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DIALOGUES
CONCERNING
NATURAL RELIGION.

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DIALOGUES

CONCERNING

NATURAL RELIGION.

B Y

DAVID HUME, Esq.

THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N:

M. DCC. LXXIX.



DIALOGUES

CONCERNING

NATURAL RELIGION.

PAMPHILUS to HERMIPPUS.

IT has been remarked, my HERMIPPUS, that though the ancient philosophers conveyed most of their instruction in the form of dialogue, this method of composition has been little practised

A

practised

practised in later ages, and has seldom succeeded in the hands of those who have attempted it. Accurate and regular argument, indeed, such as is now expected of philosophical inquirers, naturally throws a man into the methodical and didactic manner ; where he can immediately, without preparation, explain the point at which he aims ; and thence proceed, without interruption, to deduce the proofs on which it is established. To deliver a SYSTEM in conversation, scarcely appears natural ; and while the dialogue-writer desires, by departing from the direct style of composition, to give a freer air to his performance, and avoid the appearance of *Author* and *Reader*, he is apt to run into a worse inconvenience, and convey the image of *Pedagogue* and *Pupil*. Or if he carries on the dispute in the natural spirit of good company, by throwing in a variety of topics, and preserving a proper balance among the speakers ;

ers ; he often loses so much time in preparations and transitions, that the reader will scarcely think himself compensated, by all the graces of dialogue, for the order, brevity, and precision, which are sacrificed to them.

THESE are some subjects, however, to which dialogue-writing is peculiarly adapted, and where it is still preferable to the direct and simple method of composition.

ANY point of doctrine, which is so *obvious* that it scarcely admits of dispute, but at the same time so *important* that it cannot be too often inculcated, seems to require some such method of handling it; where the novelty of the manner may compensate the triteness of the subject; where the vivacity of conversation may enforce the precept; and where the variety of lights, presented by various personages and characters,

may appear neither tedious nor redundant.

ANY question of philosophy, on the other hand, which is so *obscure* and *uncertain*, that human reason can reach no fixed determination with regard to it; if it should be treated at all, seems to lead us naturally into the style of dialogue and conversation. Reasonable men may be allowed to differ, where no one can reasonably be positive: Opposite sentiments, even without any decision, afford an agreeable amusement: and if the subject be curious and interesting, the book carries us, in a manner, into company; and unites the two greatest and purest pleasures of human life, study and society.

HAPPILY, these circumstances are all to be found in the subject of NATURAL RELIGION. What truth so obvious, so certain, as the BEING of a God,

God, which the most ignorant ages have acknowledged, for which the most refined geniuses have ambitiously striven to produce new proofs and arguments? What truth so important as this, which is the ground of all our hopes, the surest foundation of morality, the firmest support of society, and the only principle which ought never to be a moment absent from our thoughts and meditations? But in treating of this obvious and important truth; what obscure questions occur, concerning the NATURE of that divine Being; his attributes, his decrees, his plan of providence? These have been always subjected to the disputation of men: Concerning these, human reason has not reached any certain determination: But these are topics so interesting, that we cannot restrain our restless inquiry with regard to them; though nothing but doubt, uncertainty, and contradiction,

have as yet been the result of our most accurate researches.

THIS I had lately occasion to observe, while I passed, as usual, part of the summer-season with CLEANTHES, and was present at those conversations of his with PHILO and DEMEA, of which I gave you lately some imperfect account. Your curiosity, you then told me, was so excited, that I must of necessity enter into a more exact detail of their reasonings, and display those various systems which they advanced with regard to so delicate a subject as that of Natural Religion. The remarkable contrast in their characters still farther raised your expectations; while you opposed the accurate philosophical turn of CLEANTHES to the careless scepticism of PHILO, or compared either of their dispositions with the rigid inflexible orthodoxy of DEMEA. My youth rendered me a mere auditor of their disputes;

putes; and that curiosity natural to the early season of life, has so deeply imprinted in my memory the whole chain and connection of their arguments, that, I hope, I shall not omit or confound any considerable part of them in the recital.

A 4

P A R T

P A R T I.

AFTER I joined the company, whom PART
I. I found sitting in CLEANTHES's library, DEMEA paid CLEANTHES some
compliments, on the great care which
he took of my education, and on his
unwearied perseverance and constancy,
in all his friendships. The father of
PAMPHILUS, said he, was your intimate
friend: The son is your pupil; and may
indeed be regarded as your adopted son,
were we to judge by the pains which
you bestow in conveying to him every
useful branch of literature and science.
You are no more wanting, I am per-
suaded, in prudence than in industry.
I shall, therefore, communicate to you

PART I. a maxim which I have observed with regard to my own children, that I may learn how far it agrees with your practice. The method I follow in their education is founded on the saying of an ancient, “*That students of philosophy ought first to learn Logics, then Ethics, next Physics, last of all the Nature of the Gods* *.” This science of Natural Theology, according to him, being the most profound and abstruse of any, required the maturest judgment in its students; and none but a mind, enriched with all the other sciences, can safely be entrusted with it,

ARE you so late, says PHILO, in teaching your children the principles of religion? Is there no danger of their neglecting, or rejecting altogether, those opinions, of which they have heard so little during the whole course of their education? It is only as a science, replied

* Chrysippus apud Plut. de repug. Stoicorum,

plied DEMEA, subjected to human reasoning and disputation, that I postpone ^{PART}
^{I.} ~~the~~ the study of Natural Theology. To season their minds with early piety, is my chief care; and by continual precept and instruction, and I hope too by example, I imprint deeply on their tender minds an habitual reverence for all the principles of religion. While they pass through every other science, I still remark the uncertainty of each part; the eternal disputations of men; the obscurity of all philosophy; and the strange, ridiculous conclusions, which some of the greatest geniuses have derived from the principles of mere human reason. Having thus tamed their mind to a proper submission and self-diffidence, I have no longer any scruple of opening to them the greatest mysteries of religion; nor apprehend any danger from that assuming arrogance of philosophy, which may lead them to reject the most established doctrines and opinions.

YOUR

PART I. YOUR precaution, says PHILO, of seasoning your childrens minds early with piety, is certainly very reasonable; and no more than is requisite in this profane and irreligious age. But what I chiefly admire in your plan of education, is your method of drawing advantage from the very principles of philosophy and learning, which, by inspiring pride and self-sufficiency, have commonly, in all ages, been found so destructive to the principles of religion. The vulgar, indeed, we may remark, who are unacquainted with science and profound inquiry, observing the endless disputes of the learned, have commonly a thorough contempt for Philosophy; and rivet themselves the faster, by that means, in the great points of theology which have been taught them. Those who enter a little into study and inquiry, finding many appearances of evidence in doctrines the newest and most extraordinary, think nothing too difficult

difficult for human reason; and, pre-
sumptuously breaking thro' all fences, <sup>PART
I.</sup>
profane the inmost sanctuaries of the
temple. But CLEANTHES will, I hope,
agree with me, that, after we have ab-
andoned ignorance, the surest remedy,
there is still one expedient left to pre-
vent this profane liberty. Let DEMEA's
principles be improved and cultivated:
Let us become thoroughly sensible of
the weakness, blindness, and narrow
limits, of human reason: Let us duly
consider its uncertainty and endless
contrarieties, even in subjects of com-
mon life and practice: Let the errors
and deceits of our very senses be set
before us; the insuperable difficulties
which attend first principles in all sys-
tems; the contradictions which ad-
here to the very ideas of matter, cause
and effect, extension, space, time, mo-
tion; and, in a word, quantity of all
kinds, the object of the only science
that can fairly pretend to any certainty
or

18 DIALOGUES CONCERNING

PART I. or evidence. When these topics are displayed in their full light, as they are by some philosophers and almost all divines; who can retain such confidence in this frail faculty of reason as to pay any regard to its determinations in points so sublime, so abstruse, so remote from common life and experience? When the coherence of the parts of a stone, or even that composition of parts which renders it extended; when these familiar objects, I say, are so inexplicable, and contain circumstances so repugnant and contradictory; with what assurance can we decide concerning the origin of worlds, or trace their history from eternity to eternity?

WHILE PHILO pronounced these words, I could observe a smile in the countenance both of DEMEA and CLEANTHES. That of DEMEA seemed to imply an unreserved satisfaction in the doctrines delivered: But, in CLEANTHES's

THESE's features, I could distinguish an ^{PART}
_{I.} air of finesse; as if he perceived some raillery or artificial malice in the rea-
sonings of PHILO.

You propose then, PHILO, said CLE-
ANTHES, to erect religious faith on phi-
losophical scepticism; and you think,
that if certainty or evidence be expelled
from every other subject of inquiry, it
will all retire to these theological doc-
trines, and there acquire a superior force
and authority. Whether your scepti-
cism be as absolute and sincere as you
pretend, we shall learn by and by, when
the company breaks up: We shall then
see, whether you go out at the door or
the window; and whether you really
doubt, if your body has gravity, or can
be injured by its fall; according to po-
pular opinion, derived from our falla-
cious senses, and more fallacious expe-
rience. And this consideration, DEMEA,
may, I think, fairly serve to abate our
ill-

PART I.
ill-will to this, humorous jest of the
sceptics. If they be thoroughly in
earnest, they will not long trouble the
world with their doubts, cavils, and
disputes: If they be only in jest, they
are, perhaps, bad raillers; but can ne-
ver be very dangerous, either to the
state, to philosophy, or to religion.

IN reality, PHILEO, continued he, it
seems certain, that though a man, in a
flush of humour, after intense reflection
on the many contradictions and imper-
fections of human reason, may entirely
renounce all belief and opinion; it is
impossible for him to persevere in this
total scepticism, or make it appear in
his conduct for a few hours. External
objects press in upon him: Passions so-
licit him: His philosophical melancholy
dissipates; and even the utmost vio-
lence upon his own temper will not be
able, during any time, to preserve the
poor appearance of scepticism. And for
what

what reason impose on himself such a ^{PART}
^{I.} violence? This is a point in which it ~~will~~
will be impossible for him ever to satisfy himself, consistently with his sceptical principles: So that upon the whole nothing could be more ridiculous than the principles of the ancient PYRRHONIANS; if in reality they endeavoured, as is pretended, to extend, throughout, the same scepticism, which they had learned from the declamations of their schools, and which they ought to have confined to them.

IN this view, there appears a great resemblance between the sects of the STOICS and PYRRHONIANS, though perpetual antagonists: and both of them seem founded on this erroneous maxim, That what a man can perform sometimes, and in some dispositions, he can perform always, and in every disposition. When the mind, by Stoical reflections, is elevated into a sublime enthusiasm of
B virtue,

PART I.
virtue, and strongly smit with any species of honour or public good, the utmost bodily pain and sufferings will not prevail over such a high sense of duty; and it is possible, perhaps, by its means, even to smile and exult in the midst of tortures. If this sometimes may be the case in fact and reality, much more may a philosopher, in his school, or even in his closet, work himself up to such an enthusiasm, and support in imagination the acutest pain or most calamitous event which he can possibly conceive. But how shall he support this enthusiasm itself? The bent of his mind relaxes, and cannot be recalled at pleasure: Avocations lead him astray: Misfortunes attack him unawares: And the *philosopher* sinks by degrees into the *plebeian*.

I ALLOW of your comparison between the STOICS and SCEPTICS, replied PHILO. But you may observe, at the same time,

time, that though the mind cannot, in ^{PART}
^{I.} Stoicism, support the highest flights of ~~the~~
philosophy; yet, even when it sinks lower,
it still retains somewhat of its former
disposition; and the effects of the Stoic's
reasoning will appear in his conduct in
common life, and through the whole
tenor of his actions. The ancient schools,
particularly that of ZENO, produced ex-
amples of virtue and constancy which
seem astonishing to present times.

Vain Wisdom all and false Philsophy.

Yet with a pleasing sorcery could charm
Pain, for a while, or anguish; and excite
Fallacious Hope, or arm the obdurate breast
With stubborn Patience, as with triple steel.

In like manner, if a man has accustomed
ed himself to sceptical considerations on
the uncertainty and narrow limits of
reason, he will not entirely forget them
when he turns his reflection on other
subjects; but in all his philosophical
principles and reasoning, I dare not say
in his common conduct, he will be found

B 2 different

PART I.
different from those, who either never
formed any opinions in the case, or
have entertained sentiments more fa-
vourable to human reason.

To whatever length any one may push his speculative principles of scepticism, he must act, I own, and live, and converse, like other men; and for this conduct he is not obliged to give any other reason, than the absolute necessity he lies under of so doing. If he ever carries his speculations farther than this necessity constrains him, and philosophises either on natural or moral subjects, he is allured by a certain pleasure and satisfaction which he finds in employing himself after that manner. He considers besides, that every one, even in common life, is constrained to have more or less of this philosophy; that from our earliest infancy we make continual advances in forming more general principles of conduct and reasoning;

ing; that the larger experience we acquire, and the stronger reason we are ~~are~~<sup>PART
I.</sup> endued with, we always render our principles the more general and comprehensive; and that what we call *philosophy* is nothing but a more regular and methodical operation of the same kind. To philosophise on such subjects is nothing essentially different from reasoning on common life; and we may only expect greater stability, if not greater truth, from our philosophy, on account of its exacter and more scrupulous method of proceeding.

BUT when we look beyond human affairs and the properties of the surrounding bodies: When we carry our speculations into the two eternities, before and after the present state of things; into the creation and formation of the universe; the existence and properties of spirits; the powers and operations of one universal Spirit, existing without

B 3 beginning

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PART I.
beginning and without end; omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, infinite, and incomprehensible: We must be far removed from the smallest tendency to scepticism not to be apprehensive, that we have here got quite beyond the reach of our faculties. So long as we confine our speculations to trade, or morals, or politics, or criticism, we make appeals, every moment, to common sense and experience, which strengthen our philosophical conclusions, and remove (at least, in part) the suspicion which we so justly entertain with regard to every reasoning that is very subtle and refined. But, in theological reasonings, we have not this advantage; while at the same time we are employed upon objects, which, we must be sensible, are too large for our grasp, and, of all others, require most to be familiarised to our apprehension. We are like foreigners in a strange country, to whom every thing must seem suspicious,

cious, and who are in danger every moment of transgressing against the laws and customs of the people with whom they live and converse. We know not how far we ought to trust our vulgar methods of reasoning in such a subject; since, even in common life, and in that province which is peculiarly appropriated to them, we cannot account for them, and are entirely guided by a kind of instinct or necessity in employing them.

ALL sceptics pretend, that, if reason be considered in an abstract view, it furnishes invincible arguments against itself; and that we could never retain any conviction or assurance, on any subject, were not the sceptical reasonings so refined and subtle, that they are not able to counterpoise the more solid and more natural arguments derived from the senses and experience. But it is evident, whenever our argu-

PART I. ments lose this advantage, and run wide of common life, that the most refined scepticism comes to be upon a footing with them, and is able to oppose and counterbalance them. The one has no more weight than the other. The mind must remain in suspense between them; and it is that very suspense or balance, which is the triumph of scepticism.

BUT I observe, says CLEANTHES, with regard to you, PHILO, and all speculative sceptics, that your doctrine and practice are as much at variance in the most abstruse points of theory as in the conduct of common life. Where-ever evidence discovers itself, you adhere to it, notwithstanding your pretended scepticism; and I can observe, too, some of your sect to be as decisive as those who make greater professions of certainty and assurance. In reality, would not a man be ridiculous, who pretended to

to reject NEWTON's explication of the ^{PART}
^{I.} wonderful phenomenon of the rainbow, ~~the~~
because that explication gives a minute
anatomy of the rays of light; a subject,
forsooth, too refined for human com-
prehension? And what would you say
to one, who having nothing particular to
object to the arguments of COPERNICUS
and GALILÆO for the motion of the
earth, should with-hold his assent, on
that general principle, That these sub-
jects were too magnificent and remote
to be explained by the narrow and fal-
lacious reason of mankind?

THERE is indeed a kind of brutish
and ignorant scepticism, as you well
observed, which gives the vulgar a ge-
neral prejudice against what they do
not easily understand, and makes them
reject every principle which requires
elaborate reasoning to prove and es-
tablish it. This species of scepticism is
fatal to knowledge, not to religion;
since

PART I.
since we find, that those who make
the greatest profession of it, give often their
assent, not only to the great truths of
Theism and natural theology, but even
to the most absurd tenets which a tra-
ditional superstition has recommend-
ed to them. They firmly believe in
witches; though they will not believe
nor attend to the most simple proposi-
tion of EUCLID. But the refined and
philosophical sceptics fall into an incon-
sistence of an opposite nature. They
push their researches into the most ab-
struse corners of science; and their
assent attends them in every step, pro-
portioned to the evidence which they
meet with. They are even obliged to
acknowledge, that the most abstruse and
remote objects are those which are best
explained by philosophy. Light is in
reality anatomized: The true system
of the heavenly bodies is discovered and
ascertained. But the nourishment of
bodies by food is still an inexplicable
mystery:

mystery: The cohesion of the parts of ^{PART}
^{I.} matter is still incomprehensible. These ~~are~~ sceptics, therefore, are obliged, in every question, to consider each particular evidence apart, and proportion their assent to the precise degree of evidence which occurs. This is their practice in all natural, mathematical, moral, and political science. And why not the same, I ask, in the theological and religious? Why must conclusions of this nature be alone rejected on the general presumption of the insufficiency of human reason, without any particular discussion of the evidence? Is not such an unequal conduct a plain proof of prejudice and passion?

OUR senses, you say, are fallacious; our understanding erroneous; our ideas even of the most familiar objects, extension, duration, motion, full of absurdities and contradictions. You defy me to solve the difficulties, or reconcile
the

32 DIALOGUES CONCERNING

PART I.
the repugnancies, which you discover
in them. I have not capacity for so
great an undertaking: I have not leisure
for it: I perceive it to be superfluous.
Your own conduct, in every circum-
stance, refutes your principles; and
shows the firmest reliance on all the re-
ceived maxims of science, morals, pru-
dence, and behaviour.

I SHALL never assent to so harsh an
opinion as that of a celebrated writer*,
who says, that the sceptics are not a sect
of philosophers: They are only a sect
of liars. I may, however, affirm, (I hope,
without offence) that they are a sect of
jesters or railers. But for my part,
whenever I find myself disposed to
mirth and amusement, I shall certainly
chuse my entertainment of a less per-
plexing and abstruse nature. A comedy,
a novel, or at most a history, seems a
more

* L'art de penser.

more natural recreation than such metaphysical subtleties and abstractions. PART
I.
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IN vain would the sceptic make a distinction between science and common life, or between one science and another. The arguments employed in all, if just, are of a similar nature, and contain the same force and evidence. Or if there be any difference among them, the advantage lies entirely on the side of theology and natural religion. Many principles of mechanics are founded on very abstruse reasoning; yet no man who has any pretensions to science, even no speculative sceptic, pretends to entertain the least doubt with regard to them. The COPERNICAN system contains the most surprising paradox, and the most contrary to our natural conceptions, to appearances, and to our very senses: yet even monks and inquisitors are now constrained to withdraw their opposition to it. And shall PHILO, a man

PART I.  
man of so liberal a genius, and extensive knowledge, entertain any general undistinguished scruples with regard to the religious hypothesis, which is founded on the simplest and most obvious arguments, and, unless it meets with artificial obstacles, has such easy access and admission into the mind of man?

AND here we may observe, continued he, turning himself towards DEMEA, a pretty curious circumstance in the history of the sciences. After the union of philosophy with the popular religion, upon the first establishment of Christianity, nothing was more usual, among all religious teachers, than declamations against reason, against the senses, against every principle derived merely from human research and inquiry. All the topics of the ancient Academics were adopted by the Fathers; and thence propagated for several ages in

in every school and pulpit throughout Christendom: The Reformers embraced the same principles of reasoning, or rather declamation; and all panegyricks on the excellency of faith were sure to be interlarded with some severe strokes of satire against natural reason. A celebrated prelate too\*, of the Romish communion, a man of the most extensive learning, who wrote a demonstration of Christianity, has also composed a treatise, which contains all the cavils of the boldest and most determined PYRRHONISM. LOCKE seems to have been the first Christian, who ventured openly to assert, that *faith* was nothing but a species of *reason*; that religion was only a branch of philosophy; and that a chain of arguments, similar to that which established any truth in morals, politics, or physicks, was always employed in discovering all the principles of theology, natural and revealed. The ill  
use

\* Mons. Huet.

PART  
I.  
use which BAYLE and other libertines  
made of the philosophical scepticism of  
the fathers and first reformers, still far-  
ther propagated the judicious sentiment  
of MR LOCKE: And it is now, in a man-  
ner, avowed, by all pretenders to rea-  
soning and philosophy, that Atheist and  
Sceptic are almost synonymous. And  
as it is certain, that no man is in earnest  
when he professes the latter principle;  
I would fain hope, that there are as few  
who seriously maintain the former.

DON'T you remember, said PHILO,  
the excellent saying of Lord BACON on  
this head? That a little philosophy, re-  
plied CLEANTHES, makes a man an  
Atheist: A great deal converts him to  
religion. That is a very judicious re-  
mark too, said PHILO. But what I have  
in my eye is another passage, where,  
having mentioned DAVID's fool, who  
said in his heart there is no God, this  
great philosopher observes, that the A-  
theists

theists now-a-days have a double share <sup>PART</sup>  
<sup>I.</sup> of folly: for they are not contented to say in their hearts there is no God, but they also utter that impiety with their lips; and are thereby guilty of multiplied indiscretion and imprudence. Such people, though they were ever so much in earnest, cannot, methinks, be very formidable.

BUT though you should rank me in this class of fools, I cannot forbear communicating a remark that occurs to me from the history of the religious and irreligious scepticism with which you have entertained us. It appears to me, that there are strong symptoms of priesthood in the whole progress of this affair. During ignorant ages, such as those which followed the dissolution of the ancient schools, the priests perceived, that Atheism, Deism, or heresy of any kind, could only proceed from the presumptuous questioning of received

C

opinions,

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PART I. opinions, and from a belief that human reason was equal to every thing. Education had then a mighty influence over the minds of men, and was almost equal in force to those suggestions of the senses and common understanding, by which the most determined sceptic must allow himself to be governed. But at present, when the influence of education is much diminished, and men, from a more open commerce of the world, have learned to compare the popular principles of different nations and ages, our sagacious divines have changed their whole system of philosophy, and talk the language of STOICS, PLATONISTS, and PERIPATETICS, not that of PYRRHONIANS and ACADEMICS. If we distrust human reason, we have now no other principle to lead us into religion. Thus, sceptics in one age, dogmatists in another; whichever system best suits the purpose of these reverend gentlemen, in giving them an ascendant over

over mankind, they are sure to make it <sup>PART</sup>  
their favourite principle, and established <sup>I.</sup> tenet.

IT is very natural, said CLEANTHES, for men to embrace those principles, by which they find they can best defend their doctrines; nor need we have any recourse to priesthood to account for so reasonable an expedient. And surely, nothing can afford a stronger presumption, that any set of principles are true, and ought to be embraced, than to observe that they tend to the confirmation of true religion, and serve to confound the cavils of Atheists, Libertines, and Freethinkers of all denominations.



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## P A R T II.

I MUST own, CLEANTHES, said PART  
DEMEA, that nothing can more <sup>II.</sup> ~  
surprise me, than the light in which  
you have all along put this argument.  
By the whole tenor of your discourse,  
one would imagine that you were main-  
taining the Being of a God, against the  
cavils of Atheists and Infidels; and were  
necessitated to become a champion for  
that fundamental principle of all religion.  
But this, I hope, is not, by any means,  
a question among us. No man; no man,  
at least, of common sense, I am persua-  
ded, ever entertained a serious doubt  
with regard to a truth so certain and  
self-evident. The question is not con-

PART II. cerning the BEING, but the NATURE, of GOD. This I affirm, from the infirmities of human understanding, to be altogether incomprehensible and unknown to us. The essence of that Supreme Mind, his attributes, the manner of his existence, the very nature of his duration; these, and every particular which regards so divine a Being, are mysterious to men. Finite, weak, and blind creatures, we ought to humble ourselves in his august presence; and, conscious of our frailties, adore in silence his infinite perfections, which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. They are covered in a deep cloud from human curiosity: It is profaneness to attempt penetrating thro' these sacred obscurities: And next to the impiety of denying his existence, is the temerity of prying into his nature and essence, decrees and attributes.

BUT

PART  
II.

BUT lest you should think, that my *piety* has here got the better of my *philosophy*, I shall support my opinion, if it needs any support, by a very great authority. I might cite all the divines, almost, from the foundation of Christianity, who have ever treated of this or any other theological subject: But I shall confine myself, at present, to one equally celebrated for piety and philosophy. It is Father MALEBRANCHE, who, I remember, thus expresses himself\*. "One ought not so much (says " he) to call God a spirit, in order to " express positively what he is, as in or- " der to signify that he is not matter. " He is a Being infinitely perfect: Cf " this we cannot doubt. But in the " same manner as we ought not to ima- " gine, even supposing him corporeal, " that he is clothed with a human body, " as the ANTHROPOMORPHITES assert- " ed, under colour that that figure was

## C 4 . . . the

\* Recherche de la Vérité, liv. 3. cap. 9.

PART II.  
“ the most perfect of any; so neither  
“ ought we to imagine, that the Spirit  
“ of God has human ideas, or bears  
“ any resemblance to our spirit; under  
“ colour that we know nothing more  
“ perfect than a human mind. We  
“ ought rather to believe, that as he  
“ comprehends the perfections of mat-  
“ ter without being material.....  
“ he comprehends also the perfections  
“ of created spirits, without being spi-  
“ rit, in the manner we conceive spi-  
“ rit: That his true name is, *He that is*;  
“ or, in other words, Being without re-  
“ striction, All Being, the Being infi-  
“ nite and universal.”

AFTER so great an authority, DEMEA,  
replied PHILO, as that which you have  
produced, and a thousand more which  
you might produce, it would appear ri-  
diculous in me to add my sentiment, or  
express my approbation of your doc-  
trine. But surely, where reasonable  
men

men treat these subjects, the question <sup>PART  
II.</sup> can never be concerning the *Being*, but ~~concerning~~ only the *Nature*, of the Deity. The former truth, as you well observe, is unquestionable and self-evident. Nothing exists without a cause; and the original cause of this universe (whatever it be) we call God; and piously ascribe to him every species of perfection. Whoever scruples this fundamental truth, deserves every punishment which can be inflicted among philosophers, to wit, the greatest ridicule, contempt, and disapprobation. But as all perfection is entirely relative, we ought never to imagine that we comprehend the attributes of this divine Being, or to suppose that his perfections have any analogy or likeness to the perfections of a human creature. Wisdom, Thought, Design, Knowledge; these we justly ascribe to him; because these words are honourable among men, and we have no other language or other conceptions by

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PART by which we can express our adoration  
II. of him. But let us beware, lest we think,  
that our ideas any wise correspond to  
his perfections, or that his attributes  
have any resemblance to these qualities  
among men. He is infinitely superior  
to our limited view and comprehension;  
and is more the object of worship in the  
the temple, than of disputation in the  
schools.

IN reality, CLEANTHES, continued  
he, there is no need of having recourse  
to that affected scepticism, so displeasing  
to you, in order to come at this deter-  
mination. Our ideas reach no farther  
than our experience: We have no expe-  
rience of divine attributes and opera-  
tions: I need not conclude my syllo-  
gism: You can draw the inference your-  
self. And it is a pleasure to me (and I  
hope to you too) that just reasoning and  
found piety here concur in the same  
conclusion, and both of them establish  
the

the adorably mysterious and incompre- PART  
hensible nature of the Supreme Being. II.  
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NOT to lose any time in circumlocutions, said CLEANTHES, addressing himself to DEMEA, much less in replying to the pious declamations of PHILO; I shall briefly explain how I conceive this matter. Look round the world: contemplate the whole and every part of it: You will find it to be nothing but one great machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines, which again admit of subdivisions to a degree beyond what human senses and faculties can trace and explain. All these various machines, and even their most minute parts, are adjusted to each other with an accuracy, which ravishes into admiration all men who have ever contemplated them. The curious adapting of means to ends, throughout all nature, resembles exactly, though it much exceeds, the productions of human contrivance;

PART II. trivance; of human design, thought, wisdom, and intelligence. Since therefore the effects resemble each other, we are led to infer, by all the rules of analogy, that the causes also resemble; and that the Author of Nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man; though possessed of much larger faculties, proportioned to the grandeur of the work which he has executed. By this argument *a posteriori*, and by this argument alone, do we prove at once the existence of a Deity, and his similarity to human mind and intelligence.

I SHALL be so free, CLEANTHES, said DEMEA, as to tell you, that from the beginning I could not approve of your conclusion concerning the similarity of the Deity to men; still less can I approve of the mediums by which you endeavour to establish it. What! No demonstration of the Being of God! No abstract arguments! No proofs *a priori*!

Are

Are these, which have hitherto been so much insisted on by philosophers, all fallacy, all sophism? Can we reach no farther in this subject than experience and probability? I will not say, that this is betraying the cause of a Deity: But surely, by this affected candor, you give advantages to Atheists, which they never could obtain by the mere dint of argument and reasoning.

WHAT I chiefly scruple in this subject, said PHILO, is not so much that all religious arguments are by CLEANTHES reduced to experience, as that they appear not to be even the most certain and irrefragable of that inferior kind. That a stone will fall, that fire will burn, that the earth has solidity, we have observed a thousand and a thousand times; and when any new instance of this nature is presented, we draw without hesitation the accustomed inference. The exact similarity of the cases

PART II. cases gives us a perfect assurance of a similar event ; and a stronger evidence is never desired nor sought after. But where-ever you depart, in the least, from the similarity of the cases, you diminish proportionably the evidence ; and may at last bring it to a very weak analogy, which is confessedly liable to error and uncertainty. After having experienced the circulation of the blood in human creatures, we make no doubt that it takes place in TITIUS and MÆVIUS : But from its circulation in frogs and fishes, it is only a presumption, though a strong one, from analogy, that it takes place in men and other animals. The analogical reasoning is much weaker, when we infer the circulation of the sap in vegetables from our experience that the blood circulates in animals ; and those, who hastily followed that imperfect analogy, are found, by more accurate experiments, to have been mistaken.

If

IF we see a house, CLEANTHES, we ^{PART}
^{II.} conclude, with the greatest certainty, u
that it had an architect or builder ; be-
cause this is precisely that species of
effect which we have experienced to
proceed from that species of cause. But
surely you will not affirm, that the
universe bears such a resemblance to a
house, that we can with the same cer-
tainty infer a similar cause, or that the
analogy is here entire and perfect. The
dissimilitude is so striking, that the ut-
most you can here pretend to is a guess,
a conjecture, a presumption concern-
ing a similar cause ; and how that pre-
tension will be received in the world, I
leave you to consider.

IT would surely be very ill received,
replied CLEANTHES ; and I should be
deservedly blamed and detested, did I
allow, that the proofs of a Deity a-
mounted to no more than a guess or
conjecture. But is the whole adjust-
ment

PART II. ment of means to ends in a house and in
the universe so slight a resemblance?

The œconomy of final causes? The order, proportion, and arrangement of every part? Steps of a stair are plainly contrived, that human legs may use them in mounting; and this inference is certain and infallible. Human legs are also contrived for walking and mounting; and this inference, I allow, is not altogether so certain, because of the dissimilarity which you remark; but does it, therefore, deserve the name only of presumption or conjecture?

Good God! cried DEMEA, interrupting him, where are we? Zealous defenders of religion allow, that the proofs of a Deity fall short of perfect evidence! And you, PHILO, on whose assistance I depended in proving the adorable mysteriousness of the Divine Nature, do you assent to all these extravagant opinions of CLEANTHES? For what

what other name can I give them? Or PART
II. why spare my censure, when such principles are advanced, supported by such an authority, before so young a man as PAMPHILUS?

You seem not to apprehend, replied PHILO, that I argue with CLEANTHES in his own way; and by showing him the dangerous consequences of his tenets, hope at last to reduce him to our opinion. But what sticks most with you, I observe, is the representation which CLEANTHES has made of the argument *a posteriori*; and finding that that argument is likely to escape your hold and vanish into air, you think it so disguised, that you can scarcely believe it to be set in its true light. Now, however much I may dissent, in other respects, from the dangerous principles of CLEANTHES, I must allow, that he has fairly represented that argument; and I shall endeavour so to state the

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matter

PART II. matter to you, that you will entertain
no farther scruples with regard to it.

WERE a man to abstract from every thing which he knows or has seen, he would be altogether incapable, merely from his own ideas, to determine what kind of scene the universe must be, or to give the preference to one state or situation of things above another. For as nothing which he clearly conceives could be esteemed impossible or implying a contradiction, every chimera of his fancy would be upon an equal footing; nor could he assign any just reason, why he adheres to one idea or system, and rejects the others which are equally possible.

AGAIN; after he opens his eyes, and contemplates the world as it really is, it would be impossible for him, at first, to assign the cause of any one event, much less of the whole of things or of the

the universe. He might set his Fancy <sup>PART
II.</sup> a rambling ; and she might bring him ~~~ in an infinite variety of reports and representations. These would all be possible ; but being all equally possible, he would never, of himself, give a satisfactory account for his preferring one of them to the rest. Experience alone can point out to him the true cause of any phenomenon.

Now according to this method of reasoning, DÉMEA, it follows (and is, indeed, tacitly allowed by CLEANTHES himself), that order, arrangement, or the adjustment of final causes, is not, of itself, any proof of design; but only so far as it has been experienced to proceed from that principle. For aught we can know *a priori*, matter may contain the source or spring of order originally, within itself, as well as mind does; and there is no more difficulty in conceiving, that the several elements,

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PART II. from an internal unknown cause, may
fall into the most exquisite arrangement,
than to conceive that their ideas, in the
great, universal mind, from a like in-
ternal unknown cause, fall into that
arrangement. The equal possibility of
both these suppositions is allowed. But
by experience we find, (according to
CLEANTHES), that there is a difference
between them. Throw several pieces
of steel together, without shape or form;
they will never arrange themselves so as
to compose a watch. Stone, and mor-
tar, and wood, without an architect,
never erect a house. But the ideas in
a human mind, we see, by an un-
known, inexplicable œconomy, arrange
themselves so as to form the plan of a
watch or house. Experience, therefore,
proves, that there is an original prin-
ciple of order in mind, not in mat-
ter. From similar effects we infer si-
milar causes. The adjustment of means
to ends is alike in the universe, as in a
machine.

machine of human contrivance. The causes, therefore, must be resembling. <sup>PART
II.</sup> ~

I WAS from the beginning scandalised, I must own, with this resemblance, which is asserted, between the Deity and human creatures; and must conceive it to imply such a degradation of the Supreme Being as no found Theist could endure. With your assistance, therefore, DEMEA, I shall endeavour to defend what you justly call the adorable mysteriousness of the Divine Nature, and shall refute this reasoning of CLEANTHES; provided he allows, that I have made a fair representation of it.

WHEN CLEANTHES had assented, PHILO, after a short pause, proceeded in the following manner.

THAT all inferences, CLEANTHES, concerning fact, are founded on experience;

PART II.
rience; and that all experimental reasonings are founded on the supposition, that similar causes prove similar effects, and similar effects similar causes; I shall not, at present, much dispute with you. But observe, I intreat you, with what extreme caution all just reasoners proceed in the transferring of experiments to similar cases. Unless the cases be exactly similar, they repose no perfect confidence in applying their past observation to any particular phenomenon. Every alteration of circumstances occasions a doubt concerning the event; and it requires new experiments to prove certainly, that the new circumstances are of no moment or importance. A change in bulk, situation, arrangement, age, disposition of the air, or surrounding bodies; any of these particulars may be attended with the most unexpected consequences: And unless the objects be quite familiar to us, it is the highest temerity to expect with assurance,

assurance, after any of these changes, an event similar to that which before fell under our observation. The slow and deliberate steps of philosophers, here, if any where, are distinguished from the precipitate march of the vulgar, who, hurried on by the smallest similitude, are incapable of all discernment or consideration.

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II.

BUT can you think, CLEANTHES, that your usual phlegm and philosophy have been preserved in so wide a step as you have taken, when you compared to the universe, houses, ships, furniture, machines; and from their similarity in some circumstances inferred a similarity in their causes? Thought, design, intelligence, such as we discover in men and other animals, is no more than one of the springs and principles of the universe, as well as heat or cold, attraction or repulsion, and a hundred others, which fall under daily observation. It

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is

PART II. is an active cause, by which some particular parts of nature, we find, produce alterations on other parts. But can a conclusion, with any propriety, be transferred from parts to the whole? Does not the great disproportion bar all comparison and inference? From observing the growth of a hair, can we learn any thing concerning the generation of a man? Would the manner of a leaf's blowing, even though perfectly known, afford us any instruction concerning the vegetation of a tree?

BUT allowing that we were to take the *operations* of one part of nature upon another for the foundation of our judgment concerning the *origin* of the whole, (which never can be admitted); yet why select so minute, so weak, so bounded a principle as the reason and design of animals is found to be upon this planet? What peculiar privilege has this little agitation of the brain which we

we call *thought*, that we must thus make PART
it the model of the whole universe? II.
Our partiality in our own favour does
indeed present it on all occasions; but
found philosophy ought carefully to
guard against so natural an illusion.

So far from admitting, continued PHILO, that the operations of a part can afford us any just conclusion concerning the origin of the whole, I will not allow any one part to form a rule for another part, if the latter be very remote from the former. Is there any reasonable ground to conclude, that the inhabitants of other planets possess thought, intelligence, reason, or any thing similar to these faculties in men? When nature has so extremely diversified her manner of operation in this small globe; can we imagine, that she incessantly copies herself throughout so immense a universe? And if thought, as we may well suppose, be confined merely to this narrow

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II.
narrow corner, and has even there so limited a sphere of action; with what propriety can we assign it for the original cause of all things? The narrow views of a peasant, who makes his domestic œconomy the rule for the government of kingdoms, is in comparison a pardonable sophism.

BUT were we ever so much assured, that a thought and reason, resembling the human, were to be found throughout the whole universe, and were its activity elsewhere vastly greater and more commanding than it appears in this globe; yet I cannot see, why the operations of a world constituted, arranged, adjusted, can with any propriety be extended to a world which is in its embryo-state, and is advancing towards that constitution and arrangement. By observation, we know somewhat of the œconomy, action, and nourishment of a finished animal; but we must transfer

fer with great caution that observation to the growth of a foetus in the womb, <sup>PART
II.</sup> and still more to the formation of an animalcule in the loins of its male parent. Nature, we find, even from our limited experience, possesses an infinite number of springs and principles, which incessantly discover themselves on every change of her position and situation. And what new and unknown principles would actuate her in so new and unknown a situation as that of the formation of a universe, we cannot, without the utmost temerity, pretend to determine,

A VERY small part of this great system, during a very short time, is very imperfectly discovered to us; and do we thence pronounce decisively concerning the origin of the whole?

ADMIRABLE conclusion! Stone, wood, brick, iron, brass, have not, at this time,

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time, in this minute globe of earth, an order or arrangement without human art and contrivance: therefore the universe could not originally attain its order and arrangement, without something similar to human art. But is a part of nature a rule for another part very wide of the former? Is it a rule for the whole? Is a very small part a rule for the universe? Is nature in one situation, a certain rule for nature in another situation vastly different from the former?

AND can you blame me, CLEANTHES, if I here imitate the prudent reserve of SIMONIDES, who, according to the noted story, being asked by HIERO, *What God was?* desired a day to think of it, and then two days more; and after that manner continually prolonged the term, without ever bringing in his definition or description? Could you even blame me, if I had answered at first, *that I did not*

not know, and was sensible that this subject lay vastly beyond the reach of my faculties? You might cry out sceptic and rallier, as much as you pleased: but having found, in so many other subjects much more familiar, the imperfections and even contradictions of human reason, I never should expect any success from its feeble conjectures, in a subject so sublime, and so remote from the sphere of our observation. When two *species* of objects have always been observed to be conjoined together, I can *infer*, by custom, the existence of one wherever I *see* the existence of the other: and this I call an argument from experience. But how this argument can have place, where the objects, as in the present case, are single, individual, without parallel, or specific resemblance, may be difficult to explain. And will any man tell me with a serious countenance, that an orderly universe must arise from some thought and art, like the

PART
II.

PART II. the human; because we have experience of it? To ascertain this reasoning, it were requisite, that we had experience of the origin of worlds; and it is not sufficient, surely, that we have seen ships and cities arise from human art and contrivance.)

PHILO was proceeding in this vehement manner, somewhat between jest and earnest, as it appeared to me; when he observed some signs of impatience in CLEANTHES, and then immediately stopped short. What I had to suggest, said CLEANTHES, is only that you would not abuse terms, or make use of popular expressions to subvert philosophical reasonings. You know, that the vulgar often distinguish reason from experience, even where the question relates only to matter of fact and existence; though it is found, where that *reason* is properly analyzed, that it is nothing but a species of experience. To prove

prove by experience the origin of the ^{PART}
^{II.} universe from mind, is not more con- trary
to common speech, than to prove
the motion of the earth from the same
principle. And a caviller might raise
all the same objections to the COPER-
NICAN system, which you have urged
against my reasonings. Have you other
earths, might he say, which you have
seen to move? Have.....

YES! cried PHILo, interrupting him,
we have other earths. Is not the moon
another earth, which we see to turn
round its centre? Is not Venus another
earth, where we observe the same phe-
nomenon? Are not the revolutions of
the sun also a confirmation, from ana-
logy, of the same theory? All the pla-
nets, are they not earths, which revolve
about the sun? Are not the satellites
moons, which move round Jupiter and
Saturn, and along with these primary
planets round the sun? These analogies
and

PART II. and resemblances, with others which I
have not mentioned, are the sole proofs
of the COPERNICAN system: and to
you it belongs to consider, whether you
have any analogies of the same kind to
support your theory.

IN reality, CLEANTHES, continued he,
the modern system of astronomy is now
so much received by all inquirers, and
has become so essential a part even of
our earliest education, that we are not
commonly very scrupulous in examining
the reasons upon which it is founded.
It is now become a matter of mere
curiosity to study the first writers on
that subject, who had the full force of
prejudice to encounter, and were obliged
to turn their arguments on every
fide in order to render them popular
and convincing. But if we peruse GALILEO's famous Dialogues concerning
the system of the world, we shall find,
that that great genius, one of the sub-
limest

limest that ever existed, first bent all ^{PART} _{II.} his endeavours to prove, that there was no foundation for the distinction commonly made between elementary and celestial substances. The schools, proceeding from the illusions of sense, had carried this distinction very far; and had established the latter substances to be ingenerable, incorruptible, unalterable, impassible; and had assigned all the opposite qualities to the former. But GALILEO, beginning with the moon, proved its similarity in every particular to the earth; its convex figure, its natural darkness when not illuminated, its density, its distinction into solid and liquid, the variations of its phases, the mutual illuminations of the earth and moon, their mutual eclipses, the inequalities of the lunar surface, &c. After many instances of this kind, with regard to all the planets, men plainly saw that these bodies became proper objects of experience; and that the similitude

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Similarity of their nature enabled us to extend the same arguments and phenomena from one to the other.

IN this cautious proceeding of the astronomers, you may read your own condemnation, CLEANTHES; or rather may see, that the subject in which you are engaged exceeds all human reason and inquiry. Can you pretend to show any such similarity between the fabric of a house, and the generation of a universe? Have you ever seen Nature in any such situation as resembles the first arrangement of the elements? Have worlds ever been formed under your eye; and have you had leisure to observe the whole progress of the phenomenon, from the first appearance of order to its final consummation? If you have, then cite your experience, and deliver your theory.

P A R T

P A R T III.

HOW the most absurd argument, re-
plied CLEANTHES, in the hands
of a man of ingenuity and invention,
may acquire an air of probability! Are
you not aware, PHILO, that it became
necessary for COPERNICUS and his first
disciples to prove the similarity of the
terrestrial and celestial matter; because
several philosophers, blinded by old sys-
tems, and supported by some sensible
appearances, had denied this similarity?
but that it is by no means necessary,
that Theists should prove the similarity
of the works of Nature to those of Art;
because this similarity is self-evident
and undeniable? The same matter, a
like

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III.
like form: what more is requisite to show an analogy between their causes, and to ascertain the origin of all things from a divine purpose and intention? Your objections, I must freely tell you, are no better than the abstruse cavils of those philosophers who denied motion; and ought to be refuted in the same manner, by illustrations, examples, and instances, rather than by serious argument and philosophy.

SUPPOSE, therefore, that an articulate voice were heard in the clouds, much louder and more melodious than any which human art could ever reach: Suppose, that this voice were extended in the same instant over all nations, and spoke to each nation in its own language and dialect: Suppose, that the words delivered not only contain a just sense and meaning, but convey some instruction altogether worthy of a benevolent Being, superior to mankind:
Could

Could you possibly hesitate a moment concerning the cause of this voice? and must you not instantly ascribe it to some design or purpose? Yet I cannot see but all the same objections (if they merit that appellation) which lie against the system of Theism, may also be produced against this inference.

MIGHT you not say, that all conclusions concerning fact were founded on experience: that when we hear an articulate voice in the dark, and thence infer a man, it is only the resemblance of the effects which leads us to conclude that there is a like resemblance in the cause: but that this extraordinary voice, by its loudness, extent, and flexibility to all languages, bears so little analogy to any human voice, that we have no reason to suppose any analogy in their causes: and consequently, that a rational, wise, coherent speech proceeded, you knew not whence, from some accidental

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III. cidental whistling of the winds, not from any divine reason or intelligence? You see clearly your own objections in these cavils; and I hope too, you see clearly, that they cannot possibly have more force in the one case than in the other.

BUT to bring the case still nearer the present one of the universe, I shall make two suppositions, which imply not any absurdity or impossibility. Suppose, that there is a natural, universal, inviolable language, common to every individual of human race; and that books are natural productions, which perpetuate themselves in the same manner with animals and vegetables, by descent and propagation. Several expressions of our passions contain a universal language: all brute animals have a natural speech, which, however limited, is very intelligible to their own species. And as there are infinitely fewer parts and less

less contrivance in the finest composition of eloquence, than in the coarsest organized body; the propagation of an *ILIAS* or *AENEAS* is an easier supposition than that of any plant or animal.

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III.
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SUPPOSE, therefore, that you enter into your library, thus peopled by natural volumes, containing the most refined reason and most exquisite beauty: could you possibly open one of them, and doubt, that its original cause bore the strongest analogy to mind and intelligence? When it reasons and discourses; when it expostulates, argues, and enforces its views and topics; when it applies sometimes to the pure intellect, sometimes to the affections; when it collects, disposes, and adorns every consideration suited to the subject: could you persist in asserting, that all this, at the bottom, had really no meaning; and that the first formation of this volume in the loins of its original pa-

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PART III. rent proceeded not from thought and design? Your obstinacy, I know, reaches not that degree of firmness: even your sceptical play and wantonness would be abashed at so glaring an absurdity.

BUT if there be any difference, PHILO, between this supposed case and the real one of the universe, it is all to the advantage of the latter. The anatomy of an animal affords many stronger instances of design than the perusal of LIVY or TACITUS: and any objection which you start in the former case, by carrying me back to so unusual and extraordinary a scene as the first formation of worlds, the same objection has place on the supposition of our vegetating library. Chuse, then, your party, PHILO, without ambiguity or evasion: assert either that a rational volume is no proof of a rational cause, or admit of a similar cause to all the works of nature,

LET

LET me here observe too, continued CLEANTHES, that this religious argument, instead of being weakened by that scepticism so much affected by you, rather acquires force from it, and becomes more firm and undisputed. To exclude all argument or reasoning of every kind, is either affectation or madness. The declared profession of every reasonable sceptic is only to reject abstruse, remote, and refined arguments ; to adhere to common sense and the plain instincts of nature ; and to assent, wherever any reasons strike him with so full a force, that he cannot, without the greatest violence, prevent it. Now the arguments for Natural Religion are plainly of this kind ; and nothing but the most perverse, obstinate metaphysics can reject them. Consider, anatomize the eye ; survey its structure and contrivance ; and tell me, from your own feeling, if the idea of a contriver does not immediately flow in upon you with

**PART III.** a force like that of sensation. The most obvious conclusion, surely, is in favour of design; and it requires time, reflection, and study, to summon up those frivolous, though abstruse objections, which can support Infidelity. Who can behold the male and female of each species, the correspondence of their parts and instincts, their passions, and whole course of life before and after generation, but must be sensible, that the propagation of the species is intended by Nature? Millions and millions of such instances present themselves through every part of the universe; and no language can convey a more intelligible, irresistible meaning, than the curious adjustment of final causes. To what degree, therefore, of blind dogmatism must one have attained, to reject such natural and such convincing arguments?

SOME beauties in writing we may meet with, which seem contrary to rules,

rules, and which gain the affections, and animate the imagination, in opposition to all the precepts of criticism, and to the authority of the established masters of art. And if the argument for Theism be, as you pretend, contradictory to the principles of logic; its universal, its irresistible influence proves clearly, that there may be arguments of a like irregular nature. Whatever cavils may be urged; an orderly world, as well as a coherent, articulate speech, will still be received as an incontestable proof of design and intention,

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III.  
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IT sometimes happens, I own, that the religious arguments have not their due influence on an ignorant savage and barbarian; not because they are obscure and difficult, but because he never asks himself any question with regard to them. Whence arises the curious structure of an animal? From the copulation of its parents. And these

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III.
these whence ? From *their* parents ? A few removes set the objects at such a distance, that to him they are lost in darkness and confusion ; nor is he actuated by any curiosity to trace them farther. But this is neither dogmatism nor scepticism, but stupidity ; a state of mind very different from your sifting, inquisitive disposition, my ingenious friend. You can trace causes from effects : You can compare the most distant and remote objects : and your greatest errors proceed not from barrenness of thought and invention ; but from too luxuriant a fertility, which suppresses your natural good sense, by a profusion of unnecessary scruples and objections.

HERE I could observe, HERMIPPUS, that PHILO was a little embarrassed and confounded : But while he hesitated in delivering an answer, luckily for him,

him, DEMEA broke in upon the dis- PART
course, and saved his countenance. III.
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YOUR instance, CLEANTHES, said he, drawn from books and language, being familiar, has, I confess, so much more force on that account: but is there not some danger too in this very circumstance; and may it not render us presumptuous, by making us imagine we comprehend the Deity, and have some adequate idea of his nature and attributes? When I read a volume, I enter into the mind and intention of the author: I become him, in a manner, for the instant; and have an immediate feeling and conception of those ideas which revolved in his imagination while employed in that composition. But so near an approach we never surely can make to the Deity. His ways are not our ways. His attributes are perfect, but incomprehensible. And this volume of Nature contains a great and inexplicable

PART explicable riddle, more than any intel-  
III. ligible discourse or reasoning.

THE ancient PLATONISTS, you know, were the most religious and devout of all the Pagan philosophers: yet many of them, particularly PLOTINUS, expressly declare, that intellect or understanding is not to be ascribed to the Deity; and that our most perfect worship of him consists, not in acts of veneration, reverence, gratitude, or love; but in a certain mysterious self-annihilation, or total extinction of all our faculties. These ideas are, perhaps, too far stretched; but still it must be acknowledged, that, by representing the Deity as so intelligible and comprehensible, and so similar to a human mind, we are guilty of the grossest and most narrow partiality, and make ourselves the model of the whole universe.

ALL the *sentiments* of the human mind,  
gratitude,

gratitude, resentment, love, friendship, approbation, blame, pity, emulation, envy, have a plain reference to the state and situation of man, and are calculated for preserving the existence and promoting the activity of a such a being in such circumstances. It seems therefore unreasonable to transfer such sentiments to a supreme existence, or to suppose him actuated by them; and the phenomena, besides, of the universe will not support us in such a theory. All our *ideas* derived from the senses are confessedly false and illusive; and cannot, therefore, be supposed to have place in a supreme intelligence: And as the ideas of internal sentiment, added to those of the external senses, compose the whole furniture of human understanding, we may conclude, that none of the *materials* of thought are in any respect similar in the human and in the divine intelligence. Now as to the *manner* of thinking; how can we make any comparison

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PART III. parison between them, or suppose them any wise resembling? Our thought is fluctuating, uncertain, fleeting, succeſſive, and compounded; and were we to remove these circumstances, we absolutely annihilate its essence, and it would in such a case be an abuse of terms to apply to it the name of thought or reaſon. At least, if it appear more pious and respectful (as it really is) still to retain these terms, when we mention the Supreme Being; we ought to acknowledge, that their meaning, in that case, is totally incomprehensible; and that the infirmities of our nature do not permit us to reach any ideas which in the least correspond to the ineffable sublimity of the divine attributes.

PART

P A R T IV.

IT seems strange to me, said CLEAN-
THES, that you, DEMEA, who are ^{PART}
^{IV.} so sincere in the cause of religion, should
still maintain the mysterious, incom-
prehensible nature of the Deity, and
should insist so strenuously that he has
no manner of likeness or resemblance to
human creatures. The Deity, I can
readily allow, possesses many powers
and attributes, of which we can have no
comprehension: But if our ideas, so far
as they go, be not just, and adequate,
and correspondent to his real nature, I
know not what there is in this subject
worth insisting on. Is the name, with-
out any meaning, of such mighty im-
F portance?

PART
IV. portance? Or how do you MYSTICS,
who maintain the absolute incompre-
hensibility of the Deity, differ from
Sceptics or Atheists, who assert, that
the first cause of all is unknown and
unintelligible? Their temerity must be
very great, if, after rejecting the pro-
duction by a mind; I mean, a mind
resembling the human, (for I know of
no other), they pretend to assign, with
certainty, any other specific intelligible
cause: And their conscience must be
be very scrupulous indeed, if they re-
fuse to call the universal, unknown cause
a God or Deity; and to bestow on him
as many sublime eulogies and unmean-
ing epithets as you shall please to re-
quire of them.

WHO could imagine, replied DEMEA,
that CLEANTHES, the calm, philosophi-
cal CLEANTHES, would attempt to re-
fute his antagonists, by affixing a nick-
name to them; and, like the common
bigots

bigots and inquisitors of the age, have ^{PART}
^{IV.} recourse to invective and declamation, u instead of reasoning? Or does he not perceive, that these topics are easily retorted, and that ANTHROPOMORPHITE is an appellation as invidious, and implies as dangerous consequences, as the epithet of MYSTIC, with which he has honoured us? In reality, CLEANTHES, consider what it is you assert when you represent the Deity as similar to a human mind and understanding. What is the soul of man? A composition of various faculties, passions, sentiments, ideas; united, indeed, into one self or person, but still distinct from each other. When it reasons, the ideas, which are the parts of its discourse, arrange themselves in a certain form or order; which is not preserved entire for a moment, but immediately gives place to another arrangement. New opinions, new passions, new affections, new feelings arise, which continually diversify the mental

F 2

scene,

PART
IV. scene, and produce in it the greatest variety and most rapid succession imaginable. How is this compatible with that perfect immutability and simplicity which all true Theists ascribe to the Deity? By the same act, say they, he sees past, present, and future: His love and hatred, his mercy and justice, are one individual operation: He is entire in every point of space; and complete in every instant of duration. No succession, no change, no acquisition, no diminution. What he is implies not in it any shadow of distinction or diversity. And what he is, this moment, he ever has been, and ever will be, without any new judgment, sentiment, or operation. He stands fixed in one simple, perfect state: nor can you ever say, with any propriety, that this act of his is different from that other; or that this judgment or idea has been lately formed, and will give place, by succession, to any different judgment or idea.

I CAN readily allow, said CLEANTHES, PART
IV. that those who maintain the perfect simplicity of the Supreme Being, to the extent in which you have explained it, are complete MYSTICS, and chargeable with all the consequences which I have drawn from their opinion. They are, in a word, ATHEISTS, without knowing it. For though it be allowed, that the Deity possesses attributes of which we have no comprehension; yet ought we never to ascribe to him any attributes which are absolutely incompatible with that intelligent nature essential to him. A mind, whose acts and sentiments and ideas are not distinct and successive; one, that is wholly simple, and totally immutable; is a mind, which has no thought, no reason, no will, no sentiment, no love, no hatred; or in a word, is no mind at all. It is an abuse of terms to give it that appellation; and we may as well speak of limited extension

PART IV.
tion without figure, or of number without composition.

PRAY consider, said PHILO, whom you are at present inveighing against. You are honouring with the appellation of *Atheist* all the sound, orthodox divines, almost, who have treated of this subject; and you will at last be, yourself, found, according to your reckoning, the only sound Theist in the world. But if idolaters be Atheists, as, I think, may justly be asserted, and Christian Theologians the same; what becomes of the argument, so much celebrated, derived from the universal consent of mankind?

BUT because I know you are not much swayed by names and authorities, I shall endeavour to show you, a little more distinctly, the inconveniences of that Anthropomorphism, which you have embraced; and shall prove, that there

there is no ground to suppose a plan of ^{PART} IV.
the world to be formed in the divine mind,
consisting of distinct ideas, dif-
ferently arranged; in the same manner
as an architect forms in his head the
plan of a house which he intends to
execute.

IT is not easy, I own, to see what
is gained by this supposition, whether
we judge of the matter by *Reason* or by
Experience. We are still obliged to
mount higher, in order to find the
cause of this cause, which you had as-
signed as satisfactory and conclusive.

IF *Reason* (I mean abstract reason,
derived from inquiries *a priori*) be not
alike mute with regard to all questions
concerning cause and effect; this sen-
tence at least it will venture to pro-
nounce, That a mental world, or uni-
verse of ideas, requires a cause as much,
as does a material world, or universe of

F 4 objects;

PART IV.
objects; and, if similar in its arrangement, must require a similar cause. For what is there in this subject, which should occasion a different conclusion or inference? In an abstract view, they are entirely alike; and no difficulty attends the one supposition, which is not common to both of them.

AGAIN, when we will needs force *Experience* to pronounce some sentence, even on these subjects, which lie beyond her sphere; neither can she perceive any material difference in this particular, between these two kinds of worlds; but finds them to be governed by similar principles, and to depend upon an equal variety of causes in their operations. We have specimens in miniature of both of them. Our own mind resembles the one: A vegetable or animal body the other. Let *Experience*, therefore, judge from these samples. Nothing seems more delicate, with regard

gard to its causes, than thought ; and as these causes never operate in two persons after the same manner, so we never find two persons who think exactly alike. Nor indeed does the same person think exactly alike at any two different periods of time. A difference of age, of the disposition of his body, of weather, of food, of company, of books, of passions ; any of these particulars, or others more minute, are sufficient to alter the curious machinery of thought, and communicate to it very different movements and operations. As far as we can judge, vegetables and animal bodies are not more delicate in their motions, nor depend upon a greater variety or more curious adjustment of springs and principles.

How therefore shall we satisfy ourselves concerning the cause of that Being, whom you suppose the Author of Nature, or, according to your system
of

PART IV. of Anthropomorphism, the ideal world, into which you trace the material?

Have we not the same reason to trace that ideal world into another ideal world, or new intelligent principle? But if we stop, and go no farther; why go so far? Why not stop at the material world? How can we satisfy ourselves without going on *in infinitum*? And after all, what satisfaction is there in that infinite progression? Let us remember the story of the INDIAN philosopher and his elephant. It was never more applicable than to the present subject. If the material world rests upon a similar ideal world, this ideal world must rest upon some other; and so one, without end. It were better, therefore, never to look beyond the present material world. By supposing it to contain the principle of its order within itself, we really assert it to be God; and the sooner we arrive at that divine Being, so much the better: When you go one step beyond the mundane

dane system, you only excite an inqui- PART
sitive humour, which it is impossible IV.
ever to satisfy.

To say, that the different ideas, which compose the reason of the Supreme Being, fall into order, of themselves, and by their own nature, is really to talk without any precise meaning. If it has a meaning, I would fain know, why it is not as good sense to say, that the parts of the material world fall into order, of themselves, and by their own nature. Can the one opinion be intelligible, while the other is not so ?

We have, indeed, experience of ideas, which fall into order, of themselves, and without any *known* cause: But, I am sure, we have a much larger experience of matter, which does the same; as in all instances of generation and vegetation, where the accurate analysis of the cause exceeds all human comprehension.

PART IV.
henſion. We have also experience of particular ſystems of thought and of matter, which have no order: of the first, in madness; of the ſecond, in corruption. Why then ſhould we think, that order is more eſſential to one than the other? And if it requires a cause in both, what do we gain by your ſystem, in tracing the universe of objects into a ſimilar universe of ideas? The first ſtep, which we make, leads us on for ever. It were, therefore, wiſe in us, to limit all our inquiries to the preſent world, without looking farther. No ſatisfaction can ever be attained by theſe ſpeculations, which ſo far exceed the narrow bounds of human understanding.

IT was uſual with the PERIPATETICS, you know, CLEANTHES, when the cause of any phenomenon was demanded, to have recourse to their *faculties* or *occult qualities*; and to ſay, for instance, that bread nourished by its nutritive

tritive faculty, and senna purged by ^{PART}
its purgative: But it has been disco- ^{IV.}
vered, that this subterfuge was nothing
but the disguise of ignorance; and that
these philosophers, though less inge-
nuous, really said the same thing with
the sceptics or the vulgar, who fairly
confessed, that they knew not the cause
of these phenomena. In like manner,
when it is asked, what cause produces
order in the ideas of the Supreme Be-
ing; can any other reason be assigned
by you, Anthropomorphites, than that
it is a *rational* faculty, and that such is
the nature of the Deity? But why a
similar answer will not be equally satis-
factory in accounting for the order of
the world, without having recourse to
any such intelligent creator as you in-
sist on, may be difficult to determine.
It is only to say, that *such* is the nature
of material objects, and that they are
all originally possessed of a *faculty* of
order and proportion. These are only
more

PART IV. more learned and elaborate ways of confessing our ignorance; nor has the one hypothesis any real advantage above the other, except in its greater conformity to vulgar prejudices.

You have displayed this argument with great emphasis, replied CLEANTHES: You seem not sensible, how easy it is to answer it. Even in common life, if I assign a cause for any event; is it any objection, PHILO, that I cannot assign the cause of that cause, and answer every new question which may incessantly be started? And what philosophers could possibly submit to so rigid a rule? philosophers, who confess ultimate causes to be totally unknown; and are sensible, that the most refined principles, into which they trace the phenomena, are still to them as inexplicable as these phenomena themselves are to the vulgar. The order and arrangement of nature, the curious adjustment

justment of final causes, the plain use and intention of every part and organ; all these bespeak in the clearest language an intelligent cause or author. The heavens and the earth join in the same testimony: The whole chorus of Nature raises one hymn to the praises of its Creator: You alone, or almost alone, disturb this general harmony. You start abstruse doubts, cavils, and objections: You ask me, what is the cause of this cause? I know not; I care not; that concerns not me. I have found a Deity; and here I stop my inquiry. Let those go farther, who are wiser or more enterprising.

I PRETEND to be neither, replied PHILO: and for that very reason, I should never perhaps have attempted to go so far; especially when I am sensible, that I must at last be contented to sit down with the same answer, which, without farther trouble, might have

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PART IV.
have satisfied me from the beginning.
If I am still to remain in utter ignorance of causes, and can absolutely give an explication of nothing, I shall never esteem it any advantage to shove off for a moment a difficulty, which, you acknowledge, must immediately, in its full force, recur upon me. Naturalists indeed very justly explain particular effects by more general causes; though these general causes themselves should remain in the end totally inexplicable; but they never surely thought it satisfactory to explain a particular effect by a particular cause, which was no more to be accounted for than the effect itself. An ideal system, arranged of itself, without a precedent design, is not a whit more explicable than a material one, which attains its order in a like manner; nor is there any more difficulty in the latter supposition than in the former.

PART

P A R T V.

BUT to show you still more inconveniences, continued PHILO, in your Anthropomorphism; please to take a new survey of your principles. *Like effects prove like causes.* This is the experimental argument; and this, you say too, is the sole theological argument. Now it is certain, that the liker the effects are which are seen, and the liker the causes which are inferred, the stronger is the argument. Every departure on either side diminishes the probability, and renders the experiment less conclusive. You cannot doubt of the principle: neither ought you to reject its consequences.

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ALL

PART V.
ALL the new discoveries in astronomy, which prove the immense grandeur and magnificence of the works of Nature, are so many additional arguments for a Deity, according to the true system of Theism: but, according to your hypothesis of experimental Theism, they become so many objections, by removing the effect still farther from all resemblance to the effects of human art and contrivance. For if LUCRETIUS *, even following the old system of the world, could exclaim,

Quis regere immensi summam, quis habere profundi
 Indu manu validas potis est moderanter habenas?
 Quis pariter cœlos omnes convertere? et omnes
 Ignibus ætheriis terras suffire feraces?
 Omnibus inque locis esse omni tempore præsto?

If TULLY † esteemed this reasoning so natural as to put it into the mouth of his EPICUREAN: *Quibus enim oculis animi intueri potuit vester Plato fabricam illam tanti operis, qua construi a Deo atque edificari*

* Lib. xi. 1094.

† De nat. Deor. lib. i.

edificari mundum facit? quæ molitio? quæ ferramenta? qui vectes? quæ machinæ? qui ministri tanti muneris fuerunt? quem admedium autem obedire et parere voluntati architecti aer, ignis, aqua, terra potuerunt? If this argument, I say, had any force in former ages; how much greater must it have at present; when the bounds of Nature are so infinitely enlarged, and such a magnificent scene is opened to us? It is still more unreasonable to form our idea of so unlimited a cause from our experience of the narrow productions of human design and invention.

THE discoveries by microscopes, as they open a new universe in miniature, are still objections, according to you, arguments, according to me. The farther we push our researches of this kind, we are still led to infer the universal cause of all to be vastly different from

PART V. mankind, or from any object of human
experience and observation.

AND what say you to the discoveries in anatomy, chemistry, botany? ---- These surely are no objections, replied CLEANTHES: they only discover new instances of art and contrivance. It is still the image of mind reflected on us from innumerable objects. Add, a mind *like the human*, said PHILO. I know of no other, replied CLEANTHES. And the liker the better, insisted PHILO. To be sure, said CLEANTHES.

Now, CLEANTHES, said PHILO, with an air of alacrity and triumph, mark the consequences. *First*, By this method of reasoning, you renounce all claim to infinity in any of the attributes of the Deity. For as the cause ought only to be proportioned to the effect; and the effect, so far as it falls under our cognisance, is not infinite; what pretensions,

tensions have we, upon your supposi-
tions, to ascribe that attribute to the di-
vine Being? You will still insist, that,
by removing him so much from all si-
milarity to human creatures, we give
into the most arbitrary hypothesis, and
at the same time weaken all proofs of
his existence.

PART
V.

Secondly, You have no reason, on your theory, for ascribing perfection to the Deity, even in his finite capacity; or for supposing him free from every error, mi-
stake, or incoherence, in his undertakings. There are many inexplicable dif-
ficulties in the works of Nature, which, if we allow a perfect author to be proved *a priori*, are easily solved, and become only seeming difficulties, from the nar-
row capacity of man, who cannot trace infinite relations. But according to your method of reasoning, these difficulties become all real; and perhaps will be insisted on, as new instances of likeness

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to

PART V.
to human art and contrivance. At least,
you must acknowledge, that it is impos-
sible for us to tell, from our limited
views, whether this system contains any
great faults, or deserves any consider-
able praise, if compared to other pos-
sible, and even real systems. Could a
peasant, if the AENEID were read to him,
pronounce that poem to be absolutely
faultless, or even assign to it its proper
rank among the productions of human
wit; he, who had never seen any other
production?

BUT were this world ever so perfect
a production, it must still remain un-
certain, whether all the excellencies of
the work can justly be ascribed to the
workman. If we survey a ship, what an
exalted idea must we form of the inge-
nuity of the carpenter who framed so
complicated, useful, and beautiful a ma-
chine? And what surprise must we feel,
when we find him a stupid mechanic,
who

who imitated others, and copied an art,<sup>PART
V.</sup> which, through a long succession of ages, ~~~~~~~ after multiplied trials, mistakes, corrections, deliberations, and controversies, had been gradually improving? Many worlds might have been botched and bungled, throughout an eternity, ere this system was struck out; much labour lost; many fruitless trials made; and a slow, but continued improvement carried on during infinite ages in the art of world-making. In such subjects, who can determine, where the truth; nay, who can conjecture where the probability, lies; amidst a great number of hypotheses which may be proposed, and a still greater number which may be imagined?

AND what shadow of an argument, continued PHILO, can you produce, from your hypothesis, to prove the unity of the Deity? A great number of men join in building a house or ship, in rear-

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PART V.
ing a city, in framing a commonwealth:
why may not several deities combine in contriving and framing a world? This is only so much greater similarity to human affairs. By sharing the work among several, we may so much farther limit the attributes of each, and get rid of that extensive power and knowledge, which must be supposed in one deity, and which, according to you, can only serve to weaken the proof of his existence. And if such foolish, such vicious creatures as man can yet often unite in framing and executing one plan; how much more those deities or dæmons, whom we may suppose several degrees more perfect?

To multiply causes, without necessity, is indeed contrary to true philosophy: but this principle applies not to the present case. Were one deity antecedently proved by your theory, who were possessed of every attribute requisite

fite to the production of the universe; ^{PART}
it would be needless, I own, (though not ^{V.} absurd), to suppose any other deity ex-
istent. But while it is still a question,
Whether all these attributes are united
in one subject, or dispersed among se-
veral independent beings; by what phe-
nomena in nature can we pretend to de-
cide the controversy? Where we see a
body raised in a scale, we are sure that
there is in the opposite scale, however
concealed from sight, some counterpoi-
sing weight equal to it: but it is still al-
lowed to doubt, whether that weight
be an aggregate of several distinct bo-
dies, or one uniform united mass. And
if the weight requisite very much ex-
ceeds any thing which we have ever
seen conjoined in any single body, the
former supposition becomes still more
probable and natural. An intelligent
being of such vast power and capacity
as is necessary to produce the universe,
or, to speak in the language of ancient
philosophy,

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PART V. philosophy, so prodigious an animal,
exceeds all analogy, and even comprehen-
sion.

BUT farther, CLEANTHES: Men are mortal, and renew their species by generation; and this is common to all living creatures. The two great sexes of male and female, says MILTON, animate the world. Why must this circumstance, so universal, so essential, be excluded from those numerous and limited deities? Behold, then, the theogeny of ancient times brought back upon us.

AND why not become a perfect Anthropomorphite? Why not assert the deity or deities to be corporeal, and to have eyes, a nose, mouth, ears, &c.? EPICURUS maintained, that no man had ever seen reason but in a human figure; therefore the gods must have a human figure. And this argument, which is deservedly so much ridiculed by CICERO,
becomes,

becomes, according to you, solid and philosophical.

PART
V.
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IN a word, CLEANTHES, a man, who follows your hypothesis, is able, perhaps, to assert, or conjecture, that the universe, sometime, arose from something like design: but beyond that position he cannot ascertain one single circumstance; and is left afterwards to fix every point of his theology, by the utmost license of fancy and hypothesis. This world, for aught he knows, is very faulty and imperfect, compared to a superior standard; and was only the first rude essay of some infant deity, who afterwards abandoned it, ashamed of his lame performance: it is the work only of some dependent, inferior deity; and is the object of derision to his superiors: it is the production of old age and dotage in some superannuated deity; and ever since his death, has run on at adventures, from the first impulse and active force

PART force which it received from him. You  
V. justly give signs of horror, DEMEA, at  
these strange suppositions ; but these,  
and a thousand more of the same kind,  
are CLEANTHES's suppositions, not  
mine. From the moment the attributes  
of the Deity are supposed finite, all these  
have place. And I cannot, for my part,  
think, that so wild and unsettled a sys-  
tem of theology is, in any respect, pre-  
ferable to none at all.

THESE suppositions I absolutely dis-  
own, cried CLEANTHES : they strike me,  
however, with no horror ; especially,  
when proposed in that rambling way  
in which they drop from you. On the  
contrary, they give me pleasure, when  
I see, that, by the utmost indulgence of  
your imagination, you never get rid of  
the hypothesis of design in the universe ;  
but are obliged at every turn to have  
recourse to it. To this concession I ad-  
here steadily ; and this I regard as a suf-  
ficient foundation for religion.

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## P A R T VI.

IT must be a slight fabric, indeed, said <sup>PART</sup> ~~VI.~~ DEMEA, which can be erected on so ~~~~~~~ tottering a foundation. While we are uncertain, whether there is one deity or many; whether the deity or deities, to whom we owe our existence, be perfect or imperfect, subordinate or supreme, dead or alive; What trust or confidence can we repose in them? What devotion or worship address to them? What veneration or obedience pay them? To all the purposes of life, the theory of religion becomes altogether useless: and even with regard to speculative consequences, its uncertainty, according to  
you,

PART VI. you, must render it totally precarious  
and unsatisfactory.

To render it still more unsatisfactory, said PHILO, there occurs to me another hypothesis, which must acquire an air of probability from the method of reasoning so much insisted on by CLEANTHES. That like effects arise from like causes: this principle he supposes the foundation of all religion. But there is another principle of the same kind, no less certain, and derived from the same source of experience; That where several known circumstances are observed to be similar, the unknown will also be found similar. Thus, if we see the limbs of a human body, we conclude, that it is also attended with a human head, though hid from us. Thus, if we see, through a chink in a wall, a small part of the sun, we conclude, that, were the wall removed, we should see the whole body. In short, this method

method of reasoning is so obvious and <sup>PART</sup> familiar, that no scruple can ever be <sup>VI.</sup> made with regard to its solidity.

Now if we survey the universe, so far as it falls under our knowledge, it bears a great resemblance to an animal or organized body, and seems actuated with a like principle of life and motion. A continual circulation of matter in it produces no disorder: a continual waste in every part is incessantly repaired: the closest sympathy is perceived throughout the entire system: and each part or member, in performing its proper offices, operates both to its own preservation and to that of the whole. The world, therefore, I infer, is an animal; and the Deity is the SOUL of the world, actuating it, and actuated by it.

You have too much learning, CLEANTHES, to be at all surprised at this opinion,

PART VI. opinion, which, you know, was maintained by almost all the Theists of antiquity, and chiefly prevails in their discourses and reasonings. For though sometimes the ancient philosophers reason from final causes, as if they thought the world the workmanship of God; yet it appears rather their favourite notion to consider it as his body, whose organization renders it subservient to him. And it must be confessed, that as the universe resembles more a human body than it does the works of human art and contrivance; if our limited analogy could ever, with any propriety, be extended to the whole of nature, the inference seems juster in favour of the ancient than the modern theory.

THERE are many other advantages, too, in the former theory, which recommended it to the ancient Theologians. Nothing more repugnant to all their notions, because nothing more repugnant

repugnant to common experience, than mind without body; a mere spiritual substance, which fell not under their senses nor comprehension, and of which they had not observed one single instance throughout all nature. Mind and body they knew, because they felt both: an order, arrangement, organization, or internal machinery, in both, they likewise knew, after the same manner: and it could not but seem reasonable to transfer this experience to the universe; and to suppose the divine mind and body to be also coeval, and to have, both of them, order and arrangement naturally inherent in them, and inseparable from them.

HERE, therefore, is a new species of *Anthropomorphism*, CLEANTHES, on which you may deliberate; and a theory which seems not liable to any considerable difficulties. You are too much superior, surely, to *systematical preju-*

PART VI. *prejudices*, to find any more difficulty in supposing an animal body to be, originally, of itself, or from unknown causes, possessed of order and organization, than in supposing a similar order to belong to mind. But the *vulgar prejudice*, that body and mind ought always to accompany each other, ought not, one should think, to be entirely neglected; since it is founded on *vulgar experience*, the only guide which you profess to follow in all these theological inquiries. And if you assert, that our limited experience is an unequal standard, by which to judge of the unlimited extent of nature; you entirely abandon your own hypothesis, and must thenceforward adopt our Mysticism, as you call it, and admit of the absolute incomprehensibility of the Divine Nature.

THIS theory, I own, replied CLEANTHES, has never before occurred to me, though a pretty natural one; and I cannot

cannot readily, upon so short an examination and reflection, deliver any ~~any~~ <sup>PART VI.</sup> opinion with regard to it. You are very scrupulous, indeed, said PHILO: were I to examine any system of yours, I should not have acted with half that caution and reserve, in starting objections and difficulties to it. However, if any thing occur to you, you will oblige us by proposing it.

WHY then, replied CLEANTHES, it seems to me, that, though the world does, in many circumstances, resemble an animal body; yet is the analogy also defective in many circumstances, the most material: no organs of sense; no seat of thought or reason; no one precise origin of motion and action. In short, it seems to bear a stronger resemblance to a vegetable than to an animal, and your inference would be so far inconclusive in favour of the soul of the world.

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BUT

PART  
VI. BUT in the next place, your theory  
seems to imply the eternity of the world;  
and that is a principle, which, I think,  
can be refuted by the strongest reasons  
and probabilities. I shall suggest an  
argument to this purpose, which, I be-  
lieve, has not been insisted on by any  
writer. Those, who reason from the  
late origin of arts and sciences, though  
their inference wants not force, may  
perhaps be refuted by considerations  
derived from the nature of human so-  
ciety, which is in continual revolution,  
between ignorance and knowledge, li-  
berty and slavery, riches and poverty;  
so that it is impossible for us, from our  
limited experience, to foretell with as-  
surance what events may or may not  
be expected. Ancient learning and hi-  
story seem to have been in great danger  
of entirely perishing after the inundation  
of the barbarous nations; and had these convulsions continued a little longer,  
or been a little more violent, we  
should

should not probably have now known what passed in the world a few centuries before us. Nay, were it not for the superstition of the Popes, who preserved a little jargon of **LATIN**, in order to support the appearance of an ancient and universal church, that tongue must have been utterly lost : in which case, the Western world, being totally barbarous, would not have been in a fit disposition for receiving the **GREEK** language and learning, which was conveyed to them after the sacking of **CONSTANTINOPLE**. When learning and books had been extinguished, even the mechanical arts would have fallen considerably to decay ; and it is easily imagined, that fable or tradition might ascribe to them a much later origin than the true one. This vulgar argument, therefore, against the eternity of the world, seems a little precarious.

BUT here appears to be the founda-  
H 3 tion

PART VI.  
tion of a better argument. LUCULLUS  
was the first that brought cherry-trees  
from ASIA to EUROPE; though that tree  
thrives so well in many EUROPEAN  
climates, that it grows in the woods  
without any culture. Is it possible, that,  
throughout a whole eternity, no EURO-  
PEAN had ever passed into ASIA, and  
thought of transplanting so delicious a  
fruit into his own country? Or if the  
tree was once transplanted and propa-  
gated, how could it ever afterwards pe-  
rish? Empires may rise and fall; liberty  
and slavery succeed alternately; igno-  
rance and knowledge give place to each  
other; but the cherry-tree will still re-  
main in the woods of GREECE, SPAIN,  
and ITALY, and will never be affected  
by the revolutions of human society.

IT is not two thousand years since  
vines were transplanted into FRANCE;  
though there is no climate in the world  
more favourable to them. It is not three  
centuries

centuries since horses, cows, sheep, swine, <sup>PART</sup> VI.  
dogs, corn, were known in AMERICA. ~~~  
Is it possible, that, during the revolu-  
tions of a whole eternity, there never  
arose a COLUMBUS, who might open the  
communication between EUROPE and  
and that continent? We may as well  
imagine, that all men would wear stock-  
ings for ten thousand years, and never  
have the sense to think of garters to tie  
them. All these seem convincing proofs  
of the youth, or rather infancy, of the  
world; as being founded on the ope-  
ration of principles more constant and  
steady than those by which human so-  
ciety is governed and directed. No-  
thing less than a total convulsion of the  
elements will ever destroy all the Eu-  
ROPEAN animals and vegetables which  
are now to be found in the Western  
world.

AND what argument have you against  
such convulsions, replied PHILO. Strong

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and

PART VI.  
and almost incontestable proofs may be traced over the whole earth, that every part of this globe has continued for many ages entirely covered with water. And though order were supposed inseparable from matter, and inherent in it; yet may matter be susceptible of many and great revolutions, through the endless periods of eternal duration. The incessant changes, to which every part of it is subject, seem to intimate some such general transformations; tho' at the same time it is observable, that all the changes and corruptions of which we have ever had experience, are but passages from one state of order to another; nor can matter ever rest in total deformity and confusion. What we see in the parts, we may infer in the whole; at least, that is the method of reasoning on which you rest your whole theory. And were I obliged to defend any particular system of this nature (which I never willingly should do), I esteem none more

more plausible than that which ascribes <sup>PART</sup>  
<sup>VI.</sup> an eternal inherent principle of order     
to the world; though attended with  
great and continual revolutions and al-  
terations. This at once solves all diffi-  
culties; and if the solution, by being so  
general, is not entirely complete and  
satisfactory, it is at least a theory that  
we must, sooner or later, have recourse  
to, whatever system we embrace. How  
could things have been as they are, were  
there not an original, inherent principle  
of order somewhere, in thought or in  
matter? And it is very indifferent to  
which of these we give the preference.  
Chance has no place, on any hypothesis,  
sceptical or religious. Every thing is  
surely governed by steady, inviolable  
laws. And were the inmost essence of  
things laid open to us, we should then  
discover a scene, of which, at present,  
we can have no idea. Instead of admiring  
the order of natural beings, we  
should clearly see, that it was absolutely  
impossible

PART VI. impossible for them, in the smallest article, ever to admit of any other disposition.

WERE any one inclined to revive the ancient Pagan Theology, which maintained, as we learn from Hesiod, that this globe was governed by 30,000 deities, who arose from the unknown powers of nature: you would naturally object, CLEANTHES, that nothing is gained by this hypothesis; and that it is as easy to suppose all men and animals, beings more numerous, but less perfect, to have sprung immediately from a like origin. Push the same inference a step farther; and you will find a numerous society of deities as explicable as one universal deity, who possesses, within himself, the powers and perfections of the whole society. All these systems, then, of Scepticism, Polytheism, and Theism, you must allow, on your principles, to be on a like footing,

ing, and that no one of them has any advantage over the others. You may thus thence learn the fallacy of your principles.

P A R T



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## P A R T VII.

BUT here, continued PHILO, in examining the ancient system of the soul of the world, there strikes me, all on a sudden, a new idea, which, if just, must go near to subvert all your reasoning, and destroy even your first inferences, on which you repose such confidence. If the universe bears a greater likeness to animal bodies and to vegetables, than to the works of human art, it is more probable, that its cause resembles the cause of the former than that of the latter, and its origin ought rather to be ascribed to generation or vegetation than to reason or design. Your conclusion, even according to your own

PART own principles, is therefore lame and  
VII. defective.

PRAY open up this argument a little farther, said DEMEA. For I do not rightly apprehend it, in that concise manner in which you have expressed it.

OUR friend CLEANTHES, replied PHILO, as you have heard, asserts, that since no question of fact can be proved otherwise than by experience, the existence of a Deity admits not of proof from any other medium. The world, says he, resembles the works of human contrivance: Therefore its cause must also resemble that of the other. Here we may remark, that the operation of one very small part of nature, to wit man, upon another very small part, to wit that inanimate matter lying within his reach, is the rule by which CLEANTHES judges of the origin of the whole; and

and he measures objects, so widely disproportioned, by the same individual standard. But to wave all objections drawn from this topic; I affirm, that there are other parts of the universe (besides the machines of human invention) which bear still a greater resemblance to the fabric of the world, and which therefore afford a better conjecture concerning the universal origin of this system. These parts are animals and vegetables. The world plainly resembles more an animal or a vegetable, than it does a watch or a knitting-loom. Its cause, therefore, it is more probable, resembles the cause of the former. The cause of the former is generation or vegetation. The cause, therefore, of the world, we may infer to be something similar or analogous to generation or vegetation.

BUT how is it conceivable, said DEMEA, that the world can arise from any thing

PART VII. thing similar to vegetation or generation?

VERY easily, replied PHILO. In like manner as a tree sheds its seed into the neighbouring fields, and produces other trees; so the great vegetable, the world, or this planetary system, produces within itself certain seeds, which, being scattered into the surrounding chaos, vegetate into new worlds. A comet, for instance, is the seed of a world; and after it has been fully ripened, by passing from sun to sun, and star to star, it is at last tossed into the unformed elements which every where surround this universe, and immediately sprouts up into a new system.

OR if, for the sake of variety (for I see no other advantage), we should suppose this world to be an animal; a comet is the egg of this animal: and in like manner as an ostrich lays its egg in

PART  
VII.

in the sand, which, without any further care, hatches the egg, and produces a new animal; so . . . . I understand you, says DEMEA: But what wild, arbitrary suppositions are these? What *data* have you for such extraordinary conclusions? And is the slight, imaginary resemblance of the world to a vegetable or an animal sufficient to establish the same inference with regard to both? Objects, which are in general so widely different; ought they to be a standard for each other?

RIGHT, cries PHILO: This is the topic on which I have all along insisted. I have still asserted, that we have no *data* to establish any system of cosmogony. Our experience, so imperfect in itself, and so limited both in extent and duration, can afford us no probable conjecture concerning the whole of things. But if we must needs fix on some hypothesis; by what rule, pray, I ought

PART VII. ought we to determine our choice? Is there any other rule than the greater similarity of the objects compared? And does not a plant or an animal, which springs from vegetation or generation, bear a stronger resemblance to the world, than does any artificial machine, which arises from reason and design?

BUT what is this vegetation and generation of which you talk, said DEMEA? Can you explain their operations, and anatomize that fine internal structure on which they depend?

AS much, at least, replied PHILO, as CLEANTHES can explain the operations of reason, or anatomize that internal structure on which *it* depends. But without any such elaborate disquisitions, when I see an animal, I infer, that it sprang from generation; and that with as great certainty as you conclude

clude a house to have been reared by design. These words, *generation, reason,* mark only certain powers and energies in nature, whose effects are known, but whose essence is incomprehensible; and one of these principles, more than the other, has no privilege for being made a standard to the whole of nature.

IN reality, DEMEA, it may reasonably be expected, that the larger the views are which we take of things, the better will they conduct us in our conclusions concerning such extraordinary and such magnificent subjects. In this little corner of the world alone, there are four principles, *Reason, Instinct, Generation, Vegetation*, which are similar to each other, and are the causes of similar effects. What a number of other principles may we naturally suppose in the immense extent and variety of the universe, could we travel from planet

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PART VII. to planet and from system to system, in order to examine each part of this mighty fabric ? Any one of these four principles above mentioned (and a hundred others, which lie open to our conjecture) may afford us a theory, by which to judge of the origin of the world ; and it is a palpable and egregious partiality, to confine our view entirely to that principle by which our own minds operate. Were this principle more intelligible on that account, such a partiality might be somewhat excuseable : But reason, in its internal fabric and structure, is really as little known to us as instinct or vegetation ; and perhaps even that vague, undeterminate word, *Nature*, to which the vulgar refer every thing, is not at the bottom more inexplicable. The effects of these principles are all known to us from experience : But the principles themselves, and their manner of operation, are totally unknown : Nor is it less intelligible,

intelligible, or less conformable to experience, to say, that the world arose by vegetation from a seed shed by another world, than to say that it arose from a divine reason or contrivance, according to the sense in which CLEANTHES understands it.

BUT methinks, said DEMEA, if the world had a vegetative quality, and could sow the seeds of new worlds into the infinite chaos, this power would be still an additional argument for design in its author. For whence could arise so wonderful a faculty but from design? Or how can order spring from any thing which perceives not that order which it bestows?

You need only look around you, replied PHILO, to satisfy yourself with regard to this question. A tree bestows order and organization on that tree which springs from it, without know-

PART VII. ing the order : an animal, in the same manner, on its offspring ; a bird, on its nest : and instances of this kind are even more frequent in the world, than those of order, which arise from reason and contrivance. To say that all this order in animals and vegetables proceeds ultimately from design, is begging the question : nor can that great point be ascertained otherwise than by proving, *a priori*, both that order is, from its nature, inseparably attached to thought ; and that it can never, of itself, or from original unknown principles, belong to matter.

BUT farther, DEMEA ; this objection, which you urge, can never be made use of by CLEANTHES, without renouncing a defence which he has already made against one of my objections. When I inquired concerning the cause of that supreme reason and intelligence, into which he resolves every

very thing ; he told me, that the im- PART  
VII. possibility of satisfying such inquiries ~~~~~~~ could never be admitted as an objection in any species of philosophy. *We must stop somewhere, says he; nor is it ever within the reach of human capacity to explain ultimate causes, or show the last connections of any objects. It is sufficient, if the steps, so far as we go, are supported by experience and observation.* Now, that vegetation and generation, as well as reason, are experienced to be principles of order in nature, is undeniably. If I rest my system of cosmogony on the former, preferably to the latter, it is at my choice. The matter seems entirely arbitrary. And when CLEANTHES asks me what is the cause of my great vegetative or generative faculty, I am equally intitled to ask him the cause of his great reasoning principle. These questions we have agreed to forbear on both sides ; and it is chiefly his interest on the present occasion to stick to this

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PART VII. agreement. Judging by our limited and imperfect experience, generation has some privileges above reason : For we see every day the latter arise from the former, never the former from the latter.

COMPARE, I beseech you, the consequences on both sides. The world, say I, resembles an animal; therefore it is an animal, therefore it arose from generation. The steps, I confess, are wide; yet there is some small appearance of analogy in each step. The world, says CLEANTHES, resembles a machine; therefore it is a machine, therefore it arose from design. The steps here are equally wide, and the analogy less striking. And if he pretends to carry on *my* hypothesis a step farther, and to infer design or reason from the great principle of generation, on which I insist; I may, with better authority, use the same freedom to push farther *his* hypothesis,

pothesis, and infer a divine generation or theogeny from his principle of reason. I have at least some faint shadow of experience, which is the utmost that can ever be attained in the present subject. Reason, in innumerable instances, is observed to arise from the principle of generation, and never to arise from any other principle.

HESIOD, and all the ancient Mythologists, were so struck with this analogy, that they universally explained the origin of nature from an animal birth, and copulation. PLATO too, so far as he is intelligible, seems to have adopted some such notion in his *TIMÆUS*.

THE BRAMINS assert, that the world arose from an infinite spider, who spun this whole complicated mass from his bowels, and annihilates afterwards the whole or any part of it, by absorbing it again, and resolving it into his own essence.

PART VII. essence. Here is a species of cosmogony, which appears to us ridiculous; because a spider is a little contemptible animal, whose operations we are never likely to take for a model of the whole universe. But still here is a new species of analogy, even in our globe. And were there a planet wholly inhabited by spiders, (which is very possible), this inference would there appear as natural and irrefragable as that which in our planet ascribes the origin of all things to design and intelligence, as explained by CLEANTHES. Why an orderly system may not be spun from the belly as well as from the brain, it will be difficult for him to give a satisfactory reason.

I MUST confess, PHILO, replied CLEANTHES, that of all men living, the task which you have undertaken, of raising doubts and objections, suits you best, and seems, in a manner, natural and unavoidable to you. So great is your fertility.

fility of invention, that I am not ashamed to acknowledge myself unable, on a sudden, to solve regularly such out-of-the-way difficulties as you incessantly start upon me: though I clearly see, in general, their fallacy and error. And I question not, but you are yourself, at present, in the same case, and have not the solution so ready as the objection: while you must be sensible, that common sense and reason are entirely against you; and that such whimsies as you have delivered, may puzzle, but never can convince us.

P A R T



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## P A R T VIII.

WHAT you ascribe to the fertility <sup>PART</sup> <sub>VIII.</sub> of my invention, replied PHILO, ~~~ is entirely owing to the nature of the subject. In subjects, adapted to the narrow compass of human reason, there is commonly but one determination, which carries probability or conviction with it; and to a man of sound judgment, all other suppositions, but that one, appear entirely absurd and chimerical. But in such questions as the present, a hundred contradictory views may preserve a kind of imperfect analogy; and invention has here full scope to exert itself. Without any great effort of thought, I believe that I could, in an instant,

PART VIII. stant, propose other systems of cosmogony, which would have some faint appearance of truth; though it is a thousand, a million to one, if either yours or any one of mine be the true system.

FOR instance; what if I should revive the old EPICUREAN hypothesis? This is commonly, and I believe justly, esteemed the most absurd system that has yet been proposed; yet, I know not, whether, with a few alterations, it might not be brought to bear a faint appearance of probability. Instead of supposing matter infinite, as EPICURUS did; let us suppose it finite. A finite number of particles is only susceptible of finite transpositions: and it must happen, in an eternal duration, that every possible order or position must be tried an infinite number of times. This world, therefore, with all its events, even the most minute, has before been produced and destroyed, and will again be produced

ced and destroyed, without any bounds <sup>PART</sup> VIII.  
and limitations. No one, who has a con-  
ception of the powers of infinite, in com-  
parison of finite, will ever scruple this  
determination.

BUT this supposes, said DEMEA, that  
matter can acquire motion, without any  
voluntary agent or first mover.

AND where is the difficulty, replied  
PHILO, of that supposition? Every event,  
before experience, is equally difficult  
and incomprehensible; and every event,  
after experience, is equally easy and in-  
telligible. Motion, in many instances,  
from gravity, from elasticity, from e-  
lectricity, begins in matter, without any  
known voluntary agent: and to sup-  
pose always, in these cases, an unknown  
voluntary agent, is mere hypothesis;  
and hypothesis attended with no advan-  
tages. The beginning of motion in  
matter itself is as conceivable *a priori* as  
its

PART VIII. its communication from mind and intelligence.

BESIDES; why may not motion have been propagated by impulse through all eternity; and the same stock of it, or nearly the same, be still upheld in the universe? As much as is lost by the composition of motion, as much is gained by its resolution. And whatever the causes are, the fact is certain, that matter is, and always has been, in continual agitation, as far as human experience or tradition reaches. There is not probably, at present, in the whole universe, one particle of matter at absolute rest.

AND this very consideration too, continued PHILO, which we have stumbled on in the course of the argument, suggests a new hypothesis of cosmogony, that is not absolutely absurd and improbable. Is there a system, an order, an œconomy of things, by which mat-  
ter

ter can preserve that perpetual agitation which seems essential to it, and yet maintain a constancy in the forms which it produces? There certainly is such an œconomy: for this is actually the case with the present world. The continual motion of matter, therefore, in less than infinite transpositions, must produce this œconomy or order; and by its very nature, that order, when once established, supports itself, for many ages, if not to eternity. But wherever matter is so poized, arranged, and adjusted, as to continue in perpetual motion, and yet preserve a constancy in the forms, its situation must, of necessity, have all the same appearance of art and contrivance which we observe at present. All the parts of each form must have a relation to each other, and to the whole: and the whole itself must have a relation to the other parts of the universe; to the element, in which the form subsists; to the materials, with

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which

PART VIII. which it repairs its waste and decay; and to every other form, which is hostile or friendly. A defect in any of these particulars destroys the form; and the matter, of which it is composed, is again set loose, and is thrown into irregular motions and fermentations, till it unite itself to some other regular form. If no such form be prepared to receive it, and if there be a great quantity of this corrupted matter in the universe, the universe itself is entirely disordered; whether it be the feeble embryo of a world in its first beginnings that is thus destroyed, or the rotten carcase of one languishing in old age and infirmity. In either case, a chaos ensues; till finite, though innumerable revolutions produce at last some forms; whose parts and organs are so adjusted as to support the forms amidst a continued succession of matter.

SUPPOSE, (for we shall endeavour to vary  
the

the expression) that matter were thrown into any position, by a blind, unguided force; it is evident, that this first position must in all probability be the most confused and most disorderly imaginable, without any resemblance to those works of human contrivance, which, along with a symmetry of parts, discover an adjustment of means to ends, and a tendency to self-preservation. If the actuating force cease after this operation, matter must remain for ever in disorder, and continue an immense chaos, without any proportion or activity. But suppose, that the actuating force, whatever it be, still continues in matter, this first position will immediately give place to a second, which will likewise in all probability be as disorderly as the first, and so on through many successions of changes and revolutions. No particular order or position ever continues a moment unaltered. The original force, still remaining in activity, gives a per-

PART VIII. petual restlessness to matter. Every pos-  
sible situation is produced, and instantly  
destroyed. If a glimpse or dawn of or-  
der appears for a moment, it is instantly  
hurried away, and confounded, by that  
never-ceasing force which actuates e-  
very part of matter.

THUS the universe goes on for many  
ages in a continued succession of chaos  
and disorder. But is it not possible that  
it may settle at last, so as not to lose its  
motion and active force (for that we  
have supposed inherent in it), yet so as  
to preserve an uniformity of appearance,  
amidst the continual motion and fluc-  
tuation of its parts? This we find to be  
the case with the universe at present.  
Every individual is perpetually chan-  
ging, and every part of every indivi-  
dual; and yet the whole remains, in ap-  
pearance, the same. May we not hope  
for such a position, or rather be assured  
of it, from the eternal revolutions of  
unguided

unguided matter; and may not this account for all the appearing wisdom and contrivance which is in the universe? Let us contemplate the subject a little, and we shall find, that this adjustment, if attained by matter, of a seeming stability in the forms, with a real and perpetual revolution or motion of parts, affords a plausible, if not a true solution of the difficulty.

IT is in vain, therefore, to insist upon the uses of the parts in animals or vegetables, and their curious adjustment to each other. I would fain know, how an animal could subsist, unless its parts were so adjusted? Do we not find, that it immediately perishes whenever this adjustment ceases, and that its matter corrupting tries some new form? It happens, indeed, that the parts of the world are so well adjusted, that some regular form immediately lays claim to this corrupted matter: and if it were not so,

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could

PART  
VIII.

PART VIII. could the world subsist? Must it not dissolve as well as the animal, and pass through new positions and situations; till in a great, but finite succession, it fall at last into the present or some such order?

IT is well, replied CLEANTHES, you told us, that this hypothesis was suggested on a sudden, in the course of the argument. Had you had leisure to examine it, you would soon have perceived the insuperable objections to which it is exposed. No form, you say, can subsist, unless it possess those powers and organs requisite for its subsistence: some new order or œconomy must be tried, and so on, without intermission; till at last some order, which can support and maintain itself, is fallen upon. But according to this hypothesis, whence arise the many conveniences and advantages which men and all animals possess? Two eyes, two ears, are not absolutely necessary

fary for the subsistence of the species. PART VIII.  
Human race might have been propagated and preserved, without horses, dogs, cows, sheep, and those innumerable fruits and products which serve to our satisfaction and enjoyment. If no camels had been created for the use of man in the sandy deserts of AFRICA and ARABIA, would the world have been dissolved? If no loadstone had been framed to give that wonderful and useful direction to the needle, would human society and the human kind have been immediately extinguished? Though the maxims of Nature be in general very frugal, yet instances of this kind are far from being rare; and any one of them is a sufficient proof of design, and of a benevolent design, which gave rise to the order and arrangement of the universe.

AT least, you may safely infer, said PHILO, that the foregoing hypothesis is

PART his turn; while he carries on an offen-  
VIII. five war, and exposes the absurdities,  
barbarities, and pernicious tenets, of his  
antagonist. But all of them, on the  
whole, prepare a complete triumph for  
the *Sceptic*; who tells them, that no sys-  
tem ought ever to be embraced with  
regard to such subjects: For this plain  
reason, that no absurdity ought ever to  
be assented to with regard to any sub-  
ject. A total suspense of judgment is  
here our only reasonable resource. And  
if every attack, as is commonly obser-  
ved, and no defence, among Theolo-  
gians, is successful; how complete must  
be *his* victory, who remains always, with  
all mankind, on the offensive, and has  
himself no fixed station or abiding city,  
which he is ever, on any occasion, ob-  
liged to defend?

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## P A R T     IX.

BUT if so many difficulties attend the PART  
IX. argument *a posteriori*, said DEMEA; had we not better adhere to that simple and sublime argument *a priori*, which, by offering to us infallible demonstration, cuts off at once all doubt and difficulty? By this argument, too, we may prove the INFINITY of the divine attributes; which, I am afraid, can never be ascertained with certainty from any other topic. For how can an effect, which either is finite, or, for aught we know, may be so; how can such an effect, I say, prove an infinite cause? The unity too of the Divine Nature, it is very difficult, if not absolutely impossible,

PART IX.  
sible, to deduce merely from contem-  
plating the works of nature; nor will  
the uniformity alone of the plan, even  
were it allowed, give us any assurance of  
that attribute. Whereas the argument  
*a priori* . . . .

You seem to reason, DEMEA, inter-  
posed CLEANTHES, as if those advan-  
tages and conveniences in the abstract  
argument were full proofs of its solidity.  
But it is first proper, in my opinion, to  
determine what argument of this na-  
ture you choose to insist on; and we  
shall afterwards, from itself, better than  
from its *useful* consequences, endeavour  
to determine what value we ought to  
put upon it.

THE argument, replied DEMEA, which  
I would insist on, is the common one.  
Whatever exists, must have a cause or  
reason of its existence; it being abso-  
lutely impossible for any thing to pro-  
duce

duce itself, or be the cause of its own PART  
IX.  
~~~existence. In mounting up, therefore, from effects to causes, we must either go on in tracing an infinite succession, without any ultimate cause at all ; or must at last have recourse to some ultimate cause, that is *necessarily* existent : Now that the first supposition is absurd, may be thus proved. In the infinite chain or succession of causes and effects, each single effect is determined to exist by the power and efficacy of that cause which immediately preceded ; but the whole eternal chain or succession, taken together, is not determined or caused by any thing ; and yet it is evident that it requires a cause or reason, as much as any particular object which begins to exist in time. The question is still reasonable, Why this particular succession of causes existed from eternity, and not any other succession, or no succession at all. If there be no necessarily-existent being, any supposition which

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PART IX. which can be formed is equally pos-
sible; nor is there any more absurdity
in Nothing's having existed from eter-
nity, than there is in that succession
of causes which constitutes the uni-
verse. What was it, then, which de-
termined Something to exist rather than
Nothing, and bestowed being on a par-
ticular possibility, exclusive of the rest?
External causes, there are supposed to be
none. *Chance* is a word without a
meaning. Was it *Nothing*? But that
can never produce any thing. We
must, therefore, have recourse to a ne-
cessarily-existent Being, who carries the
REASON of his existence in himself;
and who cannot be supposed not to
exist, without an express contradiction.
There is consequently such a Being;
that is, there is a Deity.

I SHALL not leave it to PHILO, said CLEANTHES, (though I know that the starting objections is his chief delight)
to

to point out the weakness of this meta- PART
physical reasoning. It seems to me so IX.
obviously ill-grounded, and at the same time of so little consequence to the cause of true piety and religion, that I shall myself venture to show the fallacy of it.

I SHALL begin with observing, that there is an evident absurdity in pretending to demonstrate a matter of fact, or to prove it by any arguments *a priori*. Nothing is demonstrable, unless the contrary implies a contradiction. Nothing, that is distinctly conceivable, implies a contradiction. Whatever we conceive as existent, we can also conceive as non-existent. There is no being, therefore, whose non-existence implies a contradiction. Consequently there is no being, whose existence is demonstrable. I propose this argument as entirely decisive, and am willing to rest the whole controversy upon it.

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PART
IX.
IT is pretended that the Deity is a necessarily-existent being; and this necessity of his existence is attempted to be explained by asserting, that, if we knew his whole essence or nature, we should perceive it to be as impossible for him not to exist as for twice two not to be four. But it is evident, that this can never happen, while our faculties remain the same as at present. It will still be possible for us, at any time, to conceive the non-existence of what we formerly conceived to exist; nor can the mind ever lie under a necessity of supposing any object to remain always in being; in the same manner as we lie under a necessity of always conceiving twice two to be four. The words, therefore, *necessary existence*, have no meaning; or, which is the same thing, none that is consistent.

BUT farther: Why may not the material universe be the necessarily-existent?

tent Being, according to this pretended explication of necessity? We dare not ~~not~~ affirm that we know all the qualities of matter; and for aught we can determine, it may contain some qualities, which, were they known, would make its non-existence appear as great a contradiction as that twice two is five. I find only one argument employed to prove, that the material world is not the necessarily-existent Being; and this argument is derived from the contingency both of the matter and the form of the world. "Any particle of matter," it is said *, "may be *conceived* to be annihilated; and any form may be *conceived* to be altered. Such an annihilation or alteration, therefore, is not impossible." But it seems a great partiality not to perceive, that the same argument extends equally to the Deity, so far as we have any conception of him; and that the mind can at

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* DR CLARKE.

PART IX.
least imagine him to be non-existent,
or his attributes to be altered. It must
be some unknown, inconceivable qua-
lities, which can make his non-exis-
tence appear impossible, or his attri-
butes unalterable: And no reason can
be assigned, why these qualities may
not belong to matter. As they are al-
together unknown and inconceivable,
they can never be proved incompatible
with it.

ADD to this, that in tracing an eter-
nal succession of objects, it seems ab-
surd to inquire for a general cause or
first author. How can any thing, that
exists from eternity, have a cause; since
that relation implies a priority in time,
and a beginning of existence?

IN such a chain, too, or succession of
objects, each part is caused by that
which preceded it, and causes that
which succeeds it. Where then is the
difficulty?

difficulty? But the WHOLE, you say, wants a cause. I answer, that the uniting of these parts into a whole, like the uniting of several distinct counties into one kingdom, or several distinct members into one body, is performed merely by an arbitrary act of the mind, and has no influence on the nature of things. Did I show you the particular causes of each individual in a collection of twenty particles of matter, I should think it very unreasonable, should you afterwards ask me, what was the cause of the whole twenty. That is sufficiently explained in explaining the cause of the parts.

THOUGH the reasonings which you have urged, CLEANTHES, may well excuse me, said PHILO, from starting any farther difficulties; yet I cannot forbear insisting still upon another topic. It is observed by arithmeticians, that the products of 9 compose always

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 either 9, or some lesser product of 9; if you add together all the characters, of which any of the former products is composed. Thus, of 18, 27, 36, which are products of 9, you make 9 by adding 1 to 8, 2 to 7, 3 to 6. Thus, of 369 is a product also of 9; and if you add 3, 6, and 9, you make 18, a lesser product of 9 *. To a superficial observer, so wonderful a regularity may be admired as the effect either of chance or design: but a skilful algebraist immediately concludes it to be the work of necessity; and demonstrates, that it must for ever result from the nature of these numbers. Is it not probable, I ask, that the whole œconomy of the universe is conducted by a like necessity, though no human algebra can furnish a key which solves the difficulty? And instead of admiring the order of natural beings, may it not happen, that, could we penetrate into the intimate

* République des Lettres, Aout. 1685.

mate nature of bodies, we should clearly see why it was absolutely impossible ^{PART IX.} ~~they could ever admit of any other disposition?~~ So dangerous is it to introduce this idea of necessity into the present question! and so naturally does it afford an inference directly opposite to the religious hypothesis!

But dropping all these abstractions, continued PHILO; and confining ourselves to more familiar topics; I shall venture to add an observation, that the argument *a priori* has seldom been found very convincing, except to people of a metaphysical head, who have accustomed themselves to abstract reasoning, and who finding from mathematics, that the understanding frequently leads to truth, through obscurity, and contrary to first appearances, have transferred the same habit of thinking to subjects where it ought not to have place. Other people, even

L 3 of

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of good sense and the best inclined to
religion, feel always some deficiency in
such arguments, though they are not
perhaps able to explain distinctly where
it lies. A certain proof, that men ever
did, and ever will, derive their religion
from other sources than from this spe-
cies of reasoning.

P A R T

P A R T X.

IT is my opinion, I own, replied PART X.
DEMEA, that each man feels, in a ~~~~~~~
manner, the truth of religion within
his own breast; and from a consciousness
of his imbecillity and misery, rather
than from any reasoning, is led to
seek protection from that Being, on
whom he and all nature is dependent.
So anxious or so tedious are even the
best scenes of life, that futurity is still
the object of all our hopes and fears.
We incessantly look forward, and en-
deavour, by prayers, adoration and sac-
rifice, to appease those unknown
powers, whom we find, by experience,
so able to afflict and oppress us.

L 4 Wretched

PART X.
Wretched creatures that we are ! what
resource for us amidst the innumerable
ills of life, did not religion suggest
some methods of atonement, and ap-
pease those terrors with which we are
incessantly agitated and tormented ?

I AM indeed persuaded, said PHILO,
that the best, and indeed the only,
method of bringing every one to a due
sense of religion, is by just representa-
tions of the misery and wickedness of
men. And for that purpose a talent of
eloquence and strong imagery is more
requisite than that of reasoning and ar-
gument. For is it necessary to prove,
what every one feels within himself ?
It is only necessary to make us feel it,
if possible, more intimately and sen-
sibly.

THE people, indeed, replied DEMEA,
are sufficiently convinced of this great
and melancholy truth. The miseries
of

of life; the unhappiness of man; the general corruptions of our nature; the unsatisfactory enjoyment of pleasures, riches, honours; these phrases have become almost proverbial in all languages. And who can doubt of what all men declare from their own immediate feeling and experience?

IN this point, said PHILO, the learned are perfectly agreed with the vulgar; and in all letters, *sacred* and *profane*, the topic of human misery has been insisted on with the most pathetic eloquence that sorrow and melancholy could inspire. The poets, who speak from sentiment, without a system, and whose testimony has therefore the more authority, abound in images of this nature. From HOMER down to Dr YOUNG, the whole inspired tribe have ever been sensible, that no other representation of things would suit the feeling

PART X.
feeling and observation of each individual.

As to authorities, replied DEMEA, you need not seek them. Look round this library of CLEANTHES. I shall venture to affirm, that, except authors of particular sciences, such as chymistry or botany, who have no occasion to treat of human life, there is scarce one of those innumerable writers, from whom the sense of human misery has not, in some passage or other, extorted a complaint and confession of it. At least, the chance is entirely on that side; and no one author has ever, so far as I can recollect, been so extravagant as to deny it.

THERE you must excuse me, said PHILO: LEIBNITZ has denied it; and is perhaps the first * who ventured upon

* That sentiment had been maintained by Dr KING, and some few others, before LEIBNITZ; though by none of so great fame as that GERMAN philosopher.

upon so bold and paradoxical an opinion; at least, the first who made it ^{PART X.} made it essential to his philosophical system.

AND by being the first, replied DEMEA, might he not have been sensible of his error? For is this a subject in which philosophers can propose to make discoveries, especially in so late an age? And can any man hope by a simple denial (for the subject scarcely admits of reasoning) to bear down the united testimony of mankind, founded on sense and consciousness?

AND why should man, added he, pretend to an exemption from the lot of all other animals? The whole earth, believe me, PHILO, is cursed and polluted. A perpetual war is kindled amongst all living creatures. Necessity, hunger, want, stimulate the strong and courageous: Fear, anxiety, terror, agitate the weak and infirm. The first entrance

PART entrance into life gives anguish to the
X.
new-born infant and to its wretched
parent: Weakness, impotence, distress,
attend each stage of that life: and it is
at last finished in agony and horror.

OBSERVE too, says PHILO, the curious artifices of Nature in order to embitter the life of every living being. The stronger prey upon the weaker, and keep them in perpetual terror and anxiety. The weaker too, in their turn, often prey upon the stronger, and vex and molest them without relaxation. Consider that innumerable race of insects, which either are bred on the body of each animal, or flying about infix their stings in him. These insects have others still less than themselves, which torment them. And thus on each hand, before and behind, above and below, every animal is surrounded with enemies, which incessantly seek his misery and destruction.

MAN

MAN alone, said DEMEA, seems to ^{PART}
be, in part, an exception to this rule. ^{X.}
For by combination in society, he can
easily master lions, tygers, and bears,
whose greater strength and agility na-
turally enable them to prey upon him.

ON the contrary, it is here chiefly,
cried PHILO, that the uniform and
equal maxims of Nature are most ap-
parent. Man, it is true, can, by com-
bination, surmount all his *real* enemies,
and become master of the whole ani-
mal creation: but does he not immedi-
ately raise up to himself *imaginary* ene-
mies, the daemons of his fancy, who
haunt him with superstitious terrors,
and blast every enjoyment of life? His
pleasure, as he imagines, becomes, in
their eyes, a crime: his food and repose
give them umbrage and offence: his
very sleep and dreams furnish new ma-
terials to anxious fear: and even death,
his refuge from every other ill, presents
only

PART X.
only the dread of endless and innumerable woes. Nor does the wolf molest more the timid flock, than superstition does the anxious breast of wretched mortals.

BESIDES, consider, DEMEA: This very society, by which we surmount those wild beasts, our natural enemies; what new enemies does it not raise to us? What wo and misery does it not occasion? Man is the greatest enemy of man. Oppression, injustice, contempt, contumely, violence, sedition, war, calumny, treachery, fraud; by these they mutually torment each other: and they would soon dissolve that society which they had formed, were it not for the dread of still greater ills, which must attend their separation.

BUT though these external insults, said DEMEA, from animals, from men, from all the elements, which assault us, form

form a frightful catalogue of woes, they ^{PART}
^{X.} are nothing in comparison of those ~~which~~
which arise within ourselves, from the
distempered condition of our mind and
body. How many lie under the linger-
ing torment of diseases? Hear the pa-
thetic enumeration of the great poet.

Intestine stone and ulcer, colic-pangs,
Dæmoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans: DESPAIR
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch.
And over them triumphant DEATH his dart
Shook; but delay'd to strike, tho' oft invok'd
With vows, as their chief good and final hope.

THE disorders of the mind, continued
DEMEA, though more secret, are not per-
haps less dismal and vexatious. Re-
morse, shame, anguish, rage, disappoint-
ment, anxiety, fear, dejection, despair;
who has ever passed through life with-
out cruel inroads from these tormen-
tors? How many have scarcely ever felt
any better sensations? Labour and po-
verty,

PART X.
vert, so abhorred by every one, are the
certain lot of the far greater number:
and those few privileged persons, who
enjoy ease and opulence, never reach
contentment or true felicity. All the
goods of life united would not make a
very happy man: but all the ills united
would make a wretch indeed; and any
one of them almost (and who can be
free from every one?) nay often the ab-
sence of one good (and who can pos-
sess all?) is sufficient to render life in-
eligible.

WERE a stranger to drop, on a sud-
den, into this world, I would show him,
as a specimen of its ills, an hospital full
of diseases, a prison crowded with ma-
lefactors and debtors, a field of battle
strowed with carcases, a fleet founder-
ing in the ocean, a nation languishing
under tyranny, famine, or pestilence.
To turn the gay side of life to him, and
give him a notion of its pleasures; whi-
ther

ther should I conduct him? to a ball, ^{PART}
 X.
 to an opera, to court? He might justly ~~and~~
 think, that I was only showing him a
 diversity of distress and sorrow.

THERE is no evading such striking instances, said PHILO, but by apologies, which still farther aggravate the charge. Why have all men, I ask, in all ages, complained incessantly of the miseries of life? --- They have no just reason, says one: these complaints proceed only from their discontented, repining, anxious disposition. --- And can there possibly, I reply, be a more certain foundation of misery, than such a wretched temper?

BUT if they were really as unhappy as they pretend, says my antagonist, why do they remain in life? ---

Not satisfied with life, afraid of death.

M

This

PART X
This is the secret chain, say I; that holds us. We are terrified, not bribed to the continuance of our existence.

IT is only a false delicacy, he may insist, which a few refined spirits indulge, and which has spread these complaints among the whole race of mankind. --- And what is this delicacy, I ask, which you blame? Is it any thing but a greater sensibility to all the pleasures and pains of life? and if the man of a delicate, refined temper, by being so much more alive than the rest of the world, is only so much more unhappy; what judgment must we form in general of human life?

LET men remain at rest, says our adversary; and they will be easy. They are willing artificers of their own misery. --- No! reply I: an anxious languor follows their repose; disappointment,

ment, vexation, trouble, their activity ^{PART}
X.
and ambition.

I CAN observe something like what you mention in some others, replied CLEANTHES: but I confess, I feel little or nothing of it in myself; and hope that it is not so common as you represent it.

IF you feel not human misery yourself, cried DEMEA, I congratulate you on so happy a singularity. Others, seemingly the most prosperous, have not been ashamed to vent their complaints in the most melancholy strains. Let us attend to the great, the fortunate emperor, CHARLES V. when, tired with human grandeur, he resigned all his extensive dominions into the hands of his son. In the last harangue, which he made on that memorable occasion, he publicly avowed, *that the greatest prosperities which he had ever enjoyed, had been mixed*

PART X.
with so many adversities, that he might truly say he had never enjoyed any satisfaction or contentment. But did the retired life, in which he sought for shelter, afford him any greater happiness? If we may credit his son's account, his repentance commenced the very day of his resignation.

CICERO's fortune, from small beginnings, rose to the greatest lustre and renown; yet what pathetic complaints of the ills of life do his familiar letters, as well as philosophical discourses, contain? And suitably to his own experience, he introduces CATO, the great, the fortunate CATO, protesting in his old age, that had he a new life in his offer, he would reject the present.

Ask yourself, ask any of your acquaintance, whether they would live over again the last ten or twenty years
of

of their life. No! but the next twenty, PART
they say, will be better : X.

And from the dregs of life, hope to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.

Thus at last they find (such is the greatness of human misery; it reconciles even contradictions) that they complain, at once of the shortness of life, and of its vanity and sorrow.

And is it possible, CLEANTHES, said PHILE, that after all these reflections, and infinitely more, which might be suggested, you can still persevere in your Anthropomorphism, and assert the moral attributes of the Deity, his justice, benevolence, mercy, and rectitude, to be of the same nature with these virtues in human creatures? His power we allow infinite: whatever he wills is executed: but neither man nor any other animal is happy: therefore he does not will their happiness. His wisdom is infinite: he is never mistaken

M 3

in

PART X.
in choosing the means to any end; but
the course of Nature tends not to human
or animal felicity; therefore it is not
established for that purpose. Through
the whole compass of human knowledge,
there are no inferences more certain
and infallible than these, In what re-
spect, then, do his benevolence and
mercy resemble the benevolence and
mercy of men?

EPICURUS's old questions are yet un-
answered,

Is he willing to prevent evil, but not
able? then is he impotent. Is he able,
but not willing? then is he malevolent.
Is he both able and willing? whence
then is evil?

You ascribe, CLEANTHES, (and I
believe justly) a purpose and intention
to Nature. But what, I beseech you,
is the object of that curious artifice and
machinery,

machinery, which she has displayed in ^{PART} ~~X.~~ all animals? The preservation alone ~~and~~ of individuals, and propagation of the species. It seems enough for her purpose, if such a rank be barely upheld in the universe, without any care or concern for the happiness of the members that compose it. No resource for this purpose: no machinery, in order merely to give pleasure or ease: no fund of pure joy and contentment: no indulgence, without some want or necessity accompanying it. At least, the few phenomena of this nature are overbalanced by opposite phenomena of still greater importance.

OUR sense of music, harmony, and indeed beauty of all kinds, gives satisfaction, without being absolutely necessary to the preservation and propagation of the species. But what racking pains, on the other hand, arise from gouts, gravels, megrims, tooth-

M 4 aches,

PART X.
Pains, rheumatisms; where the injury to the animal-machinery is either small or incurable? Mirth, laughter, play, frolic, seem gratuitous satisfactions, which have no farther tendency: spleen, melancholy, discontent, superstition, are pains of the same nature. How then does the divine benevolence display itself, in the sense of you Anthropomorphites? None but we Mystics, as you were pleased to call us, can account for this strange mixture of phenomena, by deriving it from attributes, infinitely perfect, but incomprehensible.

AND have you at last, said CLEANTHES smiling, betrayed your intentions, PHILO? Your long agreement with DEMEA did indeed a little surprise me; but I find you were all the while erecting a concealed battery against me. And I must confess, that you have now fallen upon a subject worthy of your noble

noble spirit of opposition and contro- PART
versy. If you can make out the present X.
point, and prove mankind to be un-
happy or corrupted, there is an end at
once of all religion. For to what pur-
pose establish the natural attributes of
the Deity, while the moral are still
doubtful and uncertain?

You take umbrage very easily, re-
plied DEMEA, at opinions the most in-
nocent, and the most generally received
even amongst the religious and devout
themselves: and nothing can be more
surprising than to find a topic like this,
concerning the wickedness and misery
of man, charged with no less than
Atheism and profaneness. Have not all
pious divines and preachers, who have
indulged their rhetoric on so fertile a
subject; have they not easily, I say,
given a solution of any difficulties
which may attend it? This world is
but a point in comparison of the
universe;

PART X
unverse; this life but a moment in
comparison of eternity. The present
evil phenomena, therefore, are rec-
tified in other regions, and in some
future period of existence. And the
eyes of men, being then opened to
larger views of things, see the whole
connection of general laws; and trace,
with adoration, the benevolence and
rectitude of the Deity, through all the
mazes and intricacies of his providence.

No! replied CLEANTHES, No! These
arbitrary suppositions can never be ad-
mitted, contrary to matter of fact, vi-
sible and uncontroverted. Whence can
any cause be known but from its known
effects? Whence can any hypothesis be
proved but from the apparent pheno-
mena? To establish one hypothesis up-
on another, is building entirely in the
air; and the utmost we ever attain, by
these conjectures and fictions, is to af-
firm the bare possibility of our opi-
nion;

nion; but never can we, upon such ^{PART}
^{X.} terms, establish its reality.

THE only method of supporting divine benevolence (and it is what I willingly embrace) is to deny absolutely the misery and wickedness of man. Your representations are exaggerated; your melancholy views mostly fictitious; your inferences contrary to fact and experience. Health is more common than sickness; pleasure than pain; happiness than misery. And for one vexation which we meet with, we attain, upon computation, a hundred enjoyments.

ADMITTING your position, replied PHILO, which yet is extremely doubtful; you must, at the same time, allow, that, if pain be less frequent than pleasure, it is infinitely more violent and durable. One hour of it is often able to outweigh a day, a week, a month of our

PART X.
our common insipid enjoyments: And how many days, weeks, and months, are passed by several in the most acute torments? Pleasure, scarcely in one instance, is ever able to reach ecstasy and rapture: And in no one instance can it continue for any time at its highest pitch and altitude. The spirits evaporate; the nerves relax; the fabric is disordered; and the enjoyment quickly degenerates into fatigue and uneasiness. But pain often, good God, how often! rises to torture and agony; and the longer it continues, it becomes still more genuine agony and torture. Patience is exhausted; courage languishes; melancholy seizes us; and nothing terminates our misery but the removal of its cause, or another event, which is the sole cure of all evil, but which, from our natural folly, we regard with still greater horror and consternation.

But not to insist upon these topics,
con-

continued PHILO, though most obvious, ^{PART}
~~X.~~ certain, and important; I must use the ~~~~~~~
freedom to admonish you, CLEANTHES,
that you have put the controversy upon
a most dangerous issue, and are unawares
introducing a total Scepticism into the
most essential articles of natural and re-
vealed theology. What! no method of
fixing a just foundation for religion,
unless we allow the happiness of human
life, and maintain a continued existence
even in this world, with all our present
pains, infirmities, vexations, and follies,
to be eligible and desirable! But this is
contrary to every one's feeling and ex-
perience: It is contrary to an authority
so established as nothing can subvert:
No decisive proofs can ever be produced
against this authority; nor is it possible
for you to compute, estimate, and com-
pare, all the pains and all the pleasures
in the lives of all men and of all ani-
mals: And thus by your resting the
whole system of religion on a point,
which,

PART X which, from its very nature, must for ever be uncertain, you tacitly confess, that that system is equally uncertain.

BUT allowing you, what never will be believed; at least, what you never possibly can prove; that animal, or at least human happiness, in this life, exceeds its misery; you have yet done nothing: For this is not, by any means, what we expect from infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite goodness. Why is there any misery at all in the world? Not by chance surely. From some cause then. Is it from the intention of the Deity? But he is perfectly benevolent. Is it contrary to his intention? But he is almighty. Nothing can shake the solidity of this reasoning, so short, so clear, so decisive: except we assert, that these subjects exceed all human capacity, and that our common measures of truth and falsehood are not applicable to them; a topic, which I have

have all along insisted on, but which ~~Part~~
you have from the beginning rejected ~~with~~^X
with scorn and indignation.

BUT I will be contented to retire still from this intrenchment, for I deny that you can ever force me in it: I will allow, that pain or misery in man is *compatible* with infinite power and goodness in the Deity, even in your sense of these attributes: What are you advanced by all these concessions? A mere possible compatibility is not sufficient. You must *prove* these pure, unmixed, and uncontrollable attributes from the present mixt and confused phenomena, and from these alone. A hopeful undertaking! Were the phenomena ever so pure and unmixed, yet being finite, they would be insufficient for that purpose. How much more, where they are also so jarring and discordant?

HERE, CLEANTHES, I find myself at
ease

PART X.
Formerly, when we argued concerning the natural attributes of intelligence and design, I needed all my sceptical and metaphysical subtlety to elude your grasp. In many views of the universe, and of its parts, particularly the latter, the beauty and fitness of final causes strike us with such irresistible force, that all objections appear (what I believe they really are) mere cavils and sophisms; nor can we then imagine how it was ever possible for us to repose any weight on them. But there is no view of human life, or of the condition of mankind, from which, without the greatest violence, we can infer the moral attributes, or learn that infinite benevolence, conjoined with infinite power and infinite wisdom, which we must discover by the eyes of faith alone. It is your turn now to tug the labouring oar, and to support your philosophical subtleties against the dictates of plain reason and experience.

P A R T XI.

I SCRUPLE not to allow, said CLEAN-^{PART}
THES, that I have been apt to su-^{XI.}
spect the frequent repetition of the word
infinite, which we meet with in all theo-
logical writers, to favour more of pa-
negyric than of philosophy; and that
any purposes of reasoning, and even of
religion, would be better served, were
we to rest contented with more accu-
rate and more moderate expressions.
The terms, *admirable*, *excellent*, *superla-*
tively great, *wise*, and *holy*; these suffi-
ciently fill the imaginations of men;
and any thing beyond, besides that it
leads into absurdities, has no influence
on the affections or sentiments. Thus,

N

in

PART XI. in the present subject, if we abandon all human analogy, as seems your intention, DEMEA, I am afraid we abandon all religion, and retain no conception of the great object of our adoration. If we preserve human analogy, we must for ever find it impossible to reconcile any mixture of evil in the universe with infinite attributes; much less, can we ever prove the latter from the former. But supposing the Author of Nature to be finitely perfect, though far exceeding mankind; a satisfactory account may then be given of natural and moral evil, and every untoward phenomenon be explained and adjusted. A less evil may then be chosen, in order to avoid a greater: Inconveniences be submitted to, in order to reach a desirable end: And in a word, benevolence, regulated by wisdom, and limited by necessity, may produce just such a world as the present. You, PHILO, who are so prompt at starting views, and reflections, and analogies;

analogies; I would gladly hear, at length, ^{PART} XI. without interruption, your opinion of ~~the~~ this new theory; and if it deserve our attention, we may afterwards, at more leisure, reduce it into form.

My sentiments, replied PHILO, are not worth being made a mystery of; and therefore, without any ceremony, I shall deliver what occurs to me with regard to the present subject. It must, I think, be allowed, that, if a very limited intelligence, whom we shall suppose utterly unacquainted with the universe, were assured, that it were the production of a very good, wise, and powerful Being, however finite, he would, from his conjectures, form *beforehand* a different notion of it from what we find it to be by experience; nor would he ever imagine, merely from these attributes of the cause, of which he is informed, that the effect could be so full of vice and misery and disorder,

N 2

PART XI. disorder, as it appears in this life. Supposing now, that this person were brought into the world, still assured that it was the workmanship of such a sublime and benevolent Being; he might, perhaps, be surprised at the disappointment; but would never retract his former belief, if founded on any very solid argument; since such a limited intelligence must be sensible of his own blindness and ignorance, and must allow, that there may be many solutions of those phenomena, which will for ever escape his comprehension. But supposing, which is the real case with regard to man, that this creature is not antecedently convinced of a supreme intelligence, benevolent, and powerful, but is left to gather such a belief from the appearances of things; this entirely alters the case, nor will he ever find any reason for such a conclusion. He may be fully convinced of the narrow limits of his understanding; but

but this will not help him in forming ^{PART XI.} an inference concerning the goodness ~~~ of superior powers, since he must form that inference from what he knows, not from what he is ignorant of. The more you exaggerate his weakness and ignorance, the more diffident you render him, and give him the greater suspicion that such subjects are beyond the reach of his faculties. You are obliged, therefore, to reason with him merely from the known phenomena, and to drop every arbitrary supposition or conjecture.

DID I show you a house or palace, where there was not one apartment convenient or agreeable; where the windows, doors, fires, passages, stairs, and the whole œconomy of the building, were the source of noise, confusion, fatigue, darkness, and the extremes of heat and cold; you would certainly blame the contrivance, with-

PART XI. out any farther examination. The architect would in vain display his subtlety, and prove to you, that if this door or that window were altered, greater ills would ensue. What he says may be strictly true: The alteration of one particular, while the other parts of the building remain, may only augment the inconveniences. But still you would assert in general, that, if the architect had had skill and good intentions, he might have formed such a plan of the whole, and might have adjusted the parts in such a manner, as would have remedied all or most of these inconveniences. His ignorance, or even your own ignorance of such a plan, will never convince you of the impossibility of it. If you find many inconveniences and deformities in the building, you will always, without entering into any detail, condemn the architect.

IN

IN short, I repeat the question: Is ^{PART.} ~~the world,~~ XI.
as it appears to us in this life, different
from what a man, or such a limited
being, would, *beforehand*, expect from
a very powerful, wise, and benevolent
Deity? It must be strange prejudice to
assert the contrary. And from thence
I conclude, that, however consistent the
world may be, allowing certain suppo-
sitions and conjectures, with the idea
of such a Deity, it can never afford us
an inference concerning his existence.
The consistence is not absolutely denied,
only the inference. Conjectures, espe-
cially where infinity is excluded from
the divine attributes, may, perhaps, be
sufficient to prove a consistence; but
can never be foundations for any in-
ference.

THERE seem to be *four* circumstances,
on which depend all, or the greatest
part of the ills, that molest sensible

N 4

creatures;

PART XI.
creatures ; and it is not impossible but
all these circumstances may be necessary
and unavoidable. We know so little be-
yond common life, or even of common
life, that, with regard to the œconomy
of a universe, there is no conjecture,
however wild, which may not be just ;
nor any one, however plausible, which
may not be erroneous. All that be-
longs to human understanding, in this
deep ignorance and obscurity, is to be
sceptical, or at least cautious ; and not
to admit of any hypothesis whatever ;
much less, of any which is supported
by no appearance of probability. Now
this I assert to be the case with regard
to all the causes of evil, and the cir-
cumstances on which it depends. None
of them appear to human reason, in
the least degree, necessary or una-
voidable ; nor can we suppose them
such, without the utmost license of
imagination.

THE

THE *first* circumstance which introduces evil, is that contrivance or ~~œco-~~<sup>PART
XL.</sup> nomy of the animal creation, by which pains, as well as pleasures, are employed to excite all creatures to action, and make them vigilant in the great work of self-preservation. Now pleasure alone, in its various degrees, seems to human understanding sufficient for this purpose. All animals might be constantly in a state of enjoyment: but when urged by any of the necessities of nature, such as thirst, hunger, weariness; instead of pain, they might feel a diminution of pleasure, by which they might be prompted to seek that object which is necessary to their subsistence. Men pursue pleasure as eagerly as they avoid pain; at least, might have been so constituted. It seems, therefore, plainly possible to carry on the business of life without any pain. Why then is any animal ever rendered susceptible of such a sensation? If animals

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PART XI.
mals can be free from it an hour, they
might enjoy a perpetual exemption from
it; and it required as particular a con-
trivance of their organs to produce that
feeling, as to endow them with sight,
hearing, or any of the senses. Shall we
conjecture, that such a contrivance
was necessary, without any appearance
of reason? and shall we build on that
conjecture, as on the most certain
truth?

BUT a capacity of pain would not
alone produce pain, were it not for the
second circumstance, viz. the conduct-
ing of the world by general laws; and
this seems nowise necessary to a very
perfect Being. It is true; if every
thing were conducted by particular
volitions, the course of nature would
be perpetually broken, and no man
could employ his reason in the conduct
of life. But might not other parti-
cular volitions remedy this inconveni-
ence?

ence? In short, might not the Deity ^{PART XI.} exterminate all ill, where-ever it were to be found; and produce all good, without any preparation or long pro- gress of causes and effects?

BESIDES, we must consider, that, according to the present œconomy of the world, the course of Nature, though supposed exactly regular, yet to us appears not so, and many events are uncertain, and many disappoint our expectations. Health and sickness, calm and tempest, with an infinite number of other accidents, whose causes are unknown and variable, have a great influence both on the fortunes of particular persons and on the prosperity of public societies: and indeed all human life, in a manner, depends on such accidents. A being, therefore, who knows the secret springs of the universe, might easily, by particular volitions, turn all these accidents to the good of mankind, and

PART and render the whole world happy,
XL without discovering himself in any ope-
ration. A fleet, whose purposes were
salutary to society, might always meet
with a fair wind: Good princes enjoy
sound health and long life: Persons
born to power and authority, be fram-
ed with good tempers and virtuous dis-
positions. A few such events as these,
regularly and wisely conducted, would
change the face of the world; and yet
would no more seem to disturb the
course of Nature, or confound human
conduct, than the present œconomy of
things, where the causes are secret, and
variable, and compounded. Some small
touches, given to CALIGULA's brain in
his infancy, might have converted him
into a TRAJAN: one wave, a little
higher than the rest, by burying CÆSAR
and his fortune in the bottom of the
ocean, might have restored liberty to a
considerable part of mankind. There
may, for aught we know, be good rea-
sons,

sons, why Providence interposes not in ^{PART} ~~XI.~~ this manner; but they are unknown to us: and though the mere supposition, that such reasons exist, may be sufficient to *save* the conclusion concerning the divine attributes, yet surely it can never be sufficient to *establish* that conclusion.

IF every thing in the universe be conducted by general laws, and if animals be rendered susceptible of pain, it scarcely seems possible but some ill must arise in the various shocks of matter, and the various concurrence and opposition of general laws: But this ill would be very rare, were it not for the *third* circumstance, which I proposed to mention, *viz.* the great frugality with which all powers and faculties are distributed to every particular being. So well adjusted are the organs and capacities of all animals, and so well fitted to their preservation, that, as far as history or tradition

PART XI.
tion reaches, there appears not to be any single species which has yet been extinguished in the universe. Every animal has the requisite endowments; but these endowments are bestowed with so scrupulous an œconomy, that any considerable diminution must entirely destroy the creature. Wherever one power is increased, there is a proportional abatement in the others. Animals, which excel in swiftness, are commonly defective in force. Those which possess both, are either imperfect in some of their senses, or are oppressed with the most craving wants. The human species, whose chief excellency is reason and sagacity, is of all others the most necessitous, and the most deficient in bodily advantages; without clothes, without arms, without food, without lodging, without any convenience of life, except what they owe to their own skill and industry. In short, Nature seems to have formed an exact calculation of the necessities

necessities of her creatures; and, like a ^{PART} ~~XL~~ rigid master, has afforded them little ~~more~~ more powers or endowments than what are strictly sufficient to supply those necessities. An *indulgent parent* would have bestowed a large stock, in order to guard against accidents, and secure the happiness and welfare of the creature in the most unfortunate concurrence of circumstances. Every course of life would not have been so surrounded with precipices, that the least departure from the true path, by mistake or necessity, must involve us in misery and ruin. Some reserve, some fund, would have been provided to ensure happiness; nor would the powers and the necessities have been adjusted with so rigid an œconomy. The Author of Nature is inconceivably powerful: his force is supposed great, if not altogether inexhaustible: nor is there any reason, as far as we can judge, to make him observe this strict frugality in his dealings with his creatures.

PART tures. It would have been better, were
XI. ~~~~~ his power extremely limited, to have
created fewer animals, and to have end-
owed these with more faculties for their
happiness and preservation. A builder
is never esteemed prudent, who under-
takes a plan beyond what his stock will
enable him to finish.

IN order to cure most of the ills of
human life, I require not that man
should have the wings of the eagle, the
swiftness of the stag, the force of the ox,
the arms of the lion, the scales of the
crocodile or rhinoceros; much less do I
demand the sagacity of an angel or che-
ribim. I am contented to take an in-
crease in one single power or faculty of
his soul. Let him be endowed with a
greater propensity to industry and la-
bour; a more vigorous spring and ac-
tivity of mind; a more constant bent to
business and application. Let the whole
species possess naturally an equal dili-
gence

gence with that which many individuals are able to attain by habit and reflection; and the most beneficial consequences, without any alloy of ill, is the immediate and necessary result of this endowment. Almost all the moral, as well as natural evils of human life arise from idleness; and were our species, by the original constitution of their frame, exempt from this vice or infirmity, the perfect cultivation of land, the improvement of arts and manufactures, the exact execution of every office and duty, immediately follow; and men at once may fully reach that state of society, which is so imperfectly attained by the best-regulated government. But as industry is a power, and the most valuable of any, Nature seems determined, suitably to her usual maxims, to bestow it on men with a very sparing hand; and rather to punish him severely for his deficiency in it, than to reward him for his attainments. She has so contrived his

O

frame,

PART XI. frame, that nothing but the most violent necessity can oblige him to labour; and she employs all his other wants to overcome, at least in part, the want of diligence, and to endow him with some share of a faculty, of which she has thought fit naturally to bereave him. Here our demands may be allowed very humble, and therefore the more reasonable. If we required the endowments of superior penetration and judgment, of a more delicate taste of beauty, of a nicer sensibility to benevolence and friendship; we might be told, that we impiously pretend to break the order of Nature; that we want to exalt ourselves into a higher rank of being; that the presents which we require, not being suitable to our state and condition, would only be pernicious to us. But it is hard; I dare to repeat it, it is hard, that being placed in a world so full of wants and necessities, where almost every being and element is either

our

our foe or refuses its assistance - - - we ^{PART}
^{XI.} should also have our own temper to struggle with, and should be deprived
of that faculty which can alone fence
against these multiplied evils.

THE *fourth* circumstance, whence arises the misery and ill of the universe, is the inaccurate workmanship of all the springs and principles of the great machine of nature. It must be acknowledged, that there are few parts of the universe, which seem not to serve some purpose, and whose removal would not produce a visible defect and disorder in the whole. The parts hang all together; nor can one be touched without affecting the rest, in a greater or less degree. But at the same time, it must be observed, that none of these parts or principles, however useful, are so accurately adjusted, as to keep precisely within those bounds in which their utility consists; but they are, all of them,

PART XI. apt, on every occasion, to run into the one extreme or the other. One would imagine, that this grand production had not received the last hand of the maker ; so little finished is every part, and so coarse are the strokes with which it is executed. Thus, the winds are requisite to convey the vapours along the surface of the globe, and to assist men in navigation : but how oft, rising up to tempests and hurricanes, do they become pernicious ? Rains are necessary to nourish all the plants and animals of the earth : but how often are they defective ? how often excessive ? Heat is requisite to all life and vegetation ; but is not always found in the due proportion. On the mixture and secretion of the humours and juices of the body depend the health and prosperity of the animal : but the parts perform not regularly their proper function. What more useful than all the passions of the mind, ambition, vanity, love, anger ?

But

But how oft do they break their bounds, ^{PART}
and cause the greatest convulsions in ^{XL.}
society ? There is nothing so advan-
tageous in the universe, but what fre-
quently becomes pernicious, by its ex-
cess or defect ; nor has Nature guarded,
with the requisite accuracy, against all
disorder or confusion. The irregula-
rity is never, perhaps, so great as to
destroy any species ; but is often suffi-
cient to involve the individuals in ruin
and misery.

ON the concurrence, then, of these four circumstances, does all or the greatest part of natural evil depend. Were all living creatures incapable of pain, or were the world administered by particular volitions, evil never could have found access into the universe: and were animals endowed with a large stock of powers and faculties, beyond what strict necessity requires; or were the several springs and principles of the

O 3 universe

PART XI. universe so accurately framed as to pre-
serve always the just temperament and
medium; there must have been very
little ill in comparison of what we feel at
present. What then shall we pronounce
on this occasion? Shall we say, that
these circumstances are not necessary,
and that they might easily have been
altered in the contrivance of the uni-
verse? This decision seems too pre-
sumptuous for creatures so blind and
ignorant. Let us be more modest in
our conclusions. Let us allow, that,
if the goodness of the Deity (I mean a
goodness like the human) could be es-
tablished on any tolerable reasons *a priori*,
these phenomena, however untoward,
would not be sufficient to subvert that
principle; but might easily, in some
unknown manner, be reconcilable to it.
But let us still assert, that as this good-
ness is not antecedently established, but
must be inferred from the phenomena,
there can be no grounds for such an
inference,

inference, while there are so many ills in the universe, and while these ills might so easily have been remedied, as far as human understanding can be allowed to judge on such a subject. I am Sceptic enough to allow, that the bad appearances, notwithstanding all my reasonings, may be compatible with such attributes as you suppose: But surely they can never prove these attributes. Such a conclusion cannot result from Scepticism; but must arise from the phenomena, and from our confidence in the reasonings which we deduce from these phenomena.

LOOK round this universe. What an immense profusion of beings, animated and organized, sensible and active! You admire this prodigious variety and fecundity. But inspect a little more narrowly these living existences, the only beings worth regarding. How hostile and destructive to each other!

O 4

How

PART XI. How insufficient all of them for their own happiness! How contemptible or odious to the spectator! The whole presents nothing but the idea of a blind Nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children.

HERE the MANICHÆAN system occurs as a proper hypothesis to solve the difficulty: and no doubt, in some respects, it is very specious, and has more probability than the common hypothesis, by giving a plausible account of the strange mixture of good and ill which appears in life. But if we consider, on the other hand, the perfect uniformity and agreement of the parts of the universe, we shall not discover in it any marks of the combat of a malevolent with a benevolent being. There is indeed an opposition of pains and pleasures

sures in the feelings of sensible creatures: but are not all the operations of Nature carried on by an opposition of principles, of hot and cold, moist and dry, light and heavy? The true conclusion is, that the original Source of all things is entirely indifferent to all these principles; and has no more regard to good above ill, than to heat above cold, or to drought above moisture, or to light above heavy.

THERE may *four* hypotheses be framed concerning the first causes of the universe: *that* they are endowed with perfect goodness; *that* they have perfect malice; *that* they are opposite, and have both goodness and malice; *that* they have neither goodness nor malice. Mixt phenomena can never prove the two former unmixt principles. And the uniformity and steadiness of general laws seem to oppose the third. The fourth,

PART fourth, therefore, seems by far the most
XI.
probable.

WHAT I have said concerning natural evil will apply to moral, with little or no variation; and we have no more reason to infer, that the rectitude of the Supreme Being resembles human rectitude than that his benevolence resembles the human. Nay, it will be thought, that we have still greater cause to exclude from him moral sentiments, such as we feel them; since moral evil, in the opinion of many, is much more predominant above moral good than natural evil above natural good.

BUT even though this should not be allowed; and though the virtue, which is in mankind, should be acknowledged much superior to the vice; yet so long as there is any vice at all in the universe, it will very much puzzle you Anthropomorphites, how to account for it.

You

You must assign a cause for it, without having recourse to the first cause. But as every effect must have a cause, and that cause another ; you must either carry on the progression *in infinitum*, or rest on that original principle, who is the ultimate cause of all things

PART
XI.

HOLD! Hold! cried DEMEA: Whither does your imagination hurry you? I joined in alliance with you, in order to prove the incomprehensible nature of the Divine Being, and refute the principles of CLEANTHES, who would measure every thing by a human rule and standard. But I now find you running into all the topics of the greatest libertines and infidels ; and betraying that holy cause, which you seemingly espoused. Are you secretly, then, a more dangerous enemy than CLEANTHES himself?

AND are you so late in perceiving it?
replied

PART XI. replied CLEANTHES. Believe me, DE-
MEA; your friend PHILO, from the be-
ginning, has been amusing himself at
both our expence; and it must be con-
fessed, that the injudicious reasoning of
our vulgar theology has given him but
too just a handle of ridicule. The total
infirmity of human reason, the absolute
incomprehensibility of the Divine Na-
ture, the great and universal misery and
still greater wickedness of men; these
are strange topics, surely, to be so fondly
cherished by orthodox divines and doc-
tors. In ages of stupidity and igno-
rance, indeed, these principles may safe-
ly be espoused; and, perhaps, no views
of things are more proper to promote
superstition, than such as encourage the
blind amazement, the diffidence, and
melancholy of mankind. But at pre-
sent

BLAME not so much, interposed PHI-
LO, the ignorance of these reverend gen-
tlemen.

lemen. They know how to change their style with the times. Formerly it was a most popular theological topic to maintain, that human life was vanity and misery, and to exaggerate all the ills and pains which are incident to men. But of late years, divines, we find, begin to retract this position; and maintain, though still with some hesitation, that there are more goods than evils, more pleasures than pains, even in this life. When religion stood entirely upon temper and education, it was thought proper to encourage melancholy; as indeed, mankind never have recourse to superior powers so readily as in that disposition. But as men have now learned to form principles, and to draw consequences, it is necessary to change the batteries, and to make use of such arguments as will endure at least some scrutiny and examination. This variation is the same (and from the same causes)

PART
XI.

PART causes) with that which I formerly re-
XI. marked with regard to Scepticism.

THUS PHILO continued to the last his spirit of opposition, and his censure of established opinions. But I could observe, that DEMEA did not at all relish the latter part of the discourse; and he took occasion soon after, on some pretence or other, to leave the company.

P A R T

P A R T XII.

AFTER DEMEA's departure, CLEAN-^{PART}
THES and PHILO continued the ^{XII,} ~~~~~~~ conversation in the following manner.
Our friend, I am afraid, said CLEAN-
THES, will have little inclination to re-
vive this topic of discourse, while you
are in company; and to tell truth,
PHILO, I should rather wish to reason
with either of you apart on a subject
so sublime and interesting. Your spirit
of controversy, joined to your abhor-
rence of vulgar superstition, carries you
strange lengths, when engaged in an ar-
gument; and there is nothing so sacred
and venerable, even in your own eyes,
which you spare on that occasion.

I

PART
XII. I MUST confess, replied PHILO, that
I am less cautious on the subject of Na-
tural Religion than on any other; both
because I know that I can never, on that
head, corrupt the principles of any man
of common sense; and because no one,
I am confident, in whose eyes I appear
a man of common sense, will ever mis-
take my intentions. You in particular,
CLEANTHES, with whom I live in un-
reserved intimacy; you are sensible,
that, notwithstanding the freedom of
my conversation, and my love of singu-
lar arguments, no one has a deeper sense
of religion impressed on his mind, or
pays more profound adoration to the
Divine Being, as he discovers himself to
reason, in the inexplicable contrivance
and artifice of Nature. A purpose, an
intention, a design, strikes every where
the most careless, the most stupid
thinker; and no man can be so hardened
in absurd systems, as at all times to
reject it. *That Nature does nothing in
vain,*

vain, is a maxim established in all the schools, merely from the contemplation of the works of Nature, without any religious purpose; and, from a firm conviction of its truth, an anatomist, who had observed a new organ or canal, would never be satisfied till he had also discovered its use and intention. One great foundation of the COPERNICAN system is the maxim, *That Nature acts by the simplest methods, and chooses the most proper means to any end;* and astronomers often, without thinking of it, lay this strong foundation of piety and religion. The same thing is observable in other parts of philosophy: And thus all the sciences almost lead us insensibly to acknowledge a first intelligent Author; and their authority is often so much the greater, as they do not directly profess that intention.

IT is with pleasure I hear GALEN reason concerning the structure of the
P human

PART
XII.

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PART XII. human body. The anatomy of a man, says he *, discovers above 600 different muscles; and whoever duly considers these, will find, that in each of them Nature must have adjusted at least ten different circumstances, in order to attain the end which she proposed; proper figure, just magnitude, right disposition of the several ends, upper and lower position of the whole, the due insertion of the several nerves, veins, and arteries: So that, in the muscles alone, above 6000 several views and intentions must have been formed and executed. The bones he calculates to be 284: The distinct purposes, aimed at in the structure of each, above forty. What a prodigious display of artifice, even in these simple and homogeneous parts? But if we consider the skin, ligaments, vessels, glandules, humours, the several limbs and members of the body; how must our

* De formatione foetus.

our astonishment rise upon us, in proportion to the number and intricacy of the parts so artificially adjusted? The farther we advance in these researches, we discover new scenes of art and wisdom: But descry still, at a distance, farther scenes beyond our reach; in the fine internal structure of the parts, in the œconomy of the brain, in the fabric of the seminal vessels. All these artifices are repeated in every different species of animal, with wonderful variety, and with exact propriety, suited to the different intentions of Nature in framing each species. And if the infidelity of GALEN, even when these natural sciences were still imperfect, could not withstand such striking appearances; to what pitch of pertinacious obstinacy must a philosopher in this age have attained, who can now doubt of a Supreme Intelligence?

COULD I meet with one of this species
P 2

PART cies (who, I thank God, are very rare)
XII. I would ask him: Supposing there were
a God, who did not discover himself
immediately to our senses; were it pos-
sible for him to give stronger proofs of
his existence, than what appear on the
whole face of Nature? What indeed
could such a Divine Being do, but copy
the present œconomy of things; render
many of his artifices so plain, that no
stupidity could mistake them; afford
glimpses of still greater artifices, which
demonstrate his prodigious superiority
above our narrow apprehensions; and
conceal altogether a great many from
such imperfect creatures? Now, accord-
ing to all rules of just reasoning, every
fact must pass for undisputed, when it
is supported by all the arguments which
its nature admits of; even though these
arguments be not, in themselves, very
numerous or forcible: How much more,
in the present case, where no human
imagination can compute their number,
and

and no understanding estimate their cogency?

PART
XII.

I SHALL farther add, said CLEANTHES, to what you have so well urged, that one great advantage of the principle of Theism, is, that it is the only system of cosmogony which can be rendered intelligible and complete, and yet can throughout preserve a strong analogy to what we every day see and experience in the world. The comparison of the universe to a machine of human contrivance is so obvious and natural, and is justified by so many instances of order and design in Nature, that it must immediately strike all unprejudiced apprehensions, and procure universal approbation. Whoever attempts to weaken this theory, cannot pretend to succeed by establishing in its place any other that is precise and determinate: It is sufficient for him, if he start doubts and difficulties; and by remote and abstract

P 3

views

PART XII. views of things, reach that suspense of judgment, which is here the utmost boundary of his wishes. But besides that this state of mind is in itself unsatisfactory, it can never be steadily maintained against such striking appearances as continually engage us into the religious hypothesis. A false, absurd system, human nature, from the force of prejudice, is capable of adhering to with obstinacy and perseverance: But no system at all, in opposition to a theory supported by strong and obvious reason, by natural propensity, and by early education, I think it absolutely impossible to maintain or defend.

So little, replied PHILo, do I esteem this suspense of judgment in the present case to be possible, that I am apt to suspect there enters somewhat of a dispute of words into this controversy, more than is usually imagined. That the works of Nature bear a great analogy

logy to the productions of art, is evident; ^{PART} XII.
and according to all the rules of good reasoning, we ought to infer, if we argue at all concerning them, that their causes have a proportional analogy. But as there are also considerable differences, we have reason to suppose a proportional difference in the causes; and in particular ought to attribute a much higher degree of power and energy to the supreme cause than any we have ever observed in mankind. Here then the existence of a DEITY is plainly ascertained by reason: and if we make it a question, whether, on account of these analogies, we can properly call him a *mind* or *intelligence*, notwithstanding the vast difference which may reasonably be supposed between him and human minds; what is this but a mere verbal controversy? No man can deny the analogies between the effects: To restrain ourselves from inquiring concerning the causes, is scarcely possible:

P 4

From

PART XII. From this inquiry, the legitimate conclusion is, that the causes have also an analogy: And if we are not contented with calling the first and supreme cause a GOD or DEITY, but desire to vary the expression; what can we call him but MIND or THOUGHT, to which he is justly supposed to bear a considerable resemblance?

ALL men of sound reason are disgusted with verbal disputes, which abound so much in philosophical and theological inquiries; and it is found, that the only remedy for this abuse must arise from clear definitions, from the precision of those ideas which enter into any argument, and from the strict and uniform use of those terms which are employed. But there is a species of controversy, which, from the very nature of language and of human ideas, is involved in perpetual ambiguity, and can never, by any precaution.

caution or any definitions, be able to reach a reasonable certainty or precision. These are the controversies concerning the degrees of any quality or circumstance. Men may argue to all eternity, whether HANNIBAL be a great, or a very great, or a superlatively great man, what degree of beauty CLEOPATRA possessed, what epithet of praise LIVY or THUCIDYDES is intitled to, without bringing the controversy to any determination. The disputants may here agree in their sense, and differ in the terms, or *vice versa*; yet never be able to define their terms, so as to enter into each others meaning: Because the degrees of these qualities are not, like quantity or number, susceptible of any exact mensuration, which may be the standard in the controversy. That the dispute concerning Theism is of this nature, and consequently is merely verbal, or perhaps, if possible, still more incurably ambiguous, will appear upon the

PART the slightest inquiry. I ask the Theist,
XII. if he does not allow, that there is a great
and immeasurable, because incompre-
hensible, difference between the *human*
and the *divine* mind : The more pious
he is, the more readily will he assent to
the affirmative, and the more will he
be disposed to magnify the difference :
He will even assert, that the difference
is of a nature which cannot be too
much magnified. I next turn to the
Atheist, who, I assert, is only nomi-
nally so, and can never possibly be in
earnest ; and I ask him, whether, from
the coherence and apparent sympathy
in all the parts of this world, there be
not a certain degree of analogy among
all the operations of Nature, in every
situation and in every age ; whether
the rotting of a turnip, the generation
of an animal, and the structure of hu-
man thought, be not energies that pro-
bably bear some remote analogy to each
other : It is impossible he can deny it :

He

He will readily acknowledge it. Having obtained this concession, I push him still farther in his retreat; and I ask him, if it be not probable, that the principle which first arranged, and still maintains, order in this universe, bears not also some remote inconceivable analogy to the other operations of Nature, and among the rest to the economy of human mind and thought. However reluctant, he must give his assent. Where then, cry I to both these antagonists, is the subject of your dispute? The Theist allows, that the original intelligence is very different from human reason: The Atheist allows, that the original principle of order bears some remote analogy to it. Will you quarrel, Gentlemen, about the degrees; and enter into a controversy, which admits not of any precise meaning, nor consequently of any determination? If you should be so obstinate, I should not be surprised to find

PART XII. find you insensibly change fides ; while the Theist, on the one hand, exaggerates the dissimilarity between the Supreme Being, and frail, imperfect, variable, fleeting, and mortal creatures ; and the Atheist, on the other, magnifies the analogy among all the operations of Nature, in every period, every situation, and every position. Consider then, where the real point of controversy lies ; and if you cannot lay aside your disputes, endeavour, at least, to cure yourselves of your animosity.

AND here I must also acknowledge, CLEANTHES, that, as the works of Nature have a much greater analogy to the effects of *our* art and contrivance, than to those of *our* benevolence and justice; we have reason to infer, that the natural attributes of the Deity have a greater resemblance to those of men, than his moral have to human virtues. But what is the consequence ? Nothing but

but this, that the moral qualities of man are more defective in their kind than his natural abilities. For as the Supreme Being is allowed to be absolutely and entirely perfect; whatever differs most from him, departs the farthest from the supreme standard of rectitude and perfection *.

THESE,

* It seems evident, that the dispute between the Sceptics and Dogmatists is entirely verbal; or at least regards only the degrees of doubt and assurance, which we ought to indulge with regard to all reasoning: And such disputes are commonly, at the bottom, verbal, and admit not of any precise determination. No philosophical Dogmatist denies, that there are difficulties both with regard to the senses and to all science; and that these difficulties are in a regular, logical method, absolutely insolveable. No Sceptic denies, that we lie under an absolute necessity, notwithstanding these difficulties, of thinking, and believing, and reasoning, with regard to all kinds of subjects, and even of frequently assenting with confidence and security. The only difference, then, between these sects, if they merit that name, is, that the Sceptic, from habit, caprice, or inclination, insists most on the difficulties; the Dogmatist, for like reasons, on the necessity.

PART
XII. THESE, CLEANTHES, are my unfeigned sentiments on this subject; and these sentiments, you know, I have ever cherished and maintained. But in proportion to my veneration for true religion, is my abhorrence of vulgar superstitions; and I indulge a peculiar pleasure, I confess, in pushing such principles, sometimes into absurdity, sometimes into impiety. And you are sensible, that all bigots, notwithstanding their great aversion to the latter above the former, are commonly equally guilty of both.

My inclination, replied CLEANTHES, lies, I own, a contrary way. Religion, however corrupted, is still better than no religion at all. The doctrine of a future state is so strong and necessary a security to morals, that we never ought to abandon or neglect it. For if finite and temporary rewards and punishments have so great an effect, as we daily

daily find ; how much greater must be ^{PART} XII. expected from such as are infinite and eternal ?

How happens it then, said PHILO, if vulgar superstition be so salutary to society, that all history abounds so much with accounts of its pernicious consequences on public affairs ? Factions, civil wars, persecutions, subversions of government, oppression, slavery ; these are the dismal consequences which always attend its prevalency over the minds of men. If the religious spirit be ever mentioned in any historical narration, we are sure to meet afterwards with a detail of the miseries which attend it. And no period of time can be happier or more prosperous, than those in which it is never regarded or heard of.

THE reason of this observation, replied CLEANTHES, is obvious. The proper

PART XII. proper office of religion is to regulate the heart of men, humanize their conduct, infuse the spirit of temperance, order, and obedience; and as its operation is silent, and only enforces the motives of morality and justice, it is in danger of being overlooked, and confounded with these other motives. When it distinguishes itself, and acts as a separate principle over men, it has departed from its proper sphere, and has become only a cover to faction and ambition.

AND so will all religion, said PHILO, except the philosophical and rational kind. Your reasonings are more easily eluded than my facts. The inference is not just, because finite and temporary rewards and punishments have so great influence, that therefore such as are infinite and eternal must have so much greater. Consider, I beseech you, the attachment which we have to present

fent things, and the little concern which we discover for objects so remote and uncertain. When divines are declaiming against the common behaviour and conduct of the world, they always represent this principle as the strongest imaginable, (which indeed it is) ; and describe almost all human kind as lying under the influence of it, and sunk into the deepest lethargy and unconcern about their religious interests. Yet these same divines, when they refute their speculative antagonists, suppose the motives of religion to be so powerful, that, without them, it were impossible for civil society to subsist; nor are they ashamed of so palpable a contradiction. It is certain, from experience, that the smallest grain of natural honesty and benevolence has more effect on mens conduct, than the most pompous views suggested by theological theories and systems. A man's natural inclination works incessantly upon him; it is for

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PART XII. ever present to the mind ; and mingles itself with every view and consideration : whereas religious motives, where they act at all, operate only by starts and bounds ; and it is scarcely possible for them to become altogether habitual to the mind. The force of the greatest gravity, say the philosophers, is infinitely small, in comparison of that of the least impulse: yet it is certain, that the smallest gravity will, in the end, prevail above a great impulse ; because no strokes or blows can be repeated with such constancy as attraction and gravitation.

ANOTHER advantage of inclination: It engages on its side all the wit and ingenuity of the mind ; and when set in opposition to religious principles, seeks every method and art of eluding them: In which it is almost always successful. Who can explain the heart of man, or account for those strange salvos and excuses,

cuses, with which people satisfy themselves, when they follow their inclinations in opposition to their religious duty? This is well understood in the world; and none but fools ever repose less trust in a man, because they hear, that, from study and philosophy, he has entertained some speculative doubts with regard to theological subjects. And when we have to do with a man, who makes a great profession of religion and devotion; has this any other effect upon several, who pass for prudent, than to put them on their guard, lest they be cheated and deceived by him?

WE must farther consider, that philosophers, who cultivate reason and reflection, stand less in need of such motives to keep them under the restraint of morals: and that the vulgar, who alone may need them, are utterly incapable of so pure a religion as represents

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PART XII the Deity to be pleased with nothing but virtue in human behaviour. The commendations to the Divinity are generally supposed to be either frivolous observances, or rapturous ecstasies, or a bigotted credulity. We need not run back into antiquity, or wander into remote regions, to find instances of this degeneracy. Amongst ourselves, some have been guilty of that atrociousness, unknown to the EGYPTIAN and GRECIAN superstitions, of declaiming, in express terms, against morality; and representing it as a sure forfeiture of the divine favour, if the least trust or reliance be laid upon it.

BUT even though superstition or enthusiasm should not put itself in direct opposition to morality; the very diverting of the attention, the raising up a new and frivolous species of merit, the preposterous distribution which it makes of praise and blame, must have the

the most pernicious consequences, and weaken extremely mens attachment to the natural motives of justice and humanity.

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SUCH a principle of action likewise, not being any of the familiar motives of human conduct, acts only by intervals on the temper; and must be rouzed by continual efforts; in order to render the pious zealot satisfied with his own conduct, and make him fulfil his devotional task. Many religious exercises are entered into with seeming fervour, where the heart, at the time, feels cold and languid: A habit of dissimulation is by degrees contracted: and, fraud and falsehood become the predominant principle. Hence the reason of that vulgar observation, that the highest zeal in religion and the deepest hypocrisy, so far from being inconsistent, are often or commonly united in the same individual character.

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XII. THE bad effects of such habits, even in common life, are easily imagined: but where the interests of religion are concerned, no morality can be forcible enough to bind the enthusiastic zealot. The sacredness of the cause sanctifies every measure which can be made use of to promote it.

THE steady attention alone to so important an interest as that of eternal salvation, is apt to extinguish the benevolent affections, and beget a narrow, contracted selfishness. And when such a temper is encouraged, it easily eludes all the general precepts of charity and benevolence.

THUS the motives of vulgar superstition have no great influence on general conduct; nor is their operation very favourable to morality, in the instances where they predominate.

Is there any maxim in politics more ^{PART} XII. certain and infallible, than that both the number and authority of priests should be confined within very narrow limits; and that the civil magistrate ought, for ever, to keep his *fæces* and *axes* from such dangerous hands? But if the spirit of popular religion were so salutary to society, a contrary maxim ought to prevail. The greater number of priests, and their greater authority and riches, will always augment the religious spirit. And though the priests have the guidance of this spirit, why may we not expect a superior sanctity of life, and greater benevolence and moderation, from persons who are set apart for religion, who are continually inculcating it upon others, and who must themselves imbibe a greater share of it? Whence comes it then, that, in fact, the utmost a wise magistrate can propose with regard to popular religions, is, as far as possible, to make a

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saving

PART XII. saving game of it, and to prevent their pernicious consequences with regard to society? Every expedient which he tries for so humble a purpose is surrounded with inconveniencies. If he admits only one religion among his subjects, he must sacrifice, to an uncertain prospect of tranquillity, every consideration of public liberty, science, reason, industry, and even his own independency. If he gives indulgence to several sects, which is the wiser maxim, he must preserve a very philosophical indifference to all of them, and carefully restrain the pretensions of the prevailing sect; otherwise he can expect nothing but endless disputes, quarrels, factions, persecutions, and civil commotions.

TRUE religion, I allow, has no such pernicious consequences: but we must treat of religion, as it has commonly been found in the world; nor have I any thing to do with that speculative tenet

tenet of Theism, which, as it is a species of philosophy, must partake of the beneficial influence of that principle, and at the same time must lie under a like inconvenience, of being always confined to very few persons.

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OATHS are requisite in all courts of judicature; but it is a question whether their authority arises from any popular religion. It is the solemnity and importance of the occasion, the regard to reputation, and the reflecting on the general interests of society, which are the chief restraints upon mankind. Custom-house oaths and political oaths are but little regarded even by some who pretend to principles of honesty and religion; and a Quaker's asseveration is with us justly put upon the same footing with the oath of any other person. I know, that POLYBIUS * ascribes the infamy of GREEK faith to the prevalency

* Lib. vi. cap. 54.

PART valency of the EPICUREAN philosophy:
XII. but I know also, that PUNIC faith had
as bad a reputation in ancient times; as
IRISH evidence has in modern; though
we cannot account for these vulgar ob-
servations by the same reason. Not to
mention, that GREEK faith was infa-
mous before the rise of the EPICUREAN
philosophy; and EURIPIDES †, in a pas-
sage which I shall point out to you, has
glanced a remarkable stroke of satire
against his nation, with regard to this
circumstance.

TAKE care, PHILO, replied CLEAN-
THES, take care: push not matters too
far: allow not your zeal against false
religion to undermine your veneration
for the true. Forfeit not this principle,
the chief, the only great comfort in life;
and our principal support amidst all the
attacks of adverse fortune. The most
agreeable reflection, which it is possible
for

† *Iphigenia in Tauride.*

for human imagination to suggest, is ^{PART} ~~XII.~~ that of genuine Theism, which represents us as the workmanship of a Being perfectly good, wise, and powerful; who created us for happiness; and who, having implanted in us immeasurable desires of good, will prolong our existence to all eternity, and will transfer us into an infinite variety of scenes, in order to satisfy those desires, and render our felicity complete and durable. Next to such a Being himself (if the comparison be allowed), the happiest lot which we can imagine, is that of being under his guardianship and protection.

THESE appearances, said PHILO, are most engaging and alluring; and with regard to the true philosopher, they are more than appearances. But it happens here, as in the former case, that, with regard to the greater part of mankind, the appearances are deceitful, and that
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PART XII. the terrors of religion commonly pre-
vail above its comforts.

IT is allowed, that men never have recourse to devotion so readily as when dejected with grief or depressed with sickness. Is not this a proof, that the religious spirit is not so nearly allied to joy as to sorrow?

BUT men, when afflicted, find consolation in religion, replied CLEANTHES. Sometimes, said PHILO; but it is natural to imagine, that they will form a notion of those unknown beings, suitably to the present gloom and melancholy of their temper, when they betake themselves to the contemplation of them. Accordingly, we find the tremendous images to predominate in all religions; and we ourselves, after having employed the most exalted expression in our descriptions of the Deity, fall into the flattest contradiction, in affirming, that
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the damned are infinitely superior in PART
XII.
~~~~~ number to the elect.

I SHALL venture to affirm, that there never was a popular religion, which represented the state of departed souls in such a light, as would render it eligible for human kind, that there should be such a state. These fine models of religion are the mere product of philosophy. For as death lies between the eye and the prospect of futurity, that event is so shocking to Nature, that it must throw a gloom on all the regions which lie beyond it; and suggest to the generality of mankind the idea of CERBERUS and Furies; devils, and torrents of fire and brimstone.

IT is true, both fear and hope enter into religion; because both these passions, at different times, agitate the human mind, and each of them forms a species of divinity suitable to itself. But when

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XII. when a man is in a cheerful disposition,  
he is fit for busines, or company, or  
entertainment of any kind; and he na-  
turally applies himself to these, and  
thinks not of religion. When melan-  
choly and dejected, he has nothing to  
do but brood upon the terrors of the  
invisible world, and to plunge himself  
still deeper in affliction. It may, indeed,  
happen, that after he has, in this man-  
ner, engraved the religious opinions  
deep into his thought and imagination,  
there may arrive a change of health or  
circumstances, which may restore his  
good-humour, and raisng cheerful pro-  
spects of futurity, make him run into  
the other extreme of joy and triumph.  
But still it must be acknowledged, that,  
as terror is the primary principle of re-  
ligion, it is the passion which always  
predominates in it, and admits but of  
short intervals of pleasure.

Not to mention, that these fits of  
excessive,

excessive, enthusiastic joy, by exhaust-<sup>PART  
XII.</sup>ing the spirits, always prepare the way ~~~ for equal fits of superstitious terror and dejection; nor is there any state of mind so happy as the calm and equable. But this state it is impossible to support, where a man thinks, that he lies, in such profound darkness and uncertainty, between an eternity of happiness and an eternity of misery. No wonder, that such an opinion disjoins the ordinary frame of the mind, and throws it into the utmost confusion. And though that opinion is seldom so steady in its operation as to influence all the actions; yet is it apt to make a considerable breach in the temper, and to produce that gloom and melancholy so remarkable in all devout people.

It is contrary to common sense to entertain apprehensions or terrors upon account of any opinion whatsoever, or to imagine that we run any risk hereafter

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XII. after, by the freest use of our reason.  
Such a sentiment implies both an *absurdity* and an *inconsistency*. It is an absurdity to believe that the Deity has human passions, and one of the lowest of human passions, a restless appetite for applause. It is an inconsistency to believe, that, since the Deity has this human passion, he has not others also; and in particular, a disregard to the opinions of creatures so much inferior.

*To know God, says SENECA, is to worship him.* All other worship is indeed absurd, superstitious, and even impious. It degrades him to the low condition of mankind, who are delighted with intreaty, solicitation, presents, and flattery. Yet is this impiety the smallest of which superstition is guilty. Commonly, it depresses the Deity far below the condition of mankind; and represents him as a capricious dæmon, who exercises his power without reason and without

without humanity! And were that Divine Being disposed to be offended at ~~the~~  
<sup>PART  
XII.</sup> the vices and follies of silly mortals, who are his own workmanship; ill would it surely fare with the votaries of most popular superstitions. Nor would any of human race merit his *favour*, but a very few, the philosophical Theists, who entertain, or rather indeed endeavour to entertain, suitable notions of his divine perfections: As the only persons, intitled to his *compassion* and *indulgence*, would be the philosophical Sceptics, a sect almost equally rare, who, from a natural diffidence of their own capacity, suspend, or endeavour to suspend, all judgment with regard to such sublime and such extraordinary subjects.

If the whole of Natural Theology, as some people seem to maintain, resolves itself into one simple, though somewhat ambiguous, at least undefined proposition,

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position,

PART XII. position, *That the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence:* If this proposition be not capable of extension, variation, or more particular explication: If it affords no inference that affects human life, or can be the source of any action or forbearance: And if the analogy, imperfect as it is, can be carried no farther than to the human intelligence; and cannot be transferred, with any appearance of probability, to the other qualities of the mind: If this really be the case, what can the most inquisitive, contemplative, and religious man do more than give a plain, philosophical assent to the proposition, as often as it occurs; and believe that the arguments on which it is established, exceed the objections which lie against it? Some astonishment indeed will naturally arise from the greatness of the object; some melancholy from its obscurity; some contempt of human reason,

son, that it can give no solution more satisfactory with regard to so extraordinary and magnificent a question. But believe me, CLEANTHES, the most natural sentiment, which a well-disposed mind will feel on this occasion, is a longing desire and expectation, that heaven would be pleased to dissipate, at least alleviate, this profound ignorance, by affording some more particular revelation to mankind, and making discoveries of the nature, attributes, and operations, of the divine object of our faith. A person, seasoned with a just sense of the imperfections of natural reason, will fly to revealed truth with the greatest avidity: While the haughty Dogmatist, persuaded that he can erect a complete system of Theology by the mere help of philosophy, disdains any farther aid, and rejects this adventitious instructor. To be a philosophical Sceptic is, in a man of letters, the first and most essential step towards being

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XII. ing a sound, believing Christian; a proposition, which I would willingly recommend to the attention of PAMPHILUS: And I hope CLEANTHES will forgive me for interposing so far in the education and instruction of his pupil.

CLEANTHES and PHILO pursued not this conversation much farther: and as nothing ever made greater impression on me, than all the reasonings of that day; so, I confess, that, upon a serious review of the whole, I cannot but think, that PHILO's principles are more probable than DEMEA's; but that those of CLEANTHES approach still nearer to the truth.

F I N I S.











