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FALSHOOD DETECTED:

BEING

ANIMADVERSIONS

ON

MR. PAINE'S LETTER

TO

THE HONORABLE THOMAS ERSKINE,

ON THE TRIAL OF

THOMAS WILLIAMS,

For publishing "The Age of Reason;"

WHEREIN

His Attacks upon the Bible are EXAMINED,

AND

Shewn to be founded in Misrepresentation and Falshood.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

By JOHN MARSOM.

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MR. HATCHARD, 173, PICCADILLY.

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TO THE READER.

ANY effort to serve the cause of christianity, and check the spread of infidelity, however small and inconsiderable, cannot be unacceptable to the serious and candid christian. The following observations for that purpose originated from the particular desire of a friend, to whom they were addressed in a letter, without the least intention of their being made public: but the manuscript having been shewn to some other friends, they requested it might be printed; offering at the same time to subscribe for a number of copies. In compliance with their request it is now submitted to the public.

The bold and unsupported assertions of deists, that the bible is unworthy of credit, on the one hand; and the sneer and ridicule, with which they treat those who pay a reverential respect to it on the other, have a tendency to affect the minds of weak and inconsiderate persons, especially the young and inexperienced, who are too easily laughed out of religion as
superstition

superstition and priestcraft, and who have not opportunity or ability to examine the evidences by which christianity is supported. Every possible endeavour therefore, should be made use of to inform the mind of such persons, and to guard them against that sophistry which deists employ to rob them of those principles which are the purest sources of consolation, and furnish the noblest motives to that piety and virtue, which are immediately connected with present usefulness and future felicity. If this little attempt should in any degree prove successful to this great end, or in any way serve the cause of truth, the author will deem himself amply rewarded by the consideration that his labour has not been entirely in vain.

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FALSHOOD DETECTED,

Ec. Ec. Ec.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

DEAR SIR,

I Have looked over Mr. PAINE's Letter to the Honorable THOMAS ERSKINE which you put into my hand, and cannot help expressing my astonishment that the weak, sophistical and unsupported attacks that are made in it upon the credit of the Bible, as the word of God, should have the least weight with any intelligent, thinking and ingenuous mind.

We acknowledge with Mr. Paine that "religious tyranny is the worst of all tyranny," but we deny that it has any countenance in what we call the word of God; every attempt at coercion in matters of *belief* is in its nature absurd and ridiculous, because it must be ineffectual: the *mind* being superior to, and incapable of subjection to it.

Mr.

Mr. Paine's Letter was occasioned by the Trial of Thomas Williams, on a charge of blasphemy, "*blasphemy*, (he says page 5) is a word of vast sound, "but of equivocal, and almost indefinite signification." This is not true, it always means *speaking evil* of some being or thing, and is rendered, Jude 9. *railing* accusation, and Matt. xxvii. 39, *reviling*; Mr. Paine himself admits that its original meaning was hurting, or injuring the reputation of any one, he therefore trifles with us when he says, page 6, "if "the Bible be not the word of God, it is the laws, "and the execution of them, that is *blasphemy*, AND "NOT THE DISBELIEF," because it would be the grossest ignorance to term *unbelief*, which is a withholding the assent of the mind, *blasphemy*. But our business is not at present with the trial of Williams, or the conduct of Mr. Erskine on that occasion, but with what Mr. Paine has advanced to discredit the bible.

"A book (he says, page 6) called the bible has been "voted by men and decreed by human laws to be the "word of God." By what evidence is this assertion supported? None at all. It is not true that the bible derived its authority from those sources; the doctrines it contains and the evidence that attended them of their divine original, when it was first promulgated, produced conviction in the hearts of men, in opposition both to the general prejudices, and all the legislative authority of the world; nor has the bible derived any advantage from the officious sanction which it has since received from human laws.

"Strange

“ Strange stories (he says, page 6) are told of the
 “ Creator in that book; he is represented as acting
 “ under the influence of every human passion.” To
 this it has been replied, * “ this, though verbally, is
 “ not logically true, the bible employs, and is forced
 “ to employ, certain expressions and representations,
 “ when speaking of God, which are immeasurably
 “ below the awful dignity of the subject: but it fre-
 “ quently reminds us that this is only speaking after
 “ the manner of men, in accommodation to human
 “ infirmity; and to guard us from entertaining any
 “ gross conception of God, *in consequence of such*
 “ *expressions*, it expressly states that, His ways are
 “ not as man’s ways, nor his thoughts as man’s
 “ thoughts.”

Mr. Paine says, † “ I will take the two first chap-
 “ ters of Genesis as they stand, and shew from thence
 “ the truth of what I say, that is, that the evidence
 “ does not warrant the belief, that the bible is the
 “ word of God.” He adds, page 9, “ these two
 “ chapters, instead of containing, as has been be-
 “ lieved, one continued account of the creation,
 “ written by Moses, contain two different and con-
 “ tradictory stories of a creation, made by two dif-
 “ ferent persons, and written in two different stiles of
 “ expression.”

These two accounts, he says, are not only different,
 but contradictory, and written by different persons.
 How does he make this appear? To shew that the two
 accounts are written by two different persons he al-
 ledges

* Monthly Review, March 1798.

† Page 6.

ledges that there is a difference in the stile. But what is this variation of stile? Simply this; that in the first, the writer uses the word *God* only, and in the other, he uses the words *Lord God*. But can any thinking man consider this such a variation of stile as will amount to a proof, that these chapters were written by different persons? Certainly not. The word *God* is expressive of power, and the writer might naturally add the word *Lord* or *Jehovah* in the second account as expressive of God having *finished* the work of creation; thus in another place he is said to have been known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the name of *God Almighty* but when he came to *fulfil* his promises made to them in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, he made himself known by the name *Jehovah*.

That these chapters contain two accounts is admitted, but that will not prove that they were not written by the same person. It is very common for persons to give a summary and general account of transactions and then to resume the account in order to enlarge on some particulars; which is evidently the case here. In the first account, Moses gives a concise history of the six days creation, in which God finished his work and rested the seventh day; in the second account, intending to enter into some particulars respecting the creation of man and to prosecute *his* history, to whom the whole bore some relation and for whose sake alone it was written, he resumes the subject, and calls back the attention of the reader to the *day* in which the Lord God created the earth, and the heavens, and the various fruits of the ground; and then he informs his reader that when these were created, *there was not a man to till the ground*; in order to introduce those particulars
 respecting

respecting his creation and subsequent history, which could not have been introduced in the former concise account without interruption and confusion, and what could be more natural in an historian than such a procedure?

But they are contradictory stories it seems, how is this made to appear? “ Why (says Mr. Paine) it is “ *impossible*, unless the writer was a *lunatic*, without “ *memory*, to relate the creation of man in the 27th “ and 28th verses of the first chapter, and afterwards “ to say in the 5th verse of the second, *there was “ not a man to till the ground*; and then to proceed in “ the 7th verse to give an account of the making of “ man for the first time, and afterwards of the making “ a woman out of his rib. Again, one and the same “ person could not say, thus the heavens and earth “ were finished, and all the host of them; and on the “ seventh day God ended all his works, which he had “ made; and immediately after set the Creator to “ work again to plant a garden, to make a man and “ a woman, &c. as is done in the second chapter.”

But all this apparent contradiction arises from the sophistry of Mr. Paine, in confounding the two accounts, and making them one continued narrative, contrary to his own assertion, that these chapters contain two different accounts. If they are two accounts, as he says, the first stating generally the creation of man, and the second resuming the account of his creation, and adding some further particulars respecting it, there is neither contradiction, lunacy, nor want of memory in the writer; but wisdom, propriety, and design.

“ As there are two accounts (say the Monthly
 “ Reviewers) it is not fair, nor consistent with the
 “ common rules of interpretation, to consider a pas-
 “ sage in the second narrative, as having any con-
 “ nection with the first. The passage *and there was*
 “ *no man to till the ground*, does not refer to any
 “ thing in the first account, but to the introductory
 “ clause of the second account, which conducts the
 “ thoughts of the reader to the day *when the Lord*
 “ *God made the earth and the heavens.*”

Mr. Paine says (page 11) “ Here are evidently two
 “ different stories contradicting each other: according
 “ to the first, the two sexes, the male and the female,
 “ were made at the same time; according to the second,
 “ they were made at different times, the man first, the
 “ woman afterwards.” This statement is glaringly
 false; the first account does not say a word about their
 being made at the *same time*, but only states *generally*
 that God created them, male and female; the second
 relates the particulars of that creation: there is there-
 fore no sort of contradiction between them.

Mr. Paine says, “ According to the first story,
 “ they were to have dominion over all the earth:
 “ according to the second, their dominion was *limited*
 “ to a garden.” This again is not true; the bible
 has indeed said, that the man was put into the gar-
 den to dress it, and to keep it; but it has no where
 said that his dominion was *limited* to a garden; Mr.
 Paine has said it without the least authority, in order
 to make the two stories contradict each other. It is
 a fact not to be disputed, that man has dominion over
 the inferior creation. Now from whom did he receive
 that dominion but from his Creator?

These

These few plain remarks, I conceive, are sufficient to shew the futility and sophistry of Mr. Paine's observations on the two first chapters of Genesis; and to vindicate and justify our belief in the Bible, so far as it depends upon their consistency.

Mr. Paine, in the next place, endeavours to invalidate the story of the flood. He says, page 12,
 “ We have all heard of Noah's flood; and it is im-
 “ possible to think of the whole human race, men,
 “ women, children and infants (except one family)
 “ deliberately drowning, without feeling a painful
 “ sensation; that heart must be a heart of flint that
 “ can contemplate such a scene with tranquility.
 “ There is nothing in the ancient mythology, nor in
 “ the religion of any people we know of upon the
 “ globe, that records a sentence of their God, or of
 “ their Gods, so tremendously severe and merciless:
 “ I go now (he says) to shew from the face of the
 “ story, that it carries the evidence of not being
 “ true. We have here (he adds) two different epochs,
 “ or points of time—that of the flood, and that of
 “ the law of Moses—the former more than six hun-
 “ dred years prior to the latter. But the maker of
 “ the story of the flood, whoever he was, has be-
 “ trayed himself by *blundering*, for he has reversed
 “ that order of the times. He has told the story as if
 “ the law of Moses was *prior* to the flood, for he has
 “ made God to say to Noah, Gen. vii. 2, *Of every*
 “ *clean beast, thou shalt take unto thee by seven, the*
 “ *male and his female, and of beasts that are not*
 “ *clean by two, the male and his female.* This is the
 “ Mosaic law, and could only be said after that law
 “ was given, not before. There was no such thing
 “ as

“ as beasts clean and unclean in the time of Noah—
 “ it is no where said, they were created so. They
 “ were only *declared* to be so, *as meats*, by the Mo-
 “ saic law, and that to the Jews only, and there were
 “ no such people as Jews in the time of Noah—This
 “ is the blundering condition in which this strange
 “ story stands.” He then infers, page 13, from the
tremendous severity of the sentence, and (what he calls)
 the evident contradiction of the circumstances, that,
 “ We ought to set it down for nothing better than a
 “ *Jewish fable*, told by nobody knows whom, and
 “ nobody knows when.”

Before we reject as a *Jewish fable*, the Mosaic history of the flood, let us examine the several allegations of Mr. Paine to prove that it is unworthy of our credit.

First, as to the fact, that the earth has experienced such an universal deluge, we may appeal to the concurrent testimony of the most ancient historians, and the traditions of all nations.

Berossus, the Chaldean historian, who lived in the time of Alexander the Great, says, * “ in the reign of
 “ *Xisuthrus*, happened the great deluge; *Chronus*, or
 “ *Saturn*, appeared to *Xisuthrus* in a dream, and
 “ warned him, that on the 15th day of the month
 “ *Dæsius*, mankind would be destroyed by a flood;
 “ and therefore commanded him to write down the
 “ original, intermediate state, and end of all things,
 “ and bury the writing in the ground in *Sippara*, the
 “ city of the Sun; that he should also build a ship,
 “ and go into it with his relations and dearest friends,
 “ having

* Vid. *Anc. Univ. Hist.* vol. I, p. 194, 195.

“ having first furnished it with provisions, and taken
 “ into it fowls and four-footed beasts; and that
 “ when he had provided every thing, and was asked
 “ whither he was sailing, he should answer, *to the*
 “ *gods to pray for happiness to mankind.* Xisuthrus
 “ did not disobey, but built a vessel whose length was
 “ five furlongs, and breadth two furlongs. He put
 “ on board all he was directed, and went into it with
 “ his wife, children and friends; the flood being come,
 “ and soon ceasing, Xisuthrus let out certain birds,
 “ which finding no food, nor place to rest upon, return-
 “ ed again to the ship. Xisuthrus after some days let
 “ out the birds again; but they came back to the ship,
 “ having their feet daubed with mud: but when they
 “ were let go the third time, they came no more to
 “ the ship, whereby Xisuthrus understood that the
 “ earth appeared again; and thereupon he made an
 “ opening between the planks of the ship, and seeing
 “ that it rested on a certain mountain, he came out
 “ with his wife, and his daughter, and his pilot; and
 “ having worshipped the earth, and raised an altar,
 “ and sacrificed to the gods, he, and those who
 “ went out with him, disappeared. They who were
 “ left behind in the ship, finding Xisuthrus, and the
 “ persons that accompanied him, did not return,
 “ went out themselves to seek for him, calling him
 “ aloud by his name: but Xisuthrus was no more
 “ seen by them; only a voice came out of the air,
 “ which enjoined them, as their duty was, to be re-
 “ ligious; and informed them, that, on account of
 “ his own piety, he was gone to dwell with the
 “ gods; and that his wife, and daughter, and pilot,
 “ were partakers of the same honour. It also directed
 “ them to return to *Babylon*, and that, as the fates
 “ had

“ had ordained, they should take the writings from
 “ *Siphara*, and communicate them to mankind; and
 “ told them that the place where they were was the
 “ country of *Armenia*.” Notwithstanding there is
 much of the fabulous intermixed in this story, it is
 impossible not to observe the wonderful agreement
 between it and the Mosaic account; and it is equally
 clear that the one has not been copied from the other.

It has been observed, * that, “ several circumstances
 “ of the deluge are mentioned in the history of *Osiris*
 “ and *Typhon*; particularly the very day when it
 “ began, or when *Osiris*, (who is taken for Noah)
 “ was shut up in the ark. The name of *Typhon*,
 “ according to some learned men, signifies also a
 “ deluge or inundation; † whence the Egyptian priests
 “ called the sea, *Typhon*.”

Another evidence we have of a tradition of the flood
 among the Egyptians, from Plato, who says, ‡
 “ That a certain Egyptian priest recounted to Solon,
 “ out of their sacred books, the history of the univer-
 “ sal flood; which happened long before the particular
 “ inundations known to the *Grecians*. The inhabi-
 “ tants of *Heliopolis* in *Syria*, shewed him a chasm, or
 “ cleft in the earth, in the temple of Juno, which, as
 “ they say, swallowed up the waters of the flood.”

A tradition of the deluge is to be found also among
 the Persians: “ An Eastern writer tells us (say the
 “ authors of the history above referred to ||) That
 “ some

* Plutarch de Isid. & Osir. p. 356.—Anc. Univer. Hist. vol. 1, p. 200.

‡ The Arabs at this day express the general deluge by the word *al tufan*.

‡ Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. 1, p. 202.

|| Page 228.

“ some of those who embraced the *Magian* religion
 “ are said to deny the flood, or at least the univer-
 “ sality of it; yet the orthodox among them ac-
 “ knowledge this general destruction by water, wherein
 “ all mankind perished, except some few that were
 “ preserved by providence; and that it was sent by
 “ God to punish the crimes of mankind.”

“ The Bramins (as related by the same historians) say
 “ That the impiety of mankind grew at length to so
 “ insufferable an height, that God’s indignation was
 “ justly provoked, and he sent a *flood* which destroyed
 “ all nations without exception; after which God,
 “ to repair mankind, created three persons of greater
 “ excellency than those of the former generation; to
 “ one of whom, named *Bromov*, he gave the power
 “ of creating men and animals, which he executed
 “ accordingly; the first human pair proceeding one
 “ from his right side, the other from his left: The
 “ man was called *Manov*, and the woman *Ceterauike*,
 “ and by them was the earth replenished.”

“ This fact will receive further confirmation from
 “ the traditions which the natives of America, §
 “ according to Gemelli, and others, had about the
 “ flood, and the peopling of their country after that
 “ memorable event. The *Peruvians* believed, that
 “ there formerly happened a deluge, in which all the
 “ people of their continent perished, except a few,
 “ who escaped the common destruction, by retiring
 “ into certain cavities or hollows, upon the tops of
 “ the highest mountains, whose posterity at last re-
 “ peopled the world. Some traditional notions of
 “ this kind prevailed also among the ancient inhabi-
 “ tants.

§ Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. xx. page 195.

“ tants of *Hispaniolo*, as we are informed by Gemelli.
 “ There is likewise mention made in the ancient
 “ histories of *Mexico*, of a general flood that swept
 “ away the whole race of mankind, except one man
 “ and his wife. These two persons, according to
 “ them, had a numerous issue; but all their children
 “ were dumb, till endued with the faculty of speech
 “ by a dove. To which they add, that the primitive
 “ language spoken by the immediate descendants of
 “ the aforesaid pair, was split into such a variety of
 “ tongues, or dialects, that they could not understand
 “ one another, and therefore were necessitated to
 “ migrate into different regions, and became there
 “ the founders of different nations.”

Now is it possible that such a tradition should so
 universally prevail, and be recorded by ancient his-
 torians of various nations, nations unconnected with,
 and unknown to each other, and in terms bearing so
 strong a resemblance to those made use of by the
 Jewish historian, if such an event had never happened?
 Or can it be supposed that those nations, who held
 the Jews in the utmost detestation, and were equally
 detested by them, would adopt a *Jewish fable*? It
 exceeds all possible belief, except that of such men as
 Mr. Paine; who, although they cannot believe facts
 contained in the bible, however strongly confirmed
 by external evidence, yet can easily give credit to
 absurdities the most monstrous unconnected with it.

There are also many traces of the deluge to be found
 in the earth itself: vast numbers of *petrified fish*, of
 various kinds; *shells, teeth of fish, bones of animals,*
 and *other productions of the sea*, have been discovered
 in

in the most interior parts of it, and at the remotest distance from the ocean. How is this to be accounted for, but by the supposition that the earth has been dissolved by water, and reduced to a chaos? In which case the more ponderous parts settling, and the waters subsiding, the productions of the sea would become incorporated with the solid parts of the earth.

Considerable evidence of the deluge arises also from the *strata* of the earth, which has been proved by those who have examined the very bowels of it, to consist of various *layers* disposed regularly one over the other, which supposing the deluge really to have taken place, would be the natural effect of their first adhesion after their dissolution, the heavier parts first uniting, and then those less ponderous. These are circumstances, which without the supposition of there having been such a deluge Mr. Paine himself will be unable to account for. In agreement with these appearances, the bible asserts the fact; and although the truth of the assertion may be denied, and the fact ridiculed, yet they cannot be disproved:

Secondly, as to the severity of the sentence, Mr. Paine says, “ There is nothing in the ancient mythology, nor in the religion of any people we know of upon the globe, that records a sentence of their God, or of their gods, so *tremendously severe* and *merciless.*” This is not true. We have seen that the tradition of the deluge was preserved among the heathen nations, and we have also seen that they ascribe it to the indignation of God; Mr. Paine’s assertion therefore, is in direct opposition to the plainest historical evidence.—If the dispensation did

take place (and we have not the testimony of Moses only, but of universal tradition to the fact) to whom can it be ascribed but to God? Who then is Mr. Paine, that he shall dare to arraign the Divine Being as *tremendously severe and merciless*? Has he entered into all the plans of his government, and shall he presume to charge his administration with severity?

Are not those *judgments*, which have *swallowed up cities*, and *desolated nations*, such as *earthquakes*, *famines*, and *pestilences*, and which Mr. Paine would call *tremendously severe and merciless*, as great an objection to natural, as the *deluge* is to revealed religion? Does not Mr. Paine himself, for instance, account the *universal* appointment of man to death, a *sentence tremendously severe and merciless*. Will he deny it to be the appointment of God, or will he abandon deism, and maintain that there is no supreme governor of the world, possessed of that wisdom, and goodness which we attribute to the Divine Being; because, if there were, mankind would not lie under a sentence so *tremendously severe and merciless*.

From the beneficent character of the deity then, connected with the irresistible evidence of the fact, we must conclude, that the *sentence* of drowning the whole world, except one family, was not *severe and merciless*: but wise and good. “ When the whole
 “ world, (says Dr. Law *) became full of *unbounded*
 “ *lust*, and impurity; of rapine and violence: when
 “ those *giants* in wickedness had filled the earth with
 “ tyranny, injustice, and oppression; and the whole
 “ race of men were grown entirely *carnal*, and abandoned,

* Theory of Relig. 6th edit, p. 62.

“ done, and every *imagination of their hearts was*
 “ *only evil continually*: God, whose spirit had been
 “ hitherto *striving* with them, was at length obliged,
 “ even *in mercy to themselves, as well as their posterity,*
 “ to cut them off; after having raised up another
 “ prophet to give them frequent warning of their fate,
 “ and allowed them an hundred and twenty years for
 “ repentance.” “ This dispensation (of the deluge,)
 “ says Dr. Taylor, † as all the rest, had relation to
 “ the *morals* of mankind; and the evident design of it
 “ was to lessen the quantity of vice and profaneness,
 “ and to preserve and advance religion and virtue in
 “ the earth; the great end for which the earth, and
 “ man in it, were created. This end it was well adapted
 “ to obtain in the present state of things, and in all
 “ future generations. In the present state of things,
 “ it prevented a total *corruption*. For if the whole
 “ tainted part had not been cut off, a single family
 “ would soon have been drawn in, or destroyed: and
 “ then the whole globe must have been ruined, and
 “ the schemes and purposes of God from the begin-
 “ ning of the world had been defeated. But by re-
 “ serving a select family for the continuation of the
 “ human species, the system of the divine counsels
 “ was preserved entire, and the most proper method
 “ was devised for the establishment of religion and
 “ virtue in the new world; as the family of *Noah* en-
 “ joyed much greater advantages for this end than the
 “ family of *Adam at the beginning of things.*”

Thirdly, Mr. Paine says, § “ When we see the
 “ story told with such an evident *contradiction* of cir-
 “ cumstances,

† Scheme of Script. Divin. c. 18.

§ Page 13.

“ cumstances, we ought to set it down for nothing
 “ better than a *Jewish fable*.” Now what is this
 inconsistency, on account of which we ought to set
 the story down as a fable? Why, Mr. Paine says, the
 maker of it has betrayed himself by blundering, for he
 has told the story, as if the law of Moses was prior to
 the flood: for he has made God say to Noah, Gen.
 vii. 2. Of every *clean* beast, “ thou shalt take unto
 “ thee by sevens, the male and his female, and of
 “ beasts that are *not clean* by two, the male and his
 “ female.” This, he says, is the Mosaic law, and
 could only be said after the law was given, not before.

Before Mr. Paine drew his conclusion, he should
 have established the premises upon which it is founded;
that the distinction of clean and unclean beasts origi-
nated in the law of Moses, and did not exist before.
 This he has not attempted; if his premises can be
 shewn to be false, his conclusion must be so too, and
 every shadow of inconsistency in the story is done
 away.

Now that the words of God to Noah had no *reference*
 to the *Jewish law*, and that this distinction did not
 originate with that law, but existed before, I think
 is evident from the manner in which Moses addresses
 the children of Israel, in Lev. v. 2, where the distinc-
 tion first occurs in the Mosaic law, “ if a soul touch
 “ any *unclean* thing, whether it be the carcase of an
 “ *unclean* beast, or a carcase of *unclean* cattle, or the
 “ carcase of *unclean* creeping things, and if it be hid-
 “ den from him; he also shall be unclean and guilty.”
 The distinction is here spoken of, as well known to
 the people of Israel before any law had been given by
 Moses

Moses respecting it, and therefore must have existed before the law of Moses. Besides, the distinction between *clean* and *unclean* beasts before the time of Moses, probably had no respect to *meats*, but only to *sacrifices*, which we know were offered before the flood, whereas the law of Moses applies the distinction to *meats*. Mr. Paine says, * “ They were only *de-*
clared to be so, (that is *clean* and *unclean*) *as meats*,
 “ by the Mosaic law,” marking the words *as meats*, by printing them in *italic*, as though he meant to furnish an answer to himself, for there is nothing said about their being so *as meats*, in the words of God to Noah.

Upon the whole, there is no sort of evidence that the words Gen. vii. 2, have any reference to the law of Moses, and consequently Mr. Paine’s charge of blunder and inconsistency in the historian is utterly unfounded.

The next attack of Mr. Paine on the authority of the bible, is in page 13, where he says, “ Had the
 “ books of Moses been written by him, they would
 “ undoubtedly have been the oldest books in the bible,
 “ and entitled to be placed first; and the *law* and the
 “ *history* they contain, *would be frequently referred to*
 “ *in the books that follow*; but this is not the case,
 “ from the time of Othniel, the first of the Judges,
 “ (Judges iii. 9,) to the end of the book of Judges,
 “ which contains a period of four hundred and ten
 “ years, *this law, and those books were not in practice,*
 “ *nor known among the Jews, nor are they so much as*
 “ *alluded to throughout the whole of that period.* And
 “ if the reader will examine the 22d and 23d chap-
 ters

“ ters of the 2d book of Kings, and 34th chapter of
 “ the 2d of Chronicles, he will find, that *no such law,*
 “ *nor any such books, were known in the time of the*
 “ *Jewish monarchy,* and that the Jews were Pagans
 “ during the whole of that time, and of their judges.

“ *The first time* the law, called the law of Moses,
 “ *made its appearance, was in the time of Josiah,*
 “ about a thousand years after Moses was dead ; it is
 “ then said to have been found by accident. The
 “ amount of this finding, or *pretended* finding, is
 “ given in the 2d of Chronicles, chap. xxxiv. ver. 14,
 “ 15, 16, 18.

“ In consequence of this finding, which much re-
 “ sembles that of poor Chatterton finding manuscript
 “ poems of Rowley the Monk, in the Cathedral
 “ church at Bristol ; or the late finding manuscripts of
 “ Shakespeare, in an old chest (two well-known
 “ frauds.)—Josiah abolished the Pagan religion of
 “ the Jews, massacred all the Pagan priests, though
 “ he himself had been a Pagan, as the reader will see
 “ in the 23d chap. 2 Kings, and thus established
 “ in blood, the law that is there called the law of
 “ Moses, and *instituted* a passover in commemoration
 “ thereof.

“ The 22d verse in speaking of this passover, says,
 “ *Surely there was not holden such a passover, from*
 “ *the days of the Judges, that judged Israel, nor in*
 “ *all the days of the Kings of Israel, nor the Kings of*
 “ *Judah ;* and the 25th ver. in speaking of this priest-
 “ killing Josiah, says, *Like unto him there was no King*
 “ *before him, that turned to the Lord, with all his heart,*
 “ *and*

“ and with all his soul, and with all his might, accord-
 “ ing to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose
 “ there any like him.

“ This verse is a general declaration against all the
 “ preceding kings, without exception. It is also a
 “ declaration against all that reigned after him, of
 “ which there were four, the whole time of whose
 “ reigning makes but 22 years and six months, before
 “ the Jews were entirely broken up as a nation, and
 “ the monarchy destroyed. It is therefore evident,
 “ that the law, called the law of Moses, of which the
 “ Jews talk so much, was promulgated and esta-
 “ blished only in the latter time of the Jewish monarchy;
 “ and it is very remarkable, that no sooner had they
 “ established it, than they were a destroyed people, as
 “ if they were punished for acting an imposition, and
 “ affixing the name of the Lord to it, and massacring
 “ their former priests under pretence of religion. The
 “ sum of the history of the Jews is this:—they con-
 “ tinued to be a nation about a thousand years; they
 “ then established a law, which they called *the law of*
 “ *the Lord given by Moses*, and were destroyed. This
 “ is not opinion but historical evidence.”

The amount of Mr. Paine's reasoning in the above passage is this; that the law ascribed to Moses, and the history connected with it, were not written by him, but were an impious forgery in the days of Josiah, a little before the dissolution of the Jewish monarchy, and consequently had no existence till about a thousand years after the death of Moses. In support of which assertion, he says, that they are never referred to in the history of the Judges after the time of Othniel, the first Judge; nor in any other of the his-
 torical

torical books, during the Jewish monarchy, till the days of Josiah, when the book of the law was *pretended* to be found by Hilkiah. The whole of this statement, I conceive, must appear so notoriously false, to every person acquainted with the Jewish history, as scarcely to deserve a refutation. It may not be amiss, however, to select some passages to shew that the *law* of Moses, and the *history* connected with it, did exist, and are referred to in various periods between the time of Othniel and Josiah.

The first passage I shall produce is, from the words of Jephthah, who judged Israel about 200 years after the death of Othniel, see Judges xi. 12, to 25; verses 16, 17, in particular are a direct reference to the Mosaic *history*, “ *But when Israel came up from*
“ *Egypt, and walked through the wilderness, unto the*
“ *Red Sea, and came to Kadesh; then Israel sent*
“ *messengers unto the King of Edom, saying, let me,*
“ *I pray thee, pass through thy land: but the King of*
“ *Edom would not hearken thereto. And in like man-*
“ *ner they sent unto the King of Moab; but he would*
“ *not consent: and Israel abode in Kadesh.*”

About twenty years after, while Samuel judged Israel, we have another reference to the Mosaic *history*, 1 Sam. vi 6. “ *Wherefore then do ye harden*
“ *your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened*
“ *their hearts? When he had wrought wonderfully*
“ *among them, did they not let the people go, and*
“ *they departed?*”

Again, chap. xii. 6th and following verses, “ *And*
“ *Samuel said unto the people, it is the Lord that ad-*
“ *vanced*

“ vanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your
 “ fathers up out of the land of Egypt. Now therefore
 “ stand still, that I may reason with you before the
 “ Lord, of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he
 “ did to you and to your fathers: When Jacob was come
 “ into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the Lord,
 “ then the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, which brought
 “ forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell
 “ in this place.”

Again, in the time of Saul, the first King of Israel,
 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3. “ Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I
 “ remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he
 “ laid wait for him in the way when he came up from
 “ Egypt.”

Again, in the days of David, we have another direct
 reference to the Mosaic history; 2 Sam. vii. 23. “ And
 “ what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even
 “ like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people
 “ to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for
 “ you great things, and terrible, for thy land, before
 “ thy people which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt,
 “ from the nations, and their gods.”

In the 1st of Kings, chap. ii. ver. 3, We have the
 following words of David to his son Solomon, “ Keep
 “ the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways,
 “ to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his
 “ judgments, and his testimonies, AS IT IS WRITTEN
 “ IN THE LAW OF MOSES, that thou mayest prosper
 “ in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest
 “ thyself.” This was about four hundred years before

the reign of Josiah, and, if we will believe Mr. Paine, so long before the *Law of Moses* had any existence.

Again, does not the historian refer to the Mosaic law, when he says of Rehoboam, 2 Chron. xii. 1. That, *He forsook the LAW OF THE LORD, and all Israel with him?* In chap. xiii. 10, 11. Abijah addressing Jeroboam says, *The Lord is our God, we have not forsaken him; and the priests which minister unto the Lord, are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business, and they burn unto the Lord every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense: the shew-bread also set they in order upon the pure table, and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening. for to KEEP THE CHARGE OF THE LORD OUR GOD.* Does not this afford the clearest evidence of the existence of the Mosaic law and history at that time? Was not the service of the Priests and Levites, their offering sacrifices, burning incense, and setting the shew-bread in order upon the table, the express appointment of that law? In chap. xiv. 4, it is said that Asa, the son Abijah, *commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do THE LAW and the COMMANDMENT.* In the next reign, that of Jehoshaphat the son of Asa, we are told, chap. xvii. ver. 9. that, *they, the Levites, who had been sent by Jehoshaphat for that purpose, taught in Judah, and had THE BOOK OF THE LAW OF THE LORD with them.* In chap. xxiii. 18, we are told, that *Jehoiada the priest, appointed the officers of the house of the Lord—to offer the burnt offerings of the Lord, AS IT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES.* And in chap. xxv. 4. and xxvi. 18. we have

have express references to the Law of Moses. In the xxxth chap. we have an account of Hezekiah, the great grandfather of Josiah, and all Israel and Judah keeping the passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, according to the law of Moses. Now the passover was not only a part of the Mosaic law, and connected with an important branch of the Jewish history, but was appointed by Moses as a standing memorial of the miraculous interposition of God, in the deliverance of his people from their Egyptian bondage.

Again, 2 Kings viii. ver. 9, we are told that when the ark was removed from the tabernacle, to the temple of Solomon, “ *There was nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the Land of Egypt.*” See also verse 53. We have here an immediate reference, both to the *history* and the *law* of Moses.

It would be almost endless to cite all the passages in the Jewish history, before the days of Josiah, that refer to the Mosaic *history* and *law*: the whole of the Psalms are a perpetual reference to them. What Mr. Paine asserts therefore, * “ That no such law, nor any such books, as those of Moses, were known in the time of the Jewish monarchy,” is notoriously false. What he further asserts in the same page, “ That the Jews were Pagans during the whole of that time, and of their judges,” is equally false. What he asserts in the following page “ That

* Page 13.

“ Hilckiah’s finding the book of the law resembles
 “ two well known frauds, that of Chatterton finding
 “ manuscript poems of Rowley the Monk, in the
 “ cathedral church at Bristol; or the late finding
 “ of manuscripts of Shakespeare, in an old chest,”
 is equally contradicted by the whole of the evidence to
 which he appeals; and from the same evidence it
 appears that, “ *the books of Moses are unquestionably*
 “ *the oldest books in the Bible, and entitled to be placed*
 “ *first.*”

Let us for a moment suppose the law of Moses not to have existed till the days of Josiah, but to have been then first promulgated and imposed upon the Jewish nation, as Mr. Paine asserts: would it not be a phenomenon not to be paralleled in the history of the world, that a whole nation should at once receive as divine, a book containing such a law and such a history. If the statement of Mr. Paine be true, the religion of the Jews was *then*, and always had been, the same with the idolatrous nations around them, and could have no affinity with what is called the dispensation of Moses; “ They were, says Mr. Paine, “ Pagans, during the whole of their monarchy and “ of their Judges.” They could not therefore have known any thing of the God of Israel, or have heard of such a law as the law of Moses, or the history connected with it; they could have had no traditions of their deliverance out of Egypt, of the Red Sea being divided, of the law being given on Mount Sinai, or of any of the miracles recorded in the Mosaic history, because no such events had ever happened; the whole being a fable which was invented, and made
 its

its first appearance in the days of Josiah. When therefore Hilkiah *pretended* that he had found the book of the Law of the Lord, given by Moses, there was not a single circumstance, if it never existed before, to promote its reception. It professes to contain the religion and worship of their ancestors, which they had received from heaven; but could such a book obtain the credit of a nation who were Pagans, and who must have known by their records or traditions, that Paganism had been the uniform religion of their forefathers. It professes to contain the history of many stupendous miracles, which God wrought for the deliverance of their nation, and for the purpose of establishing that religion among them. Now, what evidence had they to induce them to believe this? Every record, every tradition of their nation, must have detected the imposition, and become a source of infidelity. Can it be imagined that the mere pretence of Hilkiah, that he had found that book in the house of the Lord, would induce a whole nation to abolish their then existing religion, which had the sanction of all antiquity; to murder all their former priests, and establish a religion not only new, but unsupported by the evidence of miracle, tradition, or any other circumstance that could give it credibility? That a revolution so extraordinary in the religion and worship of a nation should suddenly and universally take place, is inconceivable. All other establishments of religion have taken place gradually, and through much opposition. That the Jewish religion should be universally received, without hesitation, if it were such an imposition as Mr. Paine supposes, is more marvellous and incredible than any thing contained in the bible.

Mr. Paine having appealed to the historical books which follow those of Moses, has thereby admitted their authority as evidence in the matter at issue between us. We have a right therefore to avail ourselves of that admission by appealing also to their testimony in support of the fact, that the law did exist as early as the days of Moses, and that it was written by him; nor can Mr. Paine himself object to such an appeal. We have traced its existence through the various periods of the Jewish history, after the time of Othniel, the first of the Judges. Let us then endeavour to trace back the existence of it from the time of Othniel to the days of Moses himself, by whom it is said to have been given. Immediately after the death of Joshua, and before Othniel judged Israel, we have this charge against that people, Judges ii. 17. "They turned quickly out of the way, which their fathers walked in, obeying the *Commandments* of the Lord." What those *commandments* were, we learn from Joshua's last address to them before his death. Joshua xxiii. 6. "Be courageous, to keep and do all that *is written in the Law of Moses.*" Here we have direct evidence of the existence of the Law of Moses in the period between Joshua and Othniel. At a more early period in the life-time of Joshua, we are told, chap. xxii. ver. 5, that before Joshua sent home the two tribes and half, who had assisted their brethren in the conquest of Canaan, he gave them this charge, "Take diligent heed to do the *commandment* and the *law*, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his *commandments.*" At a more early period we are told, chap. viii. ver. 34, that

Joshua

“ Joshua read all the *words of the law*, the blessings
 “ and cursings, according to all that is *written in the*
 “ *book of the law.*” And in chap. i. ver. 7; that the
 Lord appeared to Joshua immediately after the death
 of Moses, and said, “ Be thou strong and very cou-
 “ rageous, that thou mayest observe to do according
 “ to all *the law* which *Moses my servant-commanded.*”
 And in verse 8, “ Thou shalt meditate therein day
 “ and night, that thou mayest observe to do according
 “ to all *that is written therein.*” From this appeal to
 those books on which Mr. Paine himself relies, we
 have proved that the Mosaic Law not only existed
 in the various periods of the Jewish Monarchy, but
 also in every preceding period up to the time of
 Moses, and that it was committed to writing at that
 time; and consequently, *it could not be an imposition*
in the days of Josiah. Neither is it true, as he asserts,
 “ That it was written nobody knows by whom, nor
 “ nobody knows when.” That it was written by
 Moses is as clear as that it existed in his time. Joshua
 repeatedly asserts the fact: he was cotemporary with
 Moses, and an eye-witness of all the transactions which
 took place from the time of the Israelites leaving
 Egypt till they were settled in the land of Canaan; he
 could not therefore be deceived, but must know
 whether Moses was the author of it or not.

From the whole, the conclusion is natural, that
 the Law of Moses is of divine origin. It was de-
 livered at Mount Sinai with such evident demonstra-
 tions of the divine presence and power, and the
 authority of Moses was confirmed by such stupendous
 miracles, as puts it out of all doubt that he acted by
 the

the immediate direction of God. We have proved that the law was written with the history of the miracles that attended the dispensation of it, and delivered to the people of Israel in the life-time of Moses. Joshua and that people had been eye-witnesses of those miracles, and Moses repeatedly appeals to them, and reminds them, that their *eyes had seen* all the terrible acts of the Lord in Egypt and in the wilderness; "they therefore could not be imposed upon. If they had not been eye-witnesses of the wonders there recorded they must have known the history to be false, and their belief of it would have been impossible. If they had indeed seen those miracles they must have known that the dispensation of Moses was from God. We feel therefore, notwithstanding all Mr. Paine's assertions to the contrary, a firm persuasion that "the evidence is sufficient to warrant our belief that the bible is the word of God."

Our Author, after abusing the bible with unparalleled effrontery, says,† "I can write a better book myself." Those who have read his letter to Mr. Erskine, which, to say the best of it, is destitute of integrity, and abounds with declamation and abuse, will be able to form a competent judgment of his ability for such an undertaking.

Thus, Sir, at your request, I have taken a view of Mr. Paine's several objections to the Mosaic history; you have been pleased to impose the task upon me;

‡ See Deut. i. 31.—iii. 21.—x. 21.—xi. 7.

† Page 16.

I have

I have executed it to the best of my ability ; though, I am persuaded, you yourself would have done the subject more ample justice ; such, however, as the observations are, I submit them to your candid perusal,

and am, with much esteem,

your's, &c.

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