R-B

No. 7485.10

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DIALOGUES

CONCERNING

NATURAL RELIGION.

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NATURAL RELIGION.

BY

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THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

M.DCC.LXXIX.

RB B L180 .A8
B.H. 1779
284 152
Hon. Geo. R. Emerson
Oct. 15. 1860
*2185.10

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

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.

THERE 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 genuiſes 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 diſputations 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.

PART I.

AFTER I joined the company, whom 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 perſuaded, 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 rea- PART I.
ſoning and diſputation, that I poſtpone
the ſtudy of Natural Theology. To ſea-
ſon their minds with early piety, is my
chief care; and by continual precept
and inſtruction, and I hope too by ex-
ample, 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 re-
mark the uncertainty of each part; the
eternal diſputations of men; the obſcu-
rity 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 pro-
per ſubmiſſion and ſelf-diffidence, I
have no longer any ſcruple of opening
to them the greateſt myſteries of reli-
gion; 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 Philoloſophy; 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- PART I.
ſumptuouſly breaking thro' all fences, profane the inmoſt ſanctuaries of the temple. But CLEANTHES will, I hope, agree with me, that, after we have abandoned ignorance, the ſureſt remedy, there is ſtill one expedient left to prevent 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 common 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 ſyſtems; the contradictions which adhere to the very ideas of matter, cauſe and effect, extenſion, ſpace, time, motion; and, in a word, quantity of all kinds, the object of the only ſcience that can fairly pretend to any certainty

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 concerncerning 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

THES's features, I could distinguish an air of finesse; as if he perceived some raillery or artificial malice in the reasonings of PHILO. PART I.

YOU propose then, PHILO, said CLEANTHES, to erect religious faith on philosophical scepticism; and you think, that if certainty or evidence be expelled from every other subject of inquiry, it will all retire to these theological doctrines, and there acquire a superior force and authority. Whether your scepticism 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 popular opinion, derived from our fallacious senses, and more fallacious experience. And this consideration, DEMEA, may, I think, fairly serve to abate our ill-

PART I. ill-will to this humorous ſect 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 never be very dangerous, either to the ſtate, to philoſophy, or to religion.

IN reality, PHILO, continued he, it ſeems certain, that though a man, in a fluſh of humour, after intenſe reflection on the many contradictions and imperfections 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 ſolicit him: His philoſophical melancholy diſſipates; and even the utmoſt violence 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 violence? This is a point in which it 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. PART I.

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

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 Stoicism, support the highest flights of 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 examples of virtue and constancy which seem astonishing to present times. PART I.

> 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 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

PART I. different from thoſe, who either never formed any opinions in the caſe, or have entertained ſentiments more favourable 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 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. PART I.

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

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 ſubtile 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. PART I.

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 ſubtile, 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 wonderful phenomenon of the rainbow, becauſe that explication gives a minute anatomy of the rays of light; a ſubject, forſooth, too refined for human comprehenſion? 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 ſubjects were too magnificent and remote to be explained by the narrow and fallacious reaſon of mankind? PART I.

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

PART I. since we find, that those who make 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 traditional superstition has recommended to them. They firmly believe in witches; though they will not believe nor attend to the most simple proposition of EUCLID. But the refined and philosophical sceptics fall into an inconsistence of an opposite nature. They push their researches into the most abstruse corners of science; and their assent attends them in every step, proportioned 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 matter is ſtill incomprehenſible. Theſe 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? PART I.

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

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 circumſtance, refutes your principles; and ſhows the firmeſt reliance on all the received maxims of ſcience, morals, prudence, 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 perplexing and abſtruſe nature. A comedy, a novel, or at moſt a hiſtory, ſeems a more

* L'art de penſer.

more natural recreation than ſuch me- PART I.
taphyſical ſubtilties and abſtractions.

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 panegyrics 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 phyſics, 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 farther propagated the judicious ſentiment of Mr LOCKE: And it is now, in a manner, avowed, by all pretenders to reaſoning 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, replied CLEANTHES, makes a man an Atheiſt: A great deal converts him to religion. That is a very judicious remark 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 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. PART I.

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 prieſtcraft 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

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 their favourite principle, and eſtabliſhed tenet. PART I.

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 prieſtcraft 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.

PART II.

I MUST own, CLEANTHES, said DEMEA, that nothing can more 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 maintaining 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 persuaded, 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.

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: Of "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

* Recherche de la Verité, 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-
" finite 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 ridiculous in me to add my ſentiment, or expreſs my approbation of your doctrine. But ſurely, where reaſonable men

men treat these subjects, the question can never be concerning the *Being*, but 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

PART II. by which we can expreſs our adoration 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 determination. Our ideas reach no farther than our experience: We have no experience of divine attributes and operations: I need not conclude my ſyllogiſm: You can draw the inference yourſelf. And it is a pleaſure to me (and I hope to you too) that juſt reaſoning and ſound piety here concur in the ſame concluſion, and both of them eſtabliſh the

the adorably myſterious and incompre- PART II.
henſible nature of the Supreme Being.

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. PART II.

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 we ſee a houſe, CLEANTHES, we conclude, with the greateſt certainty, that it had an architect or builder; becauſe 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 certainty infer a ſimilar cauſe, or that the analogy is here entire and perfect. The diſſimilitude is ſo ſtriking, that the utmoſt you can here pretend to is a gueſs, a conjecture, a preſumption concerning a ſimilar cauſe; and how that pretenſion will be received in the world, I leave you to conſider. PART II.

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 amounted to no more than a gueſs or conjecture. But is the whole adjuſtment

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 why ſpare my cenſure, when ſuch principles are advanced, ſupported by ſuch an authority, before ſo young a man as PAMPHILUS? PART II.

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

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 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. PART II.

Now according to this method of reaſoning, DEMEA, 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,

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 internal 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 mortar, and wood, without an architect, never erect a houſe. But the ideas in a human mind, we ſee, by an unknown, inexplicable œconomy, arrange themſelves ſo as to form the plan of a watch or houſe. Experience, therefore, proves, that there is an original principle of order in mind, not in matter. From ſimilar effects we infer ſimilar 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. PART II.

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 sound 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 expe-

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. PART 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

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 it the model of the whole univerſe? Our partiality in our own favour does indeed preſent it on all occaſions; but ſound philoſophy ought carefully to guard againſt ſo natural an illuſion. PART II.

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

PART 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 fœtus in the womb, 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. PART II.

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,

PART II. 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. 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 universe from mind, is not more contrary 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 COPERNICAN system, which you have urged against my reasonings. Have you other earths, might he say, which you have seen to move? Have.....

PART II.

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 phenomenon? Are not the revolutions of the sun also a confirmation, from analogy, of the same theory? All the planets, 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 ſide in order to render them popular and convincing. But if we peruſe GALILÆO's famous Dialogues concerning the ſyſtem of the world, we ſhall find, that that great genius, one of the ſublimeſt

lineſt that ever exiſted, firſt bent all 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 GALILÆO, beginning with the moon, proved its ſimilarity in every particular to the earth; its convex figure, is 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 ſimi-

PART II.

PART II. larity 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.

PART

PART III.

HOW the moſt abſurd argument, replied 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 ſyſtems, 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

PART III.

PART 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. PART III.

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 ac-

PART 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, invariable 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 ILIAD or ÆNEID is an eaſier ſuppoſition than that of any plant or animal. PART III.

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-

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.

PART III. a force like that of ſenſation. The moſt obvious concluſion, ſurely, is in favour 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. PART III.

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

PART 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 discourse, and saved his countenance. PART III.

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 III. explicable riddle, more than any intelligible 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 exiſtencé, 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 com-

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

PART IV.

IT ſeems ſtrange to me, ſaid CLEANTHES, that you, DEMEA, who are ſo ſincere in the cauſe of religion, ſhould ſtill maintain the myſterious, incomprehenſible 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, without any meaning, of ſuch mighty im-

PART IV. portance? Or how do you MYSTICS, who maintain the abſolute incomprehenſibility 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 production 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 refuſe to call the univerſal, unknown cauſe a God or Deity; and to beſtow on him as many ſublime eulogies and unmeaning epithets as you ſhall pleaſe to require of them.

WHO could imagine, replied DEMEA, that CLEANTHES, the calm, philoſophical CLEANTHES, would attempt to refute his antagoniſts, by affixing a nickname to them; and, like the common bigots

bigots and inquisitors of the age, have recourse to invective and declamation, 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

PART IV.

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, 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 exten- PART IV.

PART IV. sion 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 inconveniencies of that Anthropomorphiſm, which you have embraced; and ſhall prove, that there

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

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 aſſigned 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 ſentence at leaſt it will venture to pronounce, That a mental world, or univerſe of ideas, requires a cauſe as much, as does a material world, or univerſe of

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. PART IV.

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 inquiſitive humour, which it is impoſſible ever to ſatisfy. PART IV.

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 its purgative: But it has been diſcovered, that this ſubterfuge was nothing but the diſguiſe of ignorance; and that theſe philoſophers, though leſs ingenuous, 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 Being; 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 ſatisfactory in accounting for the order of the world, without having recourſe to any ſuch intelligent creator as you inſiſt 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 or- 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. PART IV.

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

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

PART V.

BUT to ſhow you ſtill more inconveniencies, 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. PART V.

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 ædificari*

* Lib. xi. 1094. † De nat. Deor. lib. i.

ædificari mundum facit? quæ molitio? quæ ferramenta? qui vectes? quæ machinæ? qui miniſtri tanti muneris fuerunt? quemadmodum 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. PART V.

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 pre-

tensions,

tenſions have we, upon your ſuppoſitions, to aſcribe that attribute to the divine Being? You will ſtill inſiſt, that, by removing him ſo much from all ſimilarity 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, miſtake, or incoherence, in his undertakings. There are many inexplicable difficulties 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 narrow 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

PART V. to human art and contrivance. At leaſt, you muſt acknowledge, that it is impoſſible for us to tell, from our limited views, whether this ſyſtem contains any great faults, or deſerves any conſiderable praiſe, if compared to other poſſible, and even real ſyſtems. Could a peaſant, if the ÆNEID 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 uncertain, 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 ingenuity of the carpenter who framed ſo complicated, uſeful, and beautiful a machine? And what ſurpriſe muſt we feel, when we find him a ſtupid mechanic, who

who imitated others, and copied an art, 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? PART V.

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-

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

site to the production of the universe; it would be needless, I own, (though not absurd), to suppose any other deity existent. But while it is still a question, Whether all these attributes are united in one subject, or dispersed among several independent beings; by what phenomena in nature can we pretend to decide 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 counterpoising weight equal to it: but it is still allowed to doubt, whether that weight be an aggregate of several distinct bodies, or one uniform united mass. And if the weight requisite very much exceeds 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, PART V.

PART V. philoſophy, ſo prodigious an animal, exceeds all analogy, and even comprehenſion.

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.

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 V. force which it received from him. You 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 ſyſtem of theology is, in any reſpect, preferable to none at all.

THESE ſuppoſitions I abſolutely diſown, 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 adhere ſteadily; and this I regard as a ſufficient foundation for religion.

PART VI.

IT muſt be a ſlight fabric, indeed, ſaid 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 familiar, that no ſcruple can ever be made with regard to its ſolidity. PART VI.

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. PART VI.

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*

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 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. PART VI.

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.

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 believe, 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 ſociety, which is in continual revolution, between ignorance and knowledge, liberty and ſlavery, riches and poverty; ſo that it is impoſſible for us, from our limited experience, to foretell with aſſurance what events may or may not be expected. Ancient learning and hiſtory 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-

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 EUROPEAN 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 propagated, how could it ever afterwards periſh? Empires may riſe and fall; liberty and ſlavery ſucceed alternately; ignorance and knowledge give place to each other; but the cherry-tree will ſtill remain 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, dogs, corn, were known in AMERICA. Is it poſſible, that, during the revolutions 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 ſtockings 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 operation of principles more conſtant and ſteady than thoſe by which human ſociety is governed and directed. Nothing leſs than a total convulſion of the elements will ever deſtroy all the EUROPEAN animals and vegetables which are now to be found in the Weſtern world. PART VI.

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

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 an eternal inherent principle of order to the world; though attended with great and continual revolutions and alterations. This at once ſolves all difficulties; 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.

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 thence learn the fallacy of your principles. PART VI.

PART

PART 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 VII. own principles, is therefore lame and 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 dis- PART VII.
proportioned, 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 farther 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,

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. PART VII.

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

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. PART VII.

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 e-

very

very thing; he told me, that the impossibility 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 undeniable. 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

PART VII.

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,

PART VII.

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

tility 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. PART VII.

PART

PART VIII.

WHAT you aſcribe to the fertility 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 and limitations. No one, who has a conception of the powers of infinite, in compariſon of finite, will ever ſcruple this determination. PART VIII.

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 intelligible. Motion, in many inſtances, from gravity, from elaſticity, from electricity, begins in matter, without any known voluntary agent: and to ſuppoſe always, in theſe caſes, an unknown voluntary agent, is mere hypotheſis; and hypotheſis attended with no advantages. 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 matter

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

PART VIII.

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.

PART VIII. petual reſtleſſneſs to matter. Every poſſible ſituation is produced, and inſtantly deſtroyed. If a glimpſe or dawn of order appears for a moment, it is inſtantly hurried away, and confounded, by that never-ceaſing force which actuates every 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 fluctuation of its parts? This we find to be the caſe with the univerſe at preſent. Every individual is perpetually changing, and every part of every individual; and yet the whole remains, in appearance, 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. PART VIII.

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,

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 conveniencies and advantages which men and all animals poſſeſs? Two eyes, two ears, are not abſolutely neceſ-

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ſary for the ſubſiſtence of the ſpecies. 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. PART VIII.

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

PART VIII. so far incomplete and imperfect; which I shall not scruple to allow. But can we ever reasonably expect greater success in any attempts of this nature? Or can we ever hope to erect a system of cosmogony, that will be liable to no exceptions, and will contain no circumstance repugnant to our limited and imperfect experience of the analogy of Nature? Your theory itself cannot surely pretend to any such advantage; even though you have run into *Anthropomorphism*, the better to preserve a conformity to common experience. Let us once more put it to trial. In all instances which we have ever seen, ideas are copied from real objects, and are ectypal, not archetypal, to express myself in learned terms: You reverse this order, and give thought the precedence. In all instances which we have ever seen, thought has no influence upon matter, except where that matter is so conjoined with it as to have an equal reciprocal influence upon it.

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No animal can move immediately any thing but the members of its own body; and indeed, the equality of action and re-action ſeems to be an univerſal law of Nature: But your theory implies a contradiction to this experience. Theſe inſtances, with many more, which it were eaſy to collect, (particularly the ſuppoſition of a mind or ſyſtem of thought that is eternal, or, in other words, an animal ingenerable and immortal); theſe inſtances, I ſay, may teach all of us ſobriety in condemning each other; and let us ſee, that as no ſyſtem of this kind ought ever to be received from a ſlight analogy, ſo neither ought any to be rejected on account of a ſmall incongruity. For that is an inconvenience from which we can juſtly pronounce no one to be exempted. PART VIII.

ALL religious ſyſtems, it is confeſſed, are ſubject to great and inſuperable difficulties. Each diſputant triumphs in his

PART VIII. his turn; while he carries on an offenſive 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 ſyſtem 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 ſubject. A total ſuſpenſe of judgment is here our only reaſonable reſource. And if every attack, as is commonly obſerved, and no defence, among Theologians, 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, obliged to defend?

PART

PART IX.

BUT if ſo many difficulties attend the 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 contemplating 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, interposed CLEANTHES, as if those advantages and conveniencies in the abstract argument were full proofs of its solidity. But it is first proper, in my opinion, to determine what argument of this nature 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 absolutely impossible for any thing to produce

duce itſelf, or be the cauſe of its own 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

PART IX.

PART IX. which can be formed is equally poſſible; nor is there any more abſurdity in Nothing's having exiſted from eternity, than there is in that ſucceſſion of cauſes which conſtitutes the univerſe. What was it, then, which determined Something to exiſt rather than Nothing, and beſtowed being on a particular 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 neceſſarily-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 metaphyſical reaſoning. It ſeems to me ſo 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. PART IX.

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.

IT

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, acording to this pretended explication of neceſſity? We dare 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

* Dr CLARKE.

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

ADD to this, that in tracing an eternal ſucceſſion of objects, it ſeems abſurd 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. PART IX.

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

PART IX. 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

* Republique des Lettres, Aout. 1685.

mate nature of bodies, we ſhould clearly ſee why it was abſolutely impoſſible 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! PART IX.

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

PART IX. 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 ſpecies of reaſoning.

PART

PART X.

IT is my opinion, I own, replied 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 endeavour, by prayers, adoration and ſacrifice, to appeaſe thoſe unknown powers, whom we find, by experience, ſo able to afflict and oppreſs us.

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 appeaſe 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 repreſentations 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 argument. 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 ſenſibly.

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 exerience? PART X.

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 eſſential to his philoſophical ſyſtem. PART X.

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 X. entrance into life gives anguiſh to the 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 be, in part, an exception to this rule. For by combination in ſociety, he can eaſily maſter lions, tygers, and bears, whoſe greater ſtrength and agility naturally enable them to prey upon him. PART X.

ON the contrary, it is here chiefly, cried PHILO, that the uniform and equal maxims of Nature are moſt apparent. Man, it is true, can, by combination, ſurmount all his *real* enemies, and become maſter of the whole animal creation: but does he not immediately raiſe up to himſelf *imaginary* enemies, the dæmons 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 materials 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 are nothing in compariſon of thoſe which ariſe within ourſelves, from the diſtempered condition of our mind and body. How many lie under the lingering torment of diſeaſes? Hear the pathetic enumeration of the great poet. PART X.

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 perhaps leſs diſmal and vexatious. Remorſe, ſhame, anguiſh, rage, diſappointment, anxiety, fear, dejection, deſpair; who has ever paſſed through life without cruel inroads from theſe tormentors? How many have ſcarcely ever felt any better ſenſations? Labour and poverty,

PART X. verty, 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 abſence of one good (and who can poſſeſs all?) is ſufficient to render life ineligible.

WERE a ſtranger to drop, on a ſudden, into this world, I would ſhow him, as a ſpecimen of its ills, an hoſpital full of diſeaſes, a priſon crowded with malefactors and debtors, a field of battle ſtrowed with carcaſes, a fleet foundering 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; whither

ther ſhould I conduct him? to a ball, PART X. to an opera, to court? He might juſtly 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.

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 and ambition. PART X.

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, they ſay, will be better: PART 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 PHILO, 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

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 reſpect, then, do his benevolence and mercy reſemble the benevolence and mercy of men?

EPICURUS's old queſtions are yet unanſwered.

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 all animals? The preſervation alone 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. PART X.

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-

PART X. achs, 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 X.
verſy. If you can make out the preſent point, and prove mankind to be unhappy or corrupted, there is an end at once of all religion. For to what purpoſe eſtabliſh the natural attributes of the Deity, while the moral are ſtill doubtful and uncertain?

You take umbrage very eaſily, replied DEMEA, at opinions the moſt innocent, 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 rectified 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 admitted, contrary to matter of fact, viſible and uncontroverted. Whence can any cauſe be known but from its known effects? Whence can any hypotheſis be proved but from the apparent phenomena? To eſtabliſh one hypotheſis upon another, is building entirely in the air; and the utmoſt we ever attain, by theſe conjectures and fictions, is to aſcertain the bare poſſibility of our opinion;

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

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, 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 revealed 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 experience: 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 compare, all the pains and all the pleaſures in the lives of all men and of all animals: And thus by your reſting the whole ſyſtem of religion on a point, which, PART X.

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 you have from the beginning rejected with scorn and indignation. PART X.

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, unmixt, and uncontrollable attributes from the present mixt and confused phenomena, and from these alone. A hopeful undertaking! Were the phenomena ever so pure and unmixt, 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. eaſe in my argument. Here I triumph. Formerly, when we argued concerning the natural attributes of intelligence and deſign, I needed all my ſceptical and metaphyſical ſubtilty 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 ſubtilties againſt the dictates of plain reaſon and experience.

PART XI.

I SCRUPLE not to allow, ſaid CLEANTHES, that I have been apt to ſuſpect the frequent repetition of the word *infinite*, which we meet with in all theological writers, to ſavour more of panegyric than of philoſophy; and that any purpoſes of reaſoning, and even of religion, would be better ſerved, were we to reſt contented with more accurate and more moderate expreſſions. The terms, *admirable*, *excellent*, *ſuperlatively great*, *wiſe*, and *holy*; theſe ſufficiently fill the imaginations of men; and any thing beyond, beſides that it leads into abſurdities, has no influence on the affections or ſentiments. Thus, PART XI.

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: Inconveniencies 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, without interruption, your opinion of this new theory; and if it deserve our attention, we may afterwards, at more leisure, reduce it into form. PART XI.

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

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 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. PART XI.

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 subtilty, 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 inconveniencies. 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 inconveniencies. His ignorance, or even your own ignorance of such a plan, will never convince you of the impossibility of it. If you find many inconveniencies and deformities in the building, you will always, without entering into any detail, condemn the architect.

PART XI.

IN ſhort, I repeat the queſtion: Is the world, conſidered in general, and 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 ſuppoſitions 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, eſpecially where infinity is excluded from the divine attributes, may, perhaps, be ſufficient to prove a conſiſtence; but can never be foundations for any inference.

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

PART XI. creatures; and it is not impoſſible but all theſe circumſtances may be neceſſary and unavoidable. We know ſo little beyond 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 belongs 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 circumſtances on which it depends. None of them appear to human reaſon, in the leaſt degree, neceſſary or unavoidable; nor can we ſuppoſe them ſuch, without the utmoſt licenſe of imagination.

THE

PART XI.

THE *firſt* circumſtance which introduces evil, is that contrivance or œconomy 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

PART XI. mals can be free from it an hour, they might enjoy a perpetual exemption from it; and it required as particular a contrivance 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 conducting 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 particular volitions remedy this inconvenience?

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

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 XI. and render the whole world happy, without discovering himself in any operation. 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 framed with good tempers and virtuous dispositions. 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 reasons,

sons, why Providence interposes not in 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. PART XI.

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 *rigid maſter*, has afforded them little 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 XI.

PART XI. tures. It would have been better, were his power extremely limited, to have created fewer animals, and to have endowed theſe with more faculties for their happineſs and preſervation. A builder is never eſteemed prudent, who undertakes 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 cherubim. I am contented to take an increaſe in one ſingle power or faculty of his ſoul. Let him be endowed with a greater propenſity to induſtry and labour; a more vigorous ſpring and activity of mind; a more conſtant bent to buſineſs and application. Let the whole ſpecies poſſeſs naturally an equal diligence

gence with that which many individuals are able to attain by habit and reflection; and the moſt beneficial conſequences, without any allay 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

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 ſhould alſo have our own temper to ſtruggle with, and ſhould be deprived of that faculty which can alone fence againſt theſe multiplied evils. PART XI.

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, and cauſe the greateſt convulſions in ſociety? There is nothing ſo advantageous in the univerſe, but what frequently becomes pernicious, by its exceſs or defect; nor has Nature guarded, with the requiſite accuracy, againſt all diſorder or confuſion. The irregularity is never, perhaps, ſo great as to deſtroy any ſpecies; but is often ſufficient to involve the individuals in ruin and miſery. PART XI.

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

PART XI.

universe so accurately framed as to preserve 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 universe? This decision seems too presumptuous 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 established 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 goodness 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. PART XI.

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!

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 plea-

sures

PART XI.

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 XI. fourth, therefore, ſeems by far the moſt 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, DEMEA; your friend PHILO, from the beginning, has been amuſing himſelf at both our expence; and it muſt be confeſſed, 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 Nature, 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 doctors. In ages of ſtupidity and ignorance, indeed, theſe principles may ſafely 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 preſent.....

BLAME not ſo much, interpoſed PHILO, the ignorance of theſe reverend gentlemen.

tlemen. 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 XI. cauſes) with that which I formerly remarked 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.

PART

PART XII.

AFTER DEMEA's departure, CLEANTHES and PHILO continued the converſation in the following manner. Our friend, I am afraid, ſaid CLEANTHES, will have little inclination to revive 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 abhorrence of vulgar ſuperſtition, carries you ſtrange lengths, when engaged in an argument; and there is nothing ſo ſacred and venerable, even in your own eyes, which you ſpare on that occaſion.

PART XII. I MUST confeſs, replied PHILO, that I am leſs cautious on the ſubject of Natural 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 miſtake my intentions. You in particular, CLEANTHES, with whom I live in unreſerved intimacy; you are ſenſible, that, notwithſtanding the freedom of my converſation, and my love of ſingular 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. PART XII.

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

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 fœtûs.

our aſtoniſhment riſe upon us, in pro- PART XII.
portion 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 wiſ-
dom: But deſcry ſtill, at a diſtance, far-
ther 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 dif-
ferent intentions of Nature in framing
each ſpecies. And if the infidelity of
GALEN, even when theſe natural ſci-
ences were ſtill imperfect, could not
withſtand ſuch ſtriking appearances;
to what pitch of pertinacious obſtinacy
muſt a philoſopher in this age have at-
tained, who can now doubt of a Supreme
Intelligence?

COULD I meet with one of this ſpe-

PART XII.

cies (who, I thank God, are very rare) I would aſk him: Suppoſing there were a God, who did not diſcover himſelf immediately to our ſenſes; were it poſſible 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, according 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 prinple 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

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; 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:

PART XII.

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 XII. the ſlighteſt inquiry. I aſk the Theiſt, if he does not allow, that there is a great and immeaſurable, becauſe incomprehenſible, 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 nominally 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 human thought, be not energies that probably 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 œconomy 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.

PART XII. find you insensibly change sides; 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 *. PART XII.

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 expected from ſuch as are infinite and eternal? PART XII.

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

ſent 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

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? PART XII.

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

PART XII.

the Deity to be pleaſed with nothing but virtue in human behaviour. The recommendations 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. PART XII.

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.

PART 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

Is there any maxim in politics more 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 *faſces* 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 PART XII.

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. PART XII.

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 XII. valency of the EPICUREAN philoſophy: 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 obſervations by the ſame reaſon. Not to mention, that GREEK faith was infamous before the riſe of the EPICUREAN philoſophy; and EURIPIDES †, in a paſſage 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 CLEANTHES, 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 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. PART XII.

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 the

PART XII. the terrors of religion commonly prevail 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 the

the damned are infinitely ſuperior in number to the elect. PART XII.

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

PART XII. when a man is in a cheerful disposition, he is fit for business, or company, or entertainment of any kind; and he naturally applies himself to these, and thinks not of religion. When melancholy 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 manner, 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 raising cheerful prospects of futurity, make him run into the other extreme of joy and triumph. But still it must be acknowedged, that, as terror is the primary principle of religion, 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 exhauſting 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 disjoints 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. PART XII.

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 here-

after

PART 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 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. PART XII.

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

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 PART XII.

PART 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.

FINIS.

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