITOR.

