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THE
AGE OF

B7

Reason & Revelation;

David OR Warren.
ANIMADVERSIONS

ON MR. THOMAS PAINE'S LATE
PIECE, INTITLED

"*The AGE of REASON, &c.*"

CONTAINING

A VINDICATION OF THE SACRED SCRIP-
TURES, FROM THE REASONINGS,
OBJECTIONS, AND ASPERSI-
ONS IN THAT PIECE.

By ~~ANDREW~~ BROADBENT, V. D. M.

What have I now done? Is there not a cause?

DAVID.

And justify the ways of God to Man.

MILTON.

+++++

RICHMOND: Printed by JOHN LIXON,

FOR AN ENQUIRER AFTER TRUTH.

MDCCXCV

BL 2740
B7



T O
THE VENERABLE
GEORGE WASHINGTON,
P R E S I D E N T
OF THE
UNITED STATES
O F
A M E R I C A ;
AND TO
THE CITIZENS
IN GENERAL,
T H I S P I E C E
IS HUMBL Y I N S C R I B E D
B Y
THE AUTHOR.



ADVERTISEMENT.

IT is a Query with some, whether it would be most expedient to take Notice of Mr. Paine's "Age of Reason" by way of Answer, or to treat it with silent Contempt. Tho' it may deserve the latter, yet this might be construed, by some, as a tacit Confession in Favor of that Piece.—*Armed, therefore, from the sacred Magazine, I have ventured into the Field. Whether I have used these Weapons to Advantage, the Reader must determine for himself:—If I have, I wish the Glory to be ascribed to "The Father of Lights;"—if I have not, the shame belongs to myself; not to the Cause I have undertaken, because I must still be confident of its Goodness;—not to any other Person, because no correcting Hand (beside my own) has touched this Pamphlet. Had it passed under the Eye and Hand of some of my Acquaintance, it might (doubtless) have appeared to greater Advantage; but that being inconvenient, I submit it to the Public in its native Form.*

A. B.

CAROLINE COUNTY, }
(NEBO) : 8th April, 1795. }



Abraham Banaag



ANIMADVERSIONS

ON MR. PAINE'S "AGE OF REASON:"

OR, A VINDICATION OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES

FROM HIS OBJECTIONS, &c.

Introductory Observations.

SECTION I.

DIFFERENCE of sentiments is so apt to be productive of bigotry and prejudice, that we are too often backward to confess the merit possessed by our opponents. To avoid dissingenuousness in this respect, and do justice to Mr. *Paine*, it will be readily granted that he possesses a genius, which in some instances, has shone with uncommon lustre. His character in a political point of view, I have, for a considerable time, held in high esteem: Some of his publications previous to that which is the object of my intended Animadversions, I admire; and even in his "Age of Reason" there are sufficient indications of a considerable genius unhappily applied. Here, however, I must think, he appears considerably obscured: the badness of his cause, with his measurable unacquaintance with the subject, operating against him. What *Milton* says of *Lucifer* after his fall, may be accommodated to Mr. *Paine* here,

by substituting the word *genius* for "arch-angel :"

Nor appeared
 Less than a *genius* ruined, and th' excess
 Of glory obscur'd.

As difference of sentiment too often begets prejudice against a person; so a predilection in his favor, will, if not duly regulated, lead us blindfold into his errors and vices. 'Tis as necessary to use caution here, as in the former case: Tho' I admire Mr. Paine as a *Politician*, I am disgusted with him as a *Religionist*: And as he is desirous that people should divest themselves of prejudice in favor of Christianity, let all the readers of *that* and *this* pamphlet divest themselves of the same in favor of Mr. P. An open, ingenuous, and candid mind is ever susceptible of true knowledge; whereas, the mind which shuts itself on what it has imbibed in its first education, to the exclusion of every thing else, precludes itself from every hope of improvement. Candour therefore, is what I wish for, as well as Mr. Paine.

Impel'd (as Mr. P. would insinuate he is) by the purest motives, he is bold enough to "put this work under the protection of his Fellow-Citizens of America.*" But with all due deference to his pure intentions, was not this a long stride towards presumption and arrogance? Did he not know that notwithstanding the banners of Freedom were wide spread in America, yet there were many too cordially attached to the *Gospel of Jesus*, to take a work of *this kind* under their protection? and would it not have been more modest and becoming, barely to have recommended it to their perusal?—And if he must have protectors, then to discriminate, and

engage

* See Dedication to "Age of Reason."

engage his good friends *the Deists*, in this office? Does it not rather intimate that he conceived the Citizens of America would swallow any food their friend Thomas Paine should give them; Might he not secretly think, as he "wrote *Common Sense* the latter end of the year 1775, and as independance " was declared the 4th of July following,*" that he

* See p. 57, *Age Rea.* Any person who reads *Common Sense* and *The Age of Reason*, will easily discover that Mr. Paine dwells more on scripture (in a favorable way) in the *former*, than he does on our eternal state in the *latter*, tho' *this* seems to be his book of Divinity. I make this observation as a caution!—Who knows how soon Mr. P. may develope principles adverse to what little he has said concerning future existence? Who would have thought, from reading *Common Sense*, that Mr. P. considered "the Bible a system of wickedness, which had served to corrupt and brutalize mankind?" While the reader observes what Mr. P. says of the Scripture in the *Age of Reason* I beg he will seriously attend to the contrast formed by some quotations which I shall make from his *Common Sense*.

"The will of the Almighty, as declared by Gideon and the prophet Samuel, expressly disapproves of government by kings" (p. 7)

—"Till then their form of government (except in extraordinary cases where the Almighty interposed) was a kind of republic." (*ibid.*)

"That the Almighty hath entered his protest against monarchial government, &c." (p. 9)

"'Tis a form of government which the word of God bears testimony against, and blood will attend it." (p. 12)

"Let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter; let it be brought forth and placed on the divine law the word of God; let a crown be placed thereon, &c." (p. 26)

"For myself, I fully and conscientiously believe, that it is the will of the Almighty, that there should be diversity
" of

he might be very influential in this publication, wishing to do wonders in the *religious* as well as the *political* world?

The reader will observe that these are queries, not assertions. They seem however to call in question the purity of Mr. P.'s motives. That he is in earnest in the profession of deism, I suppose there is but little doubt;—that he might mean well in a measure, I will not deny;—but, that there is a considerable degree of alloy in the gold, is not at all improbable. Mr. P. must be confident that such a monster could not be acceptable unless it made a peaceful appearance. In order, therefore, that his missionary might be received, he has sent him with a placid smile:—But, let the circle into which this stranger comes be cautious! For, under a pleasing countenance is sometimes hid an envenomed soul. Mr. Paine, like other men, is a depraved mortal; and ambition, which dwells more or less in all aspiring characters is, like avarice, never satisfied:—Mr. P. contents not himself in his own sphere, but seems desirous to move and shine in an orbit which does not belong to him.

SECTION II.

WHEN the gigantic champion of *Gath*, issued forth from the camp of *Philistia*, clad in brazen armour

"of religious opinions among us: it affords a larger field
"for our CHRISTIAN kindness, &c. &c." (p. 34.)

Reader could you have imagined that two streams of qualities so different could have proceeded from the same fountain? ! !

mour;—when his ponderous spear gleamed on the hill of *Ephes-Daninim*, and his voice thundered, dreadfully menacing, through the valley of *Elat*—dismay was spread thro' the armies of Israel: But, contemptible as young David appeared, he slew the Giant—weak as the army of Israel might seem, they routed the hosts of Philistia; and, because GOD was on their side. Let not, therefore, the spiritual Israel fear. Tho' *Thomas Paine's* piece issues forth from the camp of DEISM, clad in the armour of *human sufficiency*,* shaking the spear of philosophy, and guarded by the sword of pretended Reason; yet God is on our side—his chosen Israel shall prevail: and as David smote off Goliath's head, with the Giant's own sword; so, probably Reason may be found finally to triumph in the hands of Christians. Christians espouse the cause of Reason, as well as Mr. P. only with due regulation.

“ Wrong not the Christian; think not *Reason* yours,

“ 'Tis *Reason* our great Master holds so dear;—

“ To give him *Reason* life, he pour'd his own.”

YOUNG.

Christians know something of *philosophy* too, as well as Deists. Many of them believed that days and years were produced by the diurnal and annual motion of the Earth, and not the Sun, before Mr. P. wrote his sketch of Astronomy; which, indeed, is taken from the Solar System of an *Advocate for Christianity*—Sir Isaac Newton.

S E C.

* Mr. Paine believes nature to be sufficient for the welfare of man, in every exigency.

SECTION III.

THE motives which actuated Mr. Paine in his publication, are not mainly the matter for our consideration: Whatever these might be, his arguments and objections call mostly for our attention. The question is, has Mr. P. sufficiently demonstrated that a supernatural Revelation is superfluous and unnecessary—that Christianity is a fraud, an imposture—that the Bible (the old and new Testament) is calculated rather to corrupt and prejudice, than to refine and benefit mankind—and, that the profession and belief of Deism would be productive of more real happiness?

To show that this is *not* the case; to obviate Mr. P's reasonings and objections, and to vindicate the *divine authority* of the Scriptures, is my intention in the present Essay: And I feel a sacred tremor while I make the attempt; a tremor produced, not by a diffidence as to the merits of the cause I undertake; but by a consciousness of the vast importance of the subject;—a subject on which hang the fates of CHRISTIANITY and DEISM—of Life and Death! What I propose however, is only to contribute a *mite* to the sacred Treasury, which, however small, may be acceptable to a condescending God, *who accepteth according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.* (a)——May the Holy Spirit, who, from the sacred heights of Zion's celestial hill, condescended to make his humble abode in the breasts of obscure mortals, when first he kindled the flame which shone a heavenly day through the earth, enlighten my mind, and assist my feeble powers, in the present undertaking!

(a) 1 Cor. viii. 13.

SECTION IV.

IT would protract this Pamphlet beyond the limits which I wish it to be compris'd in, should I undertake to animadvert on, and answer, every particular in Mr. P's piece; being, in that case, obliged to quote almost his whole performance. To be, therefore, the more succinct, I shall consider Mr. P's objections &c. under different heads, descending to such particulars as may require a more minute observation; and shall close my pamphlet with such reflections as may appear expedient.

Any person who has read Mr. Paine's *Age of Reason*, may readily observe, that the substance of what he has written against Christianity, may be comprised under the following heads or propositions.

- I. *That God's works of Creation are sufficient for man's instruction—that a supernatural Revelation is superfluous and unnecessary, that therefore, the idea is to be rejected.*
- II. *That Christianity is a fraud, and the Scriptures the production of human invention.*
- III. *That the prevalence of Christianity is injurious to mankind; the Bible being calculated rather to prejudice than benefit the world.*
- IV. *That the profession and belief of Deism would be productive of more real happiness.*

In the course of my animadversions, I hope to make it appear, that the arguments brought to support these propositions may be ranked under the following heads, viz. Insufficient argument, or such as wants weight and force:—Misrepresentation and abuse:—Sophistry, or deceitful reasoning.

CHAPTER I.

OUR attention is demanded, first, to this proposition, viz. *That God's works of creation convey all necessary knowledge to man;—but a supernatural Revelation is superfluous, the idea of which is consequently to be rejected.*

The doctrine in this proposition is founded on an idea (which Mr. P. espouses) that “man stands in the same relative condition towards his Maker he ever did stand in since man existed.” A idea which, as I said Mr. P. *espouses*; not *proves*. Could it be proven that man is by nature as undepraved, as holy, and as much in the divine favor as ever he was, the idea of a superadded revelation would seem absurd; since it would intimate that God had created man defective:—the idea of Redemption, which is the *soul* of revelation, would, in that case, be quite ridiculous; since it would imply that God had created man in a sinful, condemn'd, and lost state; on the consideration of which, the doctrine of redemption is founded. On a denial that man is in a fallen state, it is, that not only this proposition is grounded; but the whole superb structure of DEISM stands on it. Human ability, or self-sufficiency, seems to be the mighty sand-bank which for a while supports the mouldering structure; but which, by the storm of death, will be swept away, “like the baseless fabric of a vision.” The consideration that God would *not* create an intelligent being in an imperfect, sinful, and condemned state, militates as was before observed) against the idea of revelation, or the doctrine of redemption, *provided* man was still in his state of primæval rectitude:—

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The same consideration will be found positively to contradict the idea that man is in that state. That there are not only *vicious habits acquired* by us, but *vicious principles implanted* in our nature, from whence these vicious habits proceed, is a lamentable truth, written, alas! in characters too legible to require much of the exercise of my pen at present. The first sprouts of human nature discover their poisonous quality, more or less, and the long list of abominations, called by an Apostle *the works of the flesh*, (b) are not only practised in the lives of men, but deeply rooted in their hearts. Their hearts contain the seeds—their lives the branches and fruits. *Uncleanness, Hatred, Variance, Envy*, and every evil disposition, produce themselves as fly, tho' incontestible evidences, that *man is corrupt*: *Murder* too, in solitary groans declares it: *Drunkennes, Ristings, and Revellings*, harshly and disagreeably proclaim it: stupid *Idolatry* widely speaks it: and *War*, in her bloody garments, spreads the dreadful truth over the world, in thunder, shrieks, and groans!—To these evidences might be added the *Miseries* attendant on human life; such as are brought on men, not by their *actual* transgressions and follies only, but are inseparably connected with their nature. The anxiety and distress of mind—the pain and anguish of body, experienced more or less by all the human race;—and DEATH, riding in state on his pale horse, triumphantly brandishing his fatal dart;—all pronounce, all demonstrate the truth of the gloomy doctrine I am now advancing.

Comparing this rough draught with its original, and deciding impartially, no person can justly say,

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that

(b) Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

that I have dipt my pencil in colors too dark, or overcast my picture with shades too gloomy: And tho' light might with propriety be introduced into the scene, it should be such chiefly, as springs from the "*Father of Lights*," in a *merciful**, and a *supernatural* way.

Viewing this picture, or rather its far more gloomy original—the World, what are we think of Mr. P's doctrine, that man is *now* in the same state he *ever* was, from his original existence?—Have we not much greater cause to revolt with horror at the thought of this doctrine, than Mr. P. had at the thought of "*Redemption by the death of the Son of God*?†"—To support this doctrine it must be asserted, either that man is *not* in a depraved state naturally; or that God *did* create an intelligent being depraved and sinful. The *former* would contradict plain fact, and glaring evidence—the *latter* would be utterly inconsistent with every principle of Reason, Philosophy, and Religion.

The substance of these observations may be briefly comprehended in one plain logical syllogism, viz.

God would not create an intelligent being in an unholy and sinful state:

Man, an intelligent being, is in such a state:

Therefore, Man is not now in the state in which God first created him.

Mr. Paine has not attempted to prove this doctrine but seems desirous of establishing it, by ridiculing the means by which the Bible represents sin as having made its first entrance, and the fall of man to have been accomplished. In the mean time, he gives us

no

* The idea of MERCY is founded on the consideration of wretchedness. † See p. 58, Age Reason

no account how sin gain'd admission ; which he certainly should have done, to avoid imitating (as he does in this respect) the person who laughs at the supposed ignorance of another, but who, upon being examined, shamefully discovers greater ignorance. He says (p. 15.) concerning the Christian idea of the Fall, " He (Satan) is then introduced into the garden of Eden, in the shape of a snake, or a serpent, and in that shape he enters into familiar conversation with Eve, who is no ways surprized to hear a snake talk ; and the issue of this tete a tete is, that he persuades her to eat an apple, and the eating of that apple damns all mankind."—In p. 51, he asserts (among other things) that " the strange story of Eve, the snake, and the apple, is irreconcilable to the divine gift of reason that God has given to man." The reader will observe, that the first of these quotations contains no *reasoning* against the Christian idea of the Fall ; but is nothing more than a picture dressed in a garb calculated to excite ridicule : That the other quotation contains as little of the appearance of reasoning as the former ; being a bare assertion. Though ridicule and assertion are widely different from argument, and could justly claim no answer ; yet, for as much as they may be influential with some, it may not be amiss to clear our ideas of the Fall from the appearance of absurdity, and to vindicate them from the charge of unreasonableness.—An impartial and familiar statement of the matter, is as follows :

1. GOD created man upright : The soul being a principle susceptible of the Divine Image in his moral perfections, that image was stamp'd on it. Man was pure and holy.

2. The benign Author of his being gave him free access to Himself, whereby the *soul* might receive heavenly beatitude ; and free toleration in the enjoyment of every earthly good, for the *body*.

3. The sovereign Creator, in the character of LAW-GIVER, laid a prohibition on man, forbidding the use of the fruit of a certain tree, called "The tree of knowledge of good and evil:" what kind of a tree it was, is not known ; tho' Mr. P. tells us, it was an *apple tree*. Happiness was to continue (perhaps increase) during obedience ; but Death (including every kind of misery) was the awful penalty of the Law—the dread consequence of disobedience.

4. In Adam, as a representative, were considered all his seed.

5. The omniscient God saw proper to permit the trial of his new moral Agent, who was endued with sufficient power to stand, tho' free to fall. This was done by the temptations of that fallen Spirit, in whom sin first strangely conceived.

6. The dreadful effect of this temptation, was *Sin in the new creation*, leading the van of every misery. Corruption and condemnation were now entailed on all the human race.

If Mr. Paine, who seems pregnant with *reason*, could have given us a more *rational* idea of the entrance of sin into our world, and the cause of the misery with which it is stored, he is certainly quite inexcusable not to have done it in "an investigation of true and false Theology." That there *is* sin in our world, is not denied: By what means came it first among us? That there is misery, is most certain: Whence did it spring?—Mr. Paine is silent!

If, upon a superficial view, any idea held out in the statement

Statement I have given, should appear *ridiculous*, it may be that of eternal condemnation in consequence of eating the forbidden fruit; if any part seems *unreasonable*, perhaps it is the idea of *universal* condemnation, by the transgression of one or two. To a few observations on each of these points, I ask the reader's particular attention.

First, the idea of eternal condemnation in consequence of eating the forbidden fruit, comes under our notice. "What! (says the Deist) shall a man be "damn'd for eating an apple? A ludicrous idea indeed." But his eyes are only on the *apple*, and the *mouth* that eats it. I am reminded here of an anecdote I have somewhere read, which seems applicable to the present matter. "A witty fellow being pursued by the officers of justice, went to the king, "and in a suppliant manner implored *his majesty's* "pardon and protection. The king demanding an "account of the transgression of which he was guilty, the suppliant answered, *that he threw a man's "hat out at a window.* The king diverted by the "oddness of the circumstance, readily granted his "request; upon which his petitioner immediately "subjoined, *May it please your Majesty, his head "was in his hat.*" The king considered simply *the action* of throwing the hat out at the window (for kings have not always the greatest penetration)—Mr P. considers simply, *the action* of eating the fruit. It is an undeniable truth, that a circumstance may wear a ludicrous aspect by a superficial glance, which a more attentive survey will discover to be a matter of serious consequence. Let us consider that the demerit which produced such awful consequences, did not lie in the action of eating, simply considered; but

in breaking the Law of Heaven's eternal Sovereign:

If it be objected that this prohibition wears a trifling appearance; I answer, that rightly considered it does the more display the SOVEREIGNTY of the great LAW GIVER, and the GOODNESS of the kind CREATOR. His *Sovereignty*, in as much as it shows his right to make a seemingly small matter a test of obedience, and the hinge on which Life and Death should turn;---His *Goodness*, in as much as the prohibition restricted man in nothing that could be beneficial to him. To which may be added, that it demonstrated God's utter abhorrence of *sin*, tho' apparently, in its least horrid form.

An attentive survey of this matter being all that was necessary to clear it from the charge of absurdity, I pass on to the next particular, the idea of *universal* condemnation, by *partial* transgression, or by the transgression of our first parents.

That there is sin in our nature-- that it was not coeval with the first existence of human nature, have been sufficiently demonstrated: That it therefore gained admission into man after his creation, and that it was transmitted to his seed by generation, seem to be *rational*, and indeed, *necessary* ideas of the matter. If then, *sinfulness* be transmitted in this manner, in the same manner *condemnation* and *misery* (the effects of sin) are intailed on us. So that to adopt Mr. P's words on another occasion, with some alteration, "Difficult as this doctrine may be, we arrive at the belief of it from the tenfold greater difficulty of *disbelieving* it,"—or of getting Mr. P. to help us to a better idea of the circumstance.

My readers will observe, that in this doctrine, Adam (our first father) is considered as the Representative

sentative of his posterity: This seems naturally connected with the consideration of depravity and misery in consequence of his transgression.—Now when a fact is sufficiently demonstrated, 'ho' we should not be able *fully* to comprehend the nature, or reasonableness of it, no arguments or objections can make it void: Nevertheless, I will offer a few considerations in favor of the idea of Adam's standing as a federal head for his posterity.

1st. All men are parts of Adam—branches of the first stock: he becoming sinful, they necessarily partake of his sinful nature, which subjects them to condemnation and misery. This being in the course of nature, God was not bound, in justice, to prevent or alter it. Even under the *present* dispensation, we have instances of hereditary pain and distress—instances of children inheriting disease and anguish from the infirmity of their parents.

2dly. As God created Adam a perfect moral Agent, would it not be arrogance in any individual among us to say, that we should have done better in that state? Indeed when we add another consideration, it will, I think, appear unreasonable that we should entertain such a thought; which is,

3dly. That Adam had (as a weighty obligation to obedience) beside the concern of *his own* happiness, that of *all his posterity*; a motive which could not possibly have influenced each individual.

4thly. I will just add, that had Adam continued holy the time of probation allotted him (as 'tis probable there was such a space of time) then the happiness extended to his posterity would have been as great as is now their wretchedness, by his transgression.

If after all, we groan under this load of sin and
Woe,

woe, the doctrine of Redemption gives a glorious remedy: JESUS, the second Adam, will take off the burden, and turn our groans to songs of triumph ! But I pass on to the matter under consideration.

Having removed (as I think the candid mind will acknowledge) the foundation of this proposition, the superstructure, of consequence, falls ; and indeed, "GREAT IS THE FALL !" for the whole fabrick of Deism thunders along down with it.

The reader will recollect that the proposition before us at present is, *That the Creation being a sufficient instructor, a supernatural revelation is unnecessary*; and that this proposition is founded on the idea, that man is now in the same state he ever was in, since man existed. — But if man is not in that state — (and that he is not, is sufficiently evident) — if instead of being full of divine light and holy principles, he is full of spiritual darkness and sinful dispositions, it is not difficult to observe, that tho' the volume of creation might contain sufficient matter for instruction for *the holy and perfect man*, it may fall infinitely short in guiding *the fallen sinner* to everlasting happiness.

Mr. P. represents the Christian system as opposed to the contemplation of God in his works of creation ; and enters the field in defence of the wonderful power, wisdom, and order, which are displayed in the universal machinery ; strenuously insisting on attention to these amazing works. But after all his flourishing in this field, there is no adversary ; — that is, not the adversary against whom Mr. P's sword is drawn. In this, the *Christian* is by no means his opposer. The *Atheist* should have been the mark for his weapon here. — It is strange indeed that Mr. R. should represent the christian system inimical to
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the contemplation of nature, when he has adopted passages for the illustration of his observations, taken from a part of *that volume* which Christians receive as their *Credenda*, and *Agenda*! (See p. 39, 40, Age Rea.)—Christians declare, that *the eternal power and God-head* of the DEITY *may be clearly seen in the works of Creation*; Rom. i. 20. They profess that Creation is JEHOVAH's "*first volume*:"—that the sun, moon, and stars, are "heaven's golden a'phabet:—that natural religion is inculcated by the works of creation. — If Mr. P. knew this, was it not falsehood to deny it?—If he did not, was it not inexcusable to argue against Christianity, from no better premises than his own ignorance?

But, as Christians assert the important instructions conveyed to man, by the volume of creation; they likewise maintain the necessity of a Revelation superior to this;—a Revelation every way adapted to man in a fallen state*. Had man continued in a holy state, we conceive ~~that~~ the wide spread volume of creation would have conveyed all the knowledge that was requisite: Having in himself a principle of holiness, he needed only, with a mind full of divine light, to behold the DEITY portrayed in his works;—His power shining in their existence—His wisdom displayed in their order and harmony—and his goodness manifested in a profusion of blessings scattered thro' the universe:—he needed only, to

* Mr. P. asserts, that the wonders of creation are sufficient to teach us our duty, and lead us to it; yet, it must be granted that the wonders of redemption have been more influential to produce holiness of heart and life. How is this? Does *man's imaginary* book of inspiration out-do *God's real one*?!—What will the boasting *sons of reason* say to this?

to behold, and to adore ! But considering man in a fallen state, the case is very different. When, therefore, Mr. P. asks (p. 39) “What more does man want to know than that the hand or power that made these things is Divine—is Omnipotent?”—we may readily answer, he wants to know, or needs to know, considerably more. The knowledge that the Creator is *Divine*—is *Omnipotent*, in connection with a proper knowledge of our *sinful state*, would but augment our wretchedness. The brighter the displays of Divine Majesty, the more, with terror, will conscious guilt shrink back.—Is the CREATOR *Divine*? Yes! And what am I?—A *guilty sinner*—an offender against *this Being*! Is He *Omnipotent*? Surely He is! And I am a *frail mortal*, “crushed before the moth:” how shall I then stand “the thunder of his power?—These rays of Divinity being too dreadfully effulgent for the mental eye, weakened as it is by sin, the shade which the humanity of Jesus throws over them, is a grateful, a desirable one*. Does not the reader see that man wants to know more than that “the hand that made us is Divine, is Omnipotent?” Certainly.—He wants to know how a sinner can be reconciled to God: How his sins may be forgiven,

and

* See p. 41. *Age of Reason*. where Mr. P. says of the Christian system “It introduces between man and his maker an opaque body which it calls a redeemer; as the moon introduces her opaque self between the earth and the sun; and it produces by this means a religious, or an irreligious eclipse of light. It has put the whole orb of reason into shade.”——Mr. P. has attempted to introduce *his opaque self* between the world and the light of the gospel: ‘Tis to be hoped, however, that he will not be capable of producing so extensive a shade as to throw much of the orb of Christianity into an eclipse.

and yet answered for : How he may be received into Divine favor, and ⁱⁿ a way consistent with strict justice. These anxious and important enquiries Mr. P. has not attempted to answer ; but they are fully, and satisfactorily answered in *that Book* which he would persuade us to renounce. In *that*, the enquiring sinner finds that the Hand that *made* us, has *redeemed* us : and while viewing the glorious plan, may adopt the words of a charming poet,

“ With joy—with grief, that *healing hand* I see;
“ The skies it form’d, and yet it bled for me.”

A summary of my observations on the first proposition is, That man does not possess his primæval rectitude; but that he is depraved and fallen :— That tho’ he needed no supernatural revelation in his *primitive* state, yet in his *present* state he does :—being, by sin, deprived of that heavenly light which would have been a sufficient guide; and cast down from that state of happiness, in which, he needed no Redeemer.

C H A P. II.

DECLINING further observations on this proposition, I come to the second, viz.

II. *That Christianity is a fraud, and the Scriptures the production of human invention.*

The doctrine contained in this proposition, Mr. P. has attempted to establish, by holding out, That “human language being local and changeable, is
incapable

“incapable of being used as the means of unchange-
 “able and universal information”---That the christian system wants evidence of its divine authority.---
 That it contradicts, in several instances, the principles of philosophy and reason:---with some other objections.

In answer to the first objection, it may be observed, that the substance of what is contained in one language, may be faithfully conveyed in another language; that as it *may be* the case, so it certainly *shall be*, if God undertakes to superintend in the business. Now if the Christian religion be of God, there is certainly the interposition of his providence in its favor, as far as is necessary*. The objection therefore has no weight: It is founded on the supposition the Christian system is a human invention, which is begging the question; for that was the point to be proven. Mr. P. (p. 26) represents the “continual change to which the meaning of words is subject---the want of an universal language---the errors of translators, copyists and printers, together with the possibility of wilful alteration,---as evidences of themselves, that human language, whether in speech or print, *cannot* be the vehicle of the word of God.” But let the candid reader judge whether this does not call in question the power and providence of God?---for it must be granted that He can surmount all these difficulties:---can convey the same substance to all nations, tho’ in a different dress. Observation will wonderfully corroborate

* This observation is applicable to Mr. P’s objection, (p. 19.) respecting the manner in which the Church determined concerning the authenticity of the scriptural books.

elaborate these remarks : As opposition has not dried
 up the stream of Christianity, human invention has
 not muddied it ! “ We may as well make difficulties
 “ of all things that are not seen with our eyes, and
 “ so destroy all human testimony, as scruple the ge-
 “ nuineness of the sacred writings ; for never were
 “ any writings conveyed down with so good evi-
 “ dence of their being genuine and uncorrupted as
 “ these. Upon their first publication they were put
 “ into all hands, they were scattered into all na-
 “ tions, translated into various languages, and all
 “ persons used them, either to be taught by them,
 “ or to cavil at them. And ever since, they have
 “ been quoted by thousands of authors, appealed to
 “ by all parties of Christians as the supreme Judge
 “ of controversies ; and not only the enemies of
 “ Christianity have carefully watched them to de-
 “ tect any alteration which pious fraud might at-
 “ tempt to make, but one sect of Christians has
 “ kept a watchful eye over the other*, lest they should
 “ alter any thing in favor of their own cause. And
 “ it is matter of astonishment, as well as conviction,
 “ that all the various copies and translations of the
 “ scriptures, in different nations and libraries, are
 “ substantially the same, and differ only in matters
 “ of small moment, so that from the worst copy or
 “ translation in the world, one might easily learn the
 “ substance of Christianity.” †

But, to support the doctrine in this proposition,
 it is further urged that Christianity wants sufficient
 evidence of its divine authority.—Mr. P. wishes to

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main-

* A striking hint towards accounting for the permission
 (under divine Providence) of so many different sects.

† Mr. SAMUEL DAVIES'S Sermons.—Sermon 1.

maintain that unless he were an eye or ear witness of the facts recorded, no obligation lies on him to believe. If indeed his *assertion* is to be received for a *reason*, the point must be given up; but I hope there are many who differ from him in this instance:—who maintain that if those events recorded are attested with sufficient evidence to strike conviction on the candid and rational mind, a moral obligation *does* lie on us to believe. He instances in the case of *Thomas*: (p. 12) who had “ocular and manual demonstration;”—but does this prove that such demonstration was necessary to the existence of faith? By no means.—It proves that such kind of evidence was necessary to constitute an apostle, who, after being thus convinced, was to be instrumental in convincing the world by means measurably different. Thomas himself was reprimanded for his incredulity, and as Mr. P. is not an apostle (in a religious sense) it is probable such demonstration will not be granted him.

That miraculous demonstration, however, was in many respects necessary in the first propagation of Christianity, will be readily granted; and if Mr. P. could not see any reason why such evidence was needed more *then* than in later ages, I would help him to one, which I think, will by the candid enquirer after truth, be esteemed satisfactory.

That rational evidences are necessary is certain: Now many of the evidences which *we* have, they had not—could not have. Several prophecies the primitive ages could only hear uttered;—but we have, in a manner sufficiently convincing, witnessed or known their accomplishment. The beauty, excellence, and wisdom of the whole scriptures; their in-

trinsic

trinsic worth, or internal evidence, are clearly seen by us; but which could not be so well discovered by a less comprehensive view. "Holy men of old" saw the picture while as yet all its parts were not formed, nor its beauties compleated;—but we have the whole draught finished and brought to light.

Thus it is no hard matter to see why miraculous evidence was necessary in the first formation and propagation of a system, the excellence of which could not be so well known, nor its other testimonials at that time be seen.

If now sufficient rational evidences in favor of the divinity of the Christian system may be had, the point must be given up:—That such evidences do exist, is what I maintain in the following observations.

That there was such a person as *Jesus Christ* Mr. P. grants (p. 13) allows the truth of the history of his life measurably, and the manner of his death; and professes a respect for his moral character (p. 13 and 78.) That there were such men as his apostles, every one must grant, is as certain; yet Mr. P. says of the writings ascribed to them (p. 41) "it is not impossible they were written by a monk in a cell." Of all conjectures this was certainly the most improbable; not only because monkery undoubtedly originated since the spread of the gospel, but because the immediate and rapid progress of the gospel on its first promulgation (according to a combination of testimonies) plainly contradicts it. To believe that any set of men could impose on the world by appealing to events of which they were, in general, witnesses,—events too, in which imposture might easily have been detected; especially to believe that a monk from a cell could thus impose on whole nations

tions, is as much as to say, that those nations were a pack of the most stupid asses, and certainly displays a measure of credulity vastly beyond what is necessary to believe the divine authority of the scriptures. It is just as absurd as to suppose that a person, retiring in secret, could there form a scheme whereby he might speedily persuade the majority of the inhabitants of Virginia to put their trust and hopes of happiness in the last man who was publicly executed at *Richmond**—indeed more so, if possible, according to Mr. Paine, who represents Christianity as having introduced corruption, superstition and credulity.

These observations naturally lead me to the first evidence which I intended to instance in favor of the divine origin of the Christian system, viz.—1. *Its immediate and rapid progress, considered in connection with its nature, and those unfavorable circumstances which attended it.*

That the gospel really made such progress, is a fact as well attested and as certainly known as any event in the annals of preceding ages. The enquiry is, how came this to pass?—"How came this to pass," says my objector, "how came it to pass the religion of Mahomet prevailed so remarkably?" Be calm and attentive, my friend, and you shall see a material difference.

The religion of *Mahomet* is well known to be a medley of different religions, and therefore did not so entirely counteract the prejudices of its disciples:—Not so the religion of JESUS: it abrogated *Judaism*, and thereby gained the displeasure of that stiff-necked

* This argument was suggested by a passage in Mr. Fletcher's *Appeal*, p. 145.

necked people: it destroyed the superstitions of heathenism, and thereby stirred up the nations of the earth against it. The religion of *Mahomet* is evidently calculated to please the carnal mind; earthly emolument being its reward—its paradise the seat of sensual pleasures:—Not so the religion of JESUS. The votaries to this humble shrine must *deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ.*—Where all other means failed of success, the religion of *that Impostor* was enforced by that formidable argument---the sword: --Not so the religion of JESUS: “whoever takes the sword” for the purpose of enforcing religion on the minds of others “shall perish with the sword.”

Whence then this wonderful spread of Christianity? Was it by the power of oratory? No; for if oratory could effect such a matter, the publishers of the gospel were not (naturally) masters of it, being chiefly illiterate mechanics and tradesmen. Did it proceed from the brains of enthusiastic visionists? No:---the rationality which appears in this religion, and a number of the most rational men, admirers of it, are evidences to the contrary. Was it the effect of combination, craft, and juggling? No; for the preachers of Christianity appealed to circumstances and events which were as conspicuous as the sun; and such as it must be confessed impotence could not be exercised in.* Was it owing to a plausible tale, fabricated some ages after the period in which these events were said to have taken

C 3

place

* Mr. Paine (p. 74, 75) insists hard on the probability of men's being astonished by philosophical phenomena, the slight of hand &c. But nothing he has said touches the miraculous events recorded in the new Testament,

place;---was it owing to this that it gained credit? No; for beside the improbability of general credit in such a case, it is observable that the apostles appeared to events fresh in the memory, and even before the eyes of their auditories.

Whence then, this remarkable revolution in the world?—Whence, but from that supernatural power which accompanied the gospel-ministry?

When we consider the nature of the Christian religion, directly opposing the lusts of men;—when we consider the unfavorable circumstance of prejudice against it, from education as well as nature; ~~when we~~ consider the instruments who propagated it:—while we behold it gloriously triumphing over every obstacle, we must conclude it was enforced by some powerful means. Powerful indeed they are; yet, “not by (human) might, or (human) power, but by the spirit of the Lord of hosts.” (c) Are those heroes, its propagators arm’d? It is in the panoply of Heaven. Do they bear the sword? It is the “sword of the Spirit.” Does blood flow? It is the blood of the Saviour! Are the nations conquered? It is by reigning grace!

As Mr. Paine intimates by the title of his piece, that the present æra is *the age of reason*, I wish to act consistently, and make a *rational* defence of Christianity. Reason is here evidently on our side.—Reason dictates, that nothing but matter of fact: “could induce thousands of prejudiced and persecuting Jews* to embrace the humbling, self denying
“ doctrines

(c) Zechariah 4, 6.

* Mr. P. has the confidence to tell us (p. 10) that “The Jews never credited the story.” An assertion of this kind, in the face of undoubted historical evidence, merits no attention.

“doctrines of the cross, which they so much despised and abhorred. Nothing but the clearest evidence, arising from undoubted truth, could make multitudes of lawless, luxurious Heathens receive, follow, and transmit to posterity the doctrine and writings of the apostles; especially at a time when the vanity of their pretensions to miracles and the gift of tongues, could be so easily discovered had they been imposters;—at a time when the profession of Christianity exposed persons of all ranks to the greatest contempt, and most imminent danger.” *

* 2. *The miracles performed by JESUS and his apostles are weighty, yea indubitable evidences in favor of the divine origin of Christianity.*

That the record of these miracles was made in the age when they were said to have been performed, and that they appeared evidently as miracles to those who in consequence believed, is clear, from the general credit given to them. The only query is, whether those people were imposed on by slight of hand or fallacious operations. This too, ceases to be a query upon a candid examination. The miracles were of such a nature as to leave no room to doubt of the reality of them: Such as feeding the multitudes miraculously—healing the sick by a commanding word, or a sovereign touch—unlocking the chambers of death†—stilling the raging tempest by a peaceful mandate &c—together with
the

* Mr. FLETCHER's Appeal

† Mr. P. tells us of drowned persons being restored to life, which was apparently gone:—whether he or any other person restores a drowned man in the manner CHRIST raised *Lazarus*, we'll attend to the matter.

the supernatural occurrences attendant on the death of Christ:—not to speak of his Resurrection and Ascension, to which there were not so many witnesses; though these are as certain, and as well attested as the others; the most public miracles being wrought to confirm these truths. The reality of the chief of these miracles was not even denied by the bitterest opposers to Christianity, who were put to the pitiful shift of ascribing them to infernal agency.

Miracles are things out of the course of nature, and are as certain an indication of Divine power as creation. But Mr. P. asks (p. 77) “Is it more probable that nature should go out of her course, or that a man should tell a lie?” And because the latter is more probable, he draws the conclusion against the existence of miracles. To which I answer, here is false logic. Let us state the matter fairly: Is it more probable that nature should go out of her course, or that Christianity, attended with rational, irrefragable evidence, should be false?—The nature of Reason is not altered by an alteration in the course of nature; but the nature of reason must be altered if rational evidence can be disannulled.

3. *The Prophecies in the Scriptures are considerable evidences in favor of their divine origin.*

Prescience (or fore-knowledge) is an attribute peculiar to the DEITY. “Those future events which
 “ shall be accomplished by causes that do not now
 “ exist or appear, cannot be *certainly* foreknown or
 “ foretold by man; and therefore when short-sight-
 “ ed mortals are enabled to predict such events ma-
 “ ny years, and even ages before they happen, it is
 “ a certain evidence that they are let into the secrets
 “ of

“of heaven.”* There will, however, be little dispute but that *prophecy fulfilled* is a proof of the interposition of Omniscience. The query is, whether this is really the case in respect to the Scriptures? Mr. P. would maintain that this is not the case, by endeavoring, first to prove that we have mistaken the meaning of the words *Prophet* and *Prophecy*; asserting that a Prophet was a Poet, and that to prophecy, meant to make poetry, or sing (see p. 23, 24-25.) To evince that several of the prophecies are poetic (which nobody denies) he has taken occasion to display his own poetic talent, and has shewn to a demonstration that several lines from the prophets may be made to rhyme with other lines. Not to take notice of the drollery of such a method for a proof I would only ask what all this can be to the purpose? Does a proof that some of the prophecies are poetic militate in the least against their being or containing predictions? By no means. Mr. P. is not the first who has observed the poetic style of several prophecies (especially in the original) but, for aught I know, he may claim originality in asserting that *Prophet* was the *Bible-word* for *Poet*. As this is only an assertion, or, however, has no arguments in its favor worthy our further attention, and as all who read the prophecies must see that they are evidently intended chiefly as predictions of future events, I shall pass on to observe that Mr. P's second step to invalidate prophetic evidence is, to ridicule the idea. “The “supposed prophet” (says he, p. 79) “was the supposed historian of times to come; and it he happened, in shooting with a long bow of a thousand “years, to come within a thousand miles of the “mark

mark, the ingenuity of posterity could make it "point-blank."—To obviate any difficulty that may arise from this aspersions, nothing is necessary but a candid examination of the prophecies compared with their accomplishment.

In the old testament, we find "*Cyrus* was foretold by name as the restorer of the Jews from Babylon, to rebuild their temple and city, about a hundred years before he was born. (d) Several of the prophets foretold the destruction of various kingdoms in a very punctual manner; as of *Jerusalem, Babylon, Egypt, Ninevah, &c.* which predictions were exactly fulfilled. But the most remarkable prophecies of the Old Testament are those relating to the MESSIAH, which" (so far from being blunders *) "are so accurate and full that they might serve for materials of his history."—"These prophecies describe the lineage of the Messiah—the manner of his conception—his life and miracles—his death, and the various circumstances of it—his burial—resurrection—ascension—and advancement to universal empire, and the spread of the gospel through the world. In the New Testament also we meet with sundry remarkable prophecies. There CHRIST foretells his own death, and the manner of it, and his triumphant resurrection: There, with surprising accuracy, he predicts the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. † We find various prophecies

"also

(d) Isa. 45, 1 &c. * See p. 80 Age of Reason.

† Whoever compares this prophecy with *Josephus's* history of the sad event, must be sensibly struck with the remarkable parity between the prediction of the Christian LEGISLATOR, and the record of the Jewish historian. As
one

“ also in the Epistles concerning the conversion of
 “ Jews, which, though it be not yet accomplished,
 “ we see a remarkable providence making way for
 “ it, in keeping the Jews, who are scattered over
 “ all the earth, distinct from all other nations for
 “ upwards of 1700 years,—while all other nations
 “ have in a much shorter time mixed in such a
 “ manner, that none of them can now trace their
 “ own original.”*

Not only the spread of the Gospel is predicted in the Scriptures; but the clouds which infernal winds should blow up to darken its lustre; to wit, the corruption introduced by antichristian power (under the Christian name) particularly by the Church of Rome. That book which Mr. P. is pleased to term “ a book of enigmas” † may be so far *unriddled* as to shew evident predictions not only of the certainty, but the nature of the Romish abominations: so that those corruptions which Mr. P. ungenerously and sophistically uses as arguments against the system of Christianity, are (when considered as the fulfilment of prophecy) evidences in favor of it.

The final dissipation of these pernicious clouds, and the universal spread of the Gospel, are likewise predicted:—The accomplishment of other prophecies, together with the signs of the present times, are a sufficient and a comfortable earnest of the fulfilment of these.

4 The

one evidence that this prophecy was written previous to the event, it is observable that all the Evangelists who mention the circumstance died before the destruction of Jerusalem: *John* survived it, and he makes no mention of it. See *Beattie's Evid.*

• Mr. S. DAVIES. † The book of Revelation.

4. *The singular and glorious energy of the Gospel on the minds of men*, is another evidence worthy our attention.

This is an evidence which has not its due weight with Deists, partly because they (alas!) have never experienced it, and partly because of the wicked lives of many who profess Christianity. But they who have really experienced it know its power, “in convincing them of sin—easing their consciences—
 “inspiring them with unspeakable joy—subduing
 “their lusts---and transforming them into its own
 “likeness.---Every one that believeth hath this
 “witness in himself, and this is an evidence level
 “to the meanest capacity, which may be soon lost
 “in a course of sublime reasoning.” This too is an evidence which ought to have weight with candid Deists, so far as they see the fruits of this glorious energy in the lives of some:---of some especially who have been evident monuments of the power of divine grace displayed in the gospel. Among this number was *St. Paul* in ancient days; and in latter times the *Earl of Rochester*, *Col. James Gairdner*, and many others. Shew us, Sirs, a system from the wisest heathen or deistical Philosophers, that can vie in this instance, with that system revealed by JESUS the Son of Mary, and published by his illiterate disciples!

To these evidences let us add,

5. *That internal evidence which the Scriptures carry along with them, or their intrinsic excellence, particularly the New Testament, which is the more immediate foundation of Christianity.*

By the *Bible* is meant the whole Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; but when Mr. P. speaks
 of

of the bible as a "system of wickedness" (p. 22) he means the Old Testament, which only, he is there considering. But whatever "obscene stories, voluptuous debaucheries, cruel and torturous executions, and unrelenting vindictiveness" may be recorded in the Old Testament, it is evident from the tenor of that, and especially of the New Testament, that these instances are not recorded with approbation; but that sin and immorality, in every shape, are obnoxious to the divine displeasure—are the dishonor of God's cause, and the ruin of the soul.

Mr. P. to invalidate the evidence arising from miracles, tells us (p. 76) that "it implies a lameness or weakness in the doctrine that is preached." To which it may be answered, No; but it implies a lameness or weakness in the faculties of the soul: Our stupor is so great that it requires a shake from the hand of Omnipotence to awaken us.* It is true that the excellence of a system or doctrine should be such as to recommend it: And if ever a system, if ever a religion can gain acceptance on account of its intrinsic excellence, the Christian religion "is worthy of all acceptance."

As Mr. Paine has taken occasion to give us a sketch of philosophy (which seems to be the only system of religion he has held out) I will take the liberty to give a sketch of that spiritual philosophy which the holy scriptures afford us.

"In the scriptures we find the faint discoveries of natural reason illustrated, its uncertain conjectures

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deter

* "To common sense great Nature's course proclaims

"A DEITY:—when mankind falls asleep

"A miracle is sent as an alarm,

"To Wake the world, and prove Him o'er again."

DR. YOUNG.

“determined, and its mistakes corrected; so that
 “Christianity includes natural religion in the great-
 “est perfection. But it does not rest here; it brings
 “to light things which ‘eye had not seen, nor ear
 “heard, nor the heart of man conceived;’ things
 “which our feeble reason could never have disco-
 “vered without the help of supernatural revelation;
 “and which yet are of the utmost importance for us
 “to know.”

“In the Scriptures we have the clearest, and most
 “majestic account of the nature and perfections of
 “the Deity; of His being the Creator, Ruler and
 “Benefactor of the universe, to whom therefore all
 “reasonable beings are under infinite obligations.”*

In

* Mr. P. says (p. 41) “I recollect not a single passage in all the writings of the men called apostles, that conveys any idea of what God is.” What a pity he was so void of recollection in a matter of such importance!—and that he should take advantages against Christianity from his want of recollection! To shew however that this is a defect in Mr. P. and not in the Scriptures, I will here recite some hints from the writings of those men called apostles, and leave the reader to judge whether those writings do not convey to us ideas of what God is: *God a Spirit and Invisible*; John iv. 24, and 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16 *Eternal*; Rev. i. 8. *Immutable*; Jas. i. 17. Heb. xiii. 8. *Omnipotent*; Rom. i. 20, and Mat. xix. 26. *Omnipresent*; Acts xvii. 23, 28. *Omniscient*; Rom. xi. 33, and Heb. iv. 13. *Pure and Holy*; 1 Pet. i. 5 *Just and Righteous*; Col. iii. 25. *Good and Gracious*; Mat. v. 45, and 2 Cor. i. 13. *Faithful and true*, 2 Thet. iii. 3, and Titus i. 2, 3. *One God*; 1 Cor. viii. 4. *Three in One*; 1 John v. 7. *The God of Nature and Providence*; Acts xvii. 24, 26.

I cannot here forbear taking notice of the mean, ungenerous part Mr. P. has acted (p. 59) in charging the Christian system with the belief of ‘five deities: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, the God Providence, and

“ In the Scriptures we have an account of the
 “ present state of human nature, as degenerate, and
 “ a more rational and easy account of the manner of
 “ its apostacy than could ever be given by the light
 “ of nature.”

“ In the Scriptures too (which wound but to cure)
 “ we have the welcome account of a method of re-
 “ covery from the ruins of our apostacy, thro’ the
 “ mediation of the SON OF GOD: There we have
 “ the assurance which we could find no where else,
 “ that God is reconcilable and willing to pardon pe-
 “ nitents upon the account of the obedience and suf-
 “ ferings of CHRIST. There all our anxious en-
 “ quiries, wherewith shall I come before the Lord?
 “ or bow myself before the most high God? (c) are
 “ satisfactorily answered; and there the agonizing
 “ conscience can obtain relief, which might have
 “ sought it in vain among all the other religions in
 “ the world.” †

D 2

The

“ and the Goddess's Nature.” However strange the doctrine
 of the TRINITY may be, Mr. P. must know that Christi-
 ans are advocates for the doctrine of UNITY in the God-
 head. And as to the two deities, the *God Providence* and
 the *Goddess's Nature*, we are indebted to Mr. P.'s fertile in-
 vention for their existence, for Christians know that Na-
 ture and Providence are in the hands of GOD.—If the
 cause of Christianity be so palpably false as Mr. P. would
 make it, why does the cause of Deism need such palpable
 falsehood to support it?

Mr. P. seems to plume his cause upon the belief of *One*
 God only (p 7.) It is not difficult to see that for this and
 several other ideas he is indebted to the Scriptures, tho' he
 either does not perceive it, or will not acknowledge it.
 What other system ever established this doctrine except the
 Scriptures? And how can Mr. P. say, mankind will *return*
 to the belief of one God?”

(c) Micah 6. 6. 7.

† Mr. S. DAVIES.

The eternal worlds were never explored by mortals, neither could their unenlightened minds form any competent idea of them. From the eyes of the wisest heathens those unknown regions lay obscured by "shadows, clouds, and darkness."—'Tis to the gospel-revelation that we are indebted for a discovery of these awful and important things. 'Tis the hand of JESUS that has "unbarr'd the gates of light," and let heavenly day down into our benighted world. The celestial rays have beamed into this gloomy valley, and the land of the shadow of death has become a land of light and vision.

'Tis worthy our observation, how far more majestic and becoming is the idea of the future states of the righteous and wicked, held out in the sacred writings, than all the chimeras which the brains of the unenlightened heathens have formed! * How mean and insipid are their ideas of the *Elysian Fields*, and the sensual joys experienced by their inhabitants, when once compared with the pure regions of light and glory—the refined joys of angels and "the spirits of just men made perfect!" How low their descriptions of future punishments;—of *Ixion* on the wheel—of *Tantalus* mortified with the sight of cool water and tempting apples, while he could get neither—of *Sisyphus* doomed to roll in vain a huge stone up a hill—of *Prometheus* chained to a frozen mountain on whose liver a vulture preyed;—I say how low when compared with the awfully majestic displays of the regions of sorrow, the realms of damnation, where conscience, like a never-dying worm, preys
on

* Tho' the gospel reveals doctrines which human reason never could have discovered, yet when revealed they (chiefly) appear to coincide with it, and to be established by it.

on the soul, and the just vengeance of JEHOVAH, like fire, is dreadfully vented !

To these doctrinal sketches, many additions might be made ; but I pass on to observe that

The scriptures afford us the most perfect system of practical religion.

“ There, not only the duties of natural religion are inculcated ; but several important duties, as love to our enemies, humility,” repentance and faith. In short, there we are informed of our duties towards God, towards our neighbors, and towards ourselves. The scriptures are full of particular injunctions and directions to particular duties, lest we should not be sagacious enough to infer them from general rules ; and sometimes all these duties are summed up in some short maxim, or general rule, which we may easily remember, and always carry about with us. Such a noble summary is that which CHRIST has given us of the whole moral law ; *Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart. &c. and thy neighbor as thyself.* (f) Or that all-comprehending rule of our conduct towards one another, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them ;* (g) What recommends these doctrinal instructions, and practical directions is, that they are plain and obvious to common-sense. It is as much the concern of the illiterate and vulgar to be religious, as of the few endowed with a philosophic genius ; and consequently, whatever difficulties may be in a Revelation to exercise such a genius, all matters of Faith and practice which are absolutely necessary, should be delivered in a man-

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“ not

“ not suitable to the meanest capacity. According-
 “ ly, the religion of JESUS, tho’ it has mysteries
 “ equal, and infinitely superior to the largest capacity,
 “ yet in its more necessary articles is intelligible to
 “ all ranks who apply themselves with proper dili-
 “ gence to the perusal of them : and I dare affirm, that
 “ a man of common sense, with the assistance of the
 “ sacred scriptures, can form a better system of reli-
 “ gion and morality, than the wisest philosopher, with
 “ all his abilities and learning, can form without this
 “ help. This I dare affirm, because it has been put
 “ to trial, and attested by matter of fact: for who-
 “ ever is acquainted with the writings of the ancient
 “ heathen philosophers, cannot but be convinced,
 “ that amidst all their learning and study—amidst all
 “ their shining thoughts and refined speculations, they
 “ had not such just notions of God and his perfecti-
 “ ons—of the most acceptable way of worshipping
 “ Him—of the duties of morality—and of a future
 “ state, as any common Christian has learned from
 “ the scriptures.—In this sense, *the least in the king-*
 “ *dom of heaven*. i. e. any common Christian, is
 “ greater than all the *Socrates’s* the *Plato’s* the *Cice-*
 “ *ro’s*, and the *Seneca’s* of antiquity; as one that is
 “ of a weak sight can see more clearly by the help of
 “ day-light, than the clearest eyes can without it.” *

I know that Mr. Paine calmly tells us, p. 11 (after
 confessing the morality which Christ preached to be
 of the most benevolent kind †) that similar systems
 of morality had been preached before; but this
 being

* MR. S. DAVIES. † The reader will observe that
 Mr. P. professes to believe in the existence of such a person
 as Jesus Christ, and the excellence of his doctrine, the lat-
 ter of which can only be gathered from that book which he
 rejects as a forgery—the New Testament !

being but an assertion, is nothing to the purpose.

Upon the whole, the religion of JESUS is such a religion as we might expect from heaven in case any should be given; and as we have considered the expediency of a supernatural religion, we may safely conclude that *this* is it—that this is from God. It bears marks of divinity in its features—it carries evidences of divinity in the circumstances attending it. We may accommodate to this subject, with some alteration, what Mr. Paine says concerning the belief of the existence of God;—We arrive at the belief of the divinity of the scriptures from the insurmountable difficulty of disbelieving it.

We see in the works of nature evident indications of creating power and wisdom; so may I say, we see in the holy scriptures evident indications of Divinity: and (strange as some may think it) in the volume of Revelation, more of the perfections of the DEITY are illustrated, than in the volume of creation.—Creation may be termed (figuratively speaking) the signet that adorns the right hand of JEHOVAH;—but Revelation shews the gems that sparkle on all his fingers.

If it were necessary to expatiate further on this point, I would take notice that the scriptures furnish us not only with matter adapted to the common apprehension, but that here also the philosophic mind may find exercise, and the admirer of the *true sublime* may be gratified. But wishing to be as concise as may be, I must deny myself the satisfaction of exemplifying these observations by passages which might readily be cited, and pass on.

To represent Christianity as a fraud, Mr. P. further urges that it contradicts, in several instances, the prin-

principles of Reason and Philosophy: a charge which will appear to be owing chiefly to misrepresentation or misunderstanding.

Let us first consider the objection, "that it contradicts Reason."

Is it inconsistent with reason (after weighing the foregoing arguments) that man should in his present state, be esteemed corrupt?--that he should therefore be considered fallen from his original rectitude?--that in consequence he should be represented as condemned by the righteous law of God, and unable to deliver himself? that in this unhappy dilemma, a gracious, condescending God should deign to put his own hand to the work of recovering his lost creature? I confess that in all this I see nothing that contradicts the principles of reason; but I see a great deal of *reason* for the exercise of humility and gratitude.

But the matter (it may be said) requires a nicer attention, since several particular doctrines in this system are objected to. . Let us then descend to particulars.

The doctrine of the fall of man and the circumstances attending it, might claim our notice, as considered contradictory to reason by Mr. P. This however I had occasion to attend to early in the process of this work; where man is shewn to be in a fallen state--where the manner of the origin or source of universal depravity and misery, as held out in the scriptures, is considered the only rational idea we can have of it--and where Mr. P. is justly accused with failing to account for the corruption of nature, and the miseries of mankind, in a better manner. Thus far then I have anticipated myself.

The objection which we shall now first consider, seems to arise from an idea, that as God has a great number

number of worlds under his care, beside ours, it is unreasonable to suppose he would use such stupendous condescension towards one. P. 60, Mr. Paine tells us that "To believe that God created a plurality of worlds, at least as numerous as what we call stars, renders the Christian system of faith at once little and ridiculous; and scatters it in the mind like feathers in the air." And p. 69, he asks, "From whence then could arise the solitary and strange conceit that the Almighty, who had millions of worlds equally dependent on his protection should *quit the care of all the rest*, and come to die in our world —?" The idea held out in these quotations is really odd enough. A fine picture of the DEITY for you, truly!! Like a man of business, he is represented as too much cumbered with other affairs to do so much for *one world*! Does Mr. P. really think that the ALMIGHTY, in paying attention to *one world*, must quit his attention to another? Or would he thus misrepresent Christianity? If the first, he is wretchedly out in his ideas of DIVINITY;—if the last, he is as far from truth, justice, and generosity. Does a multiplicity of worlds divide the attention, love, and munificence of the Almighty in such a manner as to make them less to each world than if there were but one "solitary world?" By no means. Yet, according to Mr. P. the idea of a "solitary world" would be much more consistent with the doctrine of this stupendous love.

Upon the whole, does not the idea of a multiplicity of worlds rather aggrandize this doctrine?—The scheme of redeeming love was to manifest *the riches of God's Grace*; consequently the more stupendous his condescension, the brighter shines his
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free-grace. If it be more wonderful and strange that God, amidst ten thousand worlds rolling through immense tracts of æther, should pay such regard to "this dim spot which men call earth;" it the more exalts our ideas of His unbounded goodness. The weight of reasoning from this quarter will be found in the opposite scale to Mr. P.

The next doctrine which we shall notice, as considered inconsistent with reason by Mr. P. is, that of the Incarnation and Death of CHRIST. He tells us (p. 51) "The amphibious idea of a man-god, and the corporeal idea of the death of a God—are irreconcilable to the divine gift of reason that God has given to man." *

The matter is here misrepresented. With regard to the incarnation of CHRIST, which Mr. P. terms "the amphibious idea of a man-god," I will just observe that this wonderful person is to be considered as God and Man, distinct in these two natures, yet conjoined in One Person: In which idea, there is no more real inconsistency with reason, than in the idea of a union between two such different natures as the soul and body. Is *that* incomprehensible? so is *this*. The *possibility* of a union between the Divine and Human natures seems admissible: it is therefore not inconsistent with reason, however strange and sublime.

As to "the corporeal idea of the death of God," I have to say, that, strictly speaking, we have not such

* The epithet "divine" which is here given to reason would doubtless have been sufficient to express it the gift of God, without adding, "that God has given to man." But Mr. P. is so eager that he runs into down right tautology; to prove too, what nobody denies—that reason is God's gift.

such an idea. It is true that the blood and death of JESUS are, in scripture, set forth as the blood and death of GOD: but the representations which the scriptures every where give us of the nature of DIVINITY, are sufficient to assure us that those expressions are not to be taken in a *strict* sense. They point out to us, however, the ineffable union of the Godhead and Manhood in the person of CHRIST and the infinite merit of his sufferings by virtue of that union.

The objections which we shall next attend to, are those made to the doctrine of Redemption. This is the grand pillar, or rather the soul of Christianity; against it therefore Mr. P. makes a violent push. He first considers it as “representing the Creator “coming off, or revoking the sentence by a pun or “a quibble upon the word *death* * (p. 30).” But this is taking it for granted that the substituting of Christ as a surety, cannot be allowed of; which he ought first to have proven. As he has however attempted this afterwards, we will attend to it in its place.

He next objects to this doctrine because, as he thinks, it has given rise to the popish idea of one person performing meritorious services for another—of pardons—indulgencies &c. (p. 32) Whether these notions were suggested by the doctrine of Redemption or not, I cannot say; but certain it is that if they were, they are a perversion and abuse of that doctrine, and that they are corruptions of Christianity;—corruptions for which the system cannot be censurable. When, therefore, Mr. P. says, “The “probability is that the whole theory or doctrine of “what

* The word Death is not necessarily to be confined to one meaning; it has several in Scripture.

“ what is called the redemption (which is said to
 “ have been accomplished by the act of one person in
 “ the room of another) was originally fabricated on
 “ purpose to bring forward and build all those secon-
 “ dary and pecuniary redemptions upon;” I say,
 when Mr. P. says this, he is certainly to be contra-
 dicted. This is not the probability, but the greatest
 improbability: not only for the reasons already given
 in favor of the divine authority of the scriptures, but
 because, first, the earlier propagators of the gospel-
 doctrines never appeared to have the least shadow of
 pecuniary designs, neither were pecuniary ends ef-
 fected by their labors. Because, secondly, the whole
 tenor of the gospel reprobates such abominations,
 and represents them as evident indications of anti-
 christ. Neither does the doctrine of Redemption
 by Christ favor in the least degree the popish re-
 demptions; the Godhead of CHRIST being held
 forth as necessary to the work of Redemption. And
 since every man is a sinner, and needs this Redempti-
 on, 'tis the height of absurdity to suppose one can re-
 deem (or do any thing meritorious for) another.

Mr. P's next objection to the doctrine of Redemp-
 tion is, that it contradicts our ideas of moral justice.
 His words are (p. 33) “ If I owe a person money
 “ and cannot pay him, and he threatens to put me in
 “ prison, another person can take the debt upon him-
 “ self, and pay it for me. But if I have committed
 “ a crime, every circumstance of the case is changed.
 “ Moral justice cannot take the innocent for the
 “ guilty, even if the innocent would offer itself.”—
 I must here take the liberty to say, that I cannot
 think this doctrine so contradictory to the idea of moral
 justice as deists and some advocates for Christianity
 have

have thought it. It is true that there could be no propriety or utility in vicarious sufferings among men considering circumstances as they really are; but could it be certain that an offender should be reclaimed, as well as released from death, by the actions or sufferings of some other person (voluntarily undertaking for him) I cannot see why this should not satisfy and keep up the dignity of the law. Pecuniary justice is satisfied when the surety pays the debt, because the creditor loses nothing: in this case the innocent suffers for the guilty, and justice accepts it: and if we think the case is entirely different in moral justice, perhaps it is owing chiefly to sentiments inspired more by prejudice than principle.

After all, I am ready to confess in behalf of Christianity (nor do I conceive that it militates in the least against it) that this doctrine, as well as that of the TRINITY (of which I have before taken no notice) and some other doctrines, are beyond the comprehension of human reason.* Indeed this, so far from being an objection to Christianity, seems perfectly consistent with our ideas of a divine Revelation. That the proofs and evidences of the authority of Revelation should be clearly comprehended—that the precepts it contains should be plain to all candid and serious enquirers, are what we should naturally expect: But when we see that the reasons of many things in the natural world baffle our most painful researches—when we consider that several things in

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* By the expression, *human reason*, I do not mean to intimate that a man can give himself reason, of which Mr. P complains; but I mean that degree of reason which human nature possesses.

the moral world are far removed from the small sphere of *our* reason, such particularly as the existence of a First Cause, called God, and the first cause or source of sin—shall we not allow that in a Revelation handed to us by "*the Father of Lights*," there will be some things "dark with excessive bright?"—All, therefore, which Mr. P. has said against *mystery*, is but sophistry at best. When the reality of this Revelation has been proven on principles which we may comprehend (and that I think has been done) it certainly becomes us—it is truly reasonable, to bow with implicit deference to some things above the stretch of our reason; and to adore rather than impiously to ridicule.

I have, in this work, compared the Scriptures to a picture:—they may, in this instance be likened to a river, gliding with continued course to the sea. We can discover but a part of the stream: As far as the sight can stretch itself however, we descry the rambling current, and though at last the warried eye fails to pursue it further, yet we have sufficient reasons to believe, even to a certainty, that it continues its course to the ocean. So, may I say, the Gospel (which is compared in Scripture to a river) shews us but a part of its sacred stream: it discloses however sufficient evidences of its divine origin, to secure our belief of it; and though it stretches its course beyond the visible horizon, or the ken of the mental eye, it shews sufficient reasons to demand a belief that its wonderful current still continues the same:—that it makes its way towards the great ocean of perfection—in the channel of wisdom—in the banks of reason.

Having considered the objection, that Christiani-

ty is inconsistent with *Reason*, let us enquire into the objection, that it contradicts the principles of *Philosophy*.

The first particular we might notice is, the account of the creation, called the *mosaic* account,* but which Mr. P. terms "The whimsical account of the creation;" (p. 50.) It seems to be one of those things which Mr. P. considers "irreconcilable—to the knowledge that man gains of the power and wisdom of God, by the aid of the sciences, and by studying the structure of the universe that God has made" (p. 51.) But wherein it is thus inconsistent, Mr. P. has not condescended to shew us: as if his bare word or opinion were sufficient to counterpoise the united judgments of several of the greatest geniuses and deepest philosophers that ever adorned the world. It is true that several parts of the Scripture, upon a superficial view, appear somewhat contradictory to the principles of philosophy; but the candid mind will readily see, that things are spoken of, in many instances, according to their *appearance*; and that the Scriptures were not principally calculated to teach us philosophy (of which a knowledge may be obtained without a supernatural revelation *directly* for that purpose) but to guide our feet in the paths of immortal felicity.

As Mr. P. has not objected to any particular in this account, and as the judgment of several of the

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greatest

* Mr. P. endeavors to invalidate this account, by saying that "Moses does not take it upon himself by introducing it with the formality that he uses on other occasions, such as that of saying *The Lord spake unto Moses saying*."—A weighty argument indeed!—Would Mr. P. have allowed of its truth and validity any sooner, had it been prefaced with "the usual formality?"

greatest philosophers in favor of this account will certainly preponderate Mr. Paine's, I think it unnecessary to attend further to this matter.

Let us next observe that Mr. P. considers the Christian system as inconsistent with *Astronomy*, or that part of philosophy which teaches a knowledge of the heavenly bodies, &c.—p. 35, he says, “The
“ idea that God sent Jesus Christ to publish, as they
“ say, the glad tidings to all nations, from one end
“ of the earth to the other, is consistent only with
“ the ignorance of those who knew nothing of the
“ extent of the world, and who believed, as those
“ world-saviors believed, and continued to believe for
“ several centuries (and that in contradiction to the
“ discoveries of philosophers, and the experience of
“ navigators) that the earth was flat like a trencher,
“ and that a man might walk to the end of it.” The weakness of this objection is developed in a few words.—As to that part which respects the extent of the earth, there is no shadow of reason to believe it ever was an idea that Jesus Christ was, in person, to preach the gospel all over the world; but by the ministry of his servants. And as to the notion of the earth's being flat, so that a person might walk to the end of it, I cannot see what reason Mr. P. has for saying this was an idea espoused by the propagators of the gospel, unless it is because the expression, “*the ends of the earth*,” occurs in Scripture; which indeed is no reason at all; that being a figurative expression—and one which Mr. P. himself, notwithstanding this objection, has adopted: see p. 37, *Age of Reason*.

Furthermore, (p. 60) Mr. P. intimates that the Christian system strongly implies a contradiction to the belief

belief of a plurality of worlds ; * or that the tenor of it seems to deny the existence of other habitable worlds in the creation beside ours. Where, or how this is implied, I am utterly at a loss to know. He instances the mosaic account of the creation—the circumstance of Eve's transgression—and the death of the Son of God : But, in all this, I see nothing to the purpose. It is true, other planets or worlds are not treated of ; because the Scriptures (as before observed) were adapted to *our* world, and intended to instruct us in matters vastly more interesting and important than natural philosophy.—Yet, so far does Mr. P. go with this matter, that he roundly asserts, “ The two beliefs (that is a belief in Christianity,—and a vast number of habitable worlds) “ cannot be held together in the same mind ; “ and he who thinks he believes both, has thought “ but little of either.” (*ibid*) Now what does the reader think of this assertion, made in the face of the Sun ?—Did not “ these great masters of reason and erudition, *Grotius, Bacon, Newton, Milton, Boyle, Locke, Addison, and Lyttleton*” hold these two beliefs in the same mind ? Or will Mr. P. accuse them of having “ thought little of either ?” Have no many others, who have been ornaments to the human race, interwoven the golden woof of Revelation with the silver warp of Nature.

There now remain but one or two objections which I shall notice.

Mr. P. to represent Christianity as a fraud, urges that it is calculated to shock the infant-mind ; which

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* The reader will observe that Mr. P. confesses, in the next page, that “ the belief of a plurality of worlds was “ *familiar to the ancients.*”

he believes to be a considerable argument against its divine origin ; (p. 58.) To prove that this is the case, he instances himself. Having prefaced his little anecdote with some observations concerning "those thoughts that bolt into the mind of their own accord," he informs us very gravely, that on a certain time, one of this kind of thoughts paid him a visit, and made him revolt at the idea of "*Redemption by the death of the Son of God.*" But as he will not deny that some of these "bolting thoughts" should be rejected as intruding visitants, it might not have been amiss had he have *this* in such a manner; which perhaps he might have done, had he believed in the existence of an evil spirit, called *The Devil*, who is probably the author of such suggestions. But does it not rather seem that Mr. P. would half-way insinuate this was a kind of inspiration? Such an inconsistency (I think) one of his brother Devils before him fell into. He would have us believe that a *Revelation* was made to him, in favor of the book he had written which *denied* Revelation. Such jack-legged revelations, however, will have but little weight: They ought to be of more consequence, and better authenticated; especially when they are intended to aid objections against the authenticity of the Scriptures. If the mind is disagreeably shocked, it is owing to wrong ideas of the matter, which no doubt, Mr. P. had. As he has told us how his mind was impressed, I also will answer, on my part; which I have as much liberty to do as he. From my first conceptions of the Christian system, my mind was generally awfully impressed with the ideas suggested by it: and tho' the corruptions of nature were predominant for a considerable time, the powerful operations

rations of divine Grace, accompanying the despised Gospel of JESUS, have (I trust) at length become victorious:—a precious evidence which every true believer possesses !

The last objection which I shall notice, as comprehended in the proposition under consideration, respects some circumstances concerning the infernal power called *Satan*.

Mr. P. objects, first, that the christian account of this Being represents him possessed of *omnipresence* ; (p. 16) an attribute which belongs only to Deity. In answer to which I have only to say, that this is either a misunderstanding or a gross perversion of our ideas. We believe steadfastly that no being is omnipresent except God: nor does the belief that a vast number of infernal spirits, roaming through the world, are capable of extending their baneful influence over it, by any means give sanction to Mr. P's assertion. Secondly, he objects to the power and influence which he says is ascribed to Satan (p. 17)

“ They represent him (says he) as having compelled
 “ the Almighty to the *direct necessity* either of sur-
 “ rendering the whole of the creation to the go-
 “ vernment of this Satan, or of capitulating for its
 “ redemption by coming down upon earth, and ex-
 “ hibiting himself upon a cross in the shape of a
 “ man.” And again, “ They make the transgres-
 “ sion triumph, and the Almighty fall.” Here again I have to complain of misrepresentation. The Almighty (according to the Christian idea) was not reduced to any such dilemma, as above mentioned, by the *compulsion* of the Devil: His temptations could only be exercised under Divine permission; how then could there be any shadow of compulsion?

on? And then as to the triumph of Satan, and fall of the Almighty here spoken of, how does this appear in the Christian system? The *human* nature of CHRIST falls; but falls to rise more glorious:—Satan appears (for a while) to conquer; but is vanquished by that event which was to render him victorious. A foundation was by this means laid for that glorious structure which shall rise into “*an house eternal in the Heavens.*” O! the riches of GOD’s inscrutable councils!

C H A P. III.

I COME now to consider the next proposition formed from Mr. P’s objections; which is,

III *That the prevalence of Christianity is injurious to mankind;—the Scriptures being calculated rather to prejudice than benefit the world.*

The most material instances which Mr. P. has noticed, to prove Christianity an injury, are these following (collected from different parts of his pamphlet) v z.

1. National institutions, or the establishment of churches (p. 6)—2. Pomp and revenue, pardons, indulgencies, &c. (p. 32)—3. Contempt of reason, dictatorial prayer, &c. (p. 35)—4. A forsaking the study of God in his creation, to make room for the hag of superstition (p. 42)—5. An opposition to and persecution of the progress of science (p. 51—53.)

All these evils Mr. P. has ungenerously, unjustly,—(must I say, basely?) represented as consequences inseparably connected with, and attendant on the *Christian system!* and sophistically urges them as arguments against Christianity.

Now let us suppose that a parcel of libertines should, under the specious garb of Democracy, rise up against and attempt to demolish all kind of superiority;—murder the ruling powers to destroy tyranny, and their rich neighbors to establish equality;—destroy government, and sow the seeds of anarchy, confusion and discord. And let us suppose that for these unjustifiable proceedings they should plead Paine's "*Common Sense and Rights of Man.*" It, in such a case, Mr. P.'s system of politics should be declared a system "which had served to corrupt and brutalize mankind,"—if these enormities should be charged on his publications, would he not think himself very ungenerously and unjustly treated?—The supposition is pointedly to the purpose, and the application easy. It is as certain that the evils spoken of are a corruption and perversion of Christianity, as that they do exist. They are not in the system of Christianity; but in the lives and transactions of those "*who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*" I say they are not in the system of Christianity: Let Mr. P., or any of his adherents point them out if they can. Let us pay some further attention to the matter:

1. In direct opposition to national establishments, Christianity represents JESUS as the establisher and upholder of his church.

2. Quite contrary to pomp and revenue, it enjoins lowliness and self-denial; and for pardons, it incul-

cates

icates a trust in God alone: and as to the popish indulgencies, the Bible is an utter stranger to them.

3. Does it reject reason? encourage dictatorial prayer? No! it guides reason aright, and enjoins prayer with reverence and humble submission to the all-wise disposer of events.

4. So far from conducing towards a forsaking the works of God in the creation, the religion of the Scripture inculcates this doctrine. Mr. P. has thought proper, himself, to adopt some passages by way of illustration, from the *Psalms* and the book of *Job*; and it is well known that these (and several other passages to the same purpose) are appendages of the Christian religion. Indeed the affairs of Revelation are so abundantly represented by the things of creation—and there is such a striking connection between Nature and Grace, that the study of *one*, tends naturally to the contemplation of the *other*. And since spiritual things are so often shadowed out by images borrowed from nature, the study of God in his creation; and a knowledge in philosophy will, if properly applied, conduce towards a furtherance in the knowledge of the wonders of Revelation. *

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* It may not be amiss to give a brief sketch of the *spiritual Solar System* (as I may term it) as it is held out in the Scriptures; by which the candid reader may the better judge whether Christianity tends to take the mind off from the study of God in his works of creation.

God, especially the *incarnate* God (the Lord Jesus) is represented as a *Sun* to the mental world. Like the sun, He never waxes nor wanes. Like the Sun, he is permanently fixed. And like the sun, he is the centre of the spiritual universe.

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5 The progress of scientific knowledge is by no means opposed by Christianity. Mr. P. however, has instanced the case of *Gilileo*, who was sentenced to renounce his philosophic pursuits,—of *Vigilius*, who was condemned to death for such pursuits; and tells us that “had *Newton*, or *Descartes* lived
 “ three or four hundred years ago, and pursued
 “ their studies as they did, it is most probable they
 “ would not have lived to finish them; and had
 “ *Franklin* drawn lightning from the clouds at the
 “ same time, it would have been at the hazzard of
 “ expiring for it in flames:” (p. 53.) And pray what

The people of God, like *Planets*, revolve around Jesus (their Sun) in the spheres in which His hand has placed them. Like planets they, being dark in themselves, depend on Him for light;—being cold and lifeless, do from Him receive the vivifying beams of divine love. His Ministers especially like stars, transmit the lustre borrowed from Him to a benighted world.

The Church (or the people of God considered in aggregate) resembles the *Moon*. Like the moon, the Church is dark in herself, yet brightened by the beams which flow from the sun of righteousness, she appears fair and comely. Like the moon, she has spots; spots of imperfection; nevertheless, she is capable of reflecting, measureably, that light which Christ has given her. The appearance and progress of the true Church in the world has, like the moon, been waxing and waning; never helss, she has a fore-supply of light from JESUS the unchangeable Sun: and tho’ sometimes eclipsed by the intervention of the world, she will again break forth and shine, full onen!

Nature, considered in every view, will teach us some divine lesson:

- “ Whether the blossom blows,—the Summer ray
- “ Ruffles the plain,—delicious Autumn glams,
- “ Or Winter rises in the black’ning east.”

THOMPSON.

When

what does all this solemn parade prove more than all reformed protestants will grant? What does it prove more than that in the ages alluded to, there existed a set of men who, under the name of Christianity, had grossly perverted and abused it?—Such abuses of Christianity have nothing to do with Christianity itself. Such abuses are as horrid in the mind of a Christian as they can be in the mind of a Deist.

“Had *Newton, Descartes, or Franklin* lived three or four hundred years ago, they would probably have suffered for their philosophic studies:”—— And why did they not suffer for them in the ages in which they *did* live? Had the *Christian system* been

When angry *Winter* rages through the earth and spreads desolation abroad, we may behold in the vegetable and animal world, the gloomy state into which sin has brought man. A dreary winter possesses the mental world!

But when returning *Spring*, with gladdening smiles, cheers the creation,—when the “*flowers appear on the earth and the time of the singing of birds is come,*” we may see a lively and a lovely emblem of the joyful effects produced in the world of Grace, by the auspicious smiles of Heaven; by the kindly beams of the Sun of righteousness—the sweet gales of the Holy Spirit—the gentle showers of divine grace.—In this season, also, is presented a representation of the general resurrection, and the spring of eternal joy and glory which shall succeed.

The *Summer* season discovers emblems of several particulars in the Christian pilgrimage. The *heat* of persecution and distress often afflicts them; tho’ they are sometimes cheered by refreshing gales from heaven.—In this world they are to show the beginning of those *fruits*, which shall finally be brought to perfection.

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been calculated for such a purpose, certainly there would have been greater probability of their feeling the scourge of persecution in their own ages; for then (as we all believe) the Christian system was better attended to than in the ages alluded to. It is evident this better attention to the Christian system was the reason they did not suffer. The abuses brought in under the name of Christianity were then measurably expunged. Mr. P. confesses that "the long chain of despotic ignorance" was broken by the Reformation from Popery: a confession which effectually overturns the whole argument. For, if the Reformation was productive of a revival of the sciences, it is evident it was corruption, and not Christianity, which had impeded their progress; and that the Reformation, like a heavenly gale, blew off, measurably, those pernicious clouds. Tho' after this evils in Religion did exist as Mr. P. urges) this was for the want of a more powerful blast, "*to sweep with the besom of destruction*" those abominations.

In all his parade, therefore, Mr. P. has done no execution. Had the Christian system been
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really

The *Autumnal* season represents, in some degree, that state in which the fruits of grace shall experience a full maturity, and the copious harvest of happy Immortals be gathered to their final home. This blissful state, however, is far from being fully represented by this season: All the beauties of all the seasons, and of all nature, are borrowed, and at last fall short of completely displaying the glories of the celestial world.

As *Nature* and *Grace* are thus intimately connected, who can doubt that the study of the *former*, may (thru, grace) promote our knowledge in the latter?

really obnoxious to his charges; or had he levelled his artillery against the corruptions of Christianity, something might have been effected: but as the matter stands, his balls are vainly spent in the open air.

C H A P. IV.

ONE more proposition, composed from Mr. Paine's pamphlet, remains to be considered, viz.

IV. That the belief and profession of (what is called) Deism, would be more advantageous than Christianity.

Such assertions made in plain language, and in open day, might almost excite to ridicule and laughter; but considering that it is a matter of serious consequence, let us, for a little while attend to it seriously.

I said, for a little while; for after what has been said in favor of Christianity, Deism deserves but little attention, unless it can present us a system evidently superior in excellence. But what system of religion has Mr. P. given us? None: or at best, a very imperfect one. He has told us that the works of nature teach the true Theology; and so they do, measurably; and perhaps
would

would do so completely were man not in a depraved state : But where shall we find the Law that contains our particular duties?—that prohibits all those things which are pernicious to man, and offensive to God?—and, especially, that enforces the whole with a penal sanction suitable to give it due weight? What excesses of abomination would not men run to, were they under no restraints but such as proceed from the dictates of nature?—And what virtue, what heavenly excellence is there which would not abound, were we all influenced by the spirit of the gospel?

Mr. P. declines saying any thing concerning “ the manner of future existence ;” a matter, certainly of vast importance in a system of Theology, and with candidates for eternity ! The Scriptures are calculated, in a great measure, for information in this matter ; and I have often thought it a strong evidence in favor of the Gospel, that it gives us so noble and sublime an account—such rational and becoming ideas of that state which is called Heaven, that should we find the scene quite different, we cannot conceive how it could be as happy. That it will be vastly superior to all our ideas, is certain ; but if it will be contrary, why did not Mr. P. tell us how it could be so, and exceed in real happiness that glorious state of which the Scriptures speak ? As he has not done this, neither shewn that our hopes are groundless, he cannot, in generosity or in reason, expect us to relinquish our claim to those transcendent joys, nor

give up our hopes full of glory, for ——— Nothing. He shews us nothing beyond the grave ; he therefore shews us nothing but what we may enjoy, in a proper manner, and maintain, steadfastly our hopes of a glorious immortality through the gospel.

What excellence has Deism which is not found in Christianity, or which it does not borrow from it?—None. “ We can now form no rational system of Deism, but what must be borrowed from that source ; and as far as it reaches towards perfection, must be exactly the same ; and therefore, if we will not accept of Christianity, we can have no Religion at all. Accordingly we see, that those who fly from this, scarcely ever stop at Deism ; but hasten on with great alacrity to a total rejection of all religious and moral principles whatever.” *

Mr.

* S. JENYNS' Internal Evidence.

“ I have been long persuaded (says the elegant Dr. Young) that most, if not all our Infidels (whatever name they take, and whatever scheme, for arguments sake, and to keep themselves in countenance, they patronize) are supported in their deplorable error, by some doubt of their *Immortality*, at the bottom, and I am satisfied that men once thoroughly convinced of their immortality, are not far from being Christians. For it is hard to conceive that a man fully conscious eternal pain or happiness will certainly be his lot, should not earnestly, and impartially, enquire after the surest means of escaping one, and securing the other. And of such an earnest and impartial enquiry, I well know the consequence.”

[Preface to Night 6.]

Mr. P. having abominably misrepresented Christianity (p. 59) says, "How different is this to the pure and "simple profession of Deism!" He has painted Christianity like an ugly Hag, and Deism as a fair Angel:—He then holds up these productions of an inventive genius, and exultingly exclaims, "How different!"—How different indeed! How different each of the pictures from its original!

As the moral excellencies in Mr. P's deistical piece seem to be derived from the Scriptures, so, even his philosophy is the result, chiefly, of the studies and labors of those men whose religious profession he has represented as one of the greatest obstacles to the progress of science. Sir *Isaac Newton*, from whom his sketch of astronomy is borrowed, was not only an eminent philosopher, but a notable advocate for the cause of Christianity. While Mr. P. is thus beholden to professors of Christianity, I am really surprised he was not ashamed of the freedom he has used.

The Reader will readily excuse me for dismissing this proposition without further attention, since it offers but little for our consideration. I shall now hasten to a

CONCLUSION.

IF I have not attended to every little particular in Mr. Paine's Pamphlet, it is not because I am doubtful the shield of Christianity is not proof against all his weapons, but because I think it unnecessary to hold it up any longer: If his arrows fall blunted to the ground from this impenetrable buckler, we need not regard the darting of straws: I am not conscious that I have omitted to attend to one argument that wore the aspect of plausibility or consequence.

Whatever difficulty may now seem to stand in the way, it cannot be an argument against the divine origin of Christianity, if the arguments brought in favor of it carry a sufficient degree of weight for conviction. Whether they do not,—and whether Mr. P's objections are not sufficiently obviated, is left to the candid reader to judge for himself.

What evidence can we reasonably demand that is not given us?

Do we ask for *intrinsic excellence*?—the Gospel, doubtless, possesses this. Do we demand external evidence?—such evidence, as far as the nature of the case will admit, and as far as reason can expect, is given us.

L C F C,

Some

Some, however will still call for miracles.

If they were granted, say they, to attest the divinity of the Scriptures in early ages, why not now?

By turning back to page 26, the reader may find an answer; where good reasons are given, why miracles were more necessary in earlier ages than since. If sufficient evidence may be obtained, it is presumption to demand more.—I will add that if miracles were now granted to one age, they must to another; if to one person, they must to another; so that they would cease to be miracles and lose their efficacy. Upon the whole then, in the language of Scripture, we may say, *If they believe not Moses and the Prophets (Jesus and his Apostles) neither will they be persuaded tho' one rose from the dead.*

It may not be amiss, before I close, to take notice of some things that seem to conduce towards the incredulity and boldness of Deists.

1. The main “roots of bitterness” which give rise to infidelity are, the corruption of the human heart, the blindness of the mind, the perverseness of the will, &c. but there are other things which cherish this baneful plant.

2. The wickedness of many who profess faith in CHRIST, seems to give brass to the daring front of infidelity, and weaken the cause of Christianity.

3. Tho

3. The corruptions which still (alas!) exist under the name of Christianity, evidently conduce towards an attempt to establish the cause of infidelity. These seem to be the foundation for the chief of Mr. Paine's objections; which, tho' illy founded, may, to some wear a plausible aspect.

Now it certainly becomes the indispensable duty of those who are advocates for the cause of bleeding Zion, to exert every nerve to remove, as far as possible, these blemishes on religion—these pillars of infidelity. You that bear the Christian name, if you have any regard for the cause of Zion—for the glory of God—for the welfare of your immortal souls, Oh! endeavor to possess in your hearts the spirit of the Gospel, and to shew it in your lives “drawn out in living characters.” Be not accessory to the stabs which the cause of your LORD and MASTER receives; but convince gain-sayers that the Gospel diffuses a divine spirit wherever it comes.

It is high time also, and absolutely necessary, for all denominations who call themselves Christian Churches, to examine themselves by the unerring standard of divine truth: to examine their Constitution, Discipline, Doctrines, &c. to expunge every thing which appears contrary to that pattern of excellence, the Gospel; * as well as to attend duly to all its precepts.

Finally

* When we consider that the adulterous connection of Church and State, or the Establishment of Churches, and every degree of spiritual tyranny and oppression, seem

Finally, let it be remembered, for the encouragement of real Christians, that the Scriptures frequently remind and caution us of the many storms which should arise against the Church of Christ, and that we are also assured they shall never prevail against us. Let us likewise remember, brethren, for our comfort, that these storms will all quickly pass over, and give place to a scene of uninterrupted and never ending peace and tranquility; *“where the wicked shall cease from troubling, and the weary shall be at rest.”*

seem to have furnished Mr. P. with weapons against the cause of Christianity; how can we refrain from wishing that every vestige of such oppression were extirpated from the earth? and how can we, without lamenting, reflect that this is not the case, even in our favored America?—in America, which boasts a freedom from the shackles of tyranny, civil and religious! It may easily be guessed, that I allude to the much discussed matter concerning the sale of the galleys, and the free use of the Chapels in Virginia.

Whatever may be said by *refined* politicians to justify or palliate the matter, it is certain that an appendage of the former establishment does ~~not~~ at present remain; and as certain as *that* was unjust, was oppressive,—so is *this*. It now our Constitution or Laws cannot possibly admit of a cure, we must patiently endure the malady; but if there is balm in our *Council* for the wound, *“why is not the health of the Daughter of America recovered?”*

I assure the Public, it is in the character of a *Son of Liberty* that I make these observations, and not as the *Partizan* of a particular sect.

F I N I S.

“ **O** THOU that fitteſt in
 “ Light and Glory unapproach-
 “ able, PARENT of Angels and
 “ Men!-----Next, Thee I im-
 “ plore, Omnipotent KING, RE-
 “ DEEMER of that loſt Rem-
 “ nant whoſe Nature thou didſt
 “ aſſume, ineffable and ever-
 “ laſting Love ! And Thou, the
 “ third Subſiſtence of Divine
 “ Infinitude, illuminating SPI-
 “ RIT, the joy and ſolace of
 “ created things! One TRI-PER-
 “ SONAL GODHEAD !”-----regard
 with Compaſſion thy poor *Zion* !
 Make bare thy holy Arm in
 defence of thy Church ! Purge
 out the Dross and the Tin, and
 make the pure Gold to appear :

O