

And the
great (M. de)

HUGO GROTIUS.

ON THE

Truth of Christianity;

IN SIX BOOKS:

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.

BY THE REV. SPENCER MADAN, A. M.
RECTOR OF ST. PHILIP'S, BIRMINGHAM.

“ Look into a Book so common that almost every Body has it,
“ and so excellent that no Person ought to be without it ---
“ GROTIUS ON THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN
“ RELIGION.”

WATSON'S APOLOGY FOR THE BIBLE... LETTER 3.

BIRMINGHAM:

RE-PRINTED BY E. PIERCY, IN BULL-STREET. 1797.



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T H E P R E F A C E.

A CHEAP edition of Bishop Watson's Apology for the Bible has been for some time in general circulation :—In that work, the Bishop of Llandaff has so ably refuted the shallow and profane writings of Thomas Paine against the Truth and Authenticity of the Bible, and has so fully exposed his ignorant and blasphemous attempts against the vitals of all religion, that it is the duty of every man to peruse the book attentively, as he values the character and the hope of a Christian! The language is plain, and the arguments are conclusive; so that all ranks of men may “read and understand;” “with the heart believing unto righteousness, and with the mouth making confession unto salvation.” (*Romans* x. 10.)

But it is superfluous (if not impertinent) to state my sentiments more fully upon the merits of that performance.—I have named it (and who can name it without a note of admiration!) because the Bishop's observations and testimony in favour of my author, and his Lordship's example in the mode of publication, have induced me to offer this treatise in its present form, to the notice of my Townsmen in particular, and of my Countrymen at large.

It seems proper to premise, that when first I endeavoured to prepare myself for the sacred office of a Christian Minister, it was my instructive employ-

ment to translate into English the following Treatise of Hugo Grotius on the Truth of Christianity.

The easy nature of my task made me not apprehensive of any unfavourable construction of my motives, in publishing this translation* fifteen years ago: and I am willing to believe, that my present time of life will secure me still more from the imputation of self-conceit, or of the slightest pretensions to literary fame, in the step which I now take. Indeed, it seems ridiculous to deprecate a charge of this nature upon the present occasion. But however trivial and secondary my office may appear, the merits of the *original* are eminently great. Now, it is my duty, and my wish, to communicate to others the conviction which I feel myself, from the following short treatise, upon that highest object of all human inquiry, the Truth of Christianity; and, therefore, it seems adviseable, that the public attention should, *by any means*, be drawn to a perusal of this work. The times more especially require it:--Times, in which the principles of barbarous anarchy, and of mad infidelity would equally deprive us of all present comfort, and all future bliss! Hence the more particular obligation, the more urgent necessity, of counteracting that poison which is infused with wicked industry, and cruel artifice, into every vein of the public body, by circulating through the same channels those valuable antidotes, which contain the most wholesome and efficacious evidence of the Christian Faith! In the present small treatise, that evidence amounts to demonstration; and if my

* The Translator having been assured that a second edition, in type and paper like the former, would be acceptable to several individuals, intends shortly to prepare it for the press, with a translation of the two supplementary books by Le Clerc, and with occasional notes.

situation in this large and important place, and my more immediate connexion with a populous and respectable part of it, should happily promote its local circulation, the consequences, I should hope, must be beneficial to many in settling and securing their religious principles. It is natural, and it is right, that those principles should stand or fall as the Authenticity of the Bible, and the Truth of Revelation, shall be established or overthrown. This, then, is a point of unspeakable importance to every soul of man; to the poorest, as much as to the richest members of every Church and Nation in the Christian World!

Now a sober and dispassionate perusal of this single book may be justly expected to satisfy every honest and ingenuous mind; to fix the wavering, and confirm the faithful: and should I thus become the means of transmitting consolation or conviction to any individual, whose thoughts may have been distressed or disturbed by the specious reasonings of a false philosophy, or by the infamous assertions of a blind unbelief, my endeavours will receive their happiest recompense!—Wretched reasoners, indeed, are they, who can seek to cheat us of our main support—To shake our confidence in that rock of ages, Jesus Christ, the righteous!—Wretched cavillers, indeed, are they, who can doubt or deny the Foundation of our Faith!

The Holy Scriptures have been scrutinized and sifted to the bottom: they have stood the test of ages—They have undergone (as it was fit) the most minute inquiry by enemies as well as friends—by men of the highest character in point of station, abilities, and learning, at different periods and in distant nations—The fear of God, and the faith of Christ, have greatly surmounted the most violent af-

faults: they have hitherto prevailed against "the gates of hell." — Christianity subsisted during the three first centuries not only without the protection of the civil government, but in direct opposition to the sword of power, wielded with exterminating fury; nay it became only the more rooted by those struggles which must have overthrown it, had it been "the counsel or the work of man!" (*Acts* v. 38.) It baffled all the wit, and strength, and malice, of its most cruel and inveterate persecutors; and has not only maintained but enlarged its influence, by means apparently unequal to its arduous contest with a wicked world for almost eighteen hundred years! Shall we *now* abandon the sacred cause! Shall we *now*, like Judas, betray our Master? Shall we brand the enlightened times in which we live, with the infamous mark of a general Apostasy disgraceful to the *darkest* ages?

The authority of the Scriptures will be seen to stand upon the most complete and conclusive evidence which any antient writings can possibly possess—The third book of the ensuing treatise, may alone convince any rational and impartial reader that the proofs of his own existence are not more satisfactory than those which establish the Authenticity of the Scriptures! So true is that "saying, and worthy of all men to be received that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." (*1. Tim.* i. 15.) If this be so, what is the immediate, the unavoidable inference? Shall we now suffer the "Enemy and the Blasphemer" to burn our very Bibles and to cancel all our hopes of *eternal Salvation*! To rob us of this highest consolation which our nature can enjoy! To deprive us of this *divine aid*, so powerful in all temporal calamities!—in sickness—in poverty—in sorrow! So enlivening in the gloomy

gloomy hour of distress and despondency---so cheering in the bitterness of pain---so grateful to the wounded spirit of repentant sinners---so animating in every conflict of our mortal state---every struggle of life---every pang of death!---What equivalent for this can the whole world offer us, when the frame of nature is sinking under us; when kingdoms vanish, and their glories fade!

Reflexions of this tendency will naturally arise (and their influence will give us the most seasonable aid) when our minds are endeavouring to attain their proper temper for the study of Religious Truths. Let me hope that my readers are thus seriously disposed, upon a subject of all others the *most serious and important!* They will then see, with just sentiments of alarm and abhorrence, the *Madness of Irreligion!* They will cherish that Faith “which overcometh the world”---They will keep constantly in view, they will lay earnestly to heart, that awful alternative which is given to us all by our blessed Lord himself: “whosoever shall *confess* me before men, him will I *confess* also before my Father which is in Heaven: but whosoever shall *deny* me before men, him will I *deny* also before my Father which is in Heaven!” (*Matthew* x. 32. See also *Luke* xii. 8.)

WE stand, at this moment, in a most interesting and conspicuous point of view, political and religious. As a Nation, we have long and gloriously displayed, to the envy and admiration of the whole world, the practical observance of those temperate, rational, and wise limits, which describe the

highest point of Freedom. As a Christian People, we are equally possessed of a still more glorious distinction;—the Temple of Religion in its purest and most reformed state.* To maintain, inviolate, these greatest blessings, against the secret contagion of a wicked example, and the open rage of an inveterate foe, will prove (under Providence) their *intrinsic excellence*, and the *infinite value* of those principles which happily still animate the national Character.—O that we may “bow our hearts, as the heart of one man” to realize these sacred objects of a just ambition! that we may indeed preserve, as a bright and glorious exception,—the unequalled system of our Civil and Religious Constitution, amidst the struggles and the shock of nations! That these eminent privileges of genuine Christianity, and of true liberty, which the piety and the patriotism of our ancestors so nobly rescued, in two former ages, from superstitious and despotic chains, may never be surrendered to the intrigues of treachery, nor to the violence of invasion.

So shall this crisis of general consternation and danger (if we also profit by it to prove our Faith by a practical amendment of our lives) serve only to enhance, nationally, our temporal honours, and to promote individually, our eternal happiness, finally evincing to the whole Christian world that “all things work together for good to them that love God!” (*Romans viii. 28.*)

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SPENCER MADAN.

Birmingham, February 13, 1797.

* Would to God that in this light also we could *practically* shew the perfection of our system! The foundation of our hope, would be then, indeed secure and joyful to our *temporal* and *eternal* advantage!

T H E
Truth of Christianity, &c.

TO THE MOST NOBLE AND MOST EXCELLENT

JEROME BIGNON,

THE KING'S ADVOCATE IN THE SUPREME COURT
OF AUDIENCE AT PARIS.

B O O K T H E F I R S T.

C H A P. I.

The occasion of the present work.

WHAT may be the purport of my writings, in behalf of Christianity, as they are delivered in my native language, is a question, Noble Sir, which you frequently propose to me; *you* who are a man entitled altogether to every honour which your country can confer, to every commendation which the cause of letters can bestow, and (suffer me to add) to every acknowledgment which my poor services can offer.—The question, I confess, I by no means wonder at from you; for a man of your extensive, or rather universal reading, assisted, at the same time, by the clearest judgement,

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