CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

EXISTENCE OF GOD,

AND THE

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL,

WITH

THE RECOMPENCES OF THE FUTURE STATE.

TO WHICH IS NOW ADDED,

THE DIVINITY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION PROVED BY THE EVIDENCE OF REASON, AND DIVINE REVELATION:

FOR THE CURE OF INFIDELITY,

The Hectic Evil of the Times.

ON THE

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

CHAP. I.

Atheism is fearful of public discovery. Four heads of arguments to prove the being of God. 1. The visible frame of the world, and the numerous natures in it, exactly modelled for the good of the whole, prove it to be the work of a most wise agent. The world considered in its several parts. The sun in its situation, motion, and effects, declares the providence of the Creator. The diurnal motion of the sun from east to west is very beneficial to nature. The annual course brings admirable advantage to it. The gradual passing of the sensible world, from the excess of heat to the extremity of cold, an effect of providence. The constant revolutions of day and night, and of the seasons of the year, discover that a wise cause orders them.

IN the managing the present subject, I shall first propound such things as clearly discover that a sovereign Spirit, rich in goodness, most wise in counsel, and powerful in operation, gave being to the world, and man in it. This part of my work may seem needless, because there are very few, if any, declared atheists. As monsters remain where they are born, in the desert sands of Africa, not seen, unless sought for; so there are some unnatural enormities, that conscious how execrable they are, conceal themselves in secret, and dare not appear in open view. And of all others, no impiety is so monstrous and fearful of public discovery as atheism. But, "The fool saith in his heart there is no God." He secretly whispers in contradiction to nature, reason, conscience, authorities, there is no supreme invisible power to whom he is accountable. And having thus concluded in the dark, he loses all reverence of the divine laws, and makes himself a god, his carnal vicious appetite the supreme rule, and the satisfaction of it his chief good. That many in our times, even of the great pretenders to wit and reason, are guilty of this

extreme folly, is sadly evident. They live as absolute atheists, only refuse the title for fear of infamy, or punishment. It will therefore not be unseasonable to revive the natural notion of the Deity. Now to establish this truth no arguments are more convincing than what are level to all understandings. And those are,

I. The visible frame of the world, and the numerous natures in it, all modelled by this supreme rule, the good of the whole.

II. The usual and the extraordinary works of providence towards men according to the moral quality of their actions.

III. The evidences that prove the world had a beginning in time.

IV. The universal sense of the Deity impressed on the minds of men.

1. The first reason is clear and intelligible to all: for it is the inseparable property of an intellectual agent to propound an end, to judge of the convenience between the means and it, and to contrive them in such a manner as to accomplish it. Now if we survey the universe, and all the beings it contains, their proportion, dependance and harmony, it will fully appear that antecedently to its existence, there was a perfect mind that designed it, and disposed the various parts in that exact order, that one beautiful world is composed of them. The * philosopher conjectured truly, who being shipwrecked on the Island of Rhodes, and come to the shore, spying some mathematical figures drawn on the sand, cried out with joy, *Vestigia hominum video*, I see the footsteps of men, and comforted his despairing companions, that they were not cast into a desert, or place of savages, but of men civil and wise, as he discovered by those impressions of their minds. And if we observe the frame of the world, the concatenation of the superior with the middle, and of the middle with the lower parts, whereby it is not an accidental aggregation of bodies, but an entire universe; if we consider the just disposing them conveniently to their nature and dignity, the inferior and less noble depending on the superior, and that so many contrary natures with that fidelity and league of mutual love embrace and assist each other, that every one working according to its peculiar quality, yet all unite their operations for one general end, the preservation and benefit of the whole, must we not strongly conclude that it is the work of a designing and most wise agent?

* Vitruv. Pref. l. 6.

——Pulchrum pulcherrimus ipse
Mundum mente gerens, similique ab imagine formans.
BOET.

To make this more evident, I will produce some instances.

The sun, of all celestial bodies the most excellent in beauty and usefulness, does in its situation, motion, effects, publish the glory of a most wise providence.

1. In its situation. The wisest providence could not design to place it better with respect to its dignity, or with respect to the celestial bodies, or the benefit of the lower world. For it is placed where the stars by reflecting his glorious light, as tributaries do homage to him their sovereign, the fountain of their beauty. It is in the midst of the planets, to enlighten them with his brightness, and enkindle them with his fire, and thereby derive to them such benign qualities and activities, that make them beneficial to mixed bodies. It is the heart of the world, wherein all the vital spirits are prepared, and it is so conveniently seated as to transmit to all, even the most distant parts of that vast body, by perpetual irradiations, the most temperate, various and effectual influences, necessary for the production and preservation of innumerable species of beings in it. If the sun were raised to the stars, the earth for want of its quickening heat would lose its prolific virtue, and remain a carcass. The air would be filled with continual oppressing vapours, the sea would overflow the land. If it were as low as the moon, as dangerous effects would follow, the air would be inflamed by its excessive heat, the sea boiling, the rivers dried up, every mountain a Vesuvius or Ætna; the whole earth a barren mass of ashes, a desert of Arabia. But in this due distance, it purifies the air, abates the superfluity of waters, temperately warms the earth, and keeps the elements in such degrees of power, as are requisite for the activity of mixed bodies depending on them. It cannot be in another place without the disorder and injury of universal nature.

Besides, there is a sensible proof of a wise director in its * motion, from whence so many and various effects proceed. The diurnal motion from east to west causes the day. The sun is the

* Some modern philosophers have argued, that the earth is a planet: but whether the earth or the sun be the centre of the world, the structure of it is not less admirable, nor the commerce of its parts less regular, nor less convincing that a most wise author framed it.

first spring and great original of light, and by his presence discovers the beauties of the most of visible objects. From hence all the pleasant variety of colours, to which light is the soul that gives vivacity. Without it the world would be the sepulchre of itself, nothing but silence and solitude, horror and confusion. The light guides our journies, awakens and directs our industry, preserves mutual conversation. And the withdrawing of the sun from one hemisphere to another is as beneficial to the world by causing night. For that has peculiar advantages. Its darkness enlightens us to see the stars, and to understand their admirable order, aspects, influences; their conjunction, distances, opposition, from which proceed their different effects in all passive bodies. Now what can be more pleasant than the ornaments and diversities of these twins of time? Besides, by this distinction of the day and night there is a fit succession of labour and rest, of the works and thoughts of men; those proper to the day, active and clear; the other to the night, whose obscurity prevents the wandering of the mind through the senses; and silence favours its calm contemplations.

And the constant revolution of day and night in the space of twenty-four hours, is of great benefit. If they should continue six entire months together, as under the poles, though their space would be equal in the compass of the year as now, yet with public disadvantage. The shining of the sun without intermission, would be very hurtful to the earth, and to its inhabitants. And its long absence would cause equal mischiefs by contrary qualities. For the nature of man and other living creatures cannot subsist long in travail, without repairing their decays by rest. Now the succession of day and night in that space, fitly tempers their labour and repose. After the toilsome service of the day, the sun retires behind the earth, and the night procures a truce from business, unbends the world, and invites to rest in its deep silence and tranquillity. And by sleep, when the animal operations cease, the spirits that were much consumed in the service of the senses, are renewed, and united, in assistance to the vital faculties; the body is restored, and at the springing day made fresh and active for new labour. So that the wisdom of the Creator is as visible in the manner of this dispensation, as the thing itself. And it is an observable point of providence in ordering the length and shortness of days and nights for the good of the several parts of the

world. Under the equinoctial line, the earth being parched by the direct beams of the sun, the nights are regularly twelve hours through the year, fresh and moist to remedy that inconvenience. On the contrary, in the northern parts, where there is a fainter reflection of its beams, the days are very long, that the sun may supply by its continuance, what is defective in its vigour, to ripen the fruits of the earth.

The annual course of the sun between the north and south, discovers also the high and admirable wisdom of God. For all the benefits that nature receives, * depend on his unerring constant motion through the same circle declining and oblique, with respect to the poles of the world. It is not possible that more can be done with less. From hence proceed the difference of climates, the inequality of days and nights, the variety of seasons, the diverse mixtures of the first qualities, the universal instruments of natural productions. In the spring it is in conjunction with the pleiades, to cause sweet showers, that are as milk to nourish the new-born tender plants, that hang at the breasts of the earth. In the summer it is joined with the dog-star, to redouble its force, for the production of fruits necessary to the support of living creatures. And winter, that in appearance is the death of nature, yet is of admirable use for the good of the universe. The earth is cleansed, moistened and prepared, so that our hopes of the succeeding year depend on the frosts and snows of winter.

If the sun in its diurnal and annual motion were so swift that the year were completed in six months, and the day and night in twelve hours, the fruits of the earth would want a necessary space to ripen. If on the contrary it were so slow, as double the time were spent in its return, the harvest but once gathered in the twenty-four months, could not suffice for the nourishment of living creatures.

It is also a considerable effect of providence, that the sensible world does not suddenly pass from the highest degrees of heat to the extremity of cold, nor from this to that, but so gradually that the passage is not only tolerable, but pleasant. Immediate extremes are very dangerous to nature. To prevent that inconvenience, the spring interposes between the winter and summer, by its gentle heat disposing living bodies for the excess of summer. And autumn of a middle quality prepares them for the rigour of

* Obliquitatem ejus intellexisse, est rerum fores aperuisse. *Plin.*

winter; that they may pass from one to another without violent alteration.

To attribute these revolutions, so just and uniform to chance, is the perfection of folly: * for chance, as a cause that works without design, has no constancy nor order in its effects. If a die be thrown an hundred times, the fall is contingent, and rarely happens to be twice together on the same square. Now the alternate returns of day and night are perpetual in all the regions of the universe. And though neither the one nor the other begin nor end their course twice together in the same point; so that their motion appears confused; yet it is so just, that at the finishing of the year they are found to have taken precisely as many paces the one as the other. In the amiable war between them, though one of the two always gets, and the other loses the hours, yet in the end they retire equal, and the vicissitudes of seasons with an inviolable tenor succeed one another. Who ever saw the various scenes of a theatre move by hazard in those just spaces of time, as to represent palaces or woods, rocks and seas, as the subject of the actors required? And can the lower world four times in the circle of the year change appearance, and alter the seasons so conveniently to the use of nature, and no powerful mind direct that great work? Frequent discoveries of an end orderly pursued, must be attributed to a judicious agent.

The psalmist guided not only by inspiration but reason, declares, "The day is thine, the night also is thine, thou madest the summer and winter." But this I shall have occasion to touch on afterward.

* Φανερὸν ὧδε τίρευ τὰ τῶν αἰτία ἡ τύχη, λέγεται.—*Arist.*

CHAP. II.

The air a fit medium to convey the light and influences of the heavens to the lower world. It is the repository of vapours that are drawn up by the sun, and descend in fruitful showers. The winds of great benefit. The separation of the sea from the land the effect of great wisdom and power. That the earth is not an equal globe, is both pleasant and useful. The league of the elements considered. Excellent wisdom visible in plants and fruits. The shapes of animals are answerable to their properties. They regularly act to preserve themselves. The bees, swallows, ants directed by an excellent mind.

THE expansion of the air from the ethereal heavens to the earth, is another testimony of divine providence. For it is transparent and of a subtile nature, and thereby a fit medium to convey light and celestial influences to the lower world. It receives the first impressions of the heavens, and insinuating without resistance, conveys them to the most distant things. By it the greatest numbers of useful objects, that cannot by immediate application to our faculties be known, are transmitted in their images and representations: as colours and figures to the eye, sounds to the ear. It is necessary for the subsistence of animals that live by respiration. It mixes with their nourishment, cools the inward heat, and tempers its violence.

Besides, in the air vapours are attracted by the sun, till they ascend to that height to which its reflection does not arrive, and there losing the soul of heat that was only borrowed, by degrees return to their native coldness, and are gathered into clouds, which do not break in a deluge of waters that would wash away the seed, but dissolving into fruitful showers, fall in millions of drops to refresh the earth; so that what is taken from it without loss, is restored with immense profit.

The air is the field of the winds, an invisible generation of spirits whose life consists in motion. These are of divers qualities and effects, for the advantage of the world. Some are turbid, others serene and cheerful; some warm and refreshing, others cold and sharp; some are placid and gentle, others furious and stormy; some moist, others dry. They cleanse and purify the air that otherwise would corrupt by the settling of vapours, and be destructive to the lives of animals. They convey the clouds for the

universal benefit of the earth: for if the clouds had no motion but directly upwards, they must only fall on those parts from whence they ascended, to the great damage of the earth. For moist places that send up plenty of vapours would be overflowed; and the highest parts, to which no other waters arise, would be unfruitful. Now the winds are assigned to all the quarters of the world, and as the reins are slack or hard, they guide the clouds for the advantage of the lower world.

The separation of the sea from the land, and containing it within just bounds, is the effect of almighty wisdom and goodness. For being the lighter element, its natural situation is above it. And till separated, it was absolutely useless as to habitation or fruitfulness. It is now the convenient seat of terrestrial animals, and supplies their provisions. And the sea is fit for navigation, whereby the most distant regions maintain commerce for their mutual help and comfort.

The rivers dispersed through the veins of the earth, preserve its beauty, and make it fruitful. They are always in motion, to prevent corrupting, and to visit several parts, that the labour of cultivating may not be in vain. And that these waters may not fail, the innumerable branches spread through the earth, at last unite in the main body of the sea. What they pour into it, through secret channels they derive from it, by a natural perpetual circulation, not to be imitated by art. In this we have a clear proof of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator.

That the earth is not an equal globe, but some parts are raised into hills and mountains, others sunk into deep vallies; some are immense plains, affect with various delight, and are useful for excellent ends; not only for the production of minerals, of marble and stones requisite for buildings, but for the thriving of several kinds of grain and plants that are necessary for food or * medicine: for some love the shade, others the sun; some flourish best on rocks and precipices, others in low moist places; some delight in hills, others in plains. Thus by the unequal surface of the earth, is caused a convenient temperature of air and soil for its productions.

Add further, the wisdom of the Creator is discovered by ob-

* Ne sylvæ quidem humidiorq; naturæ facies medicinis caret, sacra illa parente rerum omnium, nusquam non remedia disponente homini, ut medicina fieret ipsa solitudo. *Plin.*

serving the league of the elements from whence all mixed bodies arise. Of how different qualities are earth, water, air, fire? Yet all combine together without the destruction of their enmity, that is as necessary to preserve nature as their friendship. Can there be imagined a greater discord in the parts of the elementary world, and a greater concord in the whole? To reduce them to such an equilibrium that all their operations promote the same end, proves that there is a mind of the highest wisdom, that has an absolute dominion over all things, and tempers them accordingly.

If we come to plants and flowers. Who divided their kinds, and formed them in that beautiful order? Who painted and perfumed them? How doth the same water die them with various colours, the scarlet, the purple, the carnation? What causes the sweet odours that breathe from them with an insensible subtilty, and diffuse in the air for our delight? From whence proceed their different virtues? These admirable works of nature exceed the * imitation and comprehension of man. It is clear therefore they proceed from a cause that excels him in wisdom and power. That some plants of excellent virtue are full of prickles in their stock and leaves, to protect them from beasts that would root them up, or trample on them, an † atheist acknowledged to be the effect of providence. The same wisdom preserves the seed in the root under the flower, and prepares the numerous leaves of trees, not only for a shadow to refresh living creatures, but to secure their fruits from the injuries of the weather. Therefore in the spring they shoot forth always before the fruits are formed. And tender delicate fruits are covered with broader and thicker leaves than others of a firmer substance. In winter they cast their leaves, are naked and dry, the vital sap retiring to the root, as if careless of dying in the members to preserve life in the heart, that in the returning spring diffuses new heat and spirits, the cause of their flourishing and fruitfulness. The season of fruit is another indication of providence. In summer we have the cool and moist to refresh our heats, in autumn the durable to be preserved when the earth produces none.

* Est igitur id quo illa conficiuntur, homine melius. Id autem quid potius dixerim quam deum? *Tull. de nat. Deor.*

† His muniendo aculeis, telisq; armando, remediis, ut tuta & salva sint, Ita hoc quoq; quod in iis odimus, hominum causa excogitatum est. *Plin.* l. 22.

If we observe the lower rank of animals, their kinds, shapes, properties, it is evident that all are the copies of a designing mind, the effects of a skilful hand. Some of them are fierce, others familiar; some are servile, others free; some crafty, others simple, and all framed conveniently to their natures. How incongruous were it for the soul of a lion to dwell in the body of a sheep, or that of an hare to animate the body of a cow? It would require a volume to describe their different shapes, and fitness to their particular natures. Those which are fruitful in many births, as swine and dogs, are furnished with many teats for the supply of their nourishment; which * Tully observes to be the certain effect of provident nature. Besides, creatures merely sensitive are acted so regularly to preserve themselves and their kind, that the reason of a superior agent † shines in all their actions. They no sooner come into the world but know their enemies, and either by strength or art secure themselves. They are instructed to swim, to fly, to run, to leap. They understand their fit nourishment, and remedies proper for their diseases. Who infused into birds the art to build their nests, the ‡ love to cherish their young? How are the bees instructed to frame their honey-combs without § hands, and in the dark, and of such a figure that among all other of equal compass and filling up the same space, is most capacious? The consideration of their art and industry, their political government and providence, and other miraculous qualities, so astonished some great wits, that they attributed something divine ‖ to them.

Esse apibus partem divinæ mentis, & haustus
Ætherios dixere——

——Some there are maintain
That bees deriv'd from a celestial strain,
And heavenly race.

* Atq; ut intelligamus, nihil horum esse fortuitum, & hæc omnia esse providæ sollertisq; naturæ, quæ multiplices fœtus procreant, ut sues, & canes, his mammarum data est multitudo, quas eadem paucas habent quæ pauca gignunt.

† Quid est in his in quo non naturæ ratio intelligentis appareat? *Tull.*

‡ Quid dicam quantus amor bestiarum sit in educandis custodiendisq; iis quæ procreaverint, usq; ad eum finem dum possint se ipsa defendere? *Tull.*

§ Quis non stupeat hoc fieri posse sine manibus? nulla interveniente doctrina hanc artem nasci.

‖ Quid non divinum habent, nisi quod moriuntur? *Quintil. Virgil.*

What moves the swallows upon the approach of winter to fly to a more temperate clime, as if they understood the celestial signs, the influences of the stars, and the changes of the seasons? From whence comes the foresight of the ants to provide in summer for winter? Their economy and fervour, their discretion in assisting one another, as if knowing that every one laboured for all, and where the benefit is common the labour must be common; their care to fortify their receptacles with a bank of earth, that in great rains it may not be overflowed, have made them the fit emblems of prudent diligence.

This is excellently described by Virgil;

Ac veluti ingentem formicæ farris acervum,
Cum populant, hyemis memores, tectoque reponunt,
It nigrum campis agmen, prædamque per herbas
Convectant calle angusto, pars grandia trudunt
Obnixa frumenta humeris; pars agmina cogunt,
Castigatque moras, opere omnis semita fervet.

Thus translated by Mr. Godolphin.

So when the winter-fearing ants invade
Some heaps of corn the husbandman had made;
The sable army marches, and with prey
Laden return, pressing the leafy-way;
Some help the weaker, and their shoulders lend;
Others the order of the march attend,
Bring up the troops, and punish all delay.

How could they propound such ends, and devise means proper to obtain them? It is evident from their constant and regular actings, that an understanding above man's, who often fails in his designs, impresed their unerring instincts, and directs their motions.

CHAP. III.

The body of man formed with perfect design for beauty and usefulness. A short description of its parts. The fabric of the eye and hand admirably discovers the wisdom of the maker. The erect stature of the body fitted for the rational soul. Man by speech is fitted for society. How the affections are discovered in the countenance. The distinction of persons by the face how necessary. The reasonable soul the image of a wise and voluntary agent.

I WILL now briefly consider man, with respect to both the parts of his compounded nature, wherein are very clear evidences of a wise maker.

The body is the most artificial of all perishing things in the world. It is justly called the store-house of proportions. It is equally impossible to add any thing but what is superfluous, or to take away any thing but what is necessary. How many internal parts, divers in their qualities and figures, are disposed with that providence, that all operate according to their proper natures, and not one can be, I do not say better, but tolerably in any other place, as well for its special as the common benefit? All are so justly ordered, with that mutual dependance as to their being and operations, that none can be without the whole, nor the whole without it. So that if with attentive eye we consider this, it might seem that in making the body, the design was only respecting convenience and * profit: but if we turn our thoughts from that which is within this unparalleled piece, and regard the various forms and structure of the outward parts, the graceful order that adorns them, we might imagine that the maker only designed its regular visible beauty. † As Phavorinus comparing the writings of two famous orators, observed that if one word be taken from a sentence of Plato, you spoiled the elegance, if from Lysias, the sense. So the taking away the least considerable

* Omnia in hominis figura non solum ad usum, verum etiam ad venustatem apta. *Tull.*

† Platonis oratione verbum aliquod demas, de elegantia detraxerit, si ex Lysia, de sententia.

part from the body, spoils its comeliness, or usefulness. * Two great philosophers have left excellent discourses of the parts of the body justly esteemed among their most noble works. Galen after an exquisite observation of the symetry of this fabric, challenged the Epicureans, to find but one of all the numerous parts that compose it, the least vein or fibre, that was not serviceable for its proper end, or might be better if changed in its form, temperature or place, and he would embrace their opinion, that chance was the author of it. In particular he makes an inquiry whether the heart that does the office of the sun in that little world, could be placed better than in the middle of the breast, and evidently proves it could not, with respect to the uses of the several faculties, that from it, as the first fountain, derive necessary supplies for their exercise. For this reason he says, that by describing the use of the parts, he composed a true hymn in praise of the wise maker.

What knowledge is requisite to describe all that is wonderful in it? The contempering the differing humours in just weight and measure, the inviolable correspondence established between all the parts of the performance of natural, vital, and animal operations? To touch upon a few things: The stomach that by an unknown virtue prepares the nourishment, the heart and liver, the two seas of blood; the one more gross, the other more refined and spirituous; the veins and arteries their inseparable companions, that diffuse themselves into innumerable rivulets, and convey the blood and spirits of life; the nerves, the secret channels, that from the brain derive the spirits of sense and motion; the muscles that give it various motions; the fleshy parts of different substance and quality according to their various offices; the membranes in that diversity, some finer, some thicker weaved according to the quality of the part they cover; the inward fat that preserves the warm bowels from drying up; the marrow wherewith the instruments of motion are oiled and made nimble and expedite; the bones that support the building of such different forms, proportions, qualities, and so fitly joined: these are a full conviction that a divine mind contrived it, a divine hand made and fashioned it.

* Σοφοῦ τινος δημιουργοῦ τέχνημα ὁτι μὲν ἀκρὰς ἕξ σοφίας καὶ δυνάμεως ὁ τοῦ σώματος ἡ μὲν κατασκευή. Gal. de Fœt. Form.

I will more particularly consider the curious fabric of the eye and hand. The eye is a work of such incomparable artifice, that whoever understands it, hath a sufficient proof of his skill that formed it. This is most evident by dissecting it, and representing the parts separate one from another, and after reuniting them, and thereby discovering the causes of the whole composure, and of the offices proper to every part.

That that may be understood without seeing it, is, that there is no member in the whole body composed of more parts, nor more different, nor ordered with more exact wisdom between themselves in one frame. Their situation is so regular and necessary, that if any of them be never so little displaced, the eye is no more an eye. It includes three humours that are transparent, and of different thickness, the one resembling water, the other glass, the other crystal, and from them borrows their names: to vary the place, the distance, the less or greater thickness, the figure that is peculiar to each of them, would render the eye altogether useless for seeing: for the refractions of the light that enters through the pupil would be disordered; and the rays not be united in a point, to paint in the retina, the images of visible objects, which is the last disposition from whence the act of seeing follows. Several tunicles involve it, one of which is perforated (as much as the little circle in the middle that is called the pupil) to give open passage to the images flowing from their objects. The muscles by their agency raise or cast down, turn or fix it. The nerves fastened to the brain, convey a supply of spirits for the sight, and transmit the representation of all visible objects without confusion to the internal senses.

If we consider the hand by the most exact rule of proportion, it is evident that its substance and shape are most conducive to beauty and service. If the fingers were not divided, and separately moveable, but joined together with one continued skin, how uncomely, how unuseful would it be? Of an hundred effects, ninety would be lost. All that require variety of motion, subtilty of art, or strength, could not be performed. But the fingers being disjoined, it is fit to do whatever the mind designs, or necessity requires. It works entirely, or in parts; it brandishes a sword, or manages a pen; strikes on the anvil with a hammer, or uses a delicate file; rows in the water, or touches a lute. It is fit for all things, adapting itself to the greatest and least: all which

advantages the * philosopher expresses with admirable brevity, *In divisione manus componendi facultas est, in compositione dividendi non esset.* Suppose the fingers were of equal length and bigness, great inconveniences would follow. And in this the divine wisdom is eminent, that what at first sight seems to be of no consequence, yet is absolutely necessary, not only for all the regular, but for most works of the hand. If the fingers were extended to the same measure, it were able to do nothing but what the four longest can. And how uncomely would such a figured hand appear? When that beauty is lost, that springs from variety in things alike. Besides, how unprofitable a part were the hand if the fingers had within one entire bone, not flexible to grasp as occasion requires? Or if a fleshly substance only, how weak and unapt for service? What strength or firmness for labour? Even the nails are not superfluous; besides their gracefulness, they give force and sense to the points of the fingers. If one be lost, the feeling in that extreme part is very much lessened, that is so necessary for the discerning of things.

To these I shall add two other considerations that discover perfect wisdom in the framing of the human body.

1. Its structure is very different from that of brutes, whereby it is a fit instrument of the rational soul. The brutes being merely terrestrial animals, are perpetually grovelling and poring downwards, seeking no more than their food. They have no commerce with the heavens, but so far as it serves them for the earth, as being only born for their bellies. But in man the posture of his body, interprets that of his soul. † The stature is straight and raised, expressive of his dominion over the creatures made for his use. The head is over all the less noble parts, and the eye so placed that the mind may look out at those windows to discover the world in its various parts, to contemplate the

* Εὖ δὲ μεμηχανῆσθαι, καὶ τὸ εἶδος, καὶ τὴν φύσιν τῆς χειρὸς, Διαιρετὴ γὰρ καὶ πολυχειδὴς, ἵνα γὰρ ἐν τῷ διαιρέτην εἶναι καὶ συνθέτην εἶναι, ἐν τούτῳ δὲ ἐκεῖνο ἐκ ἔνεστι.—*Arist. lib. 4. de part. animal. cap.* 10.

† Quid ergo plenius Argumentum & mundum hominis, & hominem sui causa, deum fecisse quam quod ex omnibus animantibus solus, ita formatus est, ut oculi ejus ad cœlum directi, facies ad deum spectans sit? Ut videatur hominem deus quasi porrecta manu allevatum ex humo ad contemplationem sui excitasse. *Lactant.*

heavens its native seat, and be instructed and excited to admire and love the divine maker.

2. If we consider man complexly as joined with society, to which he is naturally inclined, he is so formed as to give or receive assistance for his preservation and comfort. The tongue his peculiar glory, the interpreter of the thoughts, and reconciler of the affections, maintains this happy commerce. Besides, the face makes known our inward motions to others. Love, hatred, desire, dislike, joy, grief, confidence, despair, courage, cowardice, admiration, contempt, pride, modesty, cruelty, compassion, and all the rest of the affections, are discovered by their proper aspects. By a sudden change of the countenance are manifested the deepest sorrow, the highest joy. As the face of the heavens veiled with clouds, by the breaking forth of the sun is presently cleared up. And (which is above the imitation of art) different affections are represented in a more or less expressive appearance according to their stronger or remisser degrees. Timanthes the famous painter, wisely drew a veil over Agamemnon's face, present at the sacrifice of his innocent daughter; despairing to express and accord his several passions, the tenderness of a Father, with the majesty of a king, and the generosity of the leader of an army. This way of discovery has a more universal use than words. The ministry of the tongue is only useful to those that understand our language, but the face, though silent, speaks to the eye. The countenance is a crystal wherein the thoughts and affections, otherwise invisible, appear, and is a natural sign known to all. For this manner of expression is not by the common agreement of men as signs absolutely free or mixed, but from the institution of nature, that always chooses what is most proper to its end, being guided by a superior director according to the rules of perfect wisdom.

Moreover, the innumerable different character in the faces of men to discern every one, is the counsel of most wise providence, for the universal benefit of the world. For take away this distinction, and all the bands of laws, of commerce, of friendship are dissolved. If we could not by singular inseparable lineaments distinguish the innocent from the guilty, a brother from a stranger, the worthy from the unworthy, all truth in judgments, sincerity in relations, distinction of merits, security in trade would be destroyed. In short, human societies cannot be preserved

without union and distinction; the one prevents division, the other confusion. Union is maintained by speech and other signs of the inward dispositions of the heart; distinction is caused by the variety of countenances. And it is considerable that so few parts composing it, and in so small a compass, and always in the same situation, yet there is such a diversity of figures as of faces in the world. * Seneca propounds this as a spectacle worthy of admiration, though the stoical pride, falsely esteemed greatness of mind, would scarce admire miracles.

And as the frame of man's body, so much more the rational soul, his eminent prerogative above all sensible beings, discovers the Deity. The superior faculties, the understanding and will, whereby he makes a judgment and choice of things in order to his happiness, declare it to be the living image and glory of a most wise and voluntary agent. The admirable composition of two things so disproportioned, a spiritual and material substance in the human nature, is an argument of his omnipotent skill, who united them in a manner inconceivable to us. But the nature, qualities, and operations of the soul, shall be more distinctly considered afterwards. And by this short account of some parts of the world, we may sufficiently discover the perfections of the maker. We must pluck out our eyes, and extinguish common sense, not to see infinite wisdom, power and goodness shining in them, the proper marks of the Deity.

* Inter cætera propter quæ mirabile divini artifices ingenium est, hoc quoq existimo, quod in tanta copia rerum, nusquam in idem recidit; etiam quæ similia videntur, cum conferis diversa sint.

CHAP. IV.

The vanity of Epicurus' opinion of the world's original discovered, from the visible order in all the parts of it. Chance produces no regular effects. The constant natural course of things in the world proves that it is not framed nor conducted by uncertain chance. The world was not caused by the necessity of nature. In the search of causes the mind cannot rest till it comes to the first. Second causes are sustained and directed in all their workings by the first. The Creator, though invisible in his essence, is visible in his effects.

BEFORE I proceed to the other head of arguments, I will briefly show the vanity of those opinions that attribute the production of the world to chance, or to the sole necessity of nature.

It was the extravagant fancy of Democritus, and Epicurus after him, that the original of the world was from the fortuitous encountering of atoms, that were in perpetual motion in an immense space, till at last a sufficient number met in such a conjunction as formed it in this order. It is strange to amazement, how so wild an opinion, never to be reconciled with reason, could find entertainment. Yet he left a numerous school, many followers tenacious of his doctrine, the heirs of his frenzy. It is very easy to show the vanity of this conceit, that supposes all, and proves nothing.

That these particles of matter should thus meet together, it is necessary they move: * now from whence is the principle of their motion, from an internal form, or an external agent? If they will be ingenuous and speak true, they must answer thus, from whence soever they have it, they have it: for if they did not move, their opinion cannot proceed a step further. But supposing their motion to be natural, what powerful cause made them rest? How are they so firmly united? Have they hooks that fasten, or birdlime, or pitch, or any glutinous matter, that by touching they cleave so fast together? They must grant something like this, otherwise they cannot unite and compound,

* Cum in rerum natura duo sint quærenda, unum quæ materia sit ex qua quæq; res efficiatur, alterum quæ vis sit quæ quidq; efficiat, de materia disseruerunt epicuræi, vim & causam efficientem reliquerunt. *Tul. de, fin. lib.* 1.

and then the Epicurean opinion is presently dissipated. Suppo sing them triangular, circular, square, or of any other regular, or irregular figure, yet they can make no other compound, than a mass of sand, in which the several grains touch without firm union. So that it is very evident whether we suppose motion or rest to be originally in the nature of matter, there must be a powerful efficient to cause the contrary. Besides, by what art did so many meet and no more, and of such a figure and no other, and in that * just order as to form the world, a work so exact that by the most exquisite skill it cannot be made better? Add further; how could these minute bodies without sense, by motion produce it? This is to assert that a cause may act above the degree of its power.

Can we then rationally conceive that a confused rout of atoms of divers natures, and some so distant from others, should meet in such a fortunate manner, as to form an entire world, so vast in the bignesss, so distinct in the order, so united in the great diversities of natures, so regular in the variety of changes, so beautiful in the whole composure, though it were granted, that they did move, and that one of their possible conjunctions in some part of eternity were that we see at present? Could such a strict confederacy of the parts of the universe result from an accidental agreement of contrary principles? It is so evident by the universal experience of men, that regular effects are caused by the skill of a designing agent, that works for an end, that upon the sight of any such effects, there is not the least shadow of a suspicion in the mind, that it proceeded from blind and counselless chance. If we should hear one make a plea for a cause, with such powerful reasons and eloquence as are most proper to convince and persuade his judges to decide it for him, can we doubt whether he understands what he speaks, or casually moves the organs of speech? And yet if he did not move them by chance, one of the casual motions equally possible with any other, would be that performed at present. If a thousand brass wheels were thrown on a heap, would six or eight meet so fitly, as by their conjunction to organize a clock, that should distinguish the hours? Or, is a skilful hand requisite to join them, and direct their motion? And did the planets, those vast bodies,

* Si sensu carent nec coire tam disposite possint, quia non potest quicquam rationale perficere nisi ratio. *Lact.*

by chance ascend to the upper part of the world, and join in that order as to measure the time exactly for so many past ages? Who ever saw a dead statue formed in the veins of marble, or a well proportioned palacer with all rooms of convenience and state, arise out of a quarry of stones without a sculptor to fashion the one, and an architect to frame the other? Yet marble and stones are more disposed to make a statue, or a building, that are the materials of them, and only require skill and workmanship to give them form, than atoms mixed together are to make the world. Indeed * Pliny faintly tells a story of a fabulous ring of Pyrrhus, in which an agate was set, distinctly representing not by art, but pure hazard, Apollo with his harp in the midst of the nine muses. The first reporter was defective, that he did not oblige us to believe, that the sound of his harp was heard in concert with the muses. It would have been a wonderous fine miracle, and the belief as easy that a stone might be a musician, as a painter.

Now if the effects of art are not without an artificer, can the immense fabric of the world be other than the work of a most perfect understanding? Who fixed the foundations of the earth? Who laid the beautiful pavement we tread on? Who divided and adorned the chambers of the spheres? Who opened the windows to the light in the east? Who encompassed it with the immense vault of the starry heaven hanging in the air, and supporting itself? Could artless chance build it? No man, unless totally deserted of reason, can possibly have such a fancy. Let reason judge how could the world be otherwise than it is, supposing it framed by a designing cause? All things are disposed divinely, that is, by perfect wisdom, as public necessity and ornament require. What the psalmist observes concerning the heavens, is equally true of all the other parts of nature, "Their line is gone out, to signify the exactness of their proportion." If this be the effect of chance, what is the product of design? Can reason distinguish between things artificial, wherein the felicity of invention appears, and things rude not done by rules in the works of the hands, and can it not discover the manifest pfints of wisdom in the order of the universe? † How much

* Fama est, & habuisse fertur, non arte, sed sponte naturæ, ita discurrentibus maculis, ut musis quoque singulis sua redderentur insignia.

† Si est aliquid in rerum natura, quod hominis mens, quod ratio, quod vis,

more skill is evident in the frame of the world than in all the effects of human art, so much the less folly would it be to attribute the most curious works of art; than the production of the world to chance.

Add further; the established order of the parts of the world is an argument that excludes all doubt, that it is governed and was at first framed by unerring wisdom. For, if they were united by chance, would they continue in the same manner one day? Is it not most likely that one of the innumerable possible combinations should succeed, different from the same tenor of things that is but one? Especially if we consider that the parts of the world are never at rest: the heavens, the elements, mixed bodies are in perpetual motion. If chance ruled, is it within the confines of probability, that the sun that runs ten or twelve thousand leagues every day, should be now in the same part of the heavens, where it was in former years in such a day, when there are so many other places wherein by chance it might wander? Would the stars keep a perpetual course regularly in such appearing irregularities?

Nec quicquam est tanta magis mirabile mole,
Quam ratio, & certis quod legibus omnia parent;
Nusquam turba nocet, nihil illis partibus errat.

Manil. lib. 1. Astrom.

Or would the sowing of seed in the earth certainly produce such a determinate sort of grain? For the other possible mixtures are so vastly numerous, that it would be ten thousand to one but some other thing should spring up than what does. According to his hypothesis, it would be greater folly to believe that the natural course of things should be the same this year as in former times, than to assert that a gamester should to day throw the dice in the same order, and with the same points uppermost as he did yesterday. It is evident therefore that the Epicurean doctrine having not the least shadow of reason, had never been received with applause but as it is joined with impiety.

2. Some attribute the rise and course of things in the world to the sole necessity of nature. To this it may be replied.

quod potestas humana efficere non possit, est illud certe quod illud efficit homine melius. Id ante quid potius dixerim quam deum.

It is true there is an evident connection of causes and effects in the celestial and elementary world, whereby times and seasons are continued, and the succession of mutable things is preserved, so that nature always consuming, remains entire. Though all vegetative and sensitive beings die, yet the species are immortal. For the living are brought forth to succeed in the place of the dead. But the inquiring mind cannot rest here: for it is impossible to conceive a train of effects, one caused by another, without ascending to the first efficient that is not an effect. For nothing can act before it exists. The order of causes requires that we ascend to the supreme, which derives being and virtue to all the intermediate. Thus nature produces things from seminal causes, that depend on things already in being. The seed of flowers and trees suppose the fruits of the earth before growing, but the first tree could not be so produced. To fancy an infinite succession of causes depending one upon another, without arriving to a first, can only fall into the thoughts of a disordered mind. How came this horse, that lion in nature? It is by generation from another, and that from another, and so infinitely. How came this man into the world? It is because he was begotten by such a father, and he by another, and so infinitely. Thus atheism that rejects one truly infinite cause, is obliged to admit an infinity in all things, an incomprehensibility in all things. It is therefore evident the efficient principles in nature are from the sole power of the first and independent cause. They could not proceed from themselves; and that a most wise and powerful being is the original of all things is as evident. Is it conceivable that the insensible mass that is called matter, should have had an eternal being without original? Whereas there is not the least imaginable repugnance in the attributes of the first and highest being, in whom all those perfections concur, which as proper to the Deity, are formed in the mind in the idea of it, as his spiritual nature, eternity, immensity, wisdom, omnipotence, &c. of which it is equally true, that no one either absolutely or relatively considered, involves a contradiction, that make it impossible for the Supreme Being to possess it; is it not perfectly inconsistent to attribute to matter the lowest and most contemptible of all beings, the highest and most noble perfection, and independent existence? One may assert it in words, but not seriously without the utter deserting of reason. Man in-

comparably excels this matter, he understands it, and that understands not him, yet he has a derived being in time. It is therefore necessary that that should have some cause of its being. But supposing the self subsistence of matter from eternity; could the world, full of innumerable forms, spring by an impetus from a dead formless principle? It is equally impossible that a blind cause, casual or fatal, should give being and order to the universe.

Besides, all subordinate causes are sustained in their beings and powers by fresh influences from the first, and directed in their operations. To attribute the manifold effects in the world to second causes working in a blind manner without an universal intellectual mover, that disposes, tempers, and governs them, is as unreasonable as to attribute human works to the common instruments of art, without the direction of the understanding that uses them. The hand or pencil has not skill to do any thing, but as it obeys the mind, that gives it the impression of art, and regulates its motion. The earth knows not the various fruits that spring from it, nor the sea its living productions. And the sun, though a more specious, is not a more intelligent and artificial agent. Nature under another name is the ordinary power of God, that by its intimate concourse with second causes produces and supports things. And it is one of the considerable wonders of his providence, that the stream of perishing things, always emptying, is always full; there being a supply from the fountains of continual productions of what is lost in the dead sea: so that the world is always the same, and always new.

And from what hath been argued, we may judge how unreasonable it is to doubt whether there be a principle in nature of excellent wisdom, because not seen in his own essence: For if reason compel us to acknowledge that the works of art wrought by manual instruments, proceed from an unseen mind that directed their motions according to the idea framed in itself, we ought more strongly to conclude there is a * divine mind though invisible to mortal eyes, that contrived at first, and with knowledge performs all the works of nature. To deny the existence of a being not subjected to our outward senses, is equally of no force

* Εἰ δὲ ἐκ τῶ βλέπειν αὐτὸν, οὐδ εἶναι φήσομεν, ὃ φυλαίομεν ἐπὶ τὴν ὁμοιότητα τῆς πρὸς τὰς τέχνας κρίσεως.—*Gal. de opifice hominis.*

in both the instances. By the same reason St. Austin confounds the atheist objecting that he could not see the Deity, to whom he propounds this question, that since his body was only visible, and not his soul, why should it not be buried? And upon the reply, that the * quickening presence of the soul was evident in the actions of life performed by the body; he truly infers, if a vital principle imperceptible in itself is discovered by vital actions, the Deity, though by the perfection of his nature undiscernible to our senses, is clearly seen by the light of his effects. And those who are wilfully blind, if God should by any new sensible effects make a discovery of himself, yet would remain inconvincible: for the arguments of his presence from extraordinary effects, are liable to the same exceptions pretended against the ordinary.

To what has been said concerning the proofs of the Deity from the frame of things in the world, and the ordinary course of natural causes, I shall add further, that in every age such events have befallen men with that congruity to their actions, that natural reason has clearly argued from hence, that an immortal providence observes them, and rewards them accordingly. Indeed sometimes there is a promiscuous dispensing of temporal good and evil things for most wise reasons; partly to convince men that the recompences of moral actions are not distributed by the just God here, but reserved for the next life: and partly that the foundation of true virtue might not be taken away; for that consists in preferring the honest good before the pleasant or profitable in this world; so that there could not be a perfect choice of it, if the certain expectation of a present temporal benefit were the motive to allure men to its practice: but usually it is otherwise. Common experience verifies, that estates unjustly got, either waste away insensibly, as a body by the secret force of slow poison, or speedily are scattered by the luxury of the next heir, whereas what is obtained by honest industry, has a blessing conveyed along with it. And sometimes the divine providence is so visible in retributions here, that impiety itself cannot overlook it. As when good men are signally preserved from imminent dangers, and become successful in worthy designs beyond all human expectations. Or in punishing the wicked: as, 1. When there is such an exact cor-

* Unde scio quia vivis, cujus animam non video? Unde scio? Respondebis, quia loquor, quia ambulo, quia operor. Stulte, ex operibus corporis agnoscis viventem, ex operibus creaturæ non agnoscis creatorem?

respondence between the evils one has done, and the evils he suffers, that the signatures and prints of the crimes are apparent in the sufferings. *Per quæ quis peccat, per hæc & torquetur.* The complices of the sin, are the executioners of the punishment. 2. When there is such a concurrence of circumstances in a judgment, either as to the time and place, or the instruments, that it is not possible for the considering mind to reckon it among casual things, or to attribute it merely to second causes, to the rage of enemies, but must rise higher, and acknowledge that the blow was reached from a just and sure hand, that disposed of all accidents, and of the counsels and resolutions of men for the accomplishment of his righteous will. Or, 3. When persons in the highest dignity, who have abused their power by cruelties to others, are miserably cut off. Even heathens adored a power above, that has more sovereign authority over the greatest monarchs, than they have over the meanest slaves. Many pregnant examples may be alleged; I will instance in a few: thus Adonibezec instructed by his punishment concerning his sins, gave glory to God: "Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as *I* have done, so God hath rewarded me. It astonished one of the * wisest and most virtuous of the Romans, that Pompey should perish in the defence of the juster cause, and Cesar prosper in his violent usurpation; but if he had lived a while longer, and seen the † usurper killed in the senate-house that Pompey had dedicated to the common-wealth, where Cesar then exercised his tyranny, and that dying he fell at the feet of Pompey's statue, all stained with his blood, the darkness had been dispelled, and providence cleared up to his sight. ‡ Herod for assenting to the impious flattery of the people who deified him, was immediately struck with a shameful disease, and consumed by wretched vermin, as the just punishment of his pride. § Pope Alexander the sixth, was poisoned with that wine he had prepared for the murdering some rich cardinals. ‖ Henry the third of France was cut off by a stroke as dreadful as unexpected, on that day of the month, and in that chamber where he was president of the council that contrived the bloody massacre of the protest-

* *Cato: Res divinæ habent multam caliginis.* † *Plut.* Life of Julius Cesar.
‡ *Josephus.* § *Guicciardine.* ‖ *Mezeray.*

ants. Though that abhorred fact was done by the malicious fury of a monk, yet the circumstances argue the process of divine justice, that by the time and place, the perpetual witnesses of actions, gave evidence of his crimson guilt against him. In short, though extraordinary calamities may befal men for causes indiscernible to us, yet often there is such a perspicuous demonstration of a holy just providence in them, that all are compelled to confess there is a God that judges the earth.

CHAP. V.

The beginning of the world proved from the uninterrupted tradition of it through all ages. The invention of the arts, and bringing them to perfection, an argument of the world's beginning. The weakness of that fancy that the world is in a perpetual circulation from infancy to youth, and to full age, and a decrepit state, and back again, so that arts are lost and recovered in that change. The consent of nations a clear argument that there is a God. The impressions of nature are infallible. That the most men are practical atheists; that some doubt and deny God in words, is of no force to disprove his existence. There are no absolute atheists. Nature in extremities has an irresistible force, and compels the most obdurate to acknowledge the Deity.

I SHALL now come to the second head of arguments for the existence of the Deity, drawn from the proofs of the world's beginning; from whence it follows that an eternal intellectual cause gave it being according to his pleasure. For it implies an exquisite contradiction that any thing should begin to exist by its own power. Whatever is temporal, was made by a superior eternal power, that drew it from pure nothing. And the other consequence is as strong, that the cause is an intellectual being that produced it according to his will. For supposing a cause to be entirely the same, and not to produce an effect that afterwards it produces, without any preceding change, it is evident that it

operates not by necessity of nature, but voluntarily, and therefore with understanding: as a man who speaks, that before was silent, according to the liberty of his will.

Now of the world's beginning there is a general tradition derived down through the uninterrupted course of so many ages to us. It is true, the philosophers renewed the confusion of tongues, that disunited the builders of Babel, in their account of the architecture of the world: yet they generally agreed it was made by a most wise agent. And this doctrine is so agreeable to reason, that you may as soon bridle the current of Nilus, and make it return to its fountain, as suspend the persuasion of it in the minds of men, or make it turn back as false. Now what account can be given of this uncontrolable opinion? It is most rational to conceive that it came from the first man, (instructed by his Creator) when the tradition was easy, the world not being numerous.

Add to this the rudeness of former ages, and the simplicity of living becoming the new-made world. This account the most ancient histories give of the rise of commonwealths, that the first nations were a confused chaos, till the soul of society was infused to regulate them. But that which I shall particularly insist on as a convincing proof, is this; the invention of many arts beneficial to men, and the bringing them to perfection by degrees. If the world were without beginning, it would have had no age of childhood and ignorance, but being always old, and instructed by infinite study and experience, it would have always known what it successively learnt in the school of the last three thousand years, since the memorials of profane histories are transmitted to us. Some that asserted the eternity of the world, were sensible of the force of this argument, and made a pitiful shift to evade it. They fancied, that though the world had no beginning, yet as animals proceed by different ages, till they arrive at extreme and impotent old age; in like manner it happened to the earth, not in all its parts at once: for then in that vast succession of ages, the world and race of men had been spent; but sometimes in one part, and after in another. But with this difference, that whereas man after decrepit age never renews his youth, a country once wasted with age, returns by virtue of the celestial influences to its former vigour, and is in a perpetual circulation to new infancy, new youth, and so to old age. And from hence it

is, that it learns again those things that were well known in former ages, the remembrance of which was entirely lost. But the vanity of this fiction is easily discovered.

1. Is it possible that in such a number of years, of which memorials remain before and since this fiction, that in no part of the world should be seen or heard of this decrepit age and new childhood, which according to this opinion hath innumerable times happened in the circle of eternity, sometimes in one, sometimes in another province? If we fancy nature were so changeable according to the revolution of the heavens, we may with equal reason believe, that by various conjunctions of the stars, it hath and may fall out, that water should burn, and fire cool; that serpents should be innocent, and lambs pernicious; that flies should live an age, and eagles but a day.

2. Since it is affirmed that the whole world doth not sink into this oblivion at once, it must follow that in some vigorous parts of the knowledge of arts still remained, and from thence should be derived to other parts (that were ascending from their ignorance) as it is usual in the commerce of distant regions. So that it will never fall out that arts and sciences once invented should be totally lost. It is true, some particular nation, not by change of nature, but human accidents, may lose the arts wherein it formerly flourished; as is eminently visible in the Greek, that is now far more ignorant and unpolished than in former ages. But this cannot with any pretence of reason be said of the whole world. It is evident therefore if the world were eternal, it had always been most wise and civil, and that its gradual attaining the knowledge of things of public advantage, is a sufficient conviction of its beginning in time, by the counsel and will of an intellectual agent.

To the still voice of reason, the loud voice of all nations accords in confirming this truth. The civil, the barbarous, the fixed, the vagabond, the free, the enslaved, though divided into so many empires, and kingdoms, and provinces, and many so distant that not the least commerce passes between them, though so contrary in a thousand fashions and customs that depend on the liberty of men that is mutable, yet * all consent in the ac-

* Omnes duce natura eo vehimur, ut deos esse dicamus. *Cic. lib. de nat. Deor. Arist. lib.* 1. *de Cæl. Plat. lib.* 10. *de Leg. Plut. cont. Colet. in fin.*

knowledgment of a God, being instructed by nature that is always the same, and immutable. It is as natural to the human understanding by considering the frame of the world, to believe there is a God, as it is the property of the eye to see the light. Aristotle supposes that if some persons from their birth were confined to dwellings under the earth, and afterwards should ascend into these habitable parts, that upon the first sight of the heavens and earth, with their visible ornaments, of the regular and established course of nature, they would conclude that they were the works of God. The assent to this truth is enforced, but, without offering extreme violence to the rational faculties, none can contradict it. Indeed in their * conceptions of him, few have the glass of the mind so clear and even as to represent him aright. Some divide what is indivisible, and of one make many gods. Some attribute corporeal parts to a pure spirit; some figure him in statues to make the invisible seen; and in other manner deform him. Yet no error, no ignorance has absolutely defaced the notion of him. And that no societies of men are without the belief of a first being, superior to all things in the world, and of absolute power over them, and consequently worthy of supreme honour from all reasonable creatures; their prayers, vows, sacrifices, solemnities, oaths, are a visible testimony. From hence it is that conscience acquits or condemns, shines or burns, refreshes or torments according to the innocence or guilt of men's actions, with respect to the divine judgment-seat. This is a witness none can reproach, a judge none can decline, an executioner none can resist. Though the guilty person may be secure from human justice by force or concealment, yet he feels secret palpitations, is in perplexity and confusion from the fears of a superior justice to which he is accountable. Nay, sometimes an enraged conscience constrains an offender to reveal his crimes, though a death full of misery and shame be inevitable upon the discovery. The reflections of an accusing mind, cause such terrors as no powers of men can inflict or remove. These were expressed by the poets under the representation of angry furies, not to be corrupted by any solicitations, that with flaming brands, and whips of scorpions eagerly pursue the guilty, and make them restless even in the midst of outward prosperities.

* Quales sint varium est, esse, nemo negat. *Cic.*

* As when wild Pentheus, grown mad with fear,
Whole troops of hellish hags about him spies,
Two bloody suns stalking the dusky sphere,
And twofold Thebes runs rolling in his eyes:
Or through the scene staring Orestes flies,
With eyes flung back upon his mother's ghost,
That with infernal spirits all embost,
And torches quench'd in blood doth her stern son accost.

But on the contrary, the testimony of conscience when clear and innocent produces that tranquillity, complacence and joy, that no outward troubles can extinguish.

The weight of this argument is great: for that which is common to the whole species, and perpetual from its first being through all its duration, is the † impression of nature, which in its universal principles either of the understanding, or the will, is never ‡ deceived. Thus the inclination to that good that is convenient to our faculties; the approving as most just to do to another what we desire in the same circumstances should be done to us, are natural principles, whose rectitude and verity are so evident, that no man is so contumacious as to require a proof of them. If we discredit its authority in this single instance, that there is a God, we may with equal reason suspect its testimony in all other things; that the persons we converse with are phantoms, that the objects that strike our senses are only shadows, that what appears white is black, that what is felt as cold is hot, that what is evident to all men's minds is false, viz. that the whole is greater than a part. In short, the most rational discourses would have as little firmness and certainty, as the incoherent fancies of one that is distracted, or dreams. We must renounce sense and reason, having no assurance of such things as are clear, and manifest, but the instinct of nature that determines our assent. Now what account can be given of the sense of the

* *Fletcher.* Christ's victor.

†, Dos animæ a primordio. *Tert.* Quisquamne est hominum qui non cum istius principii notione diem primæ nativitatis intraverit? cui non sit ingenitum, non impressum, non insitum esse regem & dominum, cæterorumque quæcunq; sunt moderatorem? *Arnob.* l. 1.

‡ Quæ est enim gens, quod genus hominum, quod non habeat sine doctrina anticipationem quandam deorum? De quo autem omnium natura consentit, id verum esse necesse est. *Tul. lib. de nat. Deor.*

Deity indelibly * stamped on the minds of men? From whence is it that of all their thoughts, none is more evident than that of an eternal being sovereign in all perfections? And as it is impossible to conceive a circle without roundness, or a body without extension, or a man without reason, so it is not possible to conceive a God but under the notion of a being absolutely perfect, and therefore eternal, and independent in his existence, which is the first of all perfections. If there be no God, from whence comes it that nature has impressed such a strong belief of a being not only false but impossible? For if there be no God, it is impossible there should be. There is no middle between the two attributes of being, necessary and contingent. And that an eternal being should now begin to exist, is a palpable contradiction. We must therefore conclude that the author of the human soul has so framed it, that by the free use of its faculties it necessarily comes to the knowledge of its original. From hence it is universal and constant. And can there be a testimony of equal authority, clearness and sincerity as this of nature, understood in every language, and received in every place; and where it is most simple, it is most the same, and therefore more convincing.

To elude the force of this argument there are several weak evasions.

I. That the most men are practical atheists, and live without God in the world. To this I answer:

1. That men deny God in their works, is of no validity to disprove the natural notion of him; for by this confession we must cancel almost all the law of nature. How many notoriously rebel against the infallible principles of common reason? How many dishonour their parents? Yet there is no precept more clearly natural, and acknowledged by the rudest nations, than the obligation to the immediate authors of our lives. How many by fraud or rapine enrich their estates, or violate the honour of the marriage-bed, and do that to others they would not have done to themselves? But though they contradict the law of nature in their actions, can they abolish it in their hearts? Can they make conscience dumb, that it shall never reproach their impieties, because they are deaf to its voice? It is as impossible as to

* Quæ enim nobis natura informationem deorum ipsorum dedit, eadem insculpsit in mentibus, ut eos æternos & beatos haberemus.—*Tull.*

transform themselves into another kind of being, and become brutes in nature, because they resemble them in their dispositions and practices.

2. It is said by the patrons of impiety, that the disquiets of conscience are impressions from without, caused by education or vain fears that arise from the dark temper of the body, or the weakness of the mind, or from low ignorance of the * natural causes of such things as astonish men: as eclipses were formerly and still are terrible to some nations, that look on them as presages of great calamities from angry heaven.

But the folly of these pretences will appear if we consider.

(1.) That false principles instilled by parents and masters in our education, though strongly believed while the reverence of our instructors hinders a free inquiry, yet, when reason is disentangled, it gets a clear victory over them: but the terrors of the guilty conscience cannot be entirely overcome: from whence it is evident that the notion of a God has a foundation in human nature.

(2.) These fears are not the effects of melancholy, for they often surprise sinners of a brisk sanguine temper, who try all the ways of mirth and jollity to bribe or stifle conscience, but in vain. The sense of guilt imbitters their purest wines, a secret horror is discordant with their cheerful music; the wounded mind bleeds inward though they fear it never so much.

(3.) This trouble does not spring from a weak scrupulous mind: for the most enlightened and strongest spirits, when under the conviction of guilt, cannot dispute themselves out of misery; nay, according to the degrees of their knowledge, are the degrees of their sorrow.

(4.) Thunder and lightning are terrible to those who understand the natural causes of them as well as to the ignorant; there being in every man a tacit apprehension of them as the prepared instruments of vengeance in God's hands, who has set up a tribunal in conscience, and pronounces a secret sentence there. In short, conscience is an immortal power inseparable from man, and thoughts accusing or excusing are inseparable from the remembrance of his actions. It is evident therefore that God is the author of conscience, and as he has not left himself without

* Magnis doceo de rebus, & arctis, religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo. *Lucret.* l. 4.

an external witness in the works of creation and providence, so not without an inward witness in the breast of man, that can never be totally silenced.

3. It is objected, that there are speculative atheists who deny the existence of a God. To this I answer.

(1.) Supposing that some are atheists in opinion, it doth not follow that the belief of the Deity is not a pure universal principle of nature. For by all men, we must understand those in whom the sense of nature is not perverted. Things of the clearest certainty have been denied by some. We feel motion, yet a philosopher disputed against it. The argument is convincing that snow is white, because it appears to all men's eyes; though to the eye that wants its native sincerity, and infected with a vicious tincture, it appears of another colour. Now it is certain that atheism is not produced by generation from the natural discourses of the mind, but from the putrefaction and rottenness of manners. Those who have lost their reason in sensuality, and submit their understandings to the guidance of their corrupt affections, that is the seeing faculty to the blind, are most inclined to atheism. And they can never come to that impious height without obliterating in the guiltiest manner, the lively characters of reason and humility. Such are as prodigiously irregular from the true constitution and perfection of the minds of men in respect of belief, as a * bird without wings would be from the natural composure of the bodies of all others, in respect of parts. Monsters cannot dishonour, and are no pattern of the species. And shall the contradiction of a few bribed by their lust, disauthorise the consenting testimony of mankind?

(2.) There is no absolute atheist that is, of such a firm persuasion that there is no God, as excludes all doubts and fears of the contrary. It is true, as a pretext for their licentiousness, and to give boldness to their fearful impiety, some obdurate wretches may desperately deny the supreme Eternal Power, to whom they are accountable; but no violence can entirely choke this natural notion and belief of the Deity, it has such deep and strong root in

* Εἰ δε ἐξεγένοντο ἐν τω ξύμπαντι αἰῶνι δύο πε και τρεῖς ἄθεον και ταπεινὸν και ἀναιδὲς γένος, ἐκτεγμημένον δὲ την ψυχην ἄλογον καί ἄγονον καί ἄκαρπον, ὡς ἄθυμος λέων ὡς θὺς ἄσκερως, ὡς ὄρνις ἄπτερος. *Max. Tyr.*

the human spirit. The vital spark will fly in their faces, notwithstanding all their endeavours to tread it out. As the principle of life appears not in a swooning fit, yet it is only retired from the outward parts and still remains in the body; so this principle though not sensible for a time, yet is not extinguished in the soul. Sharp afflictions will awaken the apprehensions of a God in the most stupified consciences, and inspire them with new life and motion, and make them breathe out humble supplications, for mercy and help, to the Deity whom they denied before. Of this we have numerous instances: I will produce some that were signal. One is recorded by Æschilus. That the Persian messenger in his narrative to the king, of the overthrow of his army by the Grecians, related that those gallants who before the fight in the midst of their cups and bravery denied God and providence as secure of victory, yet afterwards when furiously pursued by their enemies, they came to the river Strymon, that was frozen and began to thaw, then upon their knees they mournfully implored the favour of God, that the ice might hold and give them safe passage over from the pursuers.* Nature in extremities has irresistible workings, and the inbred notions of the Deity, though long suppressed by imperious lusts, will then rise up in men's souls. Tullus Hostilius is another example, who disdained to express submission to God by acts of worship, as a thing unbecoming his royal state, but when his stubborn fierce mind was broke in his diseased body, he used all the servile rites of superstition, and commanded the people to join with him, thinking by his flattering devotions to appease the incensed Deity. Bion the philosopher, was a declared atheist, till struck with a mortal disease, and then as a false witness on the rack, confessed the truth, and addressed himself by prayers and vows to God for his recovery. Egregious folly, as the † historian observes, to think that God would be bribed with his gifts, and was or was not acccording to his fancy. And thus it happens to many like him. As a lamp near expiring shines more clearly, so conscience

* Tunc adeo fracti cum corpore sunt spiritus illi feroces, ut qui ratus antea nihil minus regium quam sacris dedere animum, repente omnibus magnis parvisq; superstitionibus obnoxius degeret, religionibusque populum impleret. *Liv. lib.* 1.

† Μωρος ευ' ὃς ἔθελεν λινός μιθυ τό θεῖον εἶναι. *Laert. in Bion.*

that burned dimly for a time, gives a dying blaze, and discovers him who is alone able to save or to destroy. But how just were it to deal with them as * Herofilus with Diodorus Cronus, a wrangler that vexed the philosophers, by urging a captious argument, against the possibility of motion. For thus he argued: a stone, or whatever else, in moving itself, is either where it is, or where it is not; if where it is, it moves not; if where it is not, then it will be in any place, but where it is. While this disputing humour continued, one day he fell, and displaced his shoulder, and sends in haste for Herofilus, of excellent skill in surgery. But he desirous first to cure his brain, and then his shoulder, told him that his art was needless in that case: for according to your own opinion, this bone in the dislocation either was where it was, or where it was not, and to assert either, makes the displacing of it equally impossible. Therefore it was in vain to reduce it to the place from whence it was never parted. And thus he kept him roaring out with pain and rage till he declared himself convinced of the vanity of his irrefutable argument. Now if, according to the impiety of atheists, there is no God, why do they invoke him in their adversities? If there be, why do they deny him in their prosperity? There can no other reason be assigned but this, that in the state of health their minds are dispersed, and clouded with blind folly, in sickness they are serious, and recover the judgment of nature. As it is ordinary with distracted persons, that in the approaches of death their reason returns: because the brain distempered by an excess of heat, when the spirits are wasted at the last, is reduced to a convenient temper.

* *Sext. Empir.* l. 1.

CHAP. VI.

The belief of the Deity no politic invention. The asserting that it is necessary to preserve states in order, is a strong proof of its truth. No history intimates when this belief was introduced into the world. The continuance of it, argues that its rise was not from a civil decree. Princes themselves are under the fears of the Deity. The multitude of false gods does not prejudice the natural notion of one true God. Idolatry was not universal. The worship of the only true God is preserved where idolatry is abolished.

II. IT is objected, that the belief of the Deity was at first introduced by the special invention of some in power to preserve the civil state; and that religion is only a politic curb to restrain the wild exorbitance and disorders of the multitude. This admits of an easy refutation.

1. Those corrupted minds that from pride or sensuality presumed to exempt men from the tribunal of heaven, yet affirmed that a city might rather be preserved without fire and water, the most necessary elements, than without the religious belief of a God. Egregious lovers of mankind! and therefore worthy of esteem and credit, since they divulge that doctrine, that if believed, the world must fall into dreadful confusion by their own acknowledgment. But such is the divine force of truth, that its * enemies are constrained to give testimony to it. For is it conceivable that an error not in a light question, but in the supreme object of the mind, should be the root of all the virtues that support the civil state, and truth if discovered should have a fatal consequence on government, subvert all societies, and expose them to the greatest dangers? How can they reconcile this with their declared principle, that the natural end of man is the knowledge of truth? It were less strange that the constant feeding on deadly poison, should be requisite to preserve the natural life in health and vigour, and that the most proper food should be pernicious to it. So that the objection if rightly considered will confirm the religious belief of a Deity. Indeed it is evident that

* Deos agere curam rerum humanarum credi, ex usu vitæ est: pœnasque aliquando seras, nunquam irritas esse. *Plin. lib.* 2.

all civil powers suppose the notion of a God to be an inseparable property of human nature, and thereby make their authority sacred in the esteem of the people, as derived from the universal monarch. Thus they make use of that natural love that is in men to their own persons, their lives, liberties, and children, as a powerful constraint to obedience. Is this affection then so natural and universal, the effect of policy? None were ever so vain as to pretend so. And certainly the belief of a God is as natural to a man, as the love to himself and his nearest relations.

2. They can give no account of what they so boldly assert. What historian ever recorded, that in such an age, such a prince introduced the belief of a Deity to make obedience to his laws to be a point of religion? It is true, politicians have sometimes used artifice and deceit to accomplish their ends. Lycurgus pretended the direction of Apollo, and Numa of the nymph Egeria, to recommend their laws to the people. Scipio and Sertorius made some other god to be of their council of war, to encourage their soldiers in dangerous enterprises. But this mask only deceived the ignorant. The more intelligent discerned the finesse of their politic contrivance.

3. Is it conceivable that the belief of the Deity, if its original were from a civil decree, should remain in force so long in the world? False opinions in philosophy, adorned with great eloquence by the inventors, and zealously defended for a time by their followers, though opposite to no man's profit or pleasure, yet have lost their credit by further inquiries. And if the notion of a God were * sophisticate gold, though authorized with the royal stamp, could it have endured the touchstone, and the fire, for so many ages without discovery? Could it have passed the test of so many searching wits, that never had a share in government? Can we rationally suppose that in such a succession of time no discontented person, when the yoke of government was uneasy, should disclose the arts of affrightment, and release the people from imaginary terrors, that with courage they might resume their liberty? It is a true observation, no single person can deceive all, nor be deceived by all. Now if there be no God, one person has deceived all by introducing the general belief of a

* Non tam stabilis opinio permaneret, nec confirmaretur diuturnitate temporis, nec una cum sæculi ætatibus hominumq; inveterare potuisset. Cic.

God into the world, and every one is deceived by all, believing so from the universal authority of mankind.

4. The greatest princes are under the awful impressions of the Deity. Those raised to the highest thrones are not free from inward anxieties, when the guilty conscience cites them before his dreadful tribunal. Of this we have their unfeigned declarations in the times of their distress. Now it is inconceivable they would voluntarily perplex themselves with a fancy of their own creating, and dread that as a real being, which they knew to be feigned. This pretence therefore cannot without an open defiance of reason be alledged.

III. It is objected that the consent of mankind in the acknowledgment of a God is no full conviction of his existence, because then we must believe the false gods that were adored in the world. To this it may be answered.

1. The multitude of idols created by superstitious fancies, is a strong presumption that there is a true God. For all falsehood is supported by some truth, deceit is made credible by resemblance. The heathen worship though directed amiss, yet proves that a religious inclination is sound in its original, and has a real object to which it tends; otherwise idolatry, the corruption of it, had not found such a facility and disposition in men to receive it.

2. Idolatry hath not been universal in all ages and nations. The first causes of it and motives that preserved it are evident. The nation of the Jews was freed from this general contagion: for we may as rationally argue from their own histories concerning their belief and practice, as from the histories of other nations. And when a veil of darkness was cast over the heathen world, some were enlightened by true reason to see the folly of the superstitious vulgar that stood in awe of their own imaginations. The philosophers privately condemned what in a guilty compliance with the laws of state they publicly owned. Nay, even the lowest and dullest among the Gentiles generally acknowledged one Supreme God and Lord of all inferior deities. As Tertullian observes, in their great distresses, guided by the internal instructions of nature, they invoked God, not the gods to their help.

3. That the belief of one God is a pure emanation from the light of nature is evident, in that since the extinction of idolatry, not a spark remaining in many parts of the world, it is still pre-

served in its vigour and lustre in the breasts of men. Since the plurality of gods have been degraded of their honour, and their worships chased out of many countries, and the ideas of various ancient superstitions are lost, the only true God is served with more solemn veneration. Time, the wise discerner of truth from falsehood, abolishes the fictions of fancy, but confirms the uncorrupted sentiments of nature.

Thus it appears, that the most specious objections produced (by these who would fain be atheists) to enervate and destroy the belief of the Deity, are so miserably weak, that they rather strengthen it. It is that which one very pertinently said to some that were arguing against God and religion, if you proceed to discourse in this unreasonable manner, in truth you will convert me from atheism. For what more just cause of aversion and horror can there be in a person, in whom judgment and honesty are not perfectly extinguished, than to find himself in the same opinion with such wretched extravagant creatures?

To conclude this discourse; what rational doubt can remain after so strong a witness of the Deity external from the universe, internal from the frame of the human soul? If we look through the whole compass of natural beings, there is not one separately taken, but has some signature of wisdom upon it. As a beam of light passing through a chink in a wall of what figure soever, always forms a circle on the place where it is reflected, and by that describes the image of its original, the sun. Thus God in every one of his works represents himself *tanquam solis radio scriptum*. But the union of all the parts by such strong and sweet bands, is a more pregnant proof of his omnipotent mind. Is it a testimony of great military skill in a general to range an army, composed of divers nations that have great antipathies between them, in that order as renders it victorious in battle? * And is it not a testimony of infinite providence to dispose all the hosts of heaven and earth so as they join successfully for the preservation of nature? It is astonishing that any should be of such a reprobate mind, as not to be convinced by the sight of the world, a visible word that more gloriously illustrates the perfections of the Creator, than the sublimest eloquence, that conceals what it designs to represent:

* "Οπερ ἐν νηκυβερνήτης, ἐν στρατοπέδῳ ἡγημών, τουτο ἐν κοσμῳ Θεὸς. *Arist. de mund.*

when * Sophocles was accused by his ungrateful sons, that his understanding being declined with his age, he was unfit to manage the affairs of his family; he made no other defence before the judges, but recited part of a tragedy newly composed by him, and left it to their decision, whether there was a failure in his intellectual faculties: upon which he was not only absolved but crowned with praises.

What foul ingratitude are those guilty of, who deny the divine wisdom, of which there are such clear and powerful demonstrations in the things that are seen? Abhorred impiety! Worthy of the most fiery indignation; and not to be expiated with a single death. None except base stupid spirits that are lapsed and sunk below the rational nature, (as a noble † philosopher justly censures them) are capable of such prodigious folly and perverseness. Yet these are the pretenders to free reason and strength of mind, and with a contemptuous smile despise the sober world, as fettered with servile principles, and foolishly softened by impressions of an unknown, uncertain being, and value themselves as more knowing than all others, because they contradict all. Ridiculous vanity! As if a blind man in a crowd sometimes justling one, sometimes another, should with impatience cry out, do you not see? When he is under a double blindness, both in his eyes and understanding, not seeing himself, and reproaching those that see, for not seeing. In short, this great truth shines with so bright an evidence, that all the sons of darkness can never put out, and can only be denied by obstinate atheism and absurdity.

* Tantum enim sapientiæ in ætate jam fractâ, dedit, ut severitatem tribunalis in theatri pavorem verteret. *Hier. Epist ad nepot.*

† Ἄθεοι καὶ ταπεινὸν καὶ ἀναιδὲς γένος, πεπλανημένον τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς. *Max. Tyr. orat. prim. Quid sit deus.*

CHAP. VII.

The duties of understanding creatures to the Maker of all things. Admiration of his glorious perfections visible in them. This is more particularly the duty of man, the world being made eminently for him. The causes why the Creator is not honoured in his works, are men's ignorance and inobservance. Things new rather affect us than great. An humble fear is a necessary respect from the creature, to the Divine Majesty and Power. Love and obedience in the highest degrees are due from men to God, in the quality of Creator. Trust and reliance on God is our duty and privilege.

LET us now briefly consider the indispensible duties of rational creatures with respect to the Maker of all things. And those are,

I. To acknowledge and admire the Deity, and his perfections that are so visible in his works. For there must be a first cause from whom that receives being, that cannot proceed from itself. In all the forms of things there are some characters stamped of the divine wisdom, that declare his glory, some footsteps impressed of his power that discover him, some lines drawn from his goodness that demonstrate him. And so much praise is justly due to the artificer as there is excellence of art and perfection of workmanship appearing in the work. This duty is especially incumbent on man, because the world was made with a more eminent respect for him, than for angels or animals. For if we consider the diversity of its parts, the multitude and variety of sensitive natures of which it consists, and the art whereby it is framed according to the most noble idea and design of highest wisdom, it is evident it was principally made for man, there being an adequate correspondence between them, with regard to his faculties and the objects. It is true the angels understand more perfectly than man the union, order and beauty of the world, an incomparable proof of the Maker's perfections, but they are not capable of knowledge or pleasure by tastes, smells, sounds, which are only proportioned to make impressions on material organs. And is it agreeable to wisdom that an object purely sensible should be chiefly intended for a power purely spiritual? Neither are the beasts fit spectators of the divine works. For the mate-

rial part to which sense can only reach, is the least notable in the frame of nature, and the economy of the world. They cannot discover the dependance between causes and effects, the means and end, nor the wisdom that ordered all. These are only for the vision of the mind, which they want. The volume of the world to them is like a fair printed book composed of sublime matter and style, but opened to one that sees the beauty of the characters, without understanding the language it speaks, and the wisdom it contains. An eagle by fixing its eyes on the sun cannot measure its greatness, nor understand the ends of its motion. The world would be lost, if only for them. But the wise Creator united these two distinct natures in man, and placed him in this theatre of his magnificence, that by the ministry of the senses he might have perception of the external part, and by his reason discover what is most worthy to be known; the admirable order that distinguishes and unites so many and such different natures, and guides all their motions, that it is clear they depend upon one principle without knowing it, and conspire to one end without willing it. How should this raise his mind in the just praises of the Maker?

The true causes why the Creator is not duly acknowledged and honoured for his works, are either ignorance, or a guilty neglect and inobservance of them.

1. Ignorance in the composure of the world, and of the several beings in it. A philosopher asked by one what advantage the instructions of philosophy would be to his son? Replied, if no other, yet that when he is a spectator in the theatre one stone shall not sit upon another. An ignorant person encompassed with all the varieties of nature, wherein omniscient skill appears, is insensible as a stone carved into the shape of a man. Nay, the most learned professors know little more than the several kinds of things, and the causes and manner of some particular effects. How often are they forced to take refuge in occult qualities when pressed with difficulties? Or only assign universal causes of things, and sometimes the same for operations extremely contrary? How many mysteries of nature are still veiled and hid in those deep recesses where we can go only in the dark? How much remains undiscovered that is truly wonderful in the works of God? They are the objects of the eye and mind; but what is visible to the eye is least worthy of admiration. From

hence the value of the works, and the glory of the author, is much lessened. Besides, the rational pleasure of the mind is lost by not discerning the wise order that is infallibly observed in universal nature. It is not the viewing a musical instrument, the variety of the parts, and of the strings in their size and length, that produces delight, but hearing the harmonious and pleasant diversity of their sounds contempered by the proportion of numbers. Thus it is not the sight of the mere outward frame of things, but the understanding the intellectual music that springs from the just laws of nature, whereby they are perfectly tuned, and the conspiring harmony of so many mixed parts without the least harsh discord, that ravishes the soul with true pleasure.

2. The inobservance of man is another cause why the great Creator is not magnified for all his works. If we did consider the least, even one of those * *unius puncti animalia,* a flea or mite, we should find what is admirable in that scarce visible atom of matter. But the † novelty, not the excellence of things, draws our thoughts. The greatest works in nature that are not miracles, only because common and usual, are passed by with a careless eye. Their continual presence is not moving, but lessens our regard and attention. The ‡ naturalist observed it to be one of the solemn follies of men, to value medicines not for their virtue, but the country where they grow, the climate from whence they come; if they have a barbarous name, they are reputed to have a mysterious efficacy, and those plants are neglected as unprofitable, that are natives of their own soil. The rarity is esteemed more than the merit of things. It is a greater wonder to give light to the sun, than to restore it to the blind, yet its daily presence does not affect us. If a chemist should extract a liquor of such an extraordinary virtue, that by pouring a

* Tertullian.

† Assiduitate quotidiana, & consuetudine oculorum assuescunt animi, neq; admirantur neq; requirunt rationes earum rerum quas semper vident. Quasi novitas magis quam magnitudo rerum debeat ad exquirendas causas excitare. *Cic. c. 2. de nat. Deor.*

‡ *Arabia* atq; India medendo æstimatur, ulteriusq; parvo medicina a rubro mari imputatur, cum remedia vera pauperrimus quisque cænet, nam si ex horto petatur aut herba, aut frutex quæratur, nulla artium vilior fiet. *Plin. lib. 24.*

few drops of it on the dust, a body should be formed, animated, and move, would any one be induced to believe it without the testimony of his own eyes, and would it not be a surprising wonder? Yet innumerable living creatures spring from the dust by the falling of rain, and few think it worthy of observation. The raising a dead body to life would astonish us, but we are unaffected that every day so many living men are born. Yet, if we consider things aright, the secret forming a body in the womb is an equal prodigy of power, and as truly marvellous, as the restoring the vital congruities to a carcass, that prepare it for the reception of the soul. What more deserves serious reflection, than that from the same indistinct seed, so many and such various parts in their substance, figure and qualities should proceed? hard and dry for the bones, liquid for the humours, moist and soft for the flesh, tenacious for the nerves, perforated for the arteries and veins, hot for the liver and heart, cold for the brain, transparent for the eyes? How should it raise our wonder that that matter which in itself is simple and equal, in God's hand is capable of such admirable art? * But the constant sight of living productions causes our neglect, and deprives him of his just honour. Thus, that from almost an invisible seed weak and tender, should spring a great tree of that strength as to resist the fury of the winds, what miraculous virtue is requisite? The enlightened observing mind ascends from nature to God, whose instrument it is, and with deliberate admiration praises him for his excellent works.

II. The most humble fear is a necessary duty from man to the majesty and power of the Creator. A barren admiration of his omnipotent art in his works is not sufficient, but it must be joined with awful respects of his excellent greatness. He has the right, and to him is due the reverence and homage of universal King. With what solemnity and composedness of spirit should we approach the divine presence? What a jealous watch ought to be placed over our hearts in all our addresses to him, lest by carelessness and inadvertency we should disparage his excellencies? To think of him without reverence is a profanation. "The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods;" and from

* Magni artificis est, clausisse totum in exiguo. *Sen.* Naturæ miraculo est tam parvo gigni arbores. *Plin.*

hence the necessary consequence is, "O come let us worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker." Whatever is glorious, is in him in the most excellent degrees of perfection. The world, with innumerable variety of creatures, is but a drop compared to his transcendent greatness: and what part is man of that drop? as nothing. Time is but a point of his eternity, dominion but a shadow of his sovereignty. It is the most natural duty of man to "walk humbly with his God," and to fear above all things to displease him. The whole creation, even the insensible part, and that seems least subject to a rule and law, and least conducted by reason, obey his will. What is more volatile and rash than the winds? yet they do not breathe but by his command. What is more fierce and impetuous than the sea? yet it does not transgress his order. When it threatens to overrun the whole earth, the weak sand stops its foaming rage, and it retires, respecting the bounds set by the Creator. What then will be our guilt, if we are regardless of his majesty and authority, who are enlightened with reason to understand his will, when the most rebellious and unteachable things in nature readily and constantly obey him? He is present every where, the whole compass of heaven and earth is but an inch of his immensity; he sees all, observes all, is more intimate with our hearts than we are ourselves; and dare men trample on his laws before his face? Who can by resistance or flight escape from punishment that offends him? He can bind the most stubborn enemies "hands and feet; and cast them into utter darkness." As he made all things by the mere act of his will, so without the least strain of his power he can destroy them! What does not a mortal man arrogate to appear terrible, and make his will to be obeyed, when he has but power to take away this short natural life? The proud king of Babylon commanded the numerous nations under his empire, to prostrate themselves like brutes in the lowest adoration of the image he set up; and when the three Hebrew young men refused to give divine honour to it, he threatened, "If ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" This is the language of a man (poor dust!) that can heat a furnace with fire, and has a squadron of soldiers ready upon the least intimation of his pleasure to throw into it any that disobeyed, as if no power either in

heaven or earth could rescue them from him. It was impious folly in him that thus spake: but God can give order to death to seize on the stoutest rebel, and cast him into an eternal furnace, and say in truth, Who shall deliver out of my hands? His power reaches beyond the grave. Tiberius intending to put to death by slow and exquisite torments one who killed himself, cried out in a rage, "Carnulius has made an escape from me." * But no sinner can by dying escape God's justice, for death itself takes the condemned, and delivers them to endless torments. There are no degrees of fear can be equal to this cause, the wrath of the great Creator. Is there any pleasure of sin so sweet, but this, if considered, would make it to be as poison or gall to the taste? Is any joy so predominant but this would instantly make it die in the carnal heart? The due apprehension of almighty anger is sufficient to subdue the most vicious insuperable passions that so violently transport to sin. But O astonishing stupidity! The most of men without fear provoke the living God, as if he were like the idols of the heathens, a dead stock or stone, insensible and powerless, so that the spiders made their webs on the beard of Jupiter, and the birds their nests in his thunder. Where is their reason, where is their self-love, to challenge so dreadful an adversary, who is able in the very act of sin to strike them with death temporal and eternal? "Consider this ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there is none to deliver."

III. Love and obedience in the highest degree are due to the Author of our beings, and all things for our use and profit. What motion is more according the laws of nature than that love should answer love; and so far as the one descends in benefits, the other should ascend in thankfulness? If we consider the first and fundamental benefit with all its circumstances, in the pure order of nature; that we are men consisting of a rational soul, and a body admirably prepared for its convenient habitation, and in this regard the most wonderful work of God; can a human breast be so hard and flinty as not to be softened and made receptive of impressions by this effect of his goodness? Is it possible that any one should be of such a stupid savage temper, so void of all humanity, nay, of the sentiments of the lower na-

* Carnulius me evasit. *Suet.*

ture, as not to be touched with a grateful affection to the author of his life, when lions and tigers, the most untractable beasts of the forest, are by an innate principle so tenderly inclined to their dams? It unspeakably enforces our obligation, that beside the inherent excellencies of nature, he made us by privilege above all creatures in this sensible world, and furnished it with innumerable objects excellent in their beauty and variety, that are not mere remedies for necessity but for the delight of this present life. And having tasted the good of being, and the fruits of his magnificent bounty, can we be coldly affected to our great benefactor? The * moralist advises, as the best expedient to make a person grateful, encompass him with thy benefits, that whereever he turns, something may recal his fugitive memory, and render thee visible to him. This cannot be done by men. But wherever we turn our thoughts, or fix our eyes, either on our persons or comforts, on the present state or the future, (for he has given eternity to our duration) we find ourselves encircled with innumerable and inestimable benefits from God. It is impossible we should ever forget them without the greatest guilt. Every minute he renews our lives and all our enjoyments. For the actual influence of his power is as requisite to preserve our being, as at first to produce it. The creature has nothing of its own, but a simple non-repugnance of coming into act. How frozen is that heart that is not melted in love to so good a God? Let us look into the depth of our native nothing, that we may understand the height of the divine love, in raising us from the pure possibility of being into act, and that merely for his sovereign pleasure, and most free benignity. There was no necessity that constrained him to decree the making the world, or man in it: for it is a plain contradiction that there should be a superior power to determine a being of infinite perfections. † And for that reason also he gives all his benefits without the least possible advantage to himself. It was commended as a miraculous virtue in Theodosius the emperor, that he was bountiful merely to satisfy his own goodness: but it is the propriety of God's nature. Is

* Beneficiis tuis illum cinge, quocunq; se convertit, memoriam tui fugiens ibi te videat. *Senec.*

† A te nova benignitate is honos amicis tuis habitus est, qui totus esset illorum quibus deferebatur, nihilque ad te redundaret nisi dandi voluptas.

he not then worthy of all our thoughts, all our affections, for his most free and admirable favours? If there be but a spark of reason, we must judge that the immense liberality of God to us, without respect to his own interest, is so far from lessening, that it increases our duty to correspond in all possible thankfulness.

Consider further, that which adds to the greatness of the gifts we receive, is * the greatness of the giver. The price of a benefit rises in proportion to the worth of the person that bestows it. A small gift from a great hand, may be justly preferred before a richer from a less estimable donor. Now if we consider that the glorious God (in comparison of whom the greatest kings are but vain shadows of majesty) has made a world full of so many and so excellent creatures for our refreshment, that our being on earth may not be tedious in the short space of our journey to heaven, will it not overcome us with an excess of wonder and affection; and cause us to break forth, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour; thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things under his feet."

And as our most ardent love, so entire obedience as the inseparable effect of it, is due to the Creator, both in active service for his glory, and an absolute resignation to his will. The strongest title to acquire dominion according to the law of nature, is that of the cause to the effect. The mind cannot rebel against the light of this principle. It is most just therefore we should employ all our powers, even from the early rise of reason to the setting point of life, wholly in his service from whom we received them. It is an excellent representation of St. † Austin; if a sculptor, after his fashioning a piece of marble in a human figure, could inspire it with life and sense, and give it motion, and understanding, and speech, can it be imagined but the first act of it would be to prostrate itself at the feet of the maker, in subjection and thankfulness, and to offer whatever it is, and can

* Illa quanto gratiora sunt, quantoque in partem interiorem animi descendunt cum delectat cogitantem magis a quo, quam quid acceperis. *Senec. de benefic. lib.* 1.

† Sicut dedit figuram, cor daret, & spiraculum vitæ, *Ser. de verb. Dom.*

do, as homage to him? The almighty hand of God formed our bodies, he breathed into us the spirit of life; and should not the power of love constrain us to live wholly according to his will? Methinks nothing should be pleasing to us but as we make it tributary to him. If we only regard him as our Creator, that one quality should for ever engage us to fidelity in his service, zeal for his interest, obedience to his laws, and an inviolable respect for his honour. And this duty binds us the more strongly, because as God made the world for man's profit, so he made man for his own glory. And what the load-stone is to the steel, or the sensible good to the appetite, the same attractive is the end to the intelligent nature. And the higher the end is, and the more the mind is fitted to understand its excellence, the more powerfully it should excite the faculties, in pursuit of it according to their uttermost capacity. Now what horrid unthankfulness is it to be insensible of the infinite debt we owe to God? What disloyalty to pervert his favours, to slight his commands, and cross the end of our creation? The serious consideration that God has given us such a noble nature, capable to know, love, serve and enjoy him, and that we have so little improved our faculties for these excellent ends, should put us into two contrary excesses of spirit, the one of joy, for his unspeakable goodness, the other of confusion, for our most unworthy neglect of it. Our duty and our disobedience have the same measure. The goodness and bounty of our great benefactor regulates the one and the other. The more we have received from him, the more we are engaged to him, and the more we are engaged, the more guilty and worthy of punishment will our neglect be. Among men an ungrateful perfidious person is an object of horror; and favours abused become motives of hatred. To employ our faculties rational or sensitive to the disservice of our Maker, is the same kind of villany, though of incomparably greater guilt, both in respect of the object and degree; as if a traitor should turn the very same weapons against his prince, that he received from him for his defence. To turn his benefits into occasions of sin, and by the same things to dishonour him by which we should glorify him, is extreme perverseness. In this, unthankful man imitates the earth from whence he was taken: for that makes use of the heat of the sun to send up vapours that obscure the beams of light he communicates to it. This is to despise the

divine majesty, power, wisdom, goodness, that are united, and so eminently appear in his works, and will provoke his severe vengeance. Let us therefore every day revive the sense of our obligations, and by intense thoughts kindle the affections of love and reverence, of praise and thankfulness, that in them, as flames ascending from an altar, we may "offer ourselves a holy living sacrifice, which is our reasonable service." Our all is due to him, whatever we are, whatever we have, our bodies, our souls, our time and eternity.

And an humble resignation to his will in all things is the essential duty of his creatures. It is true that upon the account of his wisdom and power, it becomes us with the most respectful submission to yield ourselves to his pleasure. Authority and dignity naturally result from their union in a person. Therefore it is supreme in him who possesses them in their greatest excellence. When God himself speaks to Job of his transcendent majesty, and of his right to dispose of men according to his will; he produces his works as the conspicuous testimonies of his great power and exquisite wisdom: but the reason of our submission will be more convincing if we remember that God has an absolute unalienable propriety in us, and all that we enjoy; for our being and comforts are the liberal gifts of his hand. If therefore he shall please to take away any of his favours, even life itself, though not to exchange it for a life infinitely better, it would be the most unnatural rebellion to resist the dispositions of his providence, the most vile unthankfulness, to be stormy and passionate, or to consent to any secret murmuring and discontent in the heart, as if our own were taken from us, either unseasonably or unjustly. And though our troubles immediately proceed from second natural causes, yet according to right reason, we must esteem them but as instruments of his invisible hand, and governed by his counsel, in order to such effects, and in the time he pleases. It is our duty, even in the saddest circumstances, with an entire readiness of mind, and conformity of desires, to say to our Maker, Thy will be done.

IV. Trust and reliance on God is our duty and privilege. Every being has a necessary dependance on him for its subsistence; but man of all the visible creatures is only capable of affiance in him, by reflecting upon his own impotence, and by considering the perfections of the Creator, that render him the

proper object of trust. It is the incommunicable honour of the Deity, to be acknowledged and regarded as the supporter of all things. To put confidence in ourselves, in the advantages of body or mind or estate, as if we were the architects of our own felicity, is a sacrilegious usurpation. Yet vain man foments a secret pride and high opinion of himself, as if by his own prudence and conduct he might acquire an happiness, till experience confutes his pleasing but pernicious error. The truth is, were there no God, whose powerful providence governs all things, and has a special care and respect of man, he were of all creatures the most miserable. So that besides the wickedness, we may clearly discover the folly of atheism, that deprives man of his chiefest comfort at all times, and his only comfort in the greatest exigences. For in this mutable state he is liable to so many disasters and wretched accidents, that none can have an assurance of prosperity one day. How frail and uncertain is life, the foundation of all temporal enjoyments? It depends upon so many things, that it is admirable it subsists for a little time. The least vessel in the body that breaks or is stopped, interrupting the course of the blood and humours, ruins its economy. Sometimes in its vigorous consistence, when most distant from sickness it is nearest to death. A little eruption of blood in the brain is sufficient to stop the passages of the spirits, and deprive it of motion and life. And the changes of things without us, are so various and frequent, so great and sudden, that it is an excess of folly, a dangerous rest to be secure in the enjoyment of them. The same person sometimes affords an example of the greatest prosperity, and of greater misery in the space of a few hours. Henry the fourth of France, in the midst of the triumphs of peace, was by a blow from a sacrilegious hand dispatched in his coach, and his bloody corpse forsaken by his servants, exposed to the view of all; so that as the * historian observes, there was but a moment between the adorations and oblivion of that great prince. "All flesh is grass, and the glory of it as the flower of the grass." Whatever disguises its imperfections, and gives it lustre, is but superficial, like the colour and ornament of a flower, whose matter is only a little dust and water, and is as weak and fading. Who then can possess these things without a

* *Mazeray.*

just jealousy, lest they should slip away, or be ravished from him by violence? And in this respect man is most unhappy; for besides the affliction of present evils, reason, that separates him from other creatures, and exalts him above them, is the fatal instrument of his trouble by the prevision of future evils. Ignorance of future miseries is privilege, when knowledge is ineffectual to prevent them. Unseen evils are swallowed whole, but by an apprehensive imagination are tasted in all their bitterness. By forethoughts we run to meet them before they are come, and feel them before they are truly sensible. This was the reason of that complaint in the * poet, seeing the prognostics of misery many years before it arrived,

Sit subitum quodcunque paras, sit cæca futuri
Mens hominis fati, liceat sperare timenti.

Let the evils thou preparest surprise us, let us not be tormented by an unhappy expectation of them, let the success of future things be concealed from our sight, let it be permitted to us to hope in the midst of our fears.

Indeed God has mercifully hid the most of future events from human curiosity. For as on the one side by the view of great prosperity, man would be tempted to an excess of pride and joy, so on the other (as we are more sensibly touched with pain than pleasure) if when he begins to use his reason and apprehensive faculty, by a secret of optics he should have in one sight presented all the afflictions that should befal him in the world, how languishing would his life be? This would keep him on a perpetual rack, and make him suffer together and at all times, what shall be endured separately and but once. But though the most of future things lie in obscurity, yet often we have sad intimations of approaching evils that awaken our fears. Nay, how many tempests and shipwrecks do men suffer in terra firma, from the suspicion of calamities that shall never be? Imaginary evils operate as if real, and produce substantial griefs. Now how can such an infirm and jealous creature, in the midst of things that are every minute subject to the laws of mutability, be without inward trouble? What can give him repose and tranquillity in

* *Lucan.*

his best condition, but an assurance that nothing can befal him but according to the wise counsel and gracious will of God? And in extreme afflictions, in the last agonies, when no human things can afford relief, when our dearest friends are not able to comfort us, but are miserable in our miseries, what can bear up our fainting hope but the divine power, a foundation that never fails? What can allay our sorrows but the divine goodness tenderly inclined to succour us? "Our help is in the Lord who made heaven and earth." The creation is a visible monument of his perfections. "The Lord is a sun and a shield." He is all-sufficient to supply our wants, and satisfy our desires. As the sun gives life and joy to all the world, and if there were millions of more kinds of beings and of individuals in it, his light and heat are sufficient for them all; so the divine goodness can supply us with all good things, and ten thousand worlds more. And his power can secure to us his favours, and prevent troubles; or, which is more admirable, make them beneficial and subservient to our felicity. He is a sure refuge, an inviolable sanctuary to which we may retire in all our straits. His omnipotence is directed by unerring wisdom, and excited by infinite love, for the good of those who faithfully obey him. An humble confidence in him, frees us from anxieties, preserves a firm peaceful temper in the midst of storms. This gives a superiority of spirits, a true empire of mind over all outward things.

Rex est qui posuit metus,
Occurritque suo libens
Fato, nec queritur mori.

What was the vain boast of philosophers, that by the power of reason they could make all accidents to contribute to their happiness, is the real privileges we obtain by a regular trust in God, who directs and orders all events that happen for the everlasting good of his servants. In the worst circumstances we may rejoice in hope, in a certain and quiet expectation of a blessed issue. In death itself we are more than conquerors. "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in thee."