

APPENDIX

TO THE

Theological Works

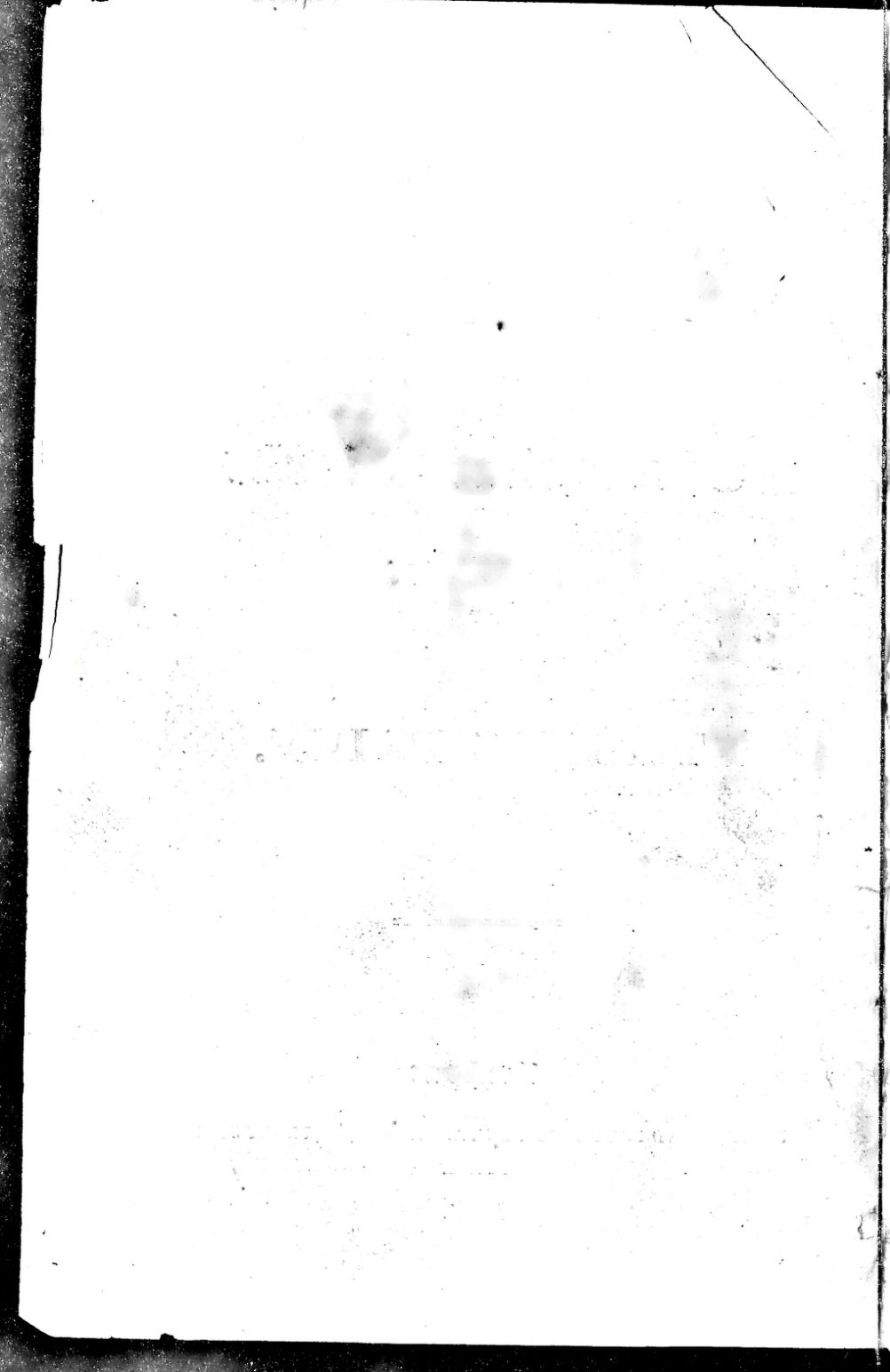
OF

THOMAS PAINE.

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1820.



TO THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

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 The Postmaster-General, on learning this mistake, informed me of it last Saturday, and as the cover was then out of date, the letter was put under a new cover with the same request, and forwarded by the post.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

THOMAS PAINE.

Federal City, Jan. 22, 1803.

To Thomas Paine.

SIR,

Boston, Nov. 30th, 1802.

I HAVE frequently with pleasure reflected on your services to my native, and your adopted country. Your Common

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

Our friend, the present President of the United States, has been calumniated for his liberal sentiments, by men who have attributed that liberality to a latent design to promote the cause of infidelity. This, and all other slanders have been made without a shadow of proof. Neither religion nor liberty can long subsist in the tumult of altercation, and amidst the noise and violence of faction.

Felix qui cautus.

Adieu,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

To Samuel Adams.

MY DEAR AND VENERABLE FRIEND,

I RECEIVED with great pleasure your friendly and affectionate letter of Nov. 30th, and I thank you also for the frankness of it. Between men in pursuit of truth, and whose object is the happiness of man both here and hereafter, there ought to be no reserve. Even error has a claim to indulgence, if not to respect, when it is believed to be truth.

I am obliged to you for your affectionate remembrance of what you style my services in awakening the public mind to a declaration of independence, and supporting it after it was declared. I also, like you, have often looked back on those times, and have thought, that if independence had not been declared at the time it was, the public mind could not have been brought up to it afterwards. It will immediately occur to you, who were so intimately acquainted with the situation of things at that time, that I allude to the black times of *seventy-six*; for though I know, and you my friend also know, they were no other than the natural consequences of the military blunders of that campaign, the country might have viewed them as proceeding from a natural inability to support its cause against the enemy, and have sunk under the despondency of that misconceived idea. This was the impression against which it was necessary the country should be strongly animated.

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

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

The case, my friend, is, that the world has been overrun with fable and creed of human invention, with sectaries of whole nations, against other nations, and sectaries of those sectaries in each of them against each other. Every sectary, except the Quakers, have been persecutors. Those who

fled from persecution, persecuted in their turn, and it is this confusion of creeds that has filled the world with persecution, and deluged it with blood. Even the depredation on your commerce by the Barbary powers, sprang from the crusades of the church against those powers. It was a war of creed against creed, each boasting of God for its author, and reviling each other with the name of infidel. If I do not believe as you believe, it proves that you do not believe as I believe, and this is all that it proves.

There is, however, one point of union wherein all religions meet, and that is in the first article of every man's creed, and of every nation's creed, that has any creed at all. *I believe in God.* Those who rest here, and there are millions who do, cannot be wrong as far as their creed goes. Those who choose to go further *may be wrong*, for it is impossible that all can be right since there is so much contradiction among them. The first, therefore, are, in my opinion, on the safest side.

I presume you are so far acquainted with ecclesiastical history as to know, and the bishop who has answered me has been obliged to acknowledge the fact, that the Books that compose the New Testament, were voted by *yeas* and *nays* to be the Word of God, as you now vote a law, by the Popish Councils of Nice and Laodocia, about fourteen hundred and fifty years ago. With respect to the fact there is no dispute, neither do I mention it for the sake of controversy. This vote may appear authority enough to some, and not authority enough to others. It is proper, however, that every body should know the fact.

With respect to the *Age of Reason*, which you so much condemn, and that, I believe, without having read it, for you say only that you *heard* of it, I will inform you of a circumstance, because you cannot know it by other means.

I have said in the first page of the first part of that work, that it had long been my intention to publish my thoughts upon religion, but that I had referred it to a later time of life. I have now to inform you why I wrote it and published it at the time I did.

In the first place, I saw my life in continual danger. My friends were falling as fast as the guillotine could cut their heads off, and as I expected every day the same fate, I resolved to begin my work. I appeared to myself to be on my death bed, for death was on every side of me, and I had no time to lose. This accounts for my writing at the time I did, and so nicely did the time and intention meet, that I

had not finished the first part of the work more than six hours, before I was arrested and taken to prison. Joel Barlow was with me, and knows the fact.

In the second place, the people of France were running headlong into atheism, and I had the work translated and published in their own language, to stop them in that career, and fix them to the first article (as I have before said) of every man's creed, who has any creed at all, *I believe in God*. It endangered my own life, in the first place, by opposing in the Convention the execution of the King, and labouring to shew they were trying the monarch and not the man, and that the crimes imputed to him were the crimes of the monarchical system; and endangered it a second time by opposing atheism, and yet *some* of your priests, for I do not believe that all are perverse, cry out, in the *war-whoop* of monarchical priestcraft. What an infidel! what a wicked man is Thomas Paine! They might as well add, for he believes in God, and is against shedding blood.

But all this *war-whoop* of the pulpit has some concealed object. Religion is not the cause, but is the stalking horse. They put it forward to conceal themselves behind it. It is not a secret that there has been a party composed of the leaders of the Federalists, for I do not include all Federalists with their leaders, who have been working by various means for several years past, to overturn the Federal Constitution established on the representative system, and place government in the new world on the corrupt system of the old. To accomplish this a large standing army was necessary, and as a pretence for such an army, the danger of a foreign invasion must be bellowed forth, from the pulpit, from the press, and by their public orators.

I am not of a disposition inclined to suspicion. It is in its nature a mean and cowardly passion, and upon the whole, even admitting error into the case, it is better, I am sure, it is more generous to be wrong on the side of confidence, than on the side of suspicion. But I know as a fact, that the English Government distributes annually fifteen hundred pounds sterling among the Presbyterian ministers in England, and one hundred among those of Ireland; and when I hear of the strange discourses of some of your ministers and professors of colleges, I cannot, as the Quakers say, find freedom in my mind to acquit them. Their anti-revolutionary doctrines invite suspicion, even against one's will, and in spite of one's charity to believe well of them.

As you have given me one Scripture phrase, I will give

you another for those ministers. It is said in Exodus, chapter xxiii, verse 28, "Thou shalt not revile the Gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people." But those ministers, such I mean as Dr. Emmons, curse ruler and people both, for the majority are, politically, the people, and it is those who have chosen the ruler whom they curse. As to the first part of the verse, that of *not reviling the Gods*, it makes no part of my Scripture. I have but one God.

Since I began this letter, for I write it by piece-meals as I have leisure, I have seen the four letters that passed between you and John Adams. In your first letter you say, "Let divines and philosophers, statesmen and patriots, unite their endeavours to *renovate the age* by inculcating in the minds of youth *the fear and love of the Deity, and universal philanthropy*." Why, my dear friend, this is exactly *my* religion, and is the whole of it. That you may have an idea that the *Age of Reason* (for I believe you have not read it) inculcates this reverential fear and love of the Deity, I will give you a paragraph from it:

"Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of the Creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful."

As I am fully with you in your first part, that respecting the Deity, so am I in your second, that of *universal philanthropy*; by which I do not mean merely the sentimental benevolence of wishing well, but the practical benevolence of doing good. We cannot serve the Deity in the manner we serve those who cannot do without that service. He needs no services from us. We can add nothing to eternity. But it is in our power to render a service *acceptable* to him, and that is not by praying, but by endeavouring to make his creatures happy. A man does not serve God when he prays, for it is himself he is trying to serve; and as to hiring or paying men to pray, as if the Deity needed instruction, it is in my opinion an abomination. One good school-master is of more use and of more value than a load of such parsons as Dr. Emmons, and some others.

You, my dear and much respected friend, are now far in the vale of years; I have yet, I believe, some years in store, for I have a good state of health and a happy mind; I take

care of both, by nourishing the first with temperance, and the latter with abundance.

This, I believe, you will allow to be the true philosophy of life. You will see by my third letter to the citizens of the United States, that I have been exposed to, and preserved through, many dangers; but instead of buffeting the Deity with prayers, as if I distrusted him, or must dictate to him, I reposed myself on his protection; and you, my friend, will find, even in your last moments, more consolation in the silence of resignation than in the murmuring wish of prayer.

In every thing which you say in your second letter to John Adams, respecting our rights as men and citizens in this world, I am perfectly with you. On other points we have to answer to our Creator and not to each other. The key of heaven is not in the keeping of any sect, nor ought the road to it to be obstructed by any. Our relation to each other in this world is as men, and the man who is a friend to man and to his rights, let his religious opinions be what they may, is a good citizen, to whom I can give, as I ought to do, and as every other ought, the right hand of fellowship and to none with more hearty good will, my dear friend, than to you.

THOMAS PAINE.

Federal City, Jan. 1, 1803.

OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.

ARCHBISHOP Tillotson says, "The difference between the style of the Old and New Testament is so very remarkable, that one of the greatest sects in the primitive times, did, upon this very ground, found their heresy of two Gods, the one evil, fierce, and cruel, whom they called the God of the Old Testament; the other was good, kind, and merciful, whom they called the God of the New Testament; so great a difference is there between the representations that are given of God in the Books of the Jewish and Christian Religion, as to give, at least, some colour and pretence to an imagination of two Gods." Thus far Tillotson.

But the case was, that as the Church had picked out several passages from the Old Testament, which she most absurdly and falsely calls prophecies of Jesus Christ, (whereas there is no prophecy of any such person as any one may see by examining the passages and the cases to which they apply,) she was under the necessity of keeping up the credit of the Old Testament, because if that fell the other would soon follow, and the Christian system of faith would soon be at an end. As a book of morals, there are several parts of the New Testament that are good; but they are no other than what had been preached in the Eastern world several hundred years before Christ was born. Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, who lived five hundred years before the time of Christ, says, *acknowledge thy benefits by the return of benefits, but never revenge injuries.*

The clergy in Popish countries were cunning enough to know, that if the Old Testament was made public, the fallacy of the New, with respect to Christ, would be detected, and they prohibited the use of it, and always took it away wherever they found it. The Deists, on the contrary, always encouraged the reading it, that people might see and judge for themselves, that a Book so full of contradictions and wickedness, could not be the word of God, and that we dishonour God by ascribing it to him.

A TRUE DEIST.

OF CAIN AND ABEL.

THE story of Cain and Abel is told in the fourth chapter of Genesis, Cain was the elder brother, and Abel the younger, and Cain killed Abel. The Egyptian story of Typhon and Osiris, and the Jewish story in Genesis of Cain and Abel, have the appearance of being the same story differently told, and that it came originally from Egypt.

In the Egyptian story, Typhon and Osiris, Typhon is the elder, and Osiris the younger, and Typhon kills Osiris. The story is an allegory on darkness and light; Typhon the elder brother is darkness, because darkness was supposed to be more ancient than light: Osiris is the good light, who rules during the summer months, and brings forth the fruits of the earth, and is the favourite, as Abel is said to have been, for which Typhon hates him; and when the winter comes, and cold and darkness overspread the earth, Typhon is represented as having killed Osiris out of malice, as Cain is said to have killed Abel.

The two stories are alike in their circumstances and their event, and are probably but the same story; what corroborates this opinion, is, that the fifth chapter of Genesis historically contradicts the reality of the story of Cain and Abel in the fourth chapter, for though the name of *Seth*, a son of Adam, is mentioned in the fourth chapter, he is spoken of in the fifth chapter as if he was the first-born of Adam. The chapter begins thus:—

“ This is the book of the *generations* of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God created he him. Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years and begat a son, in his own likeness and after his own image, and called his name *Seth*.” The rest of the chapter goes on with the genealogy.

Any body reading this chapter cannot suppose there were any sons born before *Seth*. The chapter begins with what is called *the creation of Adam*, and calls itself the book of the *generations of Adam*, yet no mention is made of such

persons as Cain and Abel; one thing, however, is evident on the face of these two chapters, which is, that the same person is not the writer of both; the most blundering historian could not have committed himself in such a manner.

Though I look on every thing in the first ten chapters of Genesis to be fiction, yet fiction historically told should be consistent, whereas these two chapters are not. The Cain and Abel of Genesis appear to be no other than the ancient Egyptian story of Typhon and Osiris, the darkness and the light, which answered very well as an allegory without being believed as a fact.

ON DEISM AND THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE.

THE following reflections, written last winter, were occasioned by *certain* expressions in some of the public papers against Deism and the Writings of Thomas Paine on that subject.

“*Great is Diana of the Ephesians,*” was the cry of the people of Ephesus;* and the cry of “*our holy religion,*” has been the cry of superstition in some instances, and of hypocrisy in others, from that day to this.

The Brahmin, the follower of Zoroaster, the Jew, the Mahometan, the church of Rome, the Greek church, the Protestant church, split into several hundred contradictory sectaries, preaching, in some instances, damnation against each other, all cry out, “*our holy religion.*” The Calvinist, who damns children of a span long to hell to burn for ever for the glory of God, (and this is called Christianity) and the Universalist, who preaches that all shall be saved and none shall be damned, (and this also is called Christianity) boasts alike of their *holy religion* and their Christian faith. Something more, therefore, is necessary than mere *cry* and wholesale assertion, and that something is TRUTH; and as inquiry is the road to truth, he that is opposed to inquiry is not a friend to truth.

The God of Truth is not the God of fable; when, therefore, any book is introduced into the world as the word of God, and made a ground-work for religion, it ought to be scrutinized more than other books to see if it bear evidence of being what it is called. Our reverence to God demands that we do this, lest we ascribe to God what is not his, and our duty to ourselves demands it lest we take fable for fact, and rest our hope of salvation on a false foundation. It is not our calling a book *holy* that makes it so, any more than our calling a religion *holy* that entitles it to the name. Inquiry, therefore, is necessary in order to arrive at truth. But inquiry must have some principle to proceed on, some standard to judge by, superior to human authority.

When we survey the works of creation, the revolutions of the planetary system, and the whole economy of what is called nature, which is no other than the laws the Creator has prescribed to matter, we see unerring order and univer-

* Acts, chap. xix. ver. 28.

sal harmony reigning throughout the whole. No one part contradicts another. The sun does not run against the moon, nor the moon against the sun, nor the planets against each other. Every thing keeps its appointed time and place. This harmony in the works of God is so obvious, that the farmer of the field, though he cannot calculate eclipses, is as sensible of it as the philosophical astronomer. He sees the God of order in every part of the visible universe.

Here, then, is the standard to which every thing must be brought that pretends to be the work or word of God, and by this standard it must be judged, independently of any thing and every thing that man can say or do. His opinion is like a feather in the scale compared with the standard that God himself has set up.

It is, therefore, by this standard, that the Bible, and all other books pretending to be the word of God, (and there are many of them in the world) must be judged, and not by the opinions of men or the decrees of ecclesiastical councils. These have been so contradictory that they have often rejected in one council what they had voted to be the word of God in another; and admitted what had been before rejected. In this state of uncertainty in which we are, and which is rendered still more uncertain by the numerous contradictory sectaries that have sprung up since the time of Luther and Calvin, what is man to do? The answer is easy. Begin at the root—begin with the Bible itself. Examine it with the utmost strictness. It is our duty so to do. Compare the parts with each other, and the whole with the harmonious, magnificent order that reigns throughout the visible universe, and the result will be, that if the same Almighty wisdom that created the universe, dictated also the Bible, the Bible will be as harmonious and as magnificent in all its parts, and in the whole, as the universe is. But if instead of this, the parts are found to be discordant, contradicting in one place what is said in another, (as in 2 Sam. chap. xxiv. ver. 1. and 1 Chron. chap. xxi. ver. 1. where the same action is ascribed to God in one book and to Satan in the other), abounding also in idle and obscene stories, and representing the Almighty as a passionate, whimsical Being, continually changing his mind, making and unmaking his own works as if he did not know what he was about, we may take it for certainty that the Creator of the universe is not the author of such a book, that it is not the word of God, and that to call it so is to dishonour his name. The Quakers, who are a people more moral and regular in their

conduct than the people of other sectaries, and generally allowed so to be, do not hold the Bible to be the word of God. They call it a *history of the times*, and a bad history it is, and also a history of bad men and of bad actions, and abounding with bad examples.

For several centuries past the dispute has been about doctrines. It is now about fact. Is the Bible the word of God, or is it not? for until the point is established no doctrine drawn from the Bible can afford real consolation to man, and he ought to be careful he does not mistake delusion for truth. This is a case that concerns all men alike.

There has always existed in Europe, and also in America, since its establishment, a numerous description of men, (I do not here mean the Quakers) who did not, and do not believe the Bible to be the word of God. These men never formed themselves into an established society, but are to be found in all the sectaries that exist, and are more numerous than any, perhaps equal to all, and are daily increasing. From *Deus*, the Latin word for God, they have been denominated *Deists*, that is, believers in God. It is the most honourable appellation can be given to man, because it is derived immediately from the Deity. It is not an artificial name like Episcopalian, Presbyterian, &c. but is a name of sacred significance, and to revile it is to revile the name of God.

Since then there is so much doubt and uncertainty about the Bible, some asserting, and others denying it to be the word of God, it is best that the whole matter come out. It is necessary, for the information of the world, that it should. A better time cannot offer than whilst the Government, patronizing no one sect or opinion in preference to another, protects equally the rights of all; and certainly every man must spurn the idea of an ecclesiastical tyranny, engrossing the rights of the press, and holding it free only for itself.

Whilst the terrors of the Church, and the tyranny of the State, hung like a pointed sword over Europe, men were commanded to believe what the church told them, or go to the stake. All inquiries into the authenticity of the Bible were shut out by the inquisition. We ought, therefore, to suspect that a great mass of information respecting the Bible and the introduction of it into the world has been suppressed by the united tyranny of Church and State, for the purpose of keeping people in ignorance, and which ought to be known.

The Bible has been received by the Protestants on the authority of the Church of Rome, and on no other autho-

riety. It is she that has said it is the word of God. We do not admit the authority of that church with respect to its pretended *infallibility*, its manufactured miracles, its setting itself up to forgive sins, its amphibious doctrine of transubstantiation, &c. ; and we ought to be watchful with respect to any book introduced by her, or her ecclesiastical councils, and called by her the Word of God ; and the more so, because it was by propagating that belief and supporting it by fire and faggot, that she kept up her temporal power. That the belief of the Bible does no good in the world may be seen by the irregular lives of those, as well priests as laymen, who profess to believe it to be the word of God, and the moral lives of the Quakers who do not. It abounds with too many ill examples to be made a rule for moral life, and were a man to copy after the lives of some of its most celebrated characters, he would come to the gallows.

Thomas Paine has written to shew that the Bible is not the word of God, that the books it contains were not written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, that it is an anonymous book, and that we have no authority for calling it the word of God, or for saying it was written by inspired penmen, since we do not know who the writers were. This is the opinion, not only of Thomas Paine, but of thousands and tens of thousands of the most respectable characters in the United States and in Europe. These men have the same right to their opinions, as others have to contrary opinions, and the same right to publish them. Ecclesiastical tyranny is not admissible in the United States.

With respect to morality, the writings of Thomas Paine are remarkable for purity and benevolence ; and though he often enlivens them with touches of wit and humour, he never loses sight of the real solemnity of his subject. No man's morals either with respect to his Maker, himself, or his neighbour, can suffer by the writings of Thomas Paine.

It is now too late to abuse Deism, especially in a country where the press is free, or *where free presses can be established*. It is a religion that has God for its patron and derives its name from him. The thoughtful mind of man, wearied with the endless contentions of sectaries against sectaries, doctrines against doctrines, and priests against priests, finds its repose at last in the contemplative belief and worship of one God and the practice of morality, for as Pope wisely says,

“ He can't be wrong whose life is in the right.”

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY, STYLING ITSELF
THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The New York Gazette of the 16th (August) contains the following article—“ On Tuesday, a Committee of the Missionary Society, consisting chiefly of distinguished Clergymen, had an interview at the City Hotel, with the Chiefs of the Osage tribe of Indians, now in this City, (New York) to whom they presented a Bible, together with an Address, the object of which was, to inform them that this good book contained the will and laws of the GREAT SPIRIT.”

It is to be hoped some humane person will, on account of our people on the frontiers, as well as of the Indians, undeceive them with respect to the present the Missionaries have made them, and which they call a *good book*, containing, they say, *the will and laws of the GREAT SPIRIT*. Can those Missionaries suppose that the assassination of men, women, and children, and sucking infants, related in the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, &c. and blasphemously said to be done by the command of the Lord, the Great Spirit, can be edifying to our Indian neighbours, or advantageous to us? Is not the Bible warfare the same kind of warfare as the Indians themselves carry on, that of indiscriminate destruction, and against which humanity shudders, can the horrid examples and vulgar obscenity, with which the Bible abounds, improve the morals, or civilize the manners of the Indians? Will they learn sobriety and decency from drunken Noah and beastly Lot; or will their daughters be edified by the example of Lot's daughters? Will the prisoners they take in war be treated the better by their knowing the horrid story of Samuel's hewing Agag in pieces like a block of wood, or David's putting them under harrows of iron? Will not the shocking accounts of the destruction of the Canaanites when the Israelites invaded their country, suggest the idea that we may serve them in the same manner, or the accounts stir them up to do the like to our people on the frontiers, and then justify the assassination by the Bible

the Missionaries have given them? Will those Missionary Societies never leave off doing mischief?

In the account which this Missionary Committee give of their interview, they make the Chief of the Indians to say, that, "as neither he nor his people could read it, he begged that some good white man might be sent to instruct them."

It is necessary the General Government keep a strict eye over those Missionary Societies, who under the pretence of instructing the Indians, send spies into their country to find out the best lands. No society should be permitted to have intercourse with the Indian tribes, nor send any person among them, but with the knowledge and consent of the Government. The present administration have brought the Indians into a good disposition, and are improving them in the moral and civil comforts of life; but if these self-created societies be suffered to interfere, and send their speculating Missionaries among them, the laudable object of Government will be defeated. Priests, we know, are not remarkable for doing any thing gratis; they have, in general, some scheme in every thing they do, either to impose on the ignorant, or derange the operations of Government.

A FRIEND TO THE INDIANS.

OF THE SABBATH DAY OF CONNECTICUT.

THE word, Sabbath, means REST, that is, cessation from labour; but the stupid Blue Laws* of Connecticut make a labour of rest, for they oblige a person to sit still from sunrise to sun-set on a Sabbath-day, which is hard work. Fanaticism made those laws, and hypocrisy pretends to reverence them, for where such laws prevail hypocrisy will prevail also.

One of those laws says, "No person shall run on a Sabbath-day, nor walk in his garden, nor elsewhere, but reverently to and from meeting." These fanatical hypocrites forgot that God dwells not in temples made with hands, and that the earth is full of his glory. One of the finest scenes and subjects of religious contemplation is to walk into the woods and fields, and survey the works of the God of the Creation. The wide expanse of heaven, the earth covered with verdure, the lofty forest, the waving corn, the magnificent roll of mighty rivers, and the murmuring melody of the cheerful brooks, are scenes that inspire the mind with gratitude and delight; but this the gloomy Calvinist of Connecticut, must not behold on a Sabbath-day. Entombed within the walls of his dwelling, he shuts from his view the temple of creation. The sun shines no joy to him. The gladdening voice of nature calls on him in vain. He is deaf, dumb, and blind to every thing around him that God has made. Such is the Sabbath-day of Connecticut.

From whence could come this miserable notion of devotion? It comes from the gloominess of the Calvinistic creed. If men love darkness rather than light, because their works are evil, the ulcerated mind of a Calvinist, who sees God only in terror, and sits brooding over the scenes of hell and damnation, can have no joy in beholding the glories of the creation. Nothing in that mighty and wondrous system accords with his principles or his devotion. He sees nothing there that tells him that God created millions on purpose

* They were called Blue Laws because they were originally printed on blue paper.

to be damned, and that children of a span long are born to burn for ever in hell. The creation preaches a different doctrine to this. We there see that the care and goodness of God is extended impartially over all the creatures he has made. The worm of the earth shares his protection equally with the elephant of the desert. The grass that springs beneath our feet grows by his bounty as well as the cedars of Lebanon. Every thing in the creation reproaches the Calvinists with unjust ideas of God, and disowns the hardness and ingratitude of his principles. Therefore he shuns the sight of them on a Sabbath-day.

AN ENEMY TO CANT AND IMPOSITION.

THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF THOMAS PAINE.

The people of the State of New York, by the Grace of God, free and independent, to all to whom these presents shall come or may concern, send greeting :

KNOW ye, that the annexed is a true copy of the Will of Thomas Paine, deceased, as recorded in the Office of our Surrogate, in and for the city and county of New York. In testimony whereof, we have caused the seal of said Office of our Surrogate to be hereunto affixed.—Witness, Silvanus Miller, Esq. Surrogate of said county, at the city of New York, the twelfth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and nine, and of our independence, the thirty-fourth.

SILVANUS MILLER.

THE last Will and Testament of me, the subscriber, Thomas Paine, reposing confidence in my Creator God, and in no other being, for I know of no other, nor believe in any other. I Thomas Paine, of the State of New York, author of the work entitled *Common Sense*, written in Philadelphia, in 1775, and published in that city the beginning of January, 1776, which awoke America to a Declaration of Independence on the fourth of July following, which was as fast as the work could spread through such an extensive country ; author also of the several numbers of the *American Crisis*, thirteen in all, published occasionally during the progress of the revolutionary war—the last is on the peace ; author also of *Rights of Man*, parts the first and second, written and published in London, in 1791 and 1792 ; author also of a work on religion, *Age of Reason*, part the first and second. N. B. I have a third part by me in manuscript, and an an-

swer to the Bishop of Landaff; author also of a work, lately published, entitled *Examination of the Passages in the New Testament, quoted from the Old, and called Prophecies concerning Jesus Christ, and shewing there are no Prophecies of any such Person*; author also of several other works not here enumerated, *Dissertation on the First Principles of Government*,—*Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance*,—*Agrarian Justice*, &c. &c. make this my last Will and Testament, that is to say: I give and bequeath to my executors hereinafter appointed, Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmet, thirty shares I hold in the New York Phoenix Insurance Company, which cost me fourteen hundred and seventy dollars, they are worth now upwards of fifteen hundred dollars, and all my moveable effects, and also the money that may be in my trunk or elsewhere at the time of my decease, paying thereout the expences of my funeral, IN TRUST as to the said shares, moveables, and money for Margaret Brazier Bonneville, of Paris, for her own sole and separate use, and at her own disposal, notwithstanding her coverture. As to my farm in New Rochelle, I give, devise, and bequeath the same to my said executors, Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmet, and to the survivor of them, his heirs and assigns for ever, IN TRUST, nevertheless, to sell and dispose thereof, now in the occupation of Andrew A. Dean, beginning at the west end of the orchard, and running in a line with the land sold to ——— Coles, to the end of the farm, and to apply the money arising from such sale as hereinafter directed. I give to my friends Walter Morton, of the New York Phoenix Insurance Company, and Thomas Addis Emmet, Counselor at Law, late of Ireland, two hundred dollars each, and one hundred dollars to Mrs. Palmer, widow of Elihu Palmer, late of New York, to be paid out of the money arising from said sale; and I give the remainder of the money arising from that sale, one half thereof to Clio Rickman, of High or Upper Mary-le-Bone Street, London, and the other half to Nicholas Bonneville of Paris, husband of Margaret B. Bonneville aforesaid: and as to the south part of the said farm, containing upwards of one hundred acres, in trust to rent out the same or otherwise put it to profit, as shall be found most adviseable, and to pay the rents and profits thereof to the said Margaret B. Bonneville, in trust for her children, Benjamin Bonneville and Thomas Bonneville, their education and maintenance, until they come to the age of

twenty-one years, in order that she may bring them well up, give them good and useful learning, and instruct them in their duty to God, and the practice of morality, the rent of the land or the interest of the money for which it may be sold, as hereinafter mentioned, to be employed in their education. And after the youngest of the said children shall have arrived at the age of twenty-one years, in further trust to convey the same to the said children, share and share alike, in fee simple. But if it shall be thought adviseable by my executors and executrix, or the survivor or survivors of them, at any time before the youngest of the said children shall come of age, to sell and dispose of the said south side of the said farm, in that case I hereby authorise and empower my said executors to sell and dispose of the same, and I direct that the money arising from such sale be put into stock, either in the United States Bank stock, or New York Phoenix Insurance Company stock, the interest or dividends thereof to be applied as is already directed for the education and maintenance of the said children, and the principal to be transferred to the said children, or the survivor of them, on his or their coming of age. I know not if the society of people called Quakers admit a person to be buried in their burying ground, who does not belong to their society, but if they do, or will admit me, I would prefer being buried there; my father belonged to that profession, and I was partly brought up in it. But if it is not consistent with their rules to do this, I desire to be buried on my farm at New Rochelle. The place where I am to be buried, to be a square of twelve feet, to be enclosed with rows of trees, and a stone or post and rail fence, with a head stone with my name and age engraved upon it, author of *Common Sense*. I nominate, constitute, and appoint Walter Morton, of the New York Phoenix Insurance Company, and Thomas Addis Emmet, counsellor at law, late of Ireland, and Margaret B. Bonneville, executors and executrix to this my last Will and Testament, requesting them the said Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmet, that they will give what assistance they conveniently can to Mrs. Bonneville, and see that the children be well brought up. Thus placing confidence in their friendship, I herewith take my final leave of them and of the world. I have lived an honest and useful life to mankind; my time has been spent in doing good, and I die in perfect composure and resignation to the will of my Creator God. Dated this eighteenth day of January, in the

year one thousand eight hundred and nine; and I have also signed my name to the other sheet of this Will in testimony of its being a part thereof.

THOMAS PAINE. [L S.]

Signed, sealed, published and declared by the Testator, in our presence, who at his request, and in the presence of each other, have set our names as witnesses thereto, the words "published and declared" first interlined.

WM. KEESE.

JAMES ANGEVINE.

CORNELIUS RYDER.

BIBLE ANACHRONISM.

THE 7th chapter of Genesis 2d verse makes God to say to Noah, "Of every *clean* beast thou shalt take unto thee by sevens, the male and his female, and of every beast that are *not clean*, by two, the male and his female."

Now, there was no such thing as beasts *clean* and *unclean* in the time of Noah. Neither were there any such people as Jews or Israelites at that time, to whom that distinction was a law. The law, called the law of Moses, by which a distinction is made, beasts clean and unclean, was not until several hundred years after the time that Noah is said to have lived. The story therefore detects itself, because the inventor of it forgot himself, by making God make use of an expression that could not be used at the time. The blunder is of the same kind, as if a man in telling a story about America a hundred years ago, should quote an expression from Mr. Jefferson's inaugural speech as if spoken by him at that time.

My opinion of this story is the same as what a man once said to another, who asked him in a drawling tone of voice, "Do you believe the account about No-ah?" The other replied in the same tone of voice, *ah-no*.

THOMAS PAINE.

OF THE WORD RELIGION, AND OTHER WORDS OF UNCERTAIN SIGNIFICATION.

THE word religion is a word of forced application when used with respect to the worship of God. The root of the word is the Latin verb *ligo*, to tie or bind. From *ligo*, comes *religo*, to tie or bind over again, or make more fast—from *religo*, comes the substantive *religio*, which with the addition of *n* makes the English substantive religion. The French use the word properly—when a woman enters a convent she is called a novice, that is, she is upon trial or probation. When she takes the oath, she is called a

religieuse, that is, she is tied or bound by that oath to the performance of it. We use the word in the same kind of sense when we say we will religiously perform the promise that we make.

But the word, without referring to its etymology has, in the manner it is used, no definitive meaning, because it does not designate what religion a man is of, there is the religion of the Chinese, of the Tatars, of the Bramins, of the Persians, of the Jews, of the Turks, &c.

The word *Christianity* is equally as vague as the word religion. No two sectaries can agree what it is. It is a *lo here* and *lo there*. The two principal sectaries, Papists and Protestants, have often cut each other's throats about it:—The Papists call the Protestants heretics, and the Protestants call the Papists idolators. The minor sectaries have shewn the same spirit of rancour, but as the civil law restrains them from blood, they content themselves with preaching damnation against each other.

The word *Protestant* has a positive signification in the sense it is used. It means protesting against the authority of the Pope, and this is the only article in which the Protestants agree. In every other sense, with respect to religion, the word Protestant, is as vague as the word Christian. When we say an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, a Baptist, a Quaker, we know what those persons are, and what tenets they hold—but when we say a Christian we know he is not a Jew nor a Mahometan, but we know not if he be a Trinitarian or an Anti-Trinitarian, a believer in what is called the immaculate conception, or a disbeliever, a man of seven sacraments, or of two sacraments, or of none. The word Christian describes what a man is not, but not what he is.

The word *Theology*, from *Theos*, the Greek word for God, and meaning the study and knowledge of God, is a word, that strictly speaking, belongs to Theists or Deists, and not to the Christians. The head of the Christian church is the person called Christ—but the head of the church of the Theists, or Deists, as they are more commonly called, from *Deus*, the Latin word for God, is God himself, and therefore the word Theology belongs to that church which has Theos or God for its head, and not to the Christian church which has the person called Christ for its head. Their technical word is *Christianity* and they cannot agree what Christianity is.

The words *revealed religion*, and *natural religion*, require also explanation. They are both invented terms, con-

trived by the church for the support of priestcraft. With respect to the first, there is no evidence of any such thing, except in the universal revelation, that God has made of his power, his wisdom, his goodness, in the structure of the universe, and in all the works of creation. We have no cause or ground from any thing we behold in those works, to suppose God would deal partially by mankind, and reveal knowledge to one nation and withhold it from another, and then damn them for not knowing it. The sun shines an equal quantity of light all over the world—and mankind in all ages and countries are endued with reason, and blessed with sight, to read the visible works of God in the creation, and so intelligent is this book that *he that runs may read*. We admire the wisdom of the ancients, yet they had no bibles, nor books, called revelation. They cultivated the reason that God gave them, studied him in his works, and arose to eminence.

As to the Bible, whether true or fabulous, it is a history, and history is not revelation. If Solomon had seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines; and if Samson slept in Delila's lap, and she cut his hair off; the relation of those things is mere history, that needed no revelation from heaven to tell it; neither does it need any revelation to tell us that Samson was a fool for his pains and Solomon too.

As to the expression so often used in the Bible, that *the word of the Lord*, came to such an one, or such an one, it was the fashion of speaking in those times, like the expression used by a Quaker, that the *spirit moveth him*, or that used by priests, that they *have a call*. We ought not to be deceived by phrases because they are ancient. But if we admit the supposition that God would condescend to reveal himself in words, we ought not to believe it would be in such idle and profligate stories as are in the Bible, and it is for this reason, among others, which our reverence to God inspires, that the Deists deny that the book called the Bible is the word of God or that it is revealed religion.

With respect to the term, *natural religion*, it is upon the face of it, the opposite of artificial religion, and it is impossible for any man to be certain that what is called *revealed religion*, is not artificial. Man has the power of making books inventing stories of God, and calling them revelation or the word of God. The Koran exists as an instance that this can be done, and we must be credulous indeed to suppose that this is the only instance, and Mahomet the only impostor. The Jews could match him, and the church of

Rome could overmatch the Jews. The Mahometans believe the Koran, the Christians believe the Bible, and it is education makes all the difference.

Books, whether Bibles or Korans, carry no evidence of being the work of any other power than man. It is only that which man cannot do that carries the evidence of being the work of a superior power. Man could not invent and make a universe—he could not invent nature, for nature is of divine origin. It is the laws by which the universe is governed. When, therefore, we look through nature up to nature's God, we are in the right road to happiness, but when we trust to books as the word of God, and confide in them as revealed religion, we are afloat on an ocean of uncertainty, and shatter into contending factions. The term, therefore *natural religion*, explains itself to be *divine religion*, and the term *revealed religion* involves in it the suspicion of being *artificial*.

To shew the necessity of understanding the meaning of words, I will mention an instance of a minister, I believe of the Episcopalian church, of Newark, in Jersey. He wrote and published a book, and entitled it, "*An Antidote to Deism.*" An antidote to *Deism*, must be *Atheism*. It has no other antidote—for what can be an antidote to the belief of a God, but the disbelief of a God. Under the tuition of such pastors, what but ignorance and false information can be expected.

THOMAS PAINE.

ON INFIDELITY.

ROBERT HALL: a protestant minister in England, preached and published a sermon against what he calls "*Modern Infidelity.*" A copy of it was sent to a gentleman in America, with a request for his opinion thereon. That gentleman sent it to a friend of his in New-York with the request written on the cover—and this last sent it to Thomas Paine, who wrote the following observations on the blank leaf at the end of the Sermon.

REMARKS ON THE FOREGOING SERMON.

THE preacher of the foregoing sermon speaks a great deal about infidelity, but does not define what he means by it.

His harangue is a general exclamation. Every thing, I suppose, that is not in his creed is infidelity with him, and his creed is infidelity with me. Infidelity is believing falsely. If what Christians believe is not true, it is the Christians that are the infidels.

The point between Deists and Christians is not about doctrine, but about fact—for if the things believed by the Christians to be facts, are not facts, the doctrine founded thereon falls of itself. There is such a book as the Bible, but is it a fact that the Bible is revealed religion? The Christians cannot prove it is. They put tradition in place of evidence, and tradition is not proof. If it were, the reality of witches could be proved by the same kind of evidence.

The Bible is a history of the times of which it speaks, and history is not revelation. The obscene and vulgar stories in the Bible are as repugnant to our ideas of the purity of a divine Being, as the horrid cruelties and murders it ascribes to him, are repugnant to our ideas of his justice. It is the reverence of the Deists for the attributes of the Deity, that causes them to reject the Bible.

Is the account which the Christian church gives of the person called Jesus Christ, a fact or a fable? Is it a fact that he was begotten by the Holy Ghost? The Christians cannot prove it, for the case does not admit of proof. The things called miracles in the Bible, such for instance as raising the dead, admitted, if true, of ocular demonstration, but the story of the conception of Jesus Christ in the womb is a cause beyond miracle, for it did not admit of demonstration. Mary, the reputed mother of Jesus, who must be supposed to know best, never said so herself, and all the evidence of it is, that the book of Matthew says, that Joseph dreamed an angel told him so. Had an old maid of two or three hundred years of age, brought forth a child, it would have been much better presumptive evidence of a supernatural conception, than Matthew's story of Joseph's dream about his young wife.

Is it a fact that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, and how is it proved? If a God, he could not die, and as a man he could not redeem, how then is this redemption proved to be fact? It is said that Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, commonly called an apple, and thereby subjected himself and all his posterity for ever to eternal damnation.—This is worse than visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the *third and fourth generation*. But how was the death of Jesus Christ to affect or alter the

case?—Did God thirst for blood? If so, would it not have been better to have crucified Adam at once upon the forbidden tree, and made a new man? Would not this have been more Creator-like than repairing the old one? Or, did God, when he made Adam, supposing the story to be true, exclude himself from the right of making another? Or impose on himself the necessity of breeding from the old stock? Priests should first prove facts and deduce doctrines from them afterwards. But instead of this, they assume every thing and prove nothing. Authorities drawn from the Bible are no more than authorities drawn from other books, unless it can be proved that the Bible is revelation.

This story of the redemption will not stand examination. That man should redeem himself from the sin of eating an apple, by committing a murder on Jesus Christ, is the strangest system of religion ever set up. Deism is perfect purity compared with this. It is an established principle with the Quakers not to shed blood—suppose then all Jerusalem had been Quakers when Christ lived, there would have been nobody to crucify him, and in that case, if man is redeemed by his blood, which is the belief of the church, there could have been no redemption—and the people of Jerusalem must all have been damned, because they were too good to commit murder. The Christian system of religion is an outrage on common sense. Why is man afraid to think?

Why do not the Christians, to be consistent, make saints of Judas and Pontius Pilate, for they were the persons who accomplished the act of salvation. The merit of a sacrifice, if there can be any merit in it, was never in the thing sacrificed, but in the persons offering up the sacrifice—and therefore Judas and Pontius Pilate ought to stand first on the calendar of saints.

THOMAS PAINE.

OF THE TOWER OF BABEL.

THE story of the tower of Babel is told in the eleventh chapter of Genesis. It begins thus.—“And the whole earth (it was but a very little part of it they knew) was of one language and of one speech. And it came to pass as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the

land of Shinar and they dwelt there.—And they said one to another, *Go to*, let us make brick and burn them thoroughly, and they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.—And they said, *Go to*, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.—And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded.—And the Lord said, behold the people is one, and they have all one language, and this they begin to do, and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do.—*Go to*, let us go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.—So, (that is, by that means) the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city."

This is the story, and a very foolish inconsistent story it is. In the first place, the familiar and irreverend manner in which the almighty is spoken of in this chapter, is offensive to a serious mind. As to the project of building a tower whose top should reach to heaven, there never could be a people so foolish as to have such a notion; but to represent the almighty as jealous of the attempt, as the writer of the story has done, is adding profanation to folly.—"*Go to*," say the builders, "let us build us a tower whose top shall reach to heaven. *Go to*, says God, let us go down and confound their language." This quaintness is indecent, and the reason given for it is worse, for, "now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do." This is representing the Almighty as jealous of their getting into heaven. The story is too ridiculous, even as a fable, to account for the diversity of languages in the world, for which it seems to have been intended.

As to the project of confounding their language for the purpose of making them separate, it is altogether inconsistent; because instead of producing this effect, it would, by increasing their difficulties, render them more necessary to each other, and cause them to keep together. Where could they go to better themselves?

Another observation upon this story is, the inconsistency of it with respect to the opinion that the Bible is the word of God given for the information of mankind; for nothing could so effectually prevent such a word being known by mankind as confounding their language. The people who after this spoke different languages, could no more under-

stand such a word generally, than the builders of Babel could understand one another. It would have been necessary, therefore, had such word ever been given or intended to be given, that the whole earth should be, as they say it was at first, of one language, and of one speech, and that it should never have been confounded.

The case however is, that the Bible will not bear examination in any part of it, which it would do if it was the word of God. Those who most believe it are those who know least about it, and the priests always take care to keep the inconsistent and contradictory parts out of sight.

THOMAS PAINE.

ON THE BIBLE AS A BOOK OF DIVINE REVELATION.

THE church tells us that the books of the Old and New Testament are divine revelation, and without this revelation we could not have true ideas of God.

The Deists, on the contrary, say that those books are not divine revelation, and that were it not for the light of reason, and the religion of Deism, those books, instead of teaching us true ideas of God, would teach us not only false but blasphemous ideas of him.

Deism teaches us that God is a God of truth and justice. Does the Bible teach the same doctrine? It does not.

The Bible says (Jeremiah, chap. 20, ver. 7) that God is a deceiver. "O Lord (says Jeremiah) thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived. Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed."

Jeremiah not only upbraids God with deceiving him but, in chap. 4, ver. 10, he upbraids God with deceiving the people of Jerusalem. "Ah! Lord God! (says he) surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying ye shall have peace whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul."

In chap. 15, ver. 18, the Bible becomes more impudent, and calls God, in plain language, a liar. "Wilt thou, (says Jeremiah to God) be altogether unto me as a liar and as waters that fail."

Ezekiel, chap. 14, ver. 9, makes God to say—"If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, *I the Lord have deceived that prophet.*" All this is downright blasphemy.

The prophet Micaiah, as he is called, 2 Chron. chap. 18, ver. 18, tells another blasphemous story of God.—“I saw, (says he,) the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, who shall entice Ahab king of Israel to go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one spoke after this manner and another after that manner. Then there came out a spirit (Micaiah does not tell us where he came from) and *stood before the Lord*, (what an impudent fellow this spirit was) and said, I will entice him. And the Lord said unto him, wherewith? and he said, I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail; go out and do even so.

We often hear of a gang of thieves plotting to rob and murder a man and laying a plan to entice him out that they may execute their design, and we always feel shocked at the wickedness of such wretches; but what must we think of a book that describes the Almighty acting in the same manner, and laying plans in heaven to entrap and ruin mankind. Our ideas of his justice and goodness forbid us to believe such stories, and therefore we say that a lying spirit has been in the mouth of the writers of the books of the Bible.

THOMAS PAINE.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

THE following publication, which has appeared in several newspapers in different parts of the United States, shews in the most striking manner the character and effects of religious fanaticism, and to what extravagant lengths it will carry its unruly and destructive operations. We give it a place in the Prospect, because we think the perusal of it will be gratifying to our subscribers; and because, by exposing the true character of such frantic zeal, we hope to produce some influence upon the reason of man and induce him to rise superior to such dreadful illusions. The judicious remarks at the end of this account were communicated to us by a very intelligent and faithful friend to the cause of Deism.

Extract from a letter of the Rev. George Scott, of Mill Creek, Washington County, Pennsylvania to Col. William M^r Farran, of Mount Bethel Northampton County, P. dated Nov. 3, 1802.

MY DEAR FRIEND,
WE have wonderful times here. God has been pleased to visit this barren corner with abundance of his grace. The work began in a neighbouring con-

gregation, at a sacramental occasion, about the last of September. It did not make its appearance in my congregation till the first Tuesday of October. After society, in the night, there appeared an evident stir among the young people, but nothing of the appearance of what appeared afterwards. On Saturday evening following we had society, but it was dull throughout. On Sabbath-day one cried out, but nothing else extraordinary appeared.— That evening I went part of the way to Raccoon congregation, where the sacrament of the supper was administered; but on Monday morning a very strong impression of duty constrained me to return to my congregation in the Flats, where the work was begun. We met in the afternoon at the meeting-house where we had a warm society. In the evening we removed to a neighbouring house, where we continued in society till midnight; numbers were falling all the time of society. After the people were dismissed, a considerable number staid and sung hymns, till perhaps two o'clock in the morning when the work began to the astonishment of all. Only five or six were left able to take care of the rest of the number perhaps of near forty.— They fell in all directions on benches, on beds, and on the floor. Next morning the people began to flock in from all quarters. One girl came early in the morning, but did not get within one hundred yards of the house before she fell powerless, and was carried in. We could not leave the house, and therefore continued society all that day and all that night, and on Wednesday morning I was obliged to leave a number of them on the spot. On Thursday evening we met again, when the work was amazing; about twenty persons lay to all appearance dead for near two and a half hours, and a great number cried out with sore distress.—Friday I preached at Mill Creek. Here nothing appeared more than an unusual solemnity. That evening we had society, where great numbers were brought under conviction, but none fell. On Sabbath-day I preached at Mill Creek. This day and evening was a very solemn time but none fell. On Monday I went to attend presbytery, but returned on Thursday evening to the Flats, where society was appointed, when numbers were struck down. On Saturday evening we had society, and a very solemn time—about a dozen persons lay dead three and a half hours by the watch. On Sabbath a number fell, and we were obliged to continue all night in society, as we had done every evening we had met before. On Monday a Mr. Hughes preached at Mill Creek, but nothing extraordinary appeared, only a great deal of falling. We concluded to divide that evening into two societies, in order to accommodate the people. Mr. H. attended the one and I the other. Nothing strange appeared where Mr. H. attended; but where I attended God was present in the most wonderful manner. I believe there was not one present but was more or less affected. A considerable number fell powerless, and two or three after lying some time, recovered with joy, and spoke near half an hour. One, especially, declared in a surprising manner the wonderful view she had of the person, character, and offices of Christ, with such accuracy of language that I was astonished to hear it. Surely this must be the work of God! On Thursday evening we had a lively society, but not much falling down. On Saturday we all went to the Cross Roads, and attended a sacrament. Here were, perhaps, about 1000 people collected. The weather was uncomfortable; on the Sabbath-day it rained, and on Monday it snowed. We had thirteen ministers present. The exercises began on Saturday, and continued on night and day with little or no intermission. Great numbers fell; to speak within bounds, there were upwards of 150 down at one time and some of them continued three or four hours with but little appearance of life. Numbers came to, rejoicing, while others were deeply distressed. The scene was wonderful: the cries of the distressed, and the agonizing

groans, gave some faint representation of the awful cries and bitter screams which will no doubt be extorted from the damned in hell. But what is to me the most surprising, of those, who have been subjects among my people, with whom I have conversed, but three had any terrors of hell during their exercise. The principal cry is, O how long have I rejected Christ! O how often have I embued my hands in his precious blood! O how often have I waded through his precious blood by stifling conviction! O this dreadful hard heart! O what a dreadful monster sin is! It was my sin that nailed Jesus to the cross, &c.

The preaching is various; some thunder the terrors of the law—others preach the mild invitation of the gospel. For my part, since the work began, I have confined myself chiefly to the doctrines of our fallen state by nature and the way of recovery through Christ; opening the way of salvation; shewing how God can be just and yet be the justifier of them that believe, and also the nature of true faith and repentance; pointing out the difference between true and false religion, and urging the invitations of the gospel in the most engaging manner that I am master of, without any strokes of terror. The convictions and cries appear to be, perhaps, nearly equal under all these different modes of preaching, but it appears rather most when we preach on the fulness and freeness of salvation.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FOREGOING LETTER.

In the fifth chapter of Mark we read a strange story of the devil getting into the swine after he had been turned out of a man, and as the freaks of the devil in that story and the tumble-down descriptions in this are very much alike; the two stories ought to go together.

“ And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, and said, what have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. (For he said unto him, come out of the man, thou unclean spirit,) And he asked him, what is thy name? and he answered, saying, my name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there, nigh unto the mountains, a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And

forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choaked in the sea."

The force of imagination is capable of producing strange effects.—When animal magnetism began in France, which was while Doctor Franklin was minister to that country, the wonderful accounts given of the wonderful effects it produced on the persons who were under the operation exceeded any thing related in the foregoing letter from Washington county. They tumbled down fell into trances, roared and rolled about like persons supposed to be bewitched. The Government, in order to ascertain the fact or detect the imposition, appointed a committee of physicians to inquire into the case, and Doctor Franklin was requested to accompany them which he did.

The committee went to the Operator's house, and the persons on whom an operation was to be performed were assembled. They were placed in the position in which they had been when under former operations, and *blind-folded*. In a little time they began to shew signs of agitation, and in the space of about two hours they went through all the frantic airs they had shewn before; but the case was, that no operation was performing upon them, neither was the Operator in the room, for he had been ordered out of it by the physicians; but as the persons did not know this, they supposed him present and operating upon them. It was the effect of imagination only. Doctor Franklin in relating this account to the writer of this article, said that he thought the Government might as well have let it gone on, for that as imagination sometimes produced disorders it might also cure some; and a similar remark may be made on this account from Washington county, for it makes the people better livers than before, let it go on. It is fortunate however, that this falling-down and crying-out scene did not happen in New England a century ago, for if it had the preachers would have been hung for witheraft, and in more ancient times the poor falling-down folks would have been supposed to be possessed of a devil, like the man in Mark, among the tombs. The progress that reason and Deism make in the world, lessen the force of superstition, and abate the spirit of persecution.

THOMAS PAINE.

A LETTER; BEING AN ANSWER TO A FRIEND, ON THE
PUBLICATION OF THE "AGE OF REASON."

Paris, May 12, 1797.

IN your letter of the 20th of March you give me several quotations from the Bible, which you call the *word of God*, to shew me that my opinions on religion are wrong, and I could give you as many from the same book to shew that yours are not right; consequently then the Bible decides nothing, because it decides any way, and every way, one choose to make it.

But by what authority do you call the Bible the *word of God*? for this is the first point to be settled. It is not your calling it so that makes it so, any more than the Mahometans calling the Koran the *word of God* that makes the Koran to be so. The Popish Councils of Nice and Laodocæa about 350 years after the time that the person called Jesus Christ is said to have lived, voted the books that now compose what is called the New Testament to be the *word of God*. This was done by *yeas* and *nays* as we now vote a law. The Pharisees of the second Temple, after the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon, did the same by the books that now compose the Old Testament, and this is all the authority there is, which to me is no authority at all. I am as capable of judging for myself as they were, and I think more so, because as they made a living by their religion, they had a self-interest in the vote they gave.

You may have an opinion that a man is inspired, but you cannot prove it, nor can you have any proof of it yourself, because you cannot see into his mind in order to know how he comes by his thoughts, and the same is the case with the word *revelation*. There can be no evidence of such a thing, for you can no more prove revelation than you can prove what another man dreams of, neither can he prove it himself.

It is often said in the Bible that God spake unto Moses; but how do you know that God spake unto Moses? Because, you will say, the Bible says so. The Koran says that God spake unto Mahomet, do you believe that too? No. Why not? Because, you will say, you do not believe it; and so, because you *do*, and because you *don't*, is all the reason you can give for believing or disbelieving, except

that you will say that Mahomet was an impostor. And how do you know that Moses was not an impostor? For my own part I believe that all are impostors that pretend to hold verbal communication with the Deity. It is the way by which the world has been imposed upon; but if you think otherwise you have the same right to your opinion that I have to mine, and must answer for it in the same manner. But all this does not settle the point, whether the Bible be the *word of God*, or not. It is therefore necessary to go a step farther. The case then is:—

You form your opinion of God from the account given of him in the Bible; and I form my opinion of the Bible from the wisdom and goodness of God, manifested in the structure of the universe, and in all the works of creation. The result in these two cases will be, that you, by taking the Bible for your standard, will have a bad opinion of God; and I by taking God for my standard, shall have a bad opinion of the Bible.

The Bible represents God to be a changeable, passionate, vindictive Being; making a world and then drowning it, and afterwards repenting of what he had done and promising not to do so again, Setting one nation to cut the throats of another, and stopping the course of the sun till the butchery should be done. But the works of God in the creation preaches to us another doctrine. In that vast volume we see nothing to give us the idea of a changeable, passionate, vindictive God, every thing we there behold impresses us with a contrary idea; that of unchangeableness, and of eternal order, harmony, and goodness. The sun and the seasons return at their appointed time, and every thing in the creation proclaims that God is unchangeable. Now, which am I to believe, a book that any impostor might make and call the *word of God*, or the creation itself which none but an almighty power could make, for the Bible says one thing, and the creation says the contrary. The Bible represents God with all the passions of a mortal, and the creation proclaims him with all the attributes of a God.

It is from the Bible that man has learned cruelty, rapine, and murder; for the belief of a cruel God makes a cruel man. That blood-thirsty man, called the prophet Samuel, makes God to say, (1 Sam. chap. xv. ver. 3,) “now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.”

That Samuel, or some impostor, might say, this is what,

at this distance of time, can neither be proved nor disproved, but in my opinion it is blasphemy to say, or to believe, that God said it. All our ideas of the justice and goodness of God revolt at the impious cruelty of the Bible. It is not a God, just and good, but a devil, under the name of God, that the Bible describes.

What makes this pretended order to destroy the Amalekites appear the worse, is the reason given for it. The Amalekites four hundred years before, according to the account in Exodus, chap. 17, (but which has the appearance of fable from the magical account it gives of Moses holding up his hands) had opposed the Israelites coming into their country, and this the Amalekites had a right to do, because the Israelites were the invaders, as the Spaniards were the invaders of Mexico; and this opposition by the Amalekites *at that time* is given as a reason that the men, women, infants, and sucklings, sheep and oxen, camels and asses that were born four hundred years afterwards should be put to death; and to complete the horror Samuel hewed Agag, the chief of the Amalekites, in pieces as you would hew a stick of wood. I will bestow a few observations on this case.

In the the first place, nobody knows who the author, or writer, of the book of Samuel was, and therefore the fact itself has no other proof than anonymous or hear-say evidence, which is no evidence at all. In the second place, this anonymous book says that this slaughter was done by *the express command of God*; but all our ideas of the justice and goodness of God give the lie to the book, and as I never will believe any book that ascribes cruelty and injustice to God, I therefore reject the Bible as unworthy of credit.

As I have now given you my reasons for believing that the Bible is not the word of God, that it is a falshood, I have a right to ask you your reasons for believing the contrary; but I know you can give me none, except that *you were educated to believe the Bible*, and as the Turks give the same reason for believing the Koran it is evident that education makes all the difference, and that reason and truth have nothing to do in the case. You believe in the Bible from the accident of birth, and the Turks believe in the Koran from the same accident, and each call the other *Infidel*. But leaving the prejudice of education out of the case, the unprejudiced truth is, that all are infidels who believe falsely of God, whether they draw their creed from the Bible, or from the Koran, from the Old Testament, or from the New.

When you have examined the Bible with the attention that I have done, (for I do not think you know much about it,) and permit yourself to have just ideas of God, you will most probably believe as I do. But I wish you to know that this answer to your letter is not written for the purpose of changing your opinion. It is written to satisfy you, and some other friends whom I esteem, that my disbelief of the Bible is founded on a pure and religious belief in God; for in my opinion the Bible is a gross libel against the justice and goodness of God in almost every part of it.

THOMAS PAINE.

OF THE RELIGION OF DEISM COMPARED WITH THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION, AND THE SUPERIORITY OF THE
FORMER OVER THE LATTER.

EVERY person of whatever religious denomination he may be is a Deist in the first article of his creed. Deism from the Latin word Deus, God, is the belief of a God, and this belief is the first article of every man's creed.

It is on this article, universally consented to by all mankind, that the Deist builds his church and here he rests. Whenever we step aside from this article, by mixing it with articles of human invention, we wander into a labyrinth of uncertainty and fable, and become exposed to every kind of imposition by pretenders to revelation. The Persian shews the *Zendavesta* of Zoroaster the law-giver of Persia, and calls it the *divine law*; the Brahmin shews the *Shaster*, revealed, he says, by God to Brama, and given to him out of a cloud; the Jew shews what he calls the law of Moses, given, he says, by God on the Mount Sinai; the Christian shews a collection of books and epistles written by nobody knows who, and called the New Testament, and the Mahometan shews the Koran, given, he says, by God to Mahomet; each of these calls itself *revealed religion*, and the *only* true word of God, and this the followers of each profess to believe from the habit of education, and each believes the others are imposed upon.

But when the divine gift of reason begins to expand itself in the mind and calls man to reflection, he then reads and contemplates God in his works, and not in books pretending to revelation. The creation is the Bible of a true

believer in God. Every thing in this vast volume inspires him with sublime ideas of the Creator. The little and paltry, and often obscene tales of the Bible sink into wretchedness when put in comparison with this mighty work. The Deist needs none of those tricks and shows called miracles to confirm his faith, for what can be a greater miracle than the creation itself and his own existence.

There is a happiness in Deism, when rightly understood, that is not to be found in any other system of religion. All other systems have something in them that either shock our reason or are repugnant to it, and man, if he thinks at all, must stifle his reason in order to force himself to believe them. But in Deism our reason and our belief become happily united. The wonderful structure of the universe and every thing we behold in the system of creation prove to us, far better than books can do, the existence of a God, and at the same time proclaim his attributes. It is by the exercise of our reason that we are enabled to contemplate God in his works and imitate him in his ways. When we see his care and goodness extended over all his creatures, it teaches us our duty towards each other, while it calls forth our gratitude to him. It is by forgetting God in his works, and running after books of pretended revelation that man has wandered from the straight path of duty and happiness, and become by turns the victim of doubt and the dupe of delusion.

Except in the first article in the Christian creed, that of believing in God, there is not an article in it but fills the mind with doubt as to the truth of it the instant man begins to think. Now every article in a creed that is necessary to the happiness and salvation of man ought to be as evident to the reason and comprehension of man as the first article is, for God has not given us reason for the purpose of confounding us, but that we should use it for our own happiness and his glory.

The truth of the first article is proved by God himself and is universal, for *the creation is of itself demonstration of the existence of a Creator*. But the second article, that of God's begetting a son, is not proved in like manner, and stands on no other authority than that of tale. Certain books in what is called the New Testament tell us that Joseph dreamed an angel told him so. (Matthew chap. i, ver. 20) "And behold the angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream, saying, Joseph thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the

Holy Ghost." The evidence upon this article bears no comparison with the evidence upon the first article, and therefore is not entitled to the same credit, and ought not to be made an article in a creed, because the evidence of it is defective, and what evidence there is, is doubtful and suspicious. We do not believe the first article on the authority of books, whether called Bibles or Korans, nor yet on the visionary authority of dreams, but on the authority of God's own visible works in the creation. The nations who never heard of such books, nor of such people as Jews, Christians, or Mahometans, believe the existence of a God as fully as we do, because it is self evident. The work of man's hands is a proof of the existence of man as fully as his personal appearance would be. When we see a watch we have as positive evidence of the existence of a watchmaker as if we saw him; and in like manner the creation is evidence to our reason and our senses of the existence of a Creator. But there is nothing in the works of God that is evidence that he begat a son, nor any thing in the system of creation that corroborates such an idea, and therefore we are not authorised in believing it. What truth there may be in the story that Mary, before she was married to Joseph, was kept by one of the Roman soldiers, and was with child by him, I leave to be settled between the Jews and the Christians. The story however has probability on its side, for her husband Joseph suspected and was jealous of her, and was going to put her away. "Joseph her husband being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was going to put her away privately." (Matthew chap. i, ver. 19).

I have already said, that "whenever we step aside from the first article (that of believing in God) we wander into a labyrinth of uncertainty," and here is evidence of the justness of the remark, for it is impossible for us to decide who was Jesus Christ's father. But presumption can assume any thing, and therefore it makes Joseph's dream to be of equal authority with the existence of God, and to help it on it calls it revelation. It is impossible for the mind of man in its serious moments, however it may have been entangled by education, or beset by priestcraft, not to stand still and doubt upon the truth of this article and of its creed. But this is not all.

The second article of the Christian creed having brought the son of Mary into the world (and this Mary according to the chronological tables was a girl of only fifteen years of age when this son was born) the next article goes on to

account for his being begotten, which was, that when he grew a man he should be put to death to expiate, they say, the sin that Adam brought into the world by eating an apple, or some kind of forbidden fruit.

But though this is the creed of the Church of Rome, from whence the Protestants borrowed it, it is a creed which that church has manufactured of itself, for it is not contained in, nor derived from, the book called the New Testament. The four books called the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which give, or pretend to give, the birth, sayings, life, preaching, and death of Jesus Christ, make no mention of what is called the fall of man, nor is the name of Adam to be found in any of those books, which it certainly would be if the writers of them believed that Jesus was begotten, born, and died for the purpose of redeeming mankind from the sin which Adam had brought into the world. Jesus never speaks of Adam himself, of the Garden of Eden, nor of what is called the fall of man. Neither did the early Christians believe the story of the fall of man to be fact, but held it to be allegory. The person called St. Augustine, says in his *City of God*, that the adventure of Eve and the serpent, and the account of Paradise, were generally considered in his time as allegory, and he treats them as such himself without attempting to give any explanation of them, but thinks a better might be given than had been offered.

Origen, another of the ancient fathers of the Church, treats the account of the creation in Genesis, and the story of the Garden of Eden and the fall of man, as fable or fiction.

What man of good sense, says he, can ever persuade himself that there was a first, a second, and a third day, and that each of those days had a night, when there was yet neither sun, moon, nor stars! (N. B. According to the account in Genesis, chap. i, the sun and moon was not made until the fourth day)—What man, continues he can be stupid enough to believe that God acting the part of a gardener had planted a garden in the east; that the tree of life was a real tree, and that the fruit of it had the virtue of making those who eat of it live for ever.

The Jews did not believe the first chapters of Genesis to be fact: Maimonides, one of the most learned and celebrated of the Jewish authors who lived in the eleventh century, says, in his book *MORE NEBACHIM*: We ought not to understand nor take according to the letter that which is written in the book of the creation, (the book of Genesis.) Taken, says he, according to the letter, especially with res-

pect to the work of four days, it gives the most absurd and extravagant ideas of God.

But the Church of Rome having set up its new religion which it called Christianity, and invented the creed which is named the Apostles creed, in which it calls Jesus the *only son of God, conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary*, things of which it is impossible that man or woman can have any idea, and consequently no belief but in words, and for which there is no authority but the idle story of Joseph's dream in the first chapter of Matthew, which any designing impostor or foolish fanatic might make, it then manufactured the allegories in the book of Genesis into fact, and the allegorical tree of life and tree of knowledge into real trees, contrary to the belief of the first Christians, and for which there is not the least authority in any of the books of the New Testament, for in none of them is there any mention made of such place as the Garden of Eden, nor of any thing that is said to have happened there.

But the Church of Rome could not erect the person called Jesus into a Saviour of the world without making the allegories in the book of Genesis into fact, though the New Testament, as before observed, gives no authority for it. All at once the allegorical tree of knowledge became, according to the church, a real tree, the fruit of it real fruit, and the eating of it sinful. As priestcraft was always the enemy of knowledge, because priestcraft supports itself by keeping people in delusion and ignorance, it was consistent with its policy to make the acquisition of knowledge a real sin.

The Church of Rome having done this, it then brings forward Jesus the son of Mary as suffering death to redeem mankind from sin, which Adam, it says, had brought into the world by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge. But as it is impossible for reason to believe such a story because it can see no reason for it, nor have any evidence of it, the church then tells us we must not regard our reason, but must *believe*, as it were, and that through thick and thin, as if God had given man reason like a play-thing, or a rattle, on purpose to make fun of him. Reason is the forbidden tree of priestcraft, and may serve to explain the allegory of the forbidden tree of knowledge, for we may reasonably suppose the allegory had some meaning and application at the time it was invented. It was the practice of the eastern nations to convey their meaning by allegory, and relate it in the manner of fact. Jesus followed the same method, yet nobody ever supposed the allegory or parable of the

rich man and Lazarus, the Prodigal Son, the ten Virgins, &c. were facts. Why then should the tree of knowledge, which is far more romantic in idea than the parables in the New Testament are, be supposed to be a real tree*. The answer to this is, because the church could not make its new fangled system, which it called Christianity, hold together without it. To have made Christ to die on account of an allegorical tree, would have been too bare-faced a fable.

But the account, as it is given of Jesus in the New Testament, even visionary as it is, does not support the creed of the church that he died for the redemption of the world. According to that account he was crucified and buried on the Friday and rose again in good health on the Sunday morning, for we do not hear that he was sick. This cannot be called dying, and is rather making fun of death than suffering it. There are thousands of men and women also, who, if they could know they should come back again in good health in about thirty-six hours, would prefer such kind of death for the sake of the experiment, and to know what the other side of the grave was. Why then should that which would be only a voyage of curious amusement to us be magnified into merit and sufferings in him? If a God he could not suffer death, for immortality cannot die, and as a man his death could be no more than the death of any other person.

The belief of the redemption of Jesus Christ is altogether an invention of the Church of Rome and not the doctrine of the New Testament. What the writers of the New Testament attempt to prove by the story of Jesus is, the *resurrection of the same body from the grave*, which was the belief of the Pharisees, in opposition to the Sadducees (a sect of Jews) who denied it. Paul, who was brought up a Pharisee, labours hard at this point, for it was the creed of his own Pharisaical church. The xv. chap. I of Corinthians is full of supposed cases and assertions about the resurrection of the same body, but there is not a word in it about redemption. This chapter makes part of the funeral service of the Episcopal church. The dogma of the redemption is the fable of priestcraft invented since the time the New Testament was compiled, and the agreeable delusion of it suited with the depravity of immoral livers. When men are taught to ascribe all their

* The remark of Emperor Julian, on the story of the Tree of Knowledge is worth observing. "If," said he, "there ever had been, or could be, a Tree of Knowledge, instead of God forbidding man to eat thereof, it would be that of which he would order him to eat the most."

crimes and vices to the temptations of the devil, and to believe that Jesus, by his death, rubs all off and pays their passage to heaven gratis, they become as careless in morals as a spendthrift would be of money, were he told that his father had engaged to pay off all his scores. It is a doctrine, not only dangerous to morals in this world, but to our happiness in the next world, because it holds out such a cheap, easy, and lazy way of getting to heaven as has a tendency to induce men to hug the delusion of it to their own injury.

But there are times when men have serious thoughts, and it is at such times when they begin to think, that they begin to doubt the truth of the Christian Religion, and well they may, for it is too fanciful, and too full of conjecture, inconsistency, improbability, and irrationality, to afford consolation to the thoughtful man. His reason revolts against his creed. He sees that none of its articles are proved, or can be proved. He may believe that such a person as is called Jesus (for Christ was not his name) was born and grew to be a man, because it is no more than a natural and probable case. But who is to prove he is the son of God, that he was begotten by the Holy Ghost? Of these things there can be no proof, and that which admits not of proof, and is against the laws of probability and the order of nature, which God himself has established, is not an object for belief. God has not given man reason to embarrass him, but to prevent his being imposed upon.

He may believe that Jesus was crucified, because many others were crucified, but who is to prove he was crucified *for the sins of the world*? This article has no evidence not even in the New Testament; and if it had, where is the proof that the New Testament, in relating things neither probable nor proveable, is to be believed as true? When an article in a creed does not admit of truth nor of probability the salvo is to call it revelation; but this is only putting one difficulty in the place of another, for it is as impossible to prove a thing to be revelation as it is to prove that Mary was gotten with child by the Holy Ghost.

Here it is that the religion of Deism is superior to the Christian religion. It is free from all those invented and torturing articles that shock our reason or injure our humanity, and with which the Christian religion abounds. Its creed is pure and sublimely simple. It believes in God and there it rests. It honours reason as the choicest gift of God to man, and the faculty by which he is enabled to contemplate the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator dis-

played in the creation; and reposing itself on his protection, both here and hereafter, it avoids all presumptuous beliefs, and rejects, as the fabulous inventions of men, all books pretending to revelation.

THOMAS PAINE.

HINTS TOWARDS FORMING A SOCIETY FOR ENQUIRING INTO THE TRUTH OR FALSEHOOD OF ANCIENT HISTORY, SO FAR AS HISTORY IS CONNECTED WITH SYSTEMS OF RELIGION ANCIENT AND MODERN.

It has been customary to class History into three divisions, distinguished by the names of *Sacred*, *Prophane*, and *Ecclesiastical*. By the first is meant the *Bible*; by the second, the history of nations, of men and things; and by the third, the history of the church and its priesthood. Nothing is more easy than to give names, and therefore mere names signify nothing unless they lead to the discovery of some cause for which that name was given. For example, Sunday is the name given to the first day of the week, in the English language, and it is the same in the Latin, that is, it has the same meaning, (*Dies Solis*) and also in the German, and in several other languages. Why then was this name given to that day? Because it was the day dedicated by the ancient world to the luminary, which in English we call the Sun, and therefore the day Sunday, or the day of the Sun; as in the like manner we call the second day Monday, the day dedicated to the Moon.

Here the name, Sunday, leads to the cause of its being called so, and we have visible evidence of the fact, because we behold the Sun from whence the name comes; but this is not the case when we distinguish one part of history from another by the name of sacred. All histories have been written by men. We have no evidence, nor any cause to believe, that any have been written by God. That part of the Bible called the Old Testament, is the History of the Jewish nation, from the time of Abraham, which begins in the 11th chap. of Genesis, to the downfall of that nation by Nebuchadnezzar, and is no more entitled to be called sacred than any other history. It is altogether the contrivance of priestcraft that has given it that name. So far from its being sacred it has not the appearance of being true in many of the things it relates. It must be better authority than a

book, which any impostor might make, as Mahomet made the Koran; to make a thoughtful man believe that the Sun and Moon stood still, or that Moses and Aaron turned the Nile, which is larger than the Delaware, into blood, and that the Egyptian magicians did the same. These things have too much the appearance of romance to be believed for fact.

It would be of use to enquire, and ascertain the time, when that part of the Bible called the Old Testament first appeared. From all that can be collected there was no such book till after the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon, and that it is the work of the Pharisees of the second Temple. How they came to make the 19th chapter of the 2d book of Kings, and the 37th of Isaiah, word for word alike, can only be accounted for by their having no plan to go by, and not knowing what they were about. The same is the case with respect to the last verses in the 2d book of Chronicles, and the first verses in Ezra, they also are word for word alike, which shews that the Bible has been put together at random.

But, besides these things, there is great reason to believe we have been imposed upon, with respect to the antiquity of the Bible, and especially with respect to the books ascribed to Moses. Herodotus, who is called the father of history, and is the most ancient historian whose works have reached to our time, and who travelled into Egypt, conversed with the priests, historians, astronomers, and learned men of that country, for the purpose of obtaining all the information of it he could, and who gives an account of the ancient state of it, makes no mention of such a man as Moses, though the Bible makes him to have been the greatest hero there, nor of any one circumstance mentioned in the book of Exodus, respecting Egypt, such as turning the rivers into blood, the dust into lice, the death of the first born throughout all the land of Egypt, the passage of the Red-Sea, the drowning of Pharaoh and all his host, things which could not have been a secret in Egypt, and must have been generally known, had they been facts; and therefore as no such things were known in Egypt, nor any such man as Moses; at the time Herodotus was there, which is about two thousand two hundred years ago, it shews that the account of these things in the book ascribed to Moses is a made story of latter times, that is, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, and that Moses is not the author of the books ascribed to him.

With respect to the cosmogony, or account of the creation, in the first chapter of Genesis, of the Garden of Eden

in the second chapter, and of what is called the fall of man in the third chapter, there is something concerning them we are not historically acquainted with. In none of the books of the Bible, after Genesis, are any of these things mentioned, or even alluded to. How is this to be accounted for? The obvious inference is, that either they were not known, or not believed to be facts, by the writers of the other books of the Bible, and that Moses is not the author of the chapters where these accounts are given.

The next question on the case is, how did the Jews come by these notions and at what time were they written?

To answer this question we must first consider what the state of the world was at the time the Jews began to be a people, for the Jews are but a modern race, compared with the antiquity of other nations. At the time there were, even by their own account, but thirteen Jews or Israelites in the world, *Jacob and his twelve sons*, and four of these were bastards. The nations of Egypt, Chaldea, Persia, and India, were great and populous, abounding in learning and science, particularly in the knowledge of astronomy of which the Jews were always ignorant. The chronological tables mention, that Eclipses were observed at Babylon above two thousand years before the Christian era, which was before there was a single Jew or Israelite in the world.

All those ancient nations had their cosmogonies, that is their accounts, how the creation was made, long before there was such people as Jews or Israelites. An account of the cosmogonies of India and Persia is given by Henry Lord, Chaplain to the East India Company, at Surat, and published in London, 1630. The writer of this has seen a copy of the edition of 1630, and made extracts from it. The work, which is now scarce, was dedicated by Lord to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

We know that the Jews were carried captives into Babylon, by Nebuchadnezzar, and remained in captivity several years, when they were liberated by Cyrus, king of Persia. During their captivity they would have had an opportunity of acquiring some knowledge of the cosmogony of the Persians, or at least of getting some ideas how to fabricate one to put at the head of their own history after their return from captivity. This will account for the cause, for some cause there must have been, that no mention nor reference is made to the cosmogony in Genesis in any of the books of the Bible, supposed to have been written before the captivity, nor is the name of Adam to be found in any of those books.

no man of our age would have written the story of Adam's fall

The Books of Chronicles were written after the return of the Jews from captivity, for the third chapter of the first book gives a list of all the Jewish Kings from David to Zedekiah, who was carried captive to Babylon, and to four generations beyond the time of Zedekiah. In the first verse of the first chapter of this book the name of Adam is mentioned, but not in any book in the Bible, written before that time, nor could it be, for Adam and Eve are names taken from the cosmogony of the Persians. Henry Lord, in his book, written from Surat, and dedicated, as I have already said, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, says that in the Persian cosmogony, the name of the first man was *Adamoh* and of the woman *Hevah*.* From hence comes the Adam and Eve of the book of Genesis. In the cosmogony of India, of which I shall speak in a future Number, the name of the first man was *Pourous*, and of the woman *Par-coutee*. We want a knowledge of the Sanscrit language of India to understand the meaning of the names, and I mention it in this place, only to show that it is from the cosmogony of Persia rather than that of India that the cosmogony in Genesis has been fabricated by the Jews, who returned from captivity by the liberality of Cyrus, King of Persia. There is, however, reason to conclude on the authority of Sir William Jones, who resided several years in India, that these names were very expressive in the language to which they belonged, for in speaking of this language he says (see the Asiatic Researches) "The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of wonderful structure; it is more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either."

These hints, which are intended to be continued, will serve to shew that a society for enquiring into the ancient state of the world, and the state of ancient history, so far as history is connected with systems of religion, ancient and modern, may become a useful and instructive institution. There is good reason to believe we have been in great error, with respect to the antiquity of the Bible, as well as imposed upon by its contents. Truth ought to be the object of every man; for without truth there can be no real happiness to a thoughtful mind, nor any assurance of happiness hereafter. It is the duty of man to obtain all the knowledge he can, and then make the best use of it.

THOMAS PAINE.

* In an English edition of the Bible, in 1583, the first woman is called Hevah.

TO MR. MOORE, OF NEW YORK, COMMONLY CALLED
BISHOP MOORE.

I HAVE read in the newspapers your account of the visit you made to the unfortunate General Hamilton, and of administering to him a ceremony of your church which you call the *Holy Communion*.

I regret the fate of General Hamilton, and I so far hope with you that it will be a warning to thoughtless man not to sport away the life that God has given him; but with respect to other parts of your letter I think it very reprehensible and betrays great ignorance of what true religion is. But you are a priest, you get your living by it, and it is not your worldly interest to undeceive yourself.

After giving an account of your administering to the deceased what you call the *Holy Communion*, you add, "By reflecting on this melancholy event let the humble believer be encouraged ever to hold fast that precious faith which is the *only source of true consolation* in the last extremity of nature. Let the infidel be persuaded to abandon his opposition to the Gospel."

To shew you, Sir, that your promise of consolation from Scripture has no foundation to stand upon, I will cite to you one of the greatest falsehoods upon record, and which was given, as the record says, for the purpose, and as a promise, of consolation.

In the Epistle called "the First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians," (chap. 4.) the writer consoles the Thessalonians as to the case of their friends who were already dead. He does this by informing them, and he does it, he says, by the word of the Lord, (a most notorious falsehood) that the general resurrection of the dead, and the ascension of the living, will be in his and their days: that their friends will then come to life again; that the dead in Christ will rise first—"Then WE (says he, ver. 17) which *are alive and remain* shall be caught up together with THEM in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord—Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Delusion and falsehood cannot be carried higher than they are in this passage. You, Sir, are but a novice in the art. The words admit of no equivocation. The whole passage is in the *first person* and the *present tense*, "We which are

alive." Had the writer meant a future time, and a distant generation, it must have been in the third person and the future tense, "*They who shall then be alive.*" I am thus particular for the purpose of nailing you down to the text, that you may not ramble from it, nor put other constructions upon the words than they will bear, which priests are very apt to do.

Now, Sir, it is impossible for serious man, to whom God has given the divine gift of reason, and who employs that reason to reverence and adore the God that gave it, it is, I say, impossible for such a person to put confidence in a book that abounds with fable and falsehood as the New Testament does. This passage is but a sample of what I could give you.

You call on those whom you stile "*infidels,*" (and they in return might call you an idolator, a worshipper of false Gods, a preacher of false doctrine) "to abandon their opposition to the Gospel." Prove, Sir, the Gospel to be true, and the opposition will cease of itself; but until you do this, (which we know you cannot do) you have no right to expect they will notice your call. If by *infidels* you mean *Deists*, (and you must be exceedingly ignorant of the origin of the word *Deist*, and know but little of *Deus*, to put that construction upon it) you will find yourself over-matched if you begin to engage in a controversy with them. Priests may dispute with priests, and sectaries with sectaries, about the meaning of what they *agree* to call Scripture and end as they began; but when you engage with a Deist you must keep to fact. Now, Sir, you cannot prove a single article of your religion to be true, and we tell you so publicly. Do it, *if you can.* The Deistical article, *the belief of a God*, with which your creed begins, has been borrowed by your church from the ancient Deists, and even this article you dishonour by putting a *dream-begotten* Phantom* which you call his Son over his head, and treating God as if he was superannuated. Deism is the only profession of religion that admits of worshipping and reverencing God in purity, and the only one on which the thoughtful mind can repose with undisturbed tranquillity. God is almost forgotten in the Christian religion.

* The first chapter of Matthew, relates that Joseph, the betrothed husband of Mary, dreamed that an angel told him that his intended bride was with child by the Holy Ghost. It is not every husband, whether carpenter or priest, that can be so easily satisfied, for lo! it was a dream. Whether Mary was in a dream when this was done we are not told. It is, however, a comical story. There is no woman living can understand it. As for priests it is quite out of their way.

Every thing, even the creation, is ascribed to the son of Mary.

In religion, as in every thing else, perfection consists in simplicity. The Christian religion of Gods within Gods, like wheels within wheels, is like a complicated machine that never goes right, and every projector in the art of Christianity is trying to mend it. It is its defects that have caused such a number and variety of tinkers to be hammering at it, and still it goes wrong. In the visible world no time-keeper can go equally true with the sun; and in like manner, no complicated religion can be equally true with the pure and unmixed religion of Deism.

Had you not offensively glanced at a description of men whom you call by a false name, you would not have been troubled nor honoured with this address; neither has the writer of it any desire or intention to enter into controversy with you. He thinks the temporal establishment of your church politically unjust and offensively unfair; but with respect to religion itself, distinct from temporal establishments, he is happy in the enjoyment of his own, and he leaves you to make the best you can of yours.

THOMAS PAINE.

TO THE REVEREND JOHN MASON,
ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF THE SCOTCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
OF NEW YORK; WITH REMARKS ON HIS ACCOUNT OF THE VISIT
HE MADE TO THE LATE GENERAL HAMILTON.

“Come now, let us REASON together, saith the Lord.”

THIS is one of the passages you quoted from your Bible, in your conversation with General Hamilton, as given in your letter, signed with your name, and published in the Commercial Advertiser, and other New York papers, and I re-quote the passage to shew that your *Text* and your *Religion* contradict each other.

It is impossible to *reason* upon things not *comprehensible by reason*; and therefore, if you keep to your *text*, which priests seldom do, (for they are generally either above it, or below it, or forget it) you must admit a religion to which reason can apply, and this, certainly, is not the Christian religion.

There is not an article in the Christian religion that is cognizable by reason. The Deistical article of your religion, *the belief of a God*, is no more a Christian article, than it is

a Mahometan article. It is an universal article, common to all religions, and which is held in greater purity by Turks than by Christians; but the Deistical church is the only one which holds it in real purity; because that church acknowledges no co-partnership with God. It believes in him solely; and knows nothing of Sons, married Virgins, nor Ghosts. It holds all these things to be the fables of priest-craft.

Why then do you talk of reason, or refer to it, since your religion has nothing to do with reason, nor reason with that. You tell people, as you told Hamilton, that they must have *faith* Faith in what? You ought to know that before the mind can have faith in any thing, it must either know it as a fact, or see cause to believe it on the probability of that kind of evidence that is cognizable by reason: but your religion is not within either of these cases; for, in the first place, you cannot prove it to be fact; and in the second place, you cannot support it by reason, not only because it is not cognizable by reason, but because it is contrary to reason. What reason can there be in supposing, or believing, that God put *himself to death, to satisfy himself, and be revenged on the Devil on account of Adam*; for tell the story which way you will it comes to this at last.

As you can make no appeal to reason in support of an unreasonable religion, you then (and others of your profession) bring yourselves off by telling people, they must not believe in *reason* but in *revelation*. This is the artifice of habit without reflection. It is putting *words* in the place of *things*; for do you not see, that when you tell people to believe in revelation, you must first prove that what you *call* revelation, *is* revelation; and as you cannot do this, you put the *word*, which is easily spoken, in the place of the *thing* you cannot prove. You have no more evidence that your Gospel is revelation than the Turks have that their Koran is revelation, and the only difference between them and you is, that they preach *their* delusion and you preach *yours*.

In your conversation with General Hamilton, you say to him, "The *simple truths* of the Gospel which require *no abstruse investigation*, but faith in the veracity of God, *who cannot lie*, are best suited to your present condition."

If those matters you call "*simple truths*," are what you call them, and *require no abstruse investigation*, they would be so obvious that reason would easily comprehend them; yet the doctrine you preach at other times is, *that the mysteries of the Gospel are beyond the reach of reason*.

If your first position be true, that they are "*simple truths,*" priests are unnecessary, for we do not want preachers to tell us the sun shines: and if your second be true, the case, as to effect, is the same, for it is waste of money to pay a man to explain unexplainable things, and loss of time to listen to him. That "*God cannot lie,*" is no advantage to your argument, because it is no proof that priests cannot, or that the Bible does not. Did not Paul lie when he told the Thessalonians that the general resurrection of the dead would be in his life-time, and that he should go up alive along with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. 1 Thess. chap. iv, ver. 27.

You spoke of what you call, "*the precious blood of Christ.*" This savage stile of language belongs to the priests of the Christian religion. The professors of this religion say they are shocked at the accounts of human sacrifices of which they read in the histories of some countries. Do they not see that their own religion is founded on a human sacrifice, the blood of man, of which their priests talk like so many butchers. It is no wonder the Christian religion has been so bloody in its effects, for it began in blood, and many thousands of human sacrifices have since been offered on the altar of the Christian religion.

It is necessary to the character of a religion, as being true, and immutable as God himself is, that the evidences of it be equally the same through all periods of time and circumstance. This is not the case with the Christian religion, nor with that of the Jews that preceded it, (for there was a time, and that within the knowledge of history, when these religions did not exist) nor of Deism. In this the evidences are eternal and universal.—"*The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work,—Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge*.*" But all other religions are made to arise

* This Psalm (19) which is a *Deistical Psalm*, is so much in the manner of some parts of the book of Job, (which is not a book of the Jews, and does not belong to the Bible) that it has the appearance of having been translated into Hebrew from the same language in which the book of Job was originally written, and brought by the Jews from Chaldea or Persia, when they returned from captivity. The contemplation of the Heavens made a great part of the religious devotion of the Chaldeans and Persians, and their religious festivals were regulated by the progress of the sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac. But the Jews knew nothing about the Heavens, or they would not have told the foolish story of the sun's standing still upon a hill, and the moon in a valley. What could they want the moon for in the day-time?

from some local circumstance, and are introduced by some temporary trifle which its partizans call a miracle, but of which there is no proof but the story of it.

The Jewish religion, according to the history of it, began in a *wilderness*, and the Christian religion, in a *stable*. The Jewish books tell us of wonders exhibited upon Mount Sinai. It happened that nobody lived there to contradict the account. The Christian books tell us of a star that hung over the *stable* at the birth of Jesus. There is no star there now, nor any person living that saw it. But all the stars in the Heavens bear eternal evidence to the truth of Deism. It did not begin in a stable, nor in a wilderness. It began every where. The theatre of the universe is the place of its birth.

As adoration paid to any being but GOD himself is idolatry, the Christian religion by paying adoration to a man, born of a woman, called Mary, belongs to the idolatrous class of religions, and consequently the consolation drawn from it is delusion. Between you and your rival in communion ceremonies, Dr. Moore, of the Episcopal church, you have, in order to make yourselves appear of some importance, reduced General Hamilton's character to that of a feeble-minded man, who in going out of the world wanted a passport from a priest. Which of you was first or last applied to for this purpose is a matter of no consequence.

The man, Sir, who puts his trust and confidence in God, that leads a just and moral life, and endeavours to do good, does not trouble himself about priests when his hour of departure comes, nor permit priests to trouble themselves about him. They are, in general, mischievous beings where character is concerned; a consultation of priests is worse than a consultation of physicians.

THOMAS PAINE.

OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

ADDRESSED TO THE BELIEVERS IN THE BOOK CALLED THE
SCRIPTURES.

THE New Testament contains twenty-seven books, of which four are called Gospels; one called the Acts of the Apostles; fourteen called Epistles of Paul; one of James; two of Peter; three of John; one of Jude; one called the Revelation.

None of those books have the appearance of being written by the persons whose name they bear, neither do we know who the authors were. They come to us on no other authority than the church of Rome, which the Protestant Priests, especially those of New England, call the *Whore of Babylon*. This church, or, to use their own vulgar language, *this Whore*, appointed sundry Councils to be held, to compose creeds for the people, and to regulate church affairs. Two of the principal of these Councils were that of Nice, and of Laodicea, (names of the places where the councils were held) about three hundred and fifty years after the time that Jesus is said to have lived. Before this time there was no such book as the New Testament. But the church could not well go on without having something to shew, as the Persians shewed the *Zendavesta*, revealed, they say, by God to Zoroaster; the Bramins of India, the *Shaster*, revealed, they say by God to Bruma, and given to him out of a dusky cloud; the Jews, the books they call the Law of Moses, given they say also out of a cloud on Mount Sinai; the church set about forming a code for itself out of such materials as it could find or pick up. But where they got those materials, in what language they were written, or whose hand writing they were, or whether they were originals or copies, or on what authority they stood, we know nothing of, nor does the New Testament tell us. The church was resolved to have a New Testament and as after the lapse of more than three hundred years no handwriting could be proved or disproved, the church, which like former impostors, had then gotten possession of the state, had every thing its own way. It invented creeds, such as that called the Apostles Creed, the Nicean Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and out of the loads of rubbish that were presented, it voted four to be Gospels, and others to be Epistles as we now find them arranged.

Of those called Gospels above forty were presented, each pretending to be genuine. Four only were voted-in, and entitled, the Gospel *according* to St. Matthew, the Gospel *according* to St. Mark. The Gospel *according* to St. Luke. The Gospel *according* to St. John.

This word *according* shews that those books have not been written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, but *according* to some accounts or traditions, picked up concerning them. The word *according* means *agreeing with*, and necessarily includes the idea of two things, or two persons. We cannot say, *The Gospel written by Matthew according to Matthew*; but we might say, the Gospel of some other

person, according to what was reported to have been the opinion of Matthew. Now we do not know who those other persons were, nor whether what they wrote *accorded* with any thing that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John might have said. There is too little evidence, and too much contrivance about those books to merit credit.

The next book after those called Gospels, is that called the *Acts of the Apostles*. This book is anonymous; neither do the Councils that compiled or contrived the New Testament tell us how they came by it. The church to supply this defect, says it was written by Luke, which shews that the church and its priests have not compared that called the Gospel according to St. Luke, and the acts together, for the two contradict each other. The book of Luke, chap. 24, makes Jesus ascend into heaven the very same day that it makes him rise from the dead. The book of Acts, chap. i. ver. 3, says, that he remained on the earth forty days after his crucifixion. There is no believing what either of them says.

The next to the book of acts is that entitled "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle* to the Romans." This is not an Epistle or letter, written by Paul or signed by him. It is an Epistle, or letter, written by a person who signs himself Tertius, and sent it as it is said at the end, by a servant woman called Phœbe. The last chapter, ver. 22, says, "I Tertius, who wrote this Epistle, salute you." Who Tertius or Phœbe were, we know nothing of. The Epistle is not dated. The whole of it is written in the first person, and that person is Tertius, not Paul. But it suited the church to ascribe it to Paul. There is nothing in it that is interesting except it be to contending and wrangling sectaries. The stupid metaphor of the potter and the clay is in the 9th chap.

The next book is entitled "The first Epistle of Paul the Apostle, to the Corinthians." This, like the former, is not an epistle written by Paul, nor signed by him. The conclusion of the epistle says, "The first epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, by Stephenas and Fortunatus and Achicus and Timotheus." The second epistle entitled, "The second Epistle of Paul the Apostle, to the Corinthians," is in the same case with the first. The conclusion of it says,

* According to the criterion of the church, Paul was not an apostle; that appellation being given only to those called the twelve. Two sailors belonging to a man of war got into dispute upon this point, whether Paul was an apostle or not, and they agreed to refer it to the Boatswain, who decided very *canonica*ly that Paul was an *acting* apostle but not *rated*.

“It was written from Philippi, a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.”

A question may arise upon these cases, which is, are these persons the writers of the epistles originally, or are they the writers and attestors of copies sent to the councils who compiled the code or canon of the New Testament? If the epistles had been dated this question could be decided; but in either of the cases the evidences of Paul's hand writing and of their being written by him is wanting, and therefore there is no authority for calling them Epistles of Paul. We know not whose Epistles they were, nor whether they are genuine or forged.

The next is entitled, “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians.” It contains six short chapters, yet the writer of it says, chap. vi. ver. 11. “Ye see how large a letter I have written to you with my own hand.” If Paul was the writer of this it shews he did not accustom himself to write long epistles; yet the epistle to the Romans, and the first to the Corinthians contains sixteen chapters each. The second to the Corinthians, and that to the Hebrews thirteen chapters each. There is something contradictory in these matters. But short as the epistle to the Galatians is, it does not carry the appearance of being the work or composition of one person. The fifth chap. ver. 2, says, “If ye be circumcised Christ shall avail you nothing.” It does not say circumcision shall profit you nothing, but Christ shall profit you nothing. Yet in the sixth chap. ver. 15, it says, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision but a new creature.” These are not reconcilable passages nor can contrivance make them so. The conclusion of the epistle says, it was written from Rome, but it is not dated, nor is there any signature to it, neither do the compilers of the New Testament say how they came by it. We are in the dark upon all these matters.

The next is entitled. “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians.” This like that of the Galatians, contains six short chapters, but Paul is not the writer. The conclusion of it says, “Written from Rome unto the Ephesians by Tychicus.”

The next is entitled, “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians.” This Epistle contains but four short chapters, and occupies only four octavo pages. But of this, short as it is, Paul is not the writer. The conclusion of it says, “It was written to the Philippians from Rome, by Epaphroditus.” It is not dated. Query, were those men who wrote and signed those Epistles, journeymen Apostles

who undertook to write in Paul's name, as Paul is said to have preached in Christ's name?

The next is entitled, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle, to the Colossians." This Epistle like the former, contains only four short chapters, but Paul is not the writer. Doctor Luke is spoken of in this Epistle as sending his compliments. "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you." Chap. 4, ver. 14. It does not say a word about his writing any Gospel. The conclusion of the Epistle says, "Written from Rome to the Colossians, by Tychicus and Onesimus."

The next is entitled, "The first Epistle of Paul the Apostle, to the Thessalonians." It contains five short chapters, and the second Epistle contains three still shorter. Either the writer of these Epistles was a visionary enthusiast, or a direct impostor, for he tells the Thessalonians, and, he says, he tells them by the word of the Lord, that the world will be at an end in his and their time; and after telling them that those who are already dead shall rise, he adds, chap. 4, ver. 17, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord." Such detected lies as these ought to fill priests with confusion, when they preach such books to be the word of God. These two Epistles are said, in the conclusions of them, to be written from Athens. They are without date or signatures.

The next four Epistles are private letters. Two of them are to Timothy, one to Titus, one to Philemon. Who they were nobody knows.

The first to Timothy contains six short chapters, and is said to be written from Laodicea. It is without date or signature. The second to Timothy contains four short chapters. It is said to be written from Rome, and is without date or signature. The Epistle to Titus contains three chapters. It is said to be written from Nicopolis in Macedonia. It is without date or signature. The Epistle to Philemon contains one chapter. It is said to be written from Rome by Onesimus. It is without date.

The last Epistle ascribed to Paul is entitled, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews." It contains thirteen chapters, and is said in the conclusion to be written from Italy, by Timothy. This Timothy (according to the conclusion of the Epistle called the second Epistle of Paul to Timothy) was bishop of the church of the Ephesians, and consequently this is not an Epistle of Paul.

On what slender cob-web evidence do the priests and professors of the Christian religion hang their faith! The

same degree of hear say evidence, and that at a third and fourth hand, would not in a court of justice, give a man a title to a cottage, and yet the priests of this profession presumptuously promise their deluded followers the kingdom of Heaven. A little reflection would teach men that those books are not to be trusted to; that so far from there being any proof that they are the word of God, it is unknown who the writers of them were, or at what time they were written, within three hundred years after the reputed authors are said to have lived. It is not the interest of priests, who get their living by them, to examine into the insufficiency of the evidence upon which those books were received by the Popish councils who compiled the New Testament. But if Messrs. Linn and Mason would occupy themselves upon this subject (it signifies not which side they take, for the event will be the same) they would be better employed than they were last presidential election, in writing jesuitical electioneering pamphlets. The very name of a priest attaches suspicion on to it the instant he becomes a dabbler in party politics. The New England priests set themselves up to govern the state, and they are falling into contempt for so doing. Men who have their farms and their several occupations to follow, and have a common interest with their neighbours in the public prosperity and tranquillity of their country, neither want nor choose to be told by a priest who they shall vote for, nor how they shall conduct their temporal concerns.

The cry of the priests, that the Church is in danger, is the cry of men who do not understand the interest of their own craft, for instead of exciting alarms and apprehensions for its safety, as they expect it excites suspicion that the foundation is not sound, and that it is necessary to take down and build it on a surer foundation. Nobody fears for the safety of a mountain, but a hillock of sand may be washed away! Blow then, O ye priests, "the Trumpet in Zion," for the Hillock is in danger.

THOMAS PAINE.

REMARKS ON A PASSAGE OF PAUL IN THE 9TH CHAPTER
OF ROMANS, 18TH VERSE, AND FOLLOWING.

ADDRESSED TO THE MINISTERS OF THE CALVINISTIC CHURCH.

PAUL, in speaking of God, says, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and on whom he will he

hardeneth.—Thou wilt then say, why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?—Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?"

I shall leave it to Calvinists and Universalists to wrangle about these expressions, and to oppose or corroborate them, by other passages from other books of the Old or New Testament. I shall go to the root at once, and say, that the whole passage is presumption and nonsense. Presumption, because it pretends to know the private mind of God: and nonsense, because the cases it states, as parallel cases, have no parallel in them, and are opposite cases.

The first expression says, "therefore hath he (God) mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." As this is ascribing to the attribute of God's power, at the expence of the attribute of his justice, I, as a believer in the justice of God, disbelieve the assertion of Paul. The Predestinarians, of which the loquacious Paul was one, appear to acknowledge but one attribute in God, that of *power*, which may not improperly be called the *physical attribute*. The Deists, in addition to this, believe in his moral attributes; those of justice and goodness.

In the next verses, Paul gets himself into what in vulgar life is called, a hobble; and he tries to get out of it by nonsense and sophistry; for having committed himself by saying, that "God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth," he felt the difficulty he was in, and the objections that would be made, which he anticipates, by saying, "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he (God) yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? Nay, but, O man, who art thou, that repliest against God!" This is neither answering the question, nor explaining the case. It is down right quibbling and shuffling off the question, and the proper retort upon him would have been, "Nay, but who art thou presumptuous Paul, that puttest thyself in God's place!" Paul, however, goes on and says, "Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" Yes, if the thing felt itself hurt, and could speak, it would say it. But as pots and pans have not the faculty of speech, the supposition of such things speaking, is putting nonsense in the place of argument, and is too ridiculous even to admit of apology. It shews to what wretched shifts sophistry will resort.

Paul, however, dashes on, and the more he tries to rea-

son the more he involves himself, and the more ridiculous he appears. "Hath not, says he, the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" In this metaphor, and a most wretched one it is, Paul makes the potter to represent God; the lump of clay, the whole human race; the vessels unto honour, those souls "on whom he hath mercy because he will have mercy;" and the vessels unto dishonour, those souls, "whom he hardeneth (for damnation) because he will harden them." The metaphor is false in every one of its points, and if it admits of any meaning or conclusion, it is the reverse of what Paul intended and the Calvinists understand.

In the first place, a potter doth not, because he cannot, make vessels of different qualities, from the same lump of clay; he cannot make a fine china bowl, intended to ornament a side-board, from the same lump of clay that he makes a coarse pan, intended for a close stool. The potter selects his clays for different uses, according to their different qualities, and degrees of fineness and goodness. Paul might as well talk of making gun-flints from the same stick of wood of which the gun-stock is made, as of making china bowls from the same lump of clay of which are made common earthen pots and pans. Paul could not have hit upon a more unfortunate metaphor for his purpose, than this of the potter and the clay; for if any inference is to follow from it, as a metaphor, it is, that as the potter selects his clay for different kinds of vessels, according to the different qualities and degrees of fineness and goodness in the clay, so God selects for future happiness, those among mankind who excel in purity and good life, which is the reverse of predestination.

In the second place, there is no comparison between the souls of men, and vessels made of clay; and, therefore, to put one to represent the other is a false position. The vessels, or the clay they are made from, are insensible of honour or dishonour. They neither suffer nor enjoy. The clay is not punished, that serves the purpose of a close-stool, nor is the finer sort rendered happy that is made up into a punch-bowl. The potter violates no principle of justice in the different uses to which he puts his different clays; for he selects as an artist, not as a moral judge; and the materials he works upon know nothing, and feel nothing, of his mercy or his wrath. Mercy or wrath would make a potter appear ridiculous, when bestowed upon his clay. He might kick some of his pots to pieces.

But the case is quite different with man, either in this world or the next. He is a being sensible of misery as well as of happiness, and therefore Paul argues like an unfeeling idiot, when he compares man to clay on a potter's wheel, or to vessels made therefrom; and with respect to God, it is an offence to his attributes of justice, goodness, and wisdom, to suppose he would treat the choicest work of creation like inanimate and insensible clay. If Paul believed that God made man after his own image, he dishonours it, by making that image, and a brick-bat to be alike.

The absurd and impious doctrine of predestination, a doctrine destructive of morals, would never have been thought of, had it not been for some stupid passages in the Bible, which priestcraft at first, and ignorance have since imposed upon mankind as revelation. Nonsense ought to be treated as nonsense, wherever it be found; and had this been done, in the rational manner it ought to be done, instead of intimating and mincing the matter, as has been too much the case, the nonsense and false doctrine of the Bible, with all the aid that priestcraft can give, could never have stood their ground against the divine reason that God has given to man.

Doctor Franklin gives a remarkable instance of the truth of this, in an account of his life, written by himself. He was in London at the time of which he speaks. "Some volumes, says he, against Deism, fell into my hands. They were said to be the substance of Sermons preached at Boyle's Lectures. It happened that they produced on me an effect precisely the reverse of what was intended by the writers; for the arguments of the Deists, which were cited in order to be refuted, appeared to me more forcible than the refutation itself. In a word I soon became a perfect Deist."—N. York edition of Franklin's Life, page 93.

All America, and more than all America, knows Franklin. His life was devoted to the good and improvement of man. Let, then, those who profess a different creed, imitate his virtues, and excel him if they can.

THOMAS PAINE.

THE END.