

P A I N E
VERSUS
R E L I G I O N ;

O R,
Christianity Triumphant.

CONTAINING
THE INTERESTING LETTERS OF SAM. ADAMS,
THO. PAINE, AND JOHN GEMMIL.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
MR. ERSKINE'S CELEBRATED SPEECH AT THE TRIAL
OF THE AGE OF REASON.



“BRETHREN, BEWARE LEST ANY MAN SPOIL YOU
THROUGH FALSE PHILOSOPHY.”

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THE following Letters must be interesting to all those who wish to see the objections of Infidelity opposed and confuted by proofs drawn from Reason and Scripture, urged by good and eminent men. — We recommend Mr. Gemmil's letter to particular attention, as he has refuted Mr. Paine's misrepresentations in a new and convincing manner.

Those who wish to see the principles of Christianity explained and vindicated more at large, will read (amongst a number of excellent writers) Bishop Watson's mild but persuasive Apology for the Bible, and Archdeacon Paley's rational and satisfactory Evidences of the Christian Religion.

INTRODUCTION.

TOWARDS the latter end of last December, I received a letter from that venerable and consistent patriot *Samuel Adams*, dated Boston 30th November. It came by a private hand, which, I suppose, was the cause of the delay. I wrote Mr. Adams an answer dated 1st January, and that I might be certain of his receiving it, and also that I might know of that reception, I desired a friend of mine at Washington to put it under cover to ~~some~~ friend of his at Boston, and desire ~~him~~ to present it to Mr. Adams. The letter was accordingly put under cover while I was present, and given to one of the clerks of the Post-Office to seal and put in the mail. The clerk put it in his pocket-book, and either forgot to put it in the mail, or supposed he had done so among other letters. The Post-Master General, on learning this mistake, informed me of it last Saturday, and as the cover was then out of date, the letter was put under a new cover with the same request, and forwarded by the post. I felt concern at this accident, lest Mr. Adams should conclude I was unmindful of his attention to me; and therefore, lest any farther accident should prevent or delay his receiving it, as well as to relieve myself from that concern, I give the letter the opportunity of reaching him by the news-papers. I am more induced to do this, because some manuscript copies have been taken of both letters, and therefore, there is a possibility of imperfect copies getting into print; and besides this, if some of the Federal printers, (for I hope they are not all base alike) could get hold of a copy they would make no scruple of altering it and publishing it as mine. I therefore send you the original letter of Mr. Adams and my own copy of the answer.

THO. PAINE.

Federal City, 22d Jan. 1803.

MR. ADAMS'S LETTER.

SIR,

Boston, 30th Nov. 1802.

I HAVE frequently, with pleasure, reflected on your services to my native, and your adopted Country. Your Common Sense, and your Crisis, unquestionably awakened the public mind, and led the people loudly to call for a Declaration of our national Independence. I therefore esteemed you as a warm friend to the liberty, and lasting welfare of the human race. But when I heard, that you had turned your mind to a defence of Infidelity, I felt myself much astonished, and more grieved, that you had attempted a measure so injurious to the feelings, and so repugnant to the true interests of so great a part of the citizens of the United States. The people of New-England, if you will allow me to use a Scripture phrase, are fast returning to their first love. Will you excite among them the spirit of angry controversy, at a time, when they are hastening to unity and peace?—I am told that some of our newspapers have announced your attention to publish an additional pamphlet upon the principles of your Age of Reason.—Do you think, that *your pen*, or the pen of any other man, can unchristianize the mass of our citizens, or have you hopes of converting a few of them to assist you in so bad a cause?—We ought to think ourselves happy in the enjoyment of opinion, without the danger of persecution ~~either~~ by civil or ecclesiastical Law.

Our friend, the present President of the United States, has been calumniated for his liberal sentiments, by men who have attributed that liberality to a latent design to promote the cause of Infidelity. This, and all other slanders, have been made without a shadow of proof. Neither Religion, nor Liberty can long subsist in the tumult of altercation, and amidst the noise and violence of Faction.—*Felis qui cautus.*

Adieu.

SAMUEL ADAMS.

MR. PAINE'S ANSWER.

My dear and venerable Friend,

I RECEIVED with great pleasure, your friendly and affectionate letter of 30th November, and I thank you also for the frankness of it. Between men in pursuit of truth, and whose object is the happiness of man both here, and hereafter, there ought to be no reserve. Even error has a claim to indulgence, if not to respect, when it is believed to be truth. I am obliged to you for your affectionate remembrance of what you stile my services in awakening the public mind to a Declaration of Independence, and supporting it after it was declared. I also, like you, have often looked back on those times, and have thought, that if Independence had not been declared at the time it was, the public mind could not have been brought up to it afterwards. It will immediately occur to you, who were so

so intimately acquainted with the situation of things at that time, that I allude to the black times of *Seventy-six*; for tho' I know, and you my friend also know, they were no other than the natural consequences of the military blunders of that campaign, the country might have viewed them as proceeding from a natural inability to support its cause against the enemy, and have sunk under the despondency of that misconceived idea. This was the impression against which it was necessary the country should be strongly animated.

I now come to the second part of your letter, on which I shall be as frank with you as you are with me.—“But (say you) when I heard you had turned your mind to a defence of Infidelity, I felt myself much astonished, &c.”—What, my good friend, do you call believing in God infidelity? for that is the great point maintained in the Age of Reason against all *divided* beliefs and *allegorical* Divinities. The Bishop of Landaff (Dr. Watson), not only acknowledges this, but pays me some compliments upon it in his answer to the second part of that work. “There is (says he) a philosophical sublimity in some of your ideas, when speaking of the Creator of the Universe.”

What then (my much esteemed friend, for I do not respect you the less because we differ, and that perhaps not much, in religious sentiments)—**what**, I ask, is this thing called Infidelity?—If **we go back to your** ancestors and mine, three or four hundred years ago, for **we** must have had fathers and grandfathers, or we should not be here, we shall find them praying to Saints and Virgins, and believing in Purgatory and Transubstantiation, and therefore all of us are infidels according to our forefathers' belief. If we go back to times more antient, we shall again be infidels according to the belief of some other forefathers.

The case, my friend, is, that the world has been over-run with Creeds of *human* invention, with sectaries of whole nations against other nations, and sectaries of those sectaries in each of them against each other!—Every sectary, except the Quakers, has been a persecutor. Those who fled from persecution, persecuted in their turn, and it is this confusion of Creeds that has filled the world with persecution, and deluged it with blood. Even the depredation on your commerce by the Barbary powers, sprang from the crusades of the Church against those powers.* It was a war of Creed against Creed;

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* We think Mr. Paine erroneous in this passage.—The Crusades were not directed against the African States, but, six or seven centuries ago, were intended to drive the Mahometans from the Holy Land in Syria, particularly from Jerusalem, from whence, not long before, they had driven both Jews and Christians.—And it is well known, that the Barbary pirates do not make war against the American ships because the people of the United States profess Christianity, but to extort from them a tribute, which they are shamefully permitted to do from the nations of Europe.

