

THE
Evangelical Magazine,
FOR MAY, 1795.

BIOGRAPHY.

*MEMOIR of Mrs. MARY ENGLISH, late Wife of the
Rev. Thomas English, of Wooburn, Bucks.*

MRS. Mary English was the third daughter of William and Elizabeth Sneath, of Great Marlow, Bucks. Her father was an eminent surgeon and apothecary in that borough, and brought up his children in the established forms of religion. From early life, her disposition was mild, and her morals uncorrupted: At twelve years of age, she was not a little affected by the admonitions of an elder sister, who, on her death-bed, solemnly cautioned her against reading novels, and exhorted her to peruse the blessed Scriptures, which were calculated to make her wise to salvation.

Though she was at that time unacquainted with the Gospel, yet she seems by this providence to have been prepared for its reception. In the year 1774, Mr. Rowland Hill, who had excited in a great degree the public attention, being on a visit to Mr. Grove at Wooburn, Mrs. English, among others, was induced, from motives of curiosity, to hear him: He preached from John, ix. 35. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Under this discourse she was deeply impressed, and became an additional seal of the success of that eminent servant of Jesus Christ.

During the space of four years, she experienced those vicissitudes in her mental frame, which to Christians in general are subjects of great lamentation. But the sermons of Mr. English, who, in 1778, succeeded Mr. Grove, at Rotherham, were rendered peculiarly profitable in restoring to her soul the joys of salvation, the loss of which she had been for some time deplored.

urged to the highest sense of which they are capable, will, like those of Isaiah, serve for a description of the celestial glory. Dr. J. particularly excels in the views which he gives of the glorious state of the world, and of the church, when Satan shall be bound a thousand years: And his description is not the language of fancy, but derived from a careful examination of the meaning of the various figures and symbols employed by the Spirit of God.

[To be concluded in our next.]

An Examination of the Age of Reason, by Thomas Paine. By Gilbert Wakefield, B. A. late Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge. 8vo. Price 1s. 6d. Eaton.

We always regret when this department of our Magazine, which is necessarily much circumscribed, and consequently ought to be appropriated to the review of such publications only as may be deemed useful, is occupied in the examination of works of an unprofitable, and even of a pernicious tendency. Nothing could reconcile our minds to the painful task of reviewing upon these occasions, but the consideration, that our drudgery may, at least, save our readers the trouble of going over many pages, which, besides failing to requite their labours, may sometimes be productive of worse consequences.

The work now before us, like some of Mr. Wakefield's former treatises, we are sorry to say, is of this kind. And notwithstanding he intimates, in the exordium of his pamphlet, with a confidence, which would have appeared with a better grace had it been said for him than by him, that he "conceived himself not unlikely to serve the cause of revealed truth by an examination of a deistical pamphlet;" we cannot but consider him greatly unqualified for an office of this nature, having already shewn himself upon several occasions inimical to its best interests. His critique upon Mr. Paine's Age of Reason, therefore, is just what might be expected from a writer of his complexion. As far as the Deistical and Socinian creeds agree, we find the greatest harmony between them. In those few points where they differ, Mr. Wakefield animadverts upon his neighbour's sentiments.

We meet with a great profusion of compliments in the course of our author's *Examination* of Mr. Paine's performance. He calls it "the effusion of pregnant intellect, sobered by the meditation of a solitary prison." He says, that "it is replete with manly sense and dignified morality, conveyed in simple but energetic language;" and that, "the writings of Thomas Paine abound with indications of original conception and profound thought, of comprehension and sagacity far beyond the vigour of vulgar minds." But in the very moment of this lavish praise, with an inconsistency peculiar to our author, he deems "his statement frivolous and erroneous in the extreme," (page 10); "inaccurate, fallacious, and inconclusive," (page 13); his notions "impertinent, and unsuitable to the purpose in view;" "a mere inapplicable fragment of our author's be-

bewildered imagination," (page 14): And after a great variety of similar observations, he tells us, in the 47th page, that "he is so tired with examining into the inconsistencies and absurdities of Thomas Paine's effusion, that he hastens to the conclusion of it." In the 53d page, he adds, by way of finale, that, "in all that Mr. Paine has said on the subject, he discerns little more than a collection of ignorance, misconception, effrontery, and insipidity."

We hope, from this specimen of Mr. Wakefield's *Examination of the Age of Reason*, our readers will be able to form an accurate opinion of the merit of the work, and how undeserving such palpable contradictions are of their attention.

We cannot, however, dismiss this article without making a further observation on the impiety, in addition to those on the inconsistency, of the writer. Mr. Paine, in his *Age of Reason*, had dared to give scope to the fallies of a profligate and unprincipled mind, and in a vein of ridicule held up the miraculous circumstance of Jonah in the belly of the whale, as the subject of derision. Mr. Wakefield joins issue with Mr. Paine upon that event, and tells his readers, "that it is a story which his stomach feels an equal disposition to ingurgitate." But that he might not be wanting in his merriment on the sacredness of Scripture, he subjoins to Mr. Paine's account, a ludicrous tale of a little black ship-boy, which, with an effrontery unparalleled, he says, "many will think not inferior to that of Jonah, in symptoms of credibility." And this, readers, comes from a man who sets out to examine Mr. Paine's *Age of Reason* with the pretension of *serving the cause of revealed truth!*

The Age of Infidelity: In Answer to Thomas Paine's Age of Reason.
By a Layman. Price 1s. 6d. Button, London.

In defending the outworks of Revelation, the Layman takes his ground, where he may obtain a double aspect of the enemy; he opposes the evidences of Christianity to the virulent attacks of Mr. Paine, and shows the inefficacy of his arguments, and the impiety of his wit. For those of our readers, who have neither leisure nor opportunity for consulting the more elaborate writings of former polemics, which have fully refuted every attempt of infidelity to throw down the faith, this defence may be used with much advantage.

In his reply to Mr. P., we discern a considerable degree of acumen, conducted at the same time with great temper and Christian spirit. As a specimen of the Layman's style and manner of reasoning, we shall present our readers with his concluding paragraph, in which he sums up the argument:

"I shall take leave of the reader with observing from the close of the pamphlet before us, the sum total of all the discoveries of modern philosophy in religion,---namely, that by reducing all religion to one simple article, the belief of a God, it cuts off every

bewildered imagination," (page 14): And after a great variety of similar observations, he tells us, in the 47th page, that "he is so tired with examining into the inconsistencies and absurdities of Thomas Paine's effusion, that he hastens to the conclusion of it." In the 53d page, he adds, by way of finale, that, "in all that Mr. Paine has said on the subject, he discerns little more than a collection of ignorance, misconception, effrontery, and insipidity."

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improvement in divine knowledge from the days of Adam---throws us back into the darkest ages of Heathenism---levels us in this respect with the most illiterate barbarians; and all the comfort it leaves a good man as to futurity is, that 'the Power that gave us existence is able to continue it.' To such writers I would take up Job's parable and say, "*Miserable comforters are ye all, and physicians of no value.*"

The Paedobaptist Mode of administering the Baptismal Ordinance defended: Wherein the Author professes to consider, whether Dipping and Sprinkling are not the two constituent Acts of Baptizing on the Part of the Administrator. By William Miller. Price 2s. 6d. Odava, 140 Pages. Priestley, Matthews, and Chapman.

Our readers will recollect that in our Magazine for last July we made some remarks on Mr. Miller's Treatise, entitled, *Catholic Baptism.*

Many of his thoughts appeared to us quite original, and his arguments deserving considerable notice. Having left his system incomplete, by confining himself to the subjects of Baptism only, that performance is very properly succeeded by the present, in which the mode of administering the baptismal ordinance is largely stated and defended. The whole of the Baptist controversy hitherto, may be very properly considered as comprised in the writings of Dr. Williams and Mr. Booth. And as Mr. Miller's hypothesis in some respects differs from the sentiments espoused by each, his objections are chiefly levelled at the assertions of these celebrated authors.

His first inquiry is, "what constitutes Christian Baptism?" Whether or not it consists of one or more actions, precisely ascertained and determined in the New Testament, without leaving any thing to the will and discretion of the administrator. Dr. Williams, it seems, afferts, "that the proper sacramental import of the word *Baptism*, is exhausted by defining it, *a ceremonial and religious use of water*;" leaving it to the choice of the administrator to sprinkle, wash, or immerse the subject; each mode being, in his opinion, equally valid, though not equally convenient, and therefore may be varied according to circumstances. Mr. Booth, on the other hand, strenuously maintains, "that the manner of using water, when Baptism is administered, is not a mere circumstance, but *Baptism itself.*" To this Mr. Miller afferts, as being more conformable to the invariable precision of positive law, and sacred institutions recorded in the Old Testament. But when Mr. Booth attempts to limit the meaning of the term to *dipping*, Mr. Miller contends that in this he is egregiously mistaken. According to his own definition, the administration of Baptism is a *complex act*, which includes *dipping* and *sprinkling*, both performed by "the administrator, who, pursuant to a divine order, dips his hand, or something equivalent, into the water, and therewith sprinkles the subject of the ordinance."