

**REASON, THE ONLY
ORACLE OF MAN: OR, A
COMPENDIOUS SYSTEM
OF NATURAL RELIGION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649028597

Reason, the Only Oracle of Man: Or, a Compendious System of Natural Religion by Ethan Allen

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ETHAN ALLEN

**REASON, THE ONLY
ORACLE OF MAN: OR, A
COMPENDIOUS SYSTEM
OF NATURAL RELIGION**

ANDOVER-HARVARD THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL

REASON,
THE
ONLY ORACLE OF MAN;
OR A COMPENDIOUS
SYSTEM OF NATURAL RELIGION.

BY COL. ETHAN ALLEN.

BOSTON:
J. P. MENDUM, CORNHILL.
1854.

INTRODUCTION.

COLONEL ETHAN ALLEN, the author of *Oracles of Reason*, was the son of Joseph Allen, a native of Coventry, Connecticut, a farmer in moderate circumstances. He afterwards resided in Litchfield, where Ethan was born in the year 1739. The family consisted of eight children, of whom our author was the eldest. But few incidents connected with his early life are known. We are apprised, however, that notwithstanding his education was very limited, his ambition to prove himself worthy of that attention which superior intellect ever commands, induced him diligently to explore every subject that came under his notice. A stranger to fear, his opinions were ever given without disguise or hesitation; and an enemy to oppression, he sought every opportunity to redress the wrongs of the oppressed.

At the breaking out of the Revolutionary War, he raised in Vermont, where he had resided, a company of volunteers, consisting of two hundred and thirty, with which he surprised the fortresses of Ticonderoga, May 10, 1775, containing about forty men, and one hundred pieces of cannon. He was unfortunately taken prisoner in September following, in an attempt on Montreal, and suffered a cruel imprisonment for several years. For an account of which, the reader is referred to his narrative, contained in a memoir of the author, by Mr. Hugh Moore, Plattsburg, 1834.

Soon after the close of the revolution, Col. Allen composed the following work; which, on account of the bold and unusual manner, particularly in this country, that the subject of religion is treated, he had great difficulty to get published. It lay a long time in the hands of a printer at Hartford, who had not the moral courage to print it.

It was finally printed by a Mr. Haswell, of Bennington, Vt. in 1784. Not long after its publication, a part of the edition, comprising the entire of several signatures, was accidentally consumed by fire. Whether Mr. H. deemed this fire a judgment upon him for having printed the work or not, is unknown—but, the fact is, he soon after committed the remainder of the edition to the flames, and joined the Methodist Connection; so that but few copies were circulated.

COL. ALLEN died in the town of Burlington, Vt., on the 12th of February, 1789, of apoplexy.

PREFACE.

An apology appears to me to be impertinent in writers who venture their works to public inspection, for this obvious reason, that if they need it, they should have been stifled in the birth, and not permitted a public existence. I therefore offer my composition to the candid judgment of the impartial world without it, taking it for granted that I have as good a natural right to expose myself to public censure, by endeavouring to subserve mankind, as any of the species who have published their productions since the creation; and I ask no favor at the hands of philosophers, divines or critics, but hope and expect they will severely chastise me for my errors and mistakes, least they may have a share in perverting the truth, which is very far from my intention.

In the circle of my acquaintance, (which has not been small,) I have generally been denominated a Deist, the reality of which I never disputed, being conscious I am no Christian, except mere infant baptism make me one; and as to being a Deist, I know not, strictly speaking, whether I am one or not, for I have never read their writings; mine will therefore determine the matter; for I have not in the least disguised my sentiments, but have written freely without any conscious knowledge of prejudice for, or against any man, sectary or party whatever; but wish that good sense, truth and virtue may be promoted and flourish in the world, to the detection of delusion, superstition, and false religion; and therefore my errors in the succeeding treatise, which may be rationally pointed out, will be readily rescinded.

By the public's most obedient and humble servant.

ETHAN ALLEN.

ORACLES OF REASON.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I.

THE DUTY OF REFORMING MANKIND FROM SUPERSTITION AND ERROR, AND THE GOOD CONSEQUENCES OF IT.

THE desire of knowledge has engaged the attention of the wise and curious among mankind in all ages which has been productive of extending the arts and sciences far and wide in the several quarters of the globe, and excited the contemplative to explore nature's laws in a gradual series of improvement, until philosophy, astronomy, geography, and history, with many other branches of science, have arrived to a great degree of perfection.

It is nevertheless to be regretted, that the bulk of mankind, even in those nations which are most celebrated for learning and wisdom, are still carried down the torrent of superstition, and entertain very unworthy apprehensions of the BEING, PERFECTIONS, CREATION, and PROVIDENCE of God, and their duty to him, which lays an indispensable obligation on the philosophic friends of human nature, unanimously to exert themselves in every lawful, wise, and prudent method, to

endeavor to reclaim mankind from their ignorance and delusion, by enlightening their minds in those great and sublime truths concerning God and his providence, and their obligations to moral rectitude, which in this world, and that which is to come, cannot fail greatly to affect their happiness and well being.

Though "none by searching can find out God, or the Almighty to perfection," yet I am persuaded, that if mankind would dare to exercise their reason as freely on those divine topics as they do in the common concerns of life, they would, in a great measure, rid themselves of their blindness and superstition, gain more exalted ideas of God and their obligations to him and one another, and be proportionally delighted and blessed with the views of his moral government, make better members of society, and acquire many powerful incentives to the practice of morality, which is the last and greatest perfection that human nature is capable of.

SECTION II.

OF THE BEING OF A GOD.

THE laws of nature having subjected mankind to a state of absolute dependence on something out of it, and manifestly beyond themselves, or the compound exertion of their natural powers, gave them the first conception of a superior principle existing; otherwise they could have had no possible conception of a superintending power. But this sense of dependency, which results from experience and reasoning on the facts, which every day cannot fail to produce, has

uniformly established the knowledge of our dependence to every individual of the species who are rational, which necessarily involves, or contains in it, the idea of a ruling power, or that there is a God, which ideas are synonymous.

The globe with its productions, the planets in their motions, and the starry heavens in their magnitudes, surprise our senses and confound our reason, in their munificent lessons of instruction concerning God, by means whereof, we are apt to be more or less lost in our ideas of the object of divine adoration, though at the same time every one is truly sensible that their being and preservation is from God. We are too apt to confound our ideas of God with his works, and take the latter for the former. Thus barbarous and unlearned nations have imagined, that inasmuch as the sun in its influence is beneficial to them in bringing forward the spring of the year, causing the production of vegetation, and food for their subsistence, that therefore it is their God: while others have located other parts of creation, and ascribe to them prerogatives of God; and mere creatures and images have been substituted for Gods by the wickedness or weakness of man, or both together. It seems that mankind in most ages and parts of the world have been fond of corporeal Deities with whom their outward senses might be gratified, or as fantastically diverted from the just apprehension of the true God, by a supposed supernatural intercourse with invisible and mere spiritual beings, to whom they ascribe divinity, so that through one means or other, the character of the true God has been much neglected, to the great detriment of truth, justice, and morality in the world; nor is it possible that mankind can be uniform in their