

THE  
ANALYTICAL REVIEW,

OR  
HISTORY OF LITERATURE,  
DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN,

ON AN ENLARGED PLAN.

CONTAINING  
SCIENTIFIC ABSTRACTS OF IMPORTANT AND INTERESTING WORKS,  
PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH;

A GENERAL ACCOUNT OF SUCH AS ARE OF LESS CONSEQUENCE,  
WITH SHORT CHARACTERS;

AND  
NOTICES, OR REVIEWS, OF VALUABLE FOREIGN BOOKS;

ALSO THE  
LITERARY INTELLIGENCE OF EUROPE, &c.

“ At hæc omnia ita tractari præcipimus, ut non, Criticorum more, in laude et  
“ cenfura tempus teratur; fed plane *hiflorice* RES IPSÆ narrentur, iudicium  
“ *parcius* interponatur.” *BACON de hifloria literaria confcribenda.*

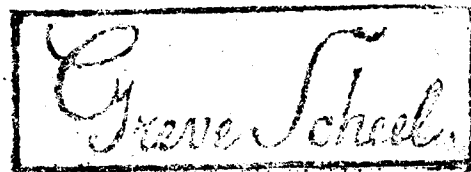
V O L. XIX.

FROM MAY TO AUGUST INCLUSIVE, 1794.

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M DCC XCIV.



Paneg. c. 1. Sueton. in Vit. August. 35. The administration of public and private worship was regulated by public authority. The functions of the pontifex maximus and his colleagues, which were continued through all the changes of the roman government, were of this kind. Liv. 1. 2. The prosperity of the nation was supposed to depend upon the precise discharge of it's instituted rites. Cic. Orat. de Harusp. Respon. On the whole, the just and evident conclusion is, that the ecclesiastical laws of Rome guarded the religion of the state by the severest prohibition against every kind of deviation from it's ancient ordinances. It was not the emperor and the proconsul, but the ancient and established laws of the land, that were oppressive and cruel to the devoted and innocuous converts in that province. In fact, Trajan ordained no new edict concerning them; and agreeably to that lenity which distinguished his government in every part of his extensive empire, he forbid Pliny to receive anonymous informations, or to molest them by official prosecutions. Benignity indeed was so eminently conspicuous among the more splendid qualities of his princely virtues, that it became an invariable custom during many subsequent centuries after his death, to add to the usual votive acclamations on the accession of a new emperor, *sis melior Trajano!* Eutrop. viii. 5.

Mr. M., on account of his age, declines entering into any further controversy on this subject: and concludes with a happy application of an ancient anecdote.

P. 34. Postscript.— Polemical writers are apt to carry on the debate with so much petulant intemperance, that the question seems ultimately to be, which of the disputants shall have the honour of the *last* word. The author of the present defence disclaims all ambition of that kind; and no *reply*, from whatever *hand* it may come, shall induce him to advance a step farther in the controversy. It was, indeed, with the utmost regret that he was *constrained*, by a very unprovoked attack, to enter into it; and he could not but consider himself, upon that occasion, as in circumstances in several respects similar to those of a certain veteran actor of ancient Rome \*, who having in his declining years retired from the theatre, and being compelled by Cæsar, in the last period of his days, to re-appear upon the stage, addressed the audience in a suitable prologue, which concludes with these elegant and very *apposite* lines:

*Ut hedera serpens vires arboræas necat,  
Ita me vetustas amplexu annorum enecat:  
Sepulchri similis nihil nisi nomen retineo.*

ART. X. *The Age of Reason, being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology.* By Thomas Paine, Secretary for Foreign Affairs to Congress in the American War, and Author of the Works entitled *Common Sense and Rights of Man, &c.* 8vo. 117 pages. Price 2s. 6d. Paris, Barrois. 1794.

MR. PAINE'S power of commanding public attention on important subjects has been more than once proved beyond all contradiction. When he gives the world his thoughts on religion, it is in vain to expect, that either contemptuous silence, or coercive prohibition, will

\* *Laberius.* Vid. *Macrob. Saturn.* ii. 7.

prevent the work from being read. The 'age of reason' is certainly so far advanced, that men will no longer ask leave of their rulers to think and inquire. Nor is it possible, that freedom of thought, and diligence of inquiry, whatever temporary inconvenience they may produce, should be in the issue injurious to mankind. Truth and good are one; and it must ever be the interest of the world at large to destroy the empire of error and prejudice. Nothing is therefore to be apprehended from giving Mr. Paine's objections to revelation a candid hearing. If his work contain any thing new it ought to be considered; and no judicious or consistent friend to christianity will shrink back from the discussion. If it contain nothing new, the refutation of his errors will be found in any of those able defences of revelation, which the learning and talents of former times have so abundantly supplied. We judge it to be a part of our duty to the public, and to the cause of truth, to give a report of the contents of Mr. P.'s work, with the same fidelity, with which we shall report the replies of his respondents.

The piece is written without much regard to method; but it's materials may all be reduced to two heads, the defence of natural religion, and objections to revelation.

With respect to natural religion, Mr. P. makes this formal declaration of his faith: 'I believe in one God, and no more: and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I believe the equality of man: and I believe that religious duty consists in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow creatures happy.' And afterwards

P. 116. 'I trouble not myself about the manner of future existence. I content myself with believing, even to positive conviction, that the power that gave me existence is able to continue it, in any form and manner he pleases, either with or without this body; and it appears more probable to me that I shall continue to exist hereafter, than that I should have had existence, as I now have, before that existence began.'

The only word of God which he acknowledges is the creation which we behold.

P. 47. 'The creation speaketh an universal language, independently of human speech or human language, multiplied and various as they be. It is an ever existing original, which every man can read. It cannot be forged; it cannot be counterfeited; it cannot be lost; it cannot be altered; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not; it publishes itself from one end of the earth to the other. It preaches to all nations and to all worlds; and this *word of God* reveals to man all that is necessary for man to know of God.

'Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of the creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful. In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the scripture, which any human hand might make, but the scripture called the creation.'

Mr.

Mr. P. great cause several ways a power of by exhibiting by teaching kind to escape from astriction of deity: filled with well adapted concerning considerable of which

On the the following origin; and the only 2. Revelation man. Singular, but revelation, account of mythology:

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'But the ascension t admits of, resurrection omitted of of a ball of thing which and evident public visit give sanctification because the ber of persons for the which are called

Mr. P. goes on to maintain the necessity of admitting a first intelligent cause of all things, and, in his energetic manner, to represent the several ways in which God has revealed himself to man, by giving him a power of discovering the immaterial and eternal principles of science, by exhibiting before him the magnificent structure of the universe, and by teaching them from the example of his munificence to all, to be kind to each other. The support which natural theology has derived from astronomical science is well represented; and the sublime notions of deity which arise from contemplating the immensity of space as filled with systems of worlds, are expressed in a familiar style, very well adapted to correct and enlarge the conceptions of the vulgar concerning the perfections and providence of the supreme Being. A considerable part of the tract is filled with illustrations of this subject, of which no friend to religion will disapprove.

On the subject of revelation Mr. P.'s arguments may be reduced to the following heads. 1. Every national religion pretends to a divine origin; every church professes to have a revelation or word of God; the only reasonable way of treating them, is to reject them all. 2. Revelation is something communicated *immediately* from God to man. Such supernatural communication may be made to one individual, but when he tells it to a second or third, it is to them not a revelation, but a hearsay, which they are not obliged to believe. 3. The account of the birth of Jesus is similar to many stories in the heathen mythology.

P. 10. Jesus Christ wrote no account of himself, of his birth, parentage, or any thing else. Not a line of what is called the New Testament is of his writing. The history of him is altogether the work of other people; and as to the account given of his resurrection and ascension, it was the necessary counterpart to the story of his birth. His historians, having brought him into the world in a supernatural manner, were obliged to take him out again in the same manner, or the first part of the story must have fallen to the ground.

The wretched contrivance with which this latter part is told, exceeds every thing that went before it. The first part, that of the miraculous conception, was not a thing that admitted of publicity; and therefore the tellers of this part of the story, had this advantage, that though they might not be credited, they could not be detected. They could not be expected to prove it, because it was not one of those things that admitted of proof, and it was impossible that the person of whom it was told could prove it himself.

But the resurrection of a dead person from the grave, and his ascension through the air, is a thing very different as to the evidence it admits of, to the invisible conception of a child in the womb. The resurrection and ascension, supposing them to have taken place, admitted of public and ocular demonstration, like that of the ascension of a balloon, or the sun at noon day, to all Jerusalem at least. A thing which every body is required to believe, requires that the proof and evidence of it should be equal to all, and universal; and as the public visibility of this last related act was the only evidence that could give sanction to the former part, the whole of it falls to the ground, because that evidence never was given. Instead of this, a small number of persons, not more than eight or nine, are introduced as proxies for the whole world, to say, they *saw it*, and all the rest of the world are called upon to believe it. But it appears that Thomas did not believe

