

## THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

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*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt; they have done abominable works; there is none that doth good.—Ps. XIV. 1.*

THIS psalm is a description of the deplorable corruption by nature of every son of Adam, since the withering of that common root. Some restrain it to the gentiles, as a wilderness full of briars and thorns, as not concerning the Jews, the garden of God, planted by his grace and watered by the dew of heaven. But the apostle, the best interpreter, rectifies this in extending it by name to Jews as well as Gentiles: Rom. iii. 9, 'We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;' and ver. 10, 11, 12, cites part of this psalm and other passages of Scripture for the further evidence of it; concluding both Jews and Gentiles, every person in the world, naturally in this state of corruption.

The psalmist first declares the corruption of the faculties of the soul: 'The fool hath said in his heart.' Secondly, The streams issuing from thence, 'they are corrupt,' &c.; the first in atheistical principles, the other in unworthy practices; and lays all the evil, tyranny, lust, and persecutions by men, as if the world were only for their sake, upon the neglects of God, and the atheism cherished in their hearts.

'The fool,' a term in Scripture signifying a wicked man, used also by the heathen philosophers to signify a vicious person, נָבֵל as coming from נָבַל signifies the extinction of life in men, animals, and plants; so the word נָבֵל is taken,—Isa. xl. 7, נָבֵל צִיץ 'the flower fadeth,' Isa. xxviii. 1,—a plant that hath lost all that juice that made it lovely and useful. So a fool is one that hath lost his wisdom and right notion of God and divine things, which were communicated to man by creation; one dead in sin, yet one not so much void of rational faculties, as of grace in those faculties; not one that wants reason, but abuses his reason. In Scripture the word signifies foolish.\*

'Said in his heart;' that is, he thinks, or he doubts, or he wishes. The thoughts of the heart are in the nature of words to God, though not to men. It is used in the like case of the atheistical person: Ps. x. 11, 13, 'He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten,' 'he hath said in his heart thou wilt not require it.' He doth not form a syllogism, as Calvin speaks, that there is no God; he dares not openly publish it, though he dares secretly think

\* Muis. נָבֵל and לֹא חָכָם put together, Deut. xxxii. 6, 'O foolish people and unwise.'

it; he cannot rase out the thoughts of a deity, though he endeavours to blot those characters of God in his soul; he hath some doubts whether there be a God or no: he wishes there were not any, and sometimes hopes there is none at all; he could not so ascertain himself by convincing arguments to produce to the world, but he tampered with his own heart to bring it to that persuasion, and smothered in himself those notices of a deity, which is so plain against the light of nature that such a man may well be called a fool for it.

‘There is no God.’\* לִית שׁוֹלֵטָא *non potestas Domini* (Chaldee). It is not *Jehovah*, which name signifies the essence of God as the prime and supreme being, but *Eloahim*, which name signifies the providence of God, God as a rector and judge. Not that he denies the existence of a supreme being that created the world, but his regarding the creatures, his government of the world, and consequently his reward of the righteous or punishments of the wicked.

There is a threefold denial of God.† 1. *Quoad existentiam*, this is absolute atheism. 2. *Quoad providentiam*, or his inspection into, or care of the things of the world, bounding him in the heavens. 3. *Quoad naturam*, in regard of one or other of the perfections due to his nature.

Of the denial of the providence of God most understand this,‡ not excluding the absolute atheist, as Diagoras is reported to be, nor the sceptical atheist, as Protagoras, who doubted whether there were a God. Those that deny the providence of God, do in effect deny the being of a God; for they strip him of that wisdom, goodness, tenderness, mercy, justice, righteousness, which are the glory of the Deity. And that principle of a greedy desire to be uncontrolled in their lusts, which induceth men to a denial of providence, that thereby they might stifle those seeds of fear which infect and embitter their sinful pleasures, may as well lead them to deny that there is any such being as a God. That at one blow their fears may be dashed all in pieces, and dissolved by the removal of the foundation; as men who desire liberty to commit works of darkness would not have the lights in the house dimmed but extinguished. What men say against providence, because they would have no check in their lusts, they may say in their hearts against the existence of God upon the same account; little difference between the dissenting from the one, and disowning the other.

‘They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doth good.’

He speaks of the atheist in the singular, *the fool*; of the corruption issuing in the life, in the plural; intimating that some few may choke in their hearts the sentiments of God and his providence, and positively deny them, yet there is something of a secret atheism in all, which is the fountain of the evil practices in their lives, not an utter disowning of the being of a God, but a denial or doubting of some of the rights of his nature.§ When men deny the God of purity, they must needs be polluted in soul and body, and grow brutish in their actions; when the sense of religion is shaken off, all kinds of wickedness is eagerly rushed into, whereby they become as loathsome to God as putrefied carcasses are to men.|| Not one or

\* אין אלהים No God.—*Muis*.

† Cocceius.

‡ Not owning him as the Egyptians called, θεον ἑγχέσμιον.—*Eugubin. in loc.*

§ Atheism absolute is not in all men’s judgments, but practical is in all men’s actions.

|| The apostle in the Romans, applying the later part of it to all mankind, but not the former, as the word translated *corrupt* signifies.

two evil actions is the product of such a principle, but the whole scene of a man's life is corrupted, and becomes execrable.

No man is exempted from some spice of atheism by the deprivation of his nature, which the Psalmist intimates, 'there is none that doth good.' Though there are indelible convictions of the being of a God, that they cannot absolutely deny it, yet there are some atheistical bubbleings in the hearts of men which evidence themselves in their actions; as the apostle, Titus i. 16, 'They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him.' Evil works are a dust stirred up by an atheistical breath. He that habituates himself in some sordid lust can scarcely be said seriously and firmly to believe that there is a God in being; and the apostle doth not say that they know God, but they 'profess to know him.' True knowledge and profession of knowledge are distinct. It intimates also to us the unreasonableness of atheism in the consequences; when men shut their eyes against the beams of so clear a sun, God revengeth himself upon them for their impiety by leaving them to their own wills, lets them fall into the deepest sink and dregs of iniquity; and since they doubt of him in their hearts, suffers them above others to deny him in their works; this the apostle discourseth at large, Rom. i. 24.

The text, then, is a description of man's corruption.

1. Of his mind. 'The fool hath said in his heart.' No better title than that of a fool is afforded to the atheist.

2. Of the other faculties. 1. In sins of commission, expressed by the loathsomeness, 'corrupt,' 'abominable.' 2. In sins of omission, 'there is none that doth good;' he lays down the corruption of the mind as the cause, the corruption of the other faculties as the effect.

I. It is a great folly to deny or doubt of the existence or being of God; or, an atheist is a great fool.

II. Practical atheism is natural to man in his corrupt state. It is against nature as constituted by God, but natural as nature is depraved by man. The absolute disowning of the being of a God is not natural to men, but the contrary is natural; but an inconsideration of God, or misrepresentation of his nature, is natural to man as corrupt.

III. A secret atheism, or a partial atheism, is the spring of all the wicked practices in the world; the disorders of the life spring from the ill dispositions of the heart.

I. For the first, every atheist is a grand fool. If he were not a fool, he would not imagine a thing so contrary to the stream of the universal reason in the world, contrary to the rational dictates of his own soul, and contrary to the testimony of every creature and link in the chain of creation. If he were not a fool, he would not strip himself of humanity, and degrade himself lower than the most despicable brute.

It is a folly; for though God be so inaccessible that we cannot know him perfectly, yet he is so much in the light, that we cannot be totally ignorant of him; as he cannot be comprehended in his essence, he cannot be unknown in his existence; it is as easy by reason to understand that he is, as it is difficult to know what he is.

The demonstrations reason furnisheth us with for the existence of God will be evidences of the atheist's folly. One would think there were little need of spending time in evidencing this truth, since in the principle of it, it seems to be so universally owned, and at the first proposal and demand gains the assent of most men.

But, 1, doth the growth of atheism among us render this necessary? May it not justly be suspected that the swarms of atheists are more numerous in

our times than history records to have been in any age, when men will not only say it in their hearts, but publish it with their lips, and boast that they have shaken off those shackles which bind other men's consciences? Doth not the barefaced debauchery of men evidence such a settled sentiment, or at least a careless belief of the truth, which lies at the root, and sprouts up in such venomous branches in the world? Can men's hearts be free from that principle wherewith their practices are so openly depraved? It is true the light of nature shines too vigorously for the power of man totally to put it out, yet loathsome actions impair and weaken the actual thoughts and considerations of a deity, and are like mists, that darken the light of the sun though they cannot extinguish it; their consciences, as a candlestick, must hold it, though their unrighteousness obscure it: Rom. i. 18, 'Who hold the truth in unrighteousness.' The engraved characters of the law of nature remain, though they daub them with their muddy lusts to make them illegible, so that since the inconsideration of a deity is the cause of all the wickedness and extravagancies of men; and, as Austin saith, the proposition is always true, 'The fool hath said in his heart,' &c., and more evidently true in this age than any; it will not be unnecessary to discourse of the demonstrations of this first principle.

The apostles spent little time in urging this truth, it was taken for granted all over the world, and they were generally devout in the worship of those idols they thought to be gods; that age ran from one God to many, and our age is running from one God to none at all.

2. The existence of God is the foundation of all religion. The whole building totters if the foundation be out of course; if we have not deliberate and right notions of it, we shall perform no worship, no service, yield no affection to him. If there be not a God, it is impossible there can be one; for eternity is essential to the notion of a God; so all religion would be vain and unreasonable, to pay homage to that which is not in being, nor can ever be. We must first believe that he is, and that he is what he declares himself to be, before we can seek him, adore him, and devote our affections to him, Heb. xi. 6. We cannot pay God a due and regular homage unless we understand him in his perfections, *what* he is; and we can pay him no homage at all, unless we believe *that* he is.

3. It is fit we should know why we believe, that our belief of a God may appear to be upon undeniable evidence, and that we may give a better reason for his existence than that we have heard our parents and teachers tell us so, and our acquaintance think so. It is as much as to say there is no God, when we know not why we believe there is, and would not consider the arguments for his existence.

4. It is necessary to depress that secret atheism which is in the heart of every man by nature. Though every visible object which offers itself to our sense presents a deity to our minds, and exhorts us to subscribe to the truth of it, yet there is a root of atheism springing up sometimes in wavering thoughts and foolish imaginations, inordinate actions and secret wishes. Certain it is that every man that doth not love God denies God; now can he that disaffects him, and hath a slavish fear of him, wish his existence, and say to his own heart with any cheerfulness, there is a God, and make it his chief care to persuade himself of it? He would persuade himself there is no God, and stifle the seeds of it in his reason and conscience, that he might have the greatest liberty to entertain the allurements of the flesh.

It is necessary to excite men to daily and actual considerations of God and his nature, which would be a bar to much of that wickedness which overflows in the lives of men.

5. Nor is it unuseful to those that effectually believe and love him;\* for those who have had a converse with God, and felt his powerful influences in the secrets of their hearts, to take a prospect of those satisfactory accounts which reason gives of that God they adore and love, to see every creature justify them in their owning of him, and affections to him; indeed, the evidences of a God striking upon the conscience of those who resolve to cleave to sin as their chiefest darling, will dash their pleasures with unwelcome mixtures.

I shall further premise this,

That the folly of atheism is evidenced by the light of reason. Men that will not listen to Scripture, as having no counterpart of it in their souls, cannot easily deny natural reason, which riseth up on all sides for the justification of this truth. There is a natural as well as a revealed knowledge, and the book of the creatures is legible in declaring the being of a God, as well as the Scriptures are in declaring the nature of a God; there are outward objects in the world, and common principles in the conscience; whence it may be inferred.

For (1.) God, in regard of his existence, is not only the discovery of faith, but of reason. God hath revealed not only his being, but some sparks of his eternal power and Godhead in his works as well as in his word. Rom. i. 19, 20, 'God hath shewed it unto them.' How?† In his works, by the things that are made; it is a discovery to our reason as shining in the creatures, and an object of our faith as breaking out upon us in the Scriptures; it is an article of our faith, and an article of our reason. Faith supposeth natural knowledge, as grace supposeth nature. Faith indeed is properly of things above reason, purely depending upon revelation. What can be demonstrated by natural light is not so properly the object of faith, though in regard of the addition of a certainty by revelation it is so.

The belief that God is, which the apostle speaks of, Heb. xi. 6, is not so much of the bare existence of God, as what God is in relation to them that seek to him, viz., 'a rewarder.' The apostle speaks of the faith of Abel, the faith of Enoch, such a faith that pleases God; but the faith of Abel testified in his sacrifice, and the faith of Enoch testified in his walking with God, was not simply a faith of the existence of God. Cain, in the time of Abel, other men in the world in the time of Enoch, believed this as well as they; but it was a faith joined with the worship of God, and desirous to please him in the way of his own appointment; so that they believed that God was such as he had declared himself to be in his promise to Adam, such an one as would be as good as his word, and bruise the serpent's head; he that seeks to God according to the mind of God, must believe that he is such a God that will pardon sin and justify a seeker of him; that he is a God of that ability and will to justify a sinner in that way he hath appointed for the clearing the holiness of his nature, and vindicating the honour of his law violated by man.

No man can seek God, or love God, unless he believe him to be thus, and he cannot seek God without a discovery of his own mind how he would be sought; for it is not a seeking God in any way of man's invention that renders him capable of this desired fruit of a reward: he that believes God as a rewarder, must believe the promise of God concerning the Messiah. Men, under the conscience of sin, cannot tell, without a divine discovery, whether God will reward, or how he will reward, the seekers of him, and therefore cannot act towards him as an object of faith. Would any man seek God merely because he is, or love him because he is, if he did not

\* Coccei Sum. Theol, c. 8, § 1.

† Aquin.

know that he should be acceptable to him? The bare existence of a thing is not the ground of affection to it, but those qualities of it, and our interest in it which render it amiable and delightful. How can men whose consciences fly in their faces seek God or love him, without this knowledge that he is a rewarder? Nature doth not shew any way to a sinner how to reconcile God's provoked justice with his tenderness. The faith the apostle speaks of here is a faith that eyes the reward as an encouragement, and the will of God as the rule of its acting, he doth not speak simply of the existence of God.

I have spoken the more of this place, because the Socinians\* use this to decry any natural knowledge of God, and that the existence of God is only to be known by revelation, so that by that reason any one that lived without the Scripture hath no ground to believe the being of a God.

The Scripture ascribes a knowledge of God to all nations in the world, Rom. i. 19; not only a faculty of knowing, if they had arguments and demonstrations, as an ignorant man in any art hath a faculty to know, but it ascribes an actual knowledge: ver. 19, 'manifest in them;' ver. 21, 'they knew God,'—not they might know him, they knew him when they did not care for knowing him. The notices of God are as intelligible to us by reason as any object in the world is visible; he is written in every letter.

(2.) We are often in the Scripture sent to take a prospect of the creatures for a discovery of God. The apostles drew arguments from the topics of nature when they discoursed with those that owned the Scripture, Rom. i. 19, as well as when they treated with those that were ignorant of it, as Acts xiv. 15, 16; and among the philosophers of Athens, Acts xvii. 27, 29. Such arguments the Holy Ghost in the apostles thought sufficient to convince men of the existence, unity, spirituality, and patience of God.† Such arguments had not been used by them and the prophets from the visible things in the world to silence the Gentiles with whom they dealt, had not this truth, and much more about God, been demonstrated by natural reason; they knew well enough that probable arguments would not satisfy piercing and inquisitive minds.

In Paul's account the testimony of the creatures was without contradiction. God himself justifies this way of proceeding by his own example, and remits Job to the consideration of the creatures, to spell out something of his divine perfections, Job xxxviii. xxxix. xl. &c. It is but one truth in philosophy and divinity, that what is false in one cannot be true in another. Truth, in what appearance soever, doth never contradict itself. And this is so convincing an argument of the existence of God, that God never vouchsafed any miracle, or put forth any act of omnipotency, besides what was evident in the creatures, for satisfaction of the curiosity of any atheist, or the evincing of his being,‡ as he hath done for the evidencing those truths which were not written in the book of nature, or for the restoring a decayed worship, or the protection or deliverance of his people. Those miracles in publishing the gospel indeed did demonstrate the existence of some supreme power; but they were not seals designedly affixed for that, but for the confirmation of that truth which was above the ken of purblind reason, and purely the birth of divine revelation. Yet what proves the truth of any spiritual doctrine, proves also in that act the existence of the divine Author of it. The revelation always implies a revealer; and that which manifests it to be a revelation, manifests also the supreme revealer of it. By the

\* Voet. Theol. natural. cap. iii. § 1, p. 22.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Lord Bacon has almost the same words in his sixteenth essay.—Ed.



same light the sun manifests other things to us it also manifests itself. But what miracles could rationally be supposed to work upon an atheist, who is not drawn to a sense of the truth proclaimed aloud by so many wonders of the creation?

Let us now proceed to the demonstration of the atheist's folly.

It is folly to deny or doubt of a sovereign being, incomprehensible in his nature, infinite in his essence and perfections, independent in his operations, who hath given being to the whole frame of sensible and intelligible creatures, and governs them according to their several natures, by an unconceivable wisdom, who fills the heavens with the glory of his majesty, and the earth with the influences of his goodness.

It is a folly inexcusable to renounce in this case all appeal to universal consent, and the joint assurances of the creatures.

*Reason 1.* It is a folly to deny or doubt of that which has been the acknowledged sentiment of all nations, in all places and ages. There is no nation but hath owned some kind of religion, and therefore no nation but hath consented in the notion of a supreme Creator and Governor.

1. This hath been universal.

2. It hath been constant and uninterrupted.

3. Natural and innate.

1. It hath been universally assented to by the judgments and practices of all nations in the world.

(1.) No nation hath been exempt from it. All histories of former and later ages have not produced any one nation but fell under the force of this truth. Though they have differed in their religions, they have agreed in this truth; here both heathen, Turk, Jew, and Christian centre without any contention. No quarrel was ever commenced on this score, though about other opinions wars have been sharp and enmities irreconcilable. The notion of the existence of a deity was the same in all, Indians as well as Britons, Americans as well as Jews.

It hath not been an opinion peculiar to this or that people, to this or that sect of philosophers, but hath been as universal as the reason whereby men are differenced from other creatures; so that some have rather defined man by *animal religiosum* than *animal rationale*. It is so twisted with reason, that a man cannot be accounted rational unless he own an object of religion; therefore he that understands not this renounces his humanity when he renounceth a divinity.

No instance can be given of any one people in the world that disclaimed it. It hath been owned by the wise and ignorant, by the learned and stupid, by those who had no other guide but the dimmest light of nature, as well as by those whose candles were snuffed by a more polite education; and that without any solemn debate and contention. Though some philosophers have been known to change their opinions in the concerns of nature, yet none can be proved to have absolutely changed their opinion concerning the being of a God. One died for asserting one God, none in the former ages upon record hath died for asserting no God. Go to the utmost bounds of America: you may find people without some broken pieces of the law of nature, but not without this signature and stamp upon them, though they wanted commerce with other nations, except as savage as themselves, in whom the light of nature was as it were sunk into the socket, who were but one remove from brutes, who clothe not their bodies, cover not their shame, yet were they as soon known to own a God as they were known to be a people. They were possessed with the notion of a supreme being, the author of the world, had an object of religious adoration, put up

prayers to the deity they owned for the good things they wanted and the diverting the evils they feared. No people so untamed, where absolute, perfect atheism had gained a footing.

Not one nation of the world known in the time of the Romans that were without their ceremonies, whereby they signified their devotion to a deity. They had their places of worship, where they made their vows, presented their prayers, offered their sacrifices, and implored the assistance of what they thought to be a god, and in their distresses ran immediately, without any deliberation, to their gods; so that the notion of a deity was as inward and settled in them as their own souls, and indeed runs in the blood of mankind. The distempers of the understanding cannot utterly deface it; you shall scarce find the most distracted bedlam in his raving fits to deny a God, though he may blaspheme and fancy himself one.

(2.) Nor doth the idolatry and multiplicity of gods in the world weaken, but confirm this universal consent. Whatsoever unworthy conceits men have had of God in all nations, or whatsoever degrading representations they have made of him, yet they all concur in this, that there is a supreme power to be adored. Though one people worshipped the sun, others the fire; and the Egyptians, gods out of their rivers, gardens, and fields; yet the notion of a deity existent, who created and governed the world, and conferred daily benefits upon them, was maintained by all, though applied to the stars, and in part to those sordid creatures. All the Dragons of the world establish this truth, and fall down before it. Had not the nations owned the being of a God, they had never offered incense to an idol; had there not been a deep impression of the existence of a deity, they had never exalted creatures below themselves to the honour of altars: men could not so easily have been deceived by forged deities, if they had not had a notion of a real one. Their fondness to set up others in the place of God, evidenced a natural knowledge that there was one who had a right to be worshipped. If there were not this sentiment of a deity, no man would ever have made an image of a piece of wood, worshipped it, prayed to it, and said, 'Deliver me, for thou art my god,' Isa. xlv. 17. They applied a general notion to a particular image. The difference is in the manner and immediate object of worship, not in the formal ground of worship. The worship sprung from a true principle, though it was not applied to a right object: while they were rational creatures they could not deface the notion; yet while they were corrupt creatures it was not difficult to apply themselves to a wrong object from a true principle. A blind man knows he hath a way to go as well as one of the clearest sight, but because of his blindness he may miss the way and stumble into a ditch. No man would be imposed upon to take a Bristol stone instead of a diamond, if he did not know that there were such things as diamonds in the world; nor any man spread forth his hands to an idol, if he were altogether without the sense of a deity. Whether it be a false or a true God men apply to, yet in both, the natural sentiment of a God is evidenced; all their mistakes were grafts inserted in this stock, since they would multiply gods rather than deny a deity.

How should such a general submission be entered into by the world, so as to adore things of base alloy, if the force of religion were not such, that in any fashion a man would seek the satisfaction of his natural instinct to some object of worship.\* This great diversity confirms this consent to be a good argument, for it evidenceth it not to be a cheat, combination, or conspiracy to deceive, or a mutual intelligence, but every one finds it in his climate, yea, in himself. People would never have given the title of a god to men

\* Charron de la Sagesse, livr. i. chap. 7.



or brutes, had there not been a pre-existing and unquestioned persuasion, that there was such a being.\* How else should the notion of a God come into their minds? The notion that there is a God must be more ancient.

(3.) Whatsoever disputes there have been in the world, this of the existence of God was never the subject of contention. All other things have been questioned. What jarrings were there among philosophers about natural things, into how many parties were they split, with what animosities did they maintain their several judgments? But we hear of no solemn controversies about the existence of a Supreme Being. This never met with any considerable contradiction. No nation, that had put other things to question, would ever suffer this to be disparaged, so much as by a public doubt.† We find among the heathen contentions about the nature of God, and the number of gods. Some asserted an innumerable multitude of gods; some affirmed him to be subject to birth and death; some affirmed the entire world was God; others fancied him to be a circle of a bright fire; others, that he was a spirit diffused through the whole world: yet they unanimously concurred in this, as the judgment of universal reason, that there was such a sovereign being. And those that were sceptical in every thing else, and asserted that the greatest certainty was that there was nothing certain, professed a certainty in this. The question was not whether there was a first cause, but what it was.‡ It is much the same thing as the disputes about the nature and matter of the heavens, the sun and planets; though there be a great diversity of judgments, yet all agree that there are heavens, sun, planets. So all the contentions among men about the nature of God, weaken not, but rather confirm, that there is a God, since there was never a public formal debate about his existence. Those that have been ready to pull out one another's eyes for their dissent from their judgments, sharply censured one another's sentiments, envied the births of one another's wits, always shook hands with an unanimous consent in this: never censured one another for being of this persuasion, never called it into question. As what was never controverted among men professing Christianity, but acknowledged by all, though contending about other things, has reason to be judged a certain truth belonging to the Christian religion; so what was never subjected to any controversy, but acknowledged by the whole world, hath reason to be embraced as a truth without any doubt.

(4.) This universal consent is not prejudiced by some few dissenters. History doth not reckon twenty professed atheists in all ages in the compass of the whole world; § and we have not the name of any one absolute atheist upon record in Scripture: yet it is questioned, whether any of them, noted in history with that infamous name, were downright deniers of the existence of God, but rather because they disparaged the deities commonly worshipped by the nations where they lived, as being of a clearer reason to discern that those qualities, vulgarly attributed to their gods, as lust and luxury, wantonness and quarrels, were unworthy of the nature of a God. But suppose they were really what they are termed to be, what are they to the multitude of men that have sprung out of the loins of Adam? Not so much as one grain of ashes is to all that were ever turned into that form by any fires in your chimneys. And many more were not sufficient to weigh down the contrary consent of the whole world, and bear down an universal impression. Should the laws of a country, agreed universally to by the whole body of the people, be accounted vain, because a hundred men of those millions disapprove of them, when not their reason, but their folly and base interest,

\* Gassend. Phys. § 1. lib. 4. cap. 2.

† Amyrant de Religion, page 50.

‡ Gassend. Phys. § 1. lib. 4. cap. 2.

§ Gassend. Phys. § 1. lib. 4. cap. 7.

persuades them to dislike them, and dispute against them? \* What if some men be blind, shall any conclude from thence that eyes are not natural to men? Shall we say that the notion of the existence of God is not natural to men, because a very small number have been of a contrary opinion? Shall a man in a dungeon, that never saw the sun, deny that there is a sun, because one or two blind men tell him there is none, when thousands assure him there is? Why should then the exceptions of a few, not one to millions, discredit that which is voted certainly true by the joint consent of the world? Add this too, that if those that are reported to be atheists had had any considerable reason to step aside from the common persuasion of the whole world, it is a wonder it met not with entertainment by great numbers of those, who, by reason of their notorious wickedness and inward disquiets, might reasonably be thought to wish in their hearts that there were no God. It is strange, if there were any reason on their side, that in so long a space of time as hath run out from the creation of the world, there could not be engaged a considerable number to frame a society for the profession of it. It hath died with the person that started it, and vanished as soon as it appeared.

To conclude this, is it not folly for any man to deny or doubt of the being of a God, to dissent from all mankind, and stand in contradiction to human nature? What is the general dictate of nature is a certain truth. It is impossible that nature can naturally and universally lie; and therefore those that ascribe all to nature, and set it in the place of God, contradict themselves, if they give not credit to it in that which it universally affirms. A general consent of all nations is to be esteemed as a law of nature.† Nature cannot plant in the minds of all men an assent to a falsity, for then the laws of nature would be destructive to the reason and the minds of men. How is it possible that a falsity should be a persuasion spread through all nations, engraven upon the minds of all men, men of the most towering and men of the most creeping understanding; that they should consent to it in all places, and in those places where the nations have not had any known commerce with the rest of the known world? A consent not settled by any law of man to constrain people to a belief of it; and indeed it is impossible that any law of man can constrain the belief of the mind. Would not he deservedly be accounted a fool, that should deny that to be gold which had been tried and examined by a great number of knowing goldsmiths, and hath passed the test of all their touchstones? What excess of folly would it be for him to deny it to be true gold, if it had been tried by all that had skill in that metal in all nations in the world!

2. It hath been a constant and uninterrupted consent. It hath been as ancient as the first age of the world; no man is able to mention any time from the beginning of the world, wherein this notion hath not been universally owned; it is as old as mankind, and hath run along with the course of the sun, nor can the date be fixed lower than that.

(1.) In all the changes of the world this hath been maintained. In the overturnings of the government of states, the alteration of modes of worship, this hath stood unshaken. The reasons upon which it was founded were in all revolutions of time accounted satisfactory and convincing, nor could absolute atheism, in the changes of any laws, ever gain the favour of any one body of people to be established by a law. When the honour of the heathen idols was laid in the dust, this suffered no impair. The being of one God was more vigorously owned when the unreasonableness of multiplicity of gods was manifest, and grew taller by the detection of counterfeits.

\* Gassend. Phys. § 1. lib. 4. cap. 2.

† Cicero.

When other parts of the law of nature have been violated by some nations, this hath maintained its standing. The long series of ages hath been so far from blotting it out, that it hath more strongly confirmed it, and maketh further progress in the confirmation of it. Time, which hath eaten out the strength of other things, and blasted mere inventions, hath not been able to consume this. The discovery of all other impostures never made this by any society of men to be suspected as one. It will not be easy to name any imposture that hath walked perpetually in the world without being discovered and whipped out by some nation or other. Falsities have never been so universally and constantly owned without public control and question. And since the world hath detected many errors of the former age, and learning been increased, this hath been so far from being dimmed, that it hath shone out clearer with the increase of natural knowledge, and received fresh and more vigorous confirmations.

(2.) The fears and anxieties in the consciencies of men have given men sufficient occasion to root it out, had it been possible for them to do it. If the notion of the existence of God had been possible to have been dashed out of the minds of men, they would have done it rather than have suffered so many troubles in their souls upon the commission of sin; since they did [not] want wickedness and wit in so many corrupt ages to have attempted it and prospered in it, had it been possible. How comes it therefore to pass that such a multitude of profligate persons, that have been in the world since the fall of man, should not have rooted out this principle, and dispossessed the minds of men of that which gave birth to their tormenting fears? How is it possible that all should agree together in a thing which created fear, and an obligation against the interest of the flesh, if it had been free for men to discharge themselves of it? No man, as far as corrupt nature bears sway in him, is willing to live controlled.

The first man would rather be a god himself than under one, Gen. iii. 5. Why should men continue this notion in them, which shackled them in their vile inclinations, if it had been in their power utterly to deface it? If it were an imposture, how comes it to pass that all the wicked ages of the world could never discover that to be a cheat, which kept them in continual alarms? Men wanted not will to shake off such apprehensions; as Adam, so all his posterity are desirous to hide themselves from God upon the commission of sin, ver. 9, and by the same reason they would hide God from their souls. What is the reason they could never attain their will and their wish by all their endeavours? Could they possibly have satisfied themselves that there were no God, they had discarded their fears, the disturbers of the repose of their lives, and been unbridled in their pleasures. The wickedness of the world would never have preserved that which was a perpetual molestation to it, had it been possible to be razed out.

But since men, under the turmoils and lashes of their own consciences, could never bring their hearts to a settled dissent from this truth, it evidenceth, that as it took its birth at the beginning of the world, it cannot expire, no, not in the ashes of it, nor in anything, but the reduction of the soul to that nothing from whence it sprung. This conception is so perpetual, that the nature of the soul must be dissolved before it be rooted out, nor can it be extinct whilst the soul endures.

(3.) Let it be considered also by us that own the Scripture, that the devil deems it impossible to root out this sentiment. It seems to be so perpetually fixed, that the devil did not think fit to tempt man to the denial of the existence of a deity, but persuaded him to believe, he might ascend to that dignity, and become a god himself: Gen. iii. 1, 'Hath God said?' and

he there owns him, ver. 5, 'Ye shall become as gods.' He owns God in the question he asks the woman, and persuades our first parents to be gods themselves. And in all stories, both ancient and modern, the devil was never able to tincture men's minds with a professed denial of the deity, which would have opened a door to a world of more wickedness than hath been acted, and took away the bar to the breaking out of that evil, which is naturally in the hearts of men, to the greater prejudice of human societies. He wanted not malice to raze out all the notions of God, but power; he knew it was impossible to effect it, and therefore in vain to attempt it. He set up himself in several places of the ignorant world as a god, but never was able to overthrow the opinion of the being of a God. The impressions of a deity were so strong as not to be struck out by the malice and power of hell.

What a folly is it then in any to contradict or doubt of this truth, which all the periods of time have not been able to wear out; which all the wars and quarrels of men with their own consciences have not been able to destroy; which ignorance, and debauchery, its two greatest enemies, cannot weaken; which all the falsehoods and errors which have reigned in one or other part of the world, have not been able to banish; which lives in the consents of men in spite of all their wishes to the contrary, and hath grown stronger and shone clearer by the improvements of natural reason!

3. Natural and innate, which pleads strongly for the perpetuity of it. It is natural, though some think it not a principal writ in the heart of man;\* it is so natural that every man is born with a restless instinct to be of some kind of religion or other, which implies some object of religion. The impression of a deity is as common as reason, and of the same age with reason.† It is a relic of knowledge after the fall of Adam, like fire under ashes, which sparkles as soon as ever the heap of ashes is open; a notion sealed up in the soul of every man;‡ else how could those people, who were unknown to one another, separate by seas and mounts, differing in various customs and manner of living, had no mutual intelligence one with another, light upon this as a common sentiment, if they had not been guided by one uniform reason in all their minds, by one nature common to them all; though their climates be different, their tempers and constitutions various, their imaginations in some things as distant from one another as heaven is from earth, the ceremonies of their religion not all of the same kind, yet wherever you find human nature, you find this settled persuasion. So that the notion of a God seems to be twisted with the nature of man, and is the first natural branch of common reason, or upon either the first inspection of a man into himself and his own state and constitution, or upon the first sight of any external visible object. Nature within man, and nature without man, agree upon the first meeting together to form this sentiment, that there is a God. It is as natural as anything we call a common principle. One thing which is called a common principle and natural is, that the whole is greater than the parts. If this be not born with us, yet the exercise of reason, essential to man, settles it as a certain maxim; upon the dividing anything into several parts, he finds every part less than when they were all together. By the same exercise of reason, we cannot cast our eyes upon anything in the world, or exercise our understandings upon ourselves, but we must presently imagine there was some cause of those things, some cause of myself and my own being, so that this truth is as natural to man as anything he can call most natural or a common principle.

\* Pink. Eph. vi. p. 10, 11.

† Amyrant des Religions, p. 6-9.

‡ King on Jonah, p. 16.

It must be confessed by all, that there is a law of nature writ upon the hearts of men, which will direct them to commendable actions, if they will attend to the writing in their own consciences. This law cannot be considered without the notice of a lawgiver. For it is but a natural and obvious conclusion, that some superior hand engrafted those principles in man, since he finds something in him twitching him upon the pursuit of uncomely actions, though his heart be mightily inclined to them; man knows he never planted this principle of reluctancy in his own soul; he can never be the cause of that which he cannot be friends with. If he were the cause of it, why doth he not rid himself of it? No man would endure a thing that doth frequently molest and disquiet him, if he could cashier it. It is therefore sown in man by some hand more powerful than man, which riseth so high and is rooted so strong, that all the force that man can use cannot pull it up. If therefore this principle be natural in man, and the law of nature be natural, the notion of a lawgiver must be as natural as the notion of a printer, or that there is a printer is obvious upon the sight of a stamp impressed; after this the multitude of effects in the world step in to strengthen this beam of natural light, and the direct conclusion from thence is, that that power which made those outward objects, implanted this inward principle; this is sown in us, born with us, and sprouts up with our growth; or as one saith,\* it is like letters carved upon the bark of a young plant, which grows up together with us, and the longer it grows the letters are more legible.

This is the ground of this universal consent, and why it may well be termed natural.

This will more evidently appear to be natural, because,

[1.] This consent could not be by mere tradition.

[2.] Nor by any mutual intelligence of governors to keep people in awe, which are two things the atheist pleads. The first hath no strong foundation, and that other is as absurd and foolish as it is wicked and abominable.

[3.] Nor was it fear first introduced it.

[1.] It could not be by mere tradition. Many things indeed are entertained by posterity, which their ancestors delivered to them, and that out of a common reverence to their forefathers, and an opinion that they had a better prospect of things than the increase of the corruption of succeeding ages would permit them to have.

But if this be a tradition handed from our ancestors, they also must receive it from theirs; we must then ascend to the first man, we cannot else escape a confounding ourselves with running into infinito. Was it then the only tradition he left to them? Is it not probable he acquainted them with other things in conjunction with this, the nature of God, the way to worship him, the manner of the world's existence, his own state? We may reasonably suppose him to have a good stock of knowledge; what is become of it? It cannot be supposed, that the first man should acquaint his posterity with an object of worship, and leave them ignorant of a mode of worship, and of the end of worship. We find in Scripture his immediate posterity did the first in sacrifices, and without doubt they were not ignorant of the other. How come men to be so uncertain in all other things, and so confident of this, if it were only a tradition? How did debates and irreconcilable questions start up concerning other things, and this remain untouched, but by a small number? Whatsoever tradition the first man left besides this, is lost and no way recoverable, but by the revelation God hath made in his word

\* Charleton.



How comes it to pass, this of a God is longer lived than all the rest, which we may suppose man left to his immediate descendants? How come men to retain the one and forget the other? What was the reason this survived the ruin of the rest, and surmounted the uncertainties into which the other sunk? Was it likely it should be handed down alone without other attendants on it at first? Why did it not expire among the Americans, who have lost the account of their own descent, and the stock from whence they sprung, and cannot reckon above eight hundred or a thousand years at most? Why was not the manner of the worship of a God transmitted, as well as that of his existence? How came men to dissent in their opinions concerning his nature, whether he was corporeal or incorporeal, finite or infinite, omnipresent or limited? Why were not men as negligent to transmit this of his existence as that of his nature? No reason can be rendered for the security of this above the other, but that there is so clear a tincture of a Deity upon the minds of men, such traces and shadows of him in the creatures, such indelible instincts within, and invincible arguments without to keep up this universal consent. The characters are so deep that they cannot possibly be rubbed out, which would have been one time or other, in one nation or other, had it depended only upon tradition, since one age shakes off frequently the sentiments of the former.

I cannot think of above one which may be called a tradition, which indeed has been kept up among all nations, viz., sacrifices, which could not be natural but instituted. What ground could they have in nature, to imagine that the blood of beasts could expiate and wash off the guilt and stains of a rational creature? Yet they had in all places (but among the Jews, and some of them only) lost the knowledge of the reason and end of the institution, which the Scripture acquaints us was to typify and signify the redemption by the promised seed. This tradition hath been superannuated and laid aside in most parts of the world, while this notion of the existence of a God hath stood firm.

But suppose it were a tradition, was it likely to be a mere intention\* and agreement of the first man? Had there been no reason for it, his posterity could soon have found out the weakness of its foundation. What advantage had it been to him to transmit so great a falsehood, to kindle the fears or raise the hopes of his posterity, if there were no God? It cannot be supposed he should be so void of that natural affection men in all ages bear to their descendants, as so grossly to deceive them, and be so contrary to the simplicity and plainness which appears in all things nearest their original.

[2.] Neither was it by any mutual intelligence of governors among themselves, to keep people in subjection to them. If it were a political design at first, it seems it met with the general nature of mankind very ready to give entertainment.

*First*, It is unaccountable how this should come to pass. It must be either by a joint assembly of them, or a mutual correspondence. If by any assembly, who were the persons? Let the name of any one be mentioned. When was the time? Where was the place of this appearance? By what authority did they meet together? Who made the first motion, and first started this great principle of policy? By what means could they assemble from such distant parts of the world? Human histories are utterly silent in it, and the Scripture, the ancientest history, gives an account of the attempt of Babel, but not a word of any design of this nature.

What mutual correspondence could such have, whose interests are for the most part different, and their designs contrary to one another? How could

\* Qu. 'invention'?—ED.



they, who were divided by such vast seas, have this mutual converse? How could those, who were different in their customs and manners, agree so unanimously together in one thing to gull the people? If there had been such a correspondence between the governors of all nations, what is the reason some nations should be unknown to the world till of late times? How could the business be so secretly managed, as not to take vent, and issue in a discovery to the world? Can reason suppose so many in a joint conspiracy, and no man's conscience in this life under sharp afflictions, or on his deathbed, when conscience is most awakened, constrain him to reveal openly the cheat that beguiled the world? How came they to be so unanimous in this notion, and to differ in their rites almost in every country? Why could they not agree in one mode of worship throughout all the world, as well as in this universal notion? If there were not a mutual intelligence, it cannot be conceived how in every nation such a state engineer should rise up with the same trick to keep people in awe. What is the reason we cannot find any law in any one nation, to constrain men to the belief of the existence of a God, since politic stratagems have been often fortified by laws? Besides, such men make use of principles received to effect their contrivances and are not so impolitic as to build designs upon principles that have no foundation in nature. Some heathen law-givers have pretended a converse with their gods to make their laws be received by the people with a greater veneration, and fix with stronger obligation the observance and perpetuity of them; but this was not the introducing of a new principle, but the supposition of an old received notion, that there was a God, and an application of that principle to their present design. The pretence had been vain had not the notion of a God been ingrafted. Politicians are so little possessed with a reverence of God, that the first mighty one in the Scripture (which may reasonably gain with the atheist the credit of the ancientest history in the word), is represented without any fear of God. Gen. x. 9, 'Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord.' An invader and oppressor of his neighbours, and reputed the introducer of a new worship, and being the first that built cities after the flood (as Cain was the first builder of them before the flood), built also idolatry with them, and erected a new worship, and was so far from strengthening that notion the people had of God, that he endeavoured to corrupt it; the first idolatry in common histories being noted to proceed from that part of the world, the ancientest idol being at Babylon and supposed to be first invented by this person. Whence by the way perhaps Rome is in the Revelations called Babylon, with respect to that similitude of their saint-worship, to the idolatry first set up in that place.\* It is evident politicians have often changed the worship of a nation, but it is not upon record, that the first thoughts of an object of worship ever entered into the minds of people by any trick of theirs.

But to return to the present argument; the being of a God is owned by some nations that have scarce any form of policy among them. It is a wonder how any wit should hit upon such an invention, as it is absurd to ascribe it to any human device, if there were not prevailing arguments to constrain the consent. Besides, how is it possible they should deceive themselves? What is the reason the greatest politicians have their fears of deity upon their unjust practices, as well as other men, they intended to befool? How many of them have had forlorn consciences upon a deathbed upon the consideration of a God to answer an account to in another world.

\* Or if we understand it, as some think, that he defended his invasions under a pretence of the preserving religion, it assures us that there was a notion of an object of religion before, since no religion can be without an object of worship.

Is it credible they should be frightened by that wherewith they knew they beguiled others? No man satisfying his pleasures would impose such a deceit upon himself, or render and make himself more miserable than the creatures he hath dominion over.

*Secondly*, It is unaccountable how it should endure so long a time; that his policy should be so fortunate as to gain ground in the consciences of men, and exercise an empire over them, and meet with such an universal success. If the notion of a God were a state-engine, and introduced by some politic grandees for the ease of government, and preserving people with more docility in order, how comes it to pass the first broachers of it were never upon record? There is scarce a false opinion vented in the world, but may as a stream be traced to the first head and fountain. The inventors of particular forms of worship are known, and the reasons why they prescribed them known; but what grandee was the author of this? who can pitch a time and person that sprung up this notion? If any be so insolent as to impose a cheat, he can hardly be supposed to be so successful as to deceive the whole world for many ages. Impostures pass not free through the whole world without examination and discovery. Falsities have not been universally and constantly owned without control and question. If a cheat imposeth upon some towns and countries, he will be found out by the more piercing enquiries of other places; and it is not easy to name any imposture that hath walked so long in its disguise in the world, without being unmasked and whipped out by some nation or other. If this had been a mere trick, there would have been as much craft in some to discern it as there was in others to contrive it. No man can be imagined so wise in a kingdom, but others may be found as wise as himself; and it is not conceivable that so many near-sighted men in all ages should be ignorant of it, and not endeavour to see the world from so great a falsity.\* It cannot be found that a trick of state should always beguile men of the most piercing insights, as well as the most credulous. That a few crafty men should befooled all the wise men in the world, and the world lie in a belief of it, and never like to be freed from it. What is the reason the succeeding politicians never knew this stratagem, since their maxims are usually handed to their successors?†

This persuasion of the existence of God, owes not itself to any imposture or subtlety of men. If it had not been agreeable to common nature and reason, it could not so long have borne sway. The imposed yoke would have been cast off by multitudes. Men would not have charged themselves with that which was attended with consequences displeasing to the flesh, and hindered them from a full swing of their rebellious passions; such a shackle would have mouldered of itself, or been broke by the extravagances human nature is inclined unto. The wickedness of men, without question, hath prompted them to endeavour to unmask it, if it were a cozenage, but could never yet be so successful as to free the world from a persuasion, or their own consciences from the tincture, of the existence of a deity. It must be, therefore, of an ancients date than the craft of statesmen, and descend into the world with the first appearance of human nature. Time, which hath rectified many errors, improves this notion, makes it shock down its roots deeper, and spread its branches larger.

It must be a natural truth that shines clear by the detection of those errors that have befooled the world, and the wit of man is never able to name any human author that first insinuated it into the beliefs of men.

[3.] Nor was it fear first introduced it. Fear is the consequent of wicked-

\* Fotherby, A theomatrix, p. 64.

† 'And there is not a Richelieu, but leaves his axioms to a Mazarin.'

ness. As man was not created with any inherent sin, so he was not created with any terrifying fears; the one had been against the holiness of the Creator, the other against his goodness. Fear did not make this opinion, but the opinion of the being of a deity was the cause of this fear, after his sense of angering the deity by his wickedness. The object of fear is before the act of fear; there could not be an act of fear exercised about the deity, till it was believed to be existent, and not only so, but offended. For God, as existent only, is not the object of fear or love: it is not the existence of a thing that excites any of those affections, but the relation a thing bears to us in particular. God is good, and so the object of love, as well as just, and thereby the object of fear. He was as much called love (*Εἰς*) and *mens*, or mind, in regard of his goodness and understanding, by the heathens, as much as by any other name. Neither of those names were proper to insinuate fear, neither was fear the first principle that made the heathens worship a god. They offered sacrifices out of gratitude to some, as well as to others out of fear; the fear of evils in the world, and the hopes of belief and assistance from their gods, and not a terrifying fear of God, was the principal spring of their worship. When calamities from the hands of men, or judgments by the influences of heaven, were upon them, they implored that which they thought a deity. It was not their fear of him, but a hope in his goodness and persuasion of remedy from him, for the averting those evils, that rendered them adorers of a god. If they had not had pre-existent notions of his being and goodness, they would never have made addresses to him, or so frequently sought to that they only apprehended as a terrifying object.\* When you hear men calling upon God in a time of affrighting thunder, you cannot imagine that the fear of thunder did first introduce the notion of a God, but implies that it was before apprehended by them, or stamped upon them, though their fear doth at present actuate that belief, and engage them in present exercise of piety; and whereas the Scripture saith, 'the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom,' Prov. ix. 10, Ps. cxi. 10, or of all religion, it is not understood of a distracted and terrifying fear, but a reverential fear of him, because of his holiness, or a worship of him, a submission to him, and sincere seeking of him.

Well then, is it not a folly for an atheist to deny that which is the reason and common sentiment of the whole world, to strip himself of humanity, run counter to his own conscience, prefer a private before a universal judgment, give the lie to his own nature and reason, assert things impossible to be proved, nay, impossible to be acted, forge irrationalities for the support of his fancy against the common persuasion of the world, and against himself, and so much of God as is manifest in him and every man? Rom. i. 19.

*Reason 2.* It is a folly to deny that which all creatures, or all things in the world manifest.† Let us view this in Scripture since we acknowledge it, and after consider the arguments from natural reason.

The apostle resolves it: Rom. i. 19, 20, 'The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.' They know, or might know, by the things that were made, of the eternity and power of God; their sense might take circuit about every object, and their minds collect the being, and something of the perfections of a deity. The first discourse of the mind upon the sight of a delicate piece of workmanship, is the conclusion of the being of an artificer, and the admission of his skill and industry. The apostle doth not say, the invisible things

\* Gassend. Phys., sect. 1, l. 4, c. 2, p. 291, 292.

† Jupiter est quodeunque vides, &c.

of God are *believed*, or they have an opinion of them, but they are *seen*, and *clearly seen*. They are like crystal glasses, which give a clear representation of the existence of a deity, like that mirror reported to be in a temple in Arcadia, which represented to the spectator, not his own face, but the image of that deity which he worshipped.

The whole world is like a looking-glass, which whole and entire represents the image of God, and every broken piece of it, every little shred of a creature, doth the like; not only the great ones, elephants and the leviathan, but ants, flies, worms, whose bodies rather than names we know; the great cattle and the creeping things, Gen. i. 24. Not naming there any intermediate creature, to direct us to view him in the smaller letters, as well as the greater characters of the world. His name is glorious, and his attributes are excellent 'in all the earth,' Ps. viii. 1, in every creature, as the glory of the sun is in every beam and smaller flash; he is seen in every insect, in every spire of grass. The voice of the Creator is in the most contemptible creature.\* The apostle adds that they are so clearly seen, that men are inexcusable if they have not some knowledge of God by them; if they might not certainly know them, they might have some excuse. So that his existence is not only probably, but demonstratively, proved from the things of the world.

Especially the heavens declare him, which God 'stretches out like a curtain,' Ps. civ. 2, or as some render the word, 'a skin,' whereby is signified, that heaven is as an open book, which was anciently made of the skins of beasts, that by the knowledge of them we may be taught the knowledge of God. Where the Scripture was not revealed, the world served for a witness of a God; whatever arguments the Scripture uses to prove it are drawn from nature (though indeed it doth not so much prove as suppose the existence of a God), but what arguments it uses are from the creatures, and particularly the heavens, which are the public preachers of this doctrine. The breath of God sounds to all the world through those organ pipes. His being is visible in their existence, his wisdom in their frame, his power in their motion, his goodness in their usefulness; for 'their voice goeth to the end of the earth,' Ps. xix. 1, 2. They have a voice, and their voice is as intelligible as any common language. And those are so plain heralds of a deity, that the heathen mistook them for deities, and gave them a particular adoration which was due to that god they declared. The first idolatry seems to be of those heavenly bodies, which began probably in the time of Nimrod. In Job's time it is certain they admired the glory of the sun and the brightness of the moon, not without kissing their hand, a sign of adoration, Job xxxi. 25, 27. It is evident a man may as well doubt whether there be a sun, when he sees his beams gilding the earth, as doubt whether there be a God, when he sees his works spread in the world.

The things in the world declare the existence of a God.

1, In their production; 2, harmony; 3, preservation; 4, answering their several ends.

1. In their production. The declaration of the existence of God was the chief end for which they were created, that the notion of a supreme and independent eternal being might easier incur into the active understanding of man from the objects of sense dispersed in every corner of the world, that he might pay a homage and devotion to the Lord of all: Isa. xl. 12, 13, 18, 19, &c., 'Have you not understood from the foundation of the earth, it is he that sits upon the circle of the heaven,' &c. How could this great heap be brought into being unless a God had framed it? Every

\* Banes in Aquin., Par. 2, Qu. 2, Artic. 2, p. 78, col. 2.

plant, every atom, as well as every star, at the first meeting whispers this in our ears, I have a Creator, I am witness to a deity. Who ever saw statues or pictures, but presently thinks of a statuary and limner? Who beholds garments, ships, or houses, but understands there was a weaver, a carpenter, an architect? \* Who can cast his eyes about the world, but must think of that power that formed it, and that the goodness which appears in the formation of it hath a perfect residence in some being? 'Those things that are good must flow from something perfectly good; that which is chief in any kind is the cause of all of that kind. Fire, which is most hot, is the cause of all things which are hot. There is some being therefore which is the cause of all that perfection which is in the creature, and this is God' (Aquinas. i. qu. 2, art. 3). All things that demonstrate something from whence they are. All things have a contracted perfection, and what they have is communicated to them. Perfections are parcelled out among several creatures. Anything that is imperfect cannot exist of itself. We are led therefore by them to consider a fountain which bubbles up in all perfection, a hand which distributes those several degrees of being and perfection to what we see. We see that which is imperfect, our minds conclude something perfect to exist before it; our eye sees the streams, but our understanding riseth to the head; as the eye sees the shadow, but the understanding informs us whether it be the shadow of a man or of a beast.

God hath given us sense to behold the objects in the world, and understanding to reason his existence from them; the understanding cannot conceive a thing to have made itself, that is against all reason, Rom. i. 20. As they are made, they speak out a maker, and cannot be a trick of chance, since they are made with such an immense wisdom, that is too big for the grasp of all human understanding. Those that doubt whether the existence of God be an implanted principle, yet agree that the effects in the world lead to a supreme and universal cause; and that if we have not the knowledge of it rooted in our natures, yet we have it by discourse, since by all masters of reason a *processus in infinitum* must be accounted impossible in subordinate causes.

This will appear in several things.

(1.) The world and every creature had a beginning. The Scripture ascertains this to us, Gen. i. David, who was not the first man, gives the praise to God of his being 'curiously wrought,' &c., Ps. cxxxix. 14, 15. God gave being to men, and plants, and beasts, before they being to one another. He gives being to them now as the fountain of all being, though the several modes of being are from the several natures of second causes.

It is true indeed we are ascertained that they were made by the true God, that they were made by his word ('By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God,' &c., Heb. xi. 3), that they were made of nothing, and not only this lower world wherein we live, but according to the Jewish division, the world of men, the world of stars, and the world of spirits and souls. We do not waver in it, or doubt of it, as the heathen did in their disputes; we know they are the workmanship of the true God, of that God we adore, not of false gods. 'By his word:' without any instrument or engine as in earthly structures; 'of things which do not appear:' without any pre-existent matter, as all artificial works of men are framed.

Yet the proof of the beginning of the world is affirmed with good reason; and if it had a beginning, it had also some higher cause than itself; every effect hath a cause.

\* Philo, ex Petav. Theol. Dog. tom. i. lib. 1, cap. 1, p. 4, somewhat changed.



The world was not eternal or from eternity.\* The matter of the world cannot be eternal; matter cannot subsist without form, nor put on any form without the action of some cause; this cause must be in being before it acted; that which is not cannot act. The cause of the world must necessarily exist before any matter was endued with any form; that therefore cannot be eternal before which another did subsist. If it were from eternity, it would not be subject to mutation; if the whole was from eternity, why not also the parts? What makes the changes so visible, then, if eternity would exempt it from mutability?

[1.] Time cannot be infinite, and therefore the world not eternal;† all motion hath its beginning; if it were otherwise, we must say the number of heavenly revolutions of days and nights, which are past to this instant, is actually infinite, which cannot be in nature. If it were so, it must needs be granted that a part is equal to the whole; because infinite being equal to infinite, the number of days past in all ages to the beginning of one year being infinite (as they would be, supposing the world had no beginning), would by consequence be equal to the number of days which shall pass to the end of the next; whereas the number of days past is indeed but a part, and so a part would be equal to the whole.

[2.] Generations of men, animals, and plants could not be from eternity.‡ If any man say the world was from eternity, then there must be propagations of living creatures in the same manner as are at this day, for without this the world could not consist. What we see now done must have been perpetually done, if it be done by a necessity of nature; but we see nothing now that doth arise but by a mutual propagation from another. If the world were eternal, therefore, it must be so in all eternity. Take any particular species, suppose a man, if men were from eternity, then there were perpetual generations, some were born into the world and some died. Now the natural condition of generation is, that a man doth not generate a man, nor a sheep a lamb, as soon as ever itself is brought into the world, but gets strength and vigour by degrees, and must arrive to a certain stated age before they can produce the like; for whilst anything is little and below the due age, it cannot increase its kind. Men therefore and other creatures did propagate their kind by the same law, not as soon as ever they were born, but in the interval of some time, and children grew up by degrees in the mother's womb till they were fit to be brought forth. If this be so, then there could not be an eternal succession of propagating; for there is no eternal continuation of time. Time is always to be conceived as having one part before another; but that perpetuity of nativities is always after some time, wherein it could not be for the weakness of age. If no man, then, can conceive a propagation from eternity, there must be then a beginning of generation in time, and consequently the creatures were made in time.

To express it in the words of one of our own: 'If the world were eternal, it must have been in the same posture as it is now, in a state of generation and corruption; and so corruption must have been as eternal as generation, and then things that do generate and corrupt must have eternally been, and eternally not have been: there must be some first way to set generation on work.'§ We must lose ourselves in our conceptions; we cannot conceive a father before a child, as well as we cannot conceive a child before a father; and reason is quite bewildered, and cannot return into a right way of con-

\* Daille, 20 Serm. Psal. cii. p. 13, 14.

† Daille *ut supra*.

‡ Petav. Theo. Dogmat. tom. i. lib. 1, cap. 2, p. 15.

§ Wolseley of Atheism, page 47.



ception till it conceive one first of every kind : one first man, one first animal, one first plant, from whence others do proceed. The argument is unanswerable, and the wisest atheist (if any atheist can be called wise) cannot unloose the knot. We must come to something that is first in every kind, and this first must have a cause, not of the same kind, but infinite and independent ; otherwise men run into inconceivable labyrinths and contradictions.

Man, the noblest creature upon earth, hath a beginning. No man in the world but was some years ago no man. If every man we see had a beginning, then the first man had also a beginning, then the world had a beginning ; for the earth, which was made for the use of man, had wanted that end for which it was made. ' We must pitch upon some one man that was unborn ;'\* that first man must either be eternal,—that cannot be, for he that hath no beginning hath no end,—or must spring out of the earth, as plants and trees do,—that cannot be. Why should not the earth produce men to this day, as it doth plants and trees ? He was therefore made ; and whatsoever is made hath some cause that made it, which is God. If the world were uncreated, † it were then immutable, but every creature upon the earth is in a continual flux, always changing. If things be mutable, they were created ; if created, they were made by some author ; whatsoever hath a beginning must have a maker ; if the world hath a beginning, there was then a time when it was not : it must have some cause to produce it. That which makes is before that which is made, and this is God ; which will appear further in this

*Prop.* No creature can make itself : the world could not make itself.

If every man had a beginning, every man then was once nothing ; he could not then make himself, because nothing cannot be the cause of something : Ps. c. 3, ' The Lord he is God : he hath made us, and not we ourselves.' Whatsoever begun in time, was not ; and when it was nothing, it had nothing, and could do nothing : and therefore could never give to itself nor to any other to be, or to be able to do ; for then it gave what it had not, and did what it could not. ‡ Since reason must acknowledge a *first* of every kind, a first man, &c., it must acknowledge him created and made, not by himself. Why have not other men since risen up by themselves ? Not by chance ; why hath not chance produced the like in that long time the world hath stood ? If we never knew any thing give being to itself, how can we imagine any thing ever could ? If the chiefest part of this lower world cannot, nor any part of it hath been known to give being to itself, then the whole cannot be supposed to give any being to itself. Man did not form himself : his body is not from himself ; it would then have the power of moving itself, but that is not able to live or act without the presence of the soul. Whilst the soul is present, the body moves ; when that is absent, the body lies as a senseless log, not having the least action or motion. His soul could not form itself ; can that which cannot form the least mote, the least grain of dust, form itself a nobler substance than any upon the earth ?

This will be evident to every man's reason, if we consider,

1. Nothing can act before it be. The first man was not, and therefore could not make himself to be : for any thing to produce itself is to act ; if it acted before it was, it was then something and nothing at the same time ; it had then a being before it had a being ; it acted when it brought itself into being. How could it act without a being, without it was ? So that if it were the cause of itself, it must be before itself as well as after itself : it

\* Petav. *ut supra*, page 10.

† Damason.

‡ Petav. Theol. Dog. tom. i. lib. i. cap. 2, page 14.

was before it was ; it was as a cause before it was as an effect. Action always supposes a principle from whence it flows ; as *nothing* hath no existence, so it hath no operation ; there must be therefore something of real existence to give a being to those things that are, and every cause must be an effect of some other before it be a cause. To be and not be at the same time, is a manifest contradiction, which would be if any thing made itself. That which makes is always before that which is made. Who will say the house is before the carpenter, or the picture before the limner ? The world as a creator must be before itself as a creature.

2. That which doth not understand itself, and order itself, could not make itself. If the first man fully understood his own nature, the excellency of his own soul, the manner of its operations, why was not that understanding conveyed to his posterity ? Are not many of them found, who understand their own nature almost as little as a beast understands itself, or a rose understands its own sweetness, or a tulip its own colours ? The Scripture indeed gives us an account how this came about, viz., by the deplorable rebellion of man, whereby death was brought upon them, a spiritual death, which includes ignorance as well as an inability to spiritual action, Gen. ii. 17, Ps. xlix. 8. Thus he fell from his honour, and became like the beasts that perish, and not retaining God in his knowledge, retained not himself in his own knowledge.

But what reply can an atheist make to it, who acknowledges no higher cause than nature ? If the soul made itself, how comes it to be so muddy, so wanting in its knowledge of itself and of other things ? If the soul made its own understanding, whence did the defect arise ? If some first principle was settled by the first man in himself, where was the stop, that he did not implant all in his own mind, and consequently in the minds of all his descendants ? Our souls know little of themselves, little of the world, are every day upon new inquiries, have little satisfaction in themselves, meet with many an invincible rub in their way ; and when they seem to come to some resolution in some cases, stagger again, and like a stone rolled up to the top of the hill, quickly find themselves again at the foot. How come they to be so purblind in truth ? so short of that which they judge true goodness ? How comes it to pass they cannot order their own rebellious affections, and suffer the reins they have to hold over their affections to be taken out of their hands by the unruly fancy and flesh ?

Thus no man that denies the being of a God, and the revelation in Scripture, can give an account of. Blessed be God that we have the Scripture, which gives us an account of those things, that all the wit of men could never inform us of ; and that when they are discovered and known by revelation, they appear not contrary to reason.

3. If the first man made himself, how came he to limit himself ? If he gave himself being, why did he not give himself all the perfections and ornaments of being ? Nothing that made itself could sit down contented with a little, but would have had as much power to give itself that which is less, as to give itself being when it was nothing. The excellencies it wanted had not been more difficult to gain than the other which it possessed, as belonging to its nature. If the first man had been independent upon another, and had his perfection from himself, he might have acquired that perfection he wanted, as well as have bestowed upon himself that perfection he had ; and then there would have been no bounds set to him. He would have been omniscient and immutable. He might have given himself what he would ; if he had had the setting his own bounds, he would have set none at all ; for what should restrain him ? No man now wants ambition to be what he is

not; and if the first man had not been determined by another, but had given himself being, he would not have remained in that determinate being, no more than a toad would remain a toad, if it had power to make itself a man, and that power it would have had, if it had given itself a being. Whatsoever gives itself being, would give itself all degrees of being, and so would have no imperfection, because every imperfection is a want of some degree of being.\* He that could give himself matter and life, might give himself every thing. The giving of life is an act of omnipotence, and what is omnipotent in one thing, may be in all. Besides, if the first man had made himself, he would have conveyed himself to all his posterity in the same manner; every man would have had all the perfections of the first man, as every creature hath the perfections of the same kind; from whence it naturally issues, all are desirous to communicate what they can to their posterity. Communicative goodness belongs to every nature. Every plant propagates its kind in the same perfection it hath itself; and the nearer anything comes to a rational nature, the greater affection it hath to that which descends from it; therefore this affection belongs to a rational nature much more. The first man, therefore, if he had had power to give himself being, and consequently all perfection, he would have had as much power to convey it down to his posterity; no impediment could have stopped his way: then all souls proceeding from that first man would have been equally intellectual. What should hinder them from inheriting the same perfections? whence should they have diverse qualifications and differences in their understandings? No man then would have been subject to those weaknesses, doubts, and unsatisfied desires of knowledge and perfection. But being all souls are not alike, it is certain they depend upon some other cause for the communication of that excellency they have. If the perfections of men be so contracted and kept within certain bounds, it is certain that they were not in his own power, and so were not from himself. Whatsoever hath a determinate being must be limited by some superior cause. There is therefore some superior power, that hath thus determined the creature by set bounds and distinct measures, and hath assigned to every one its proper nature, that it should not be greater or less than it is; who hath said of every one, as of the waves of the sea, Job xxxviii. 11, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further;' and this is God. Man could not have reserved any perfection from his posterity; for since he doth propagate not by choice but nature, he could no more have kept back any perfection from them than he could, as he pleased, have given any perfection belonging to his nature to them.

4. That which hath power to give itself being, cannot want power to preserve that being. Preservation is not more difficult than creation. If the first man made himself, why did he not preserve himself? He is not now among the living in the world. How came he to be so feeble as to sink into the grave? Why did he not inspire himself with new heat and moisture, and fill his languishing limbs and declining body with new strength? Why did he not chase away diseases and death at the first approach? What creature can find the dust of the first man? All his posterity traverse the stage and retire again; in a short space again their 'age departs, and is removed from them as a shepherd's tent, and is cut off with pining sickness,' Isa. xxxviii. 12. The life of man is as a wind, and like a cloud that is consumed and vanishes away. 'The eye that sees him shall see him no more. He returns not to his house, neither doth his place know him any more.'

\* Therefore the heathens called God τὸ ὄν, the only being. Other things were not beings, because they had not all degrees of being.

Job vii. 8, 10. The Scripture gives us the reason of this, and lays it upon the score of sin against his Creator, which no man without revelation can give any satisfactory account of.

Had the first man made himself, he had been sufficient for himself, able to support himself without the assistance of any creature. He would not have needed animals and plants, and other helps to nourish and refresh him, nor medicines to cure him. He could not be beholding to other things for his support, which he is certain he never made for himself. His own nature would have continued that vigour which once he had conferred upon himself. He would not have needed the heat and light of the sun; he would have wanted nothing sufficient for himself in himself; he needed not have sought without himself for his own preservation and comfort. What depends upon another is not of itself, and what depends upon things inferior to itself is less of itself. Since nothing can subsist of itself, since we see those things upon which man depends for his nourishment and subsistence growing and decaying, starting into the world and retiring from it, as well as man himself, some preserving cause must be concluded upon which all depends.

5. If the first man did produce himself, why did he not produce himself before?

It hath been already proved that he had a beginning, and could not be from eternity. Why then did he not make himself before? Not because he would not. For having no being, he could have no will; he could neither be willing nor not willing. If he could not then, how could he afterwards? If it were in his own power he could have done it, he would have done it; if it were not in his own power, then it was in the power of some other cause, and that is God. How came he by that power to produce himself? If the power of producing himself were communicated by another, then man could not be the cause of himself. That is the cause of it which communicated that power to it. But if the power of being was in and from himself, and in no other, nor communicated to him, man would always have been in act, and always have existed, no hindrance can be conceived. For that which had the power of being in itself was invincible by anything that should stand in the way of its own being.

We may conclude from hence the excellency of the Scripture, that it is a word not to be refused credit. It gives us the most rational account of things in the 1st and 2d of Genesis, which nothing in the world else is able to do.

*Prop. 2.* No creature could make the world. No creature can create another. If it creates of nothing, it is then omnipotent, and so not a creature. If it makes something of matter unfit for that which is produced out of it, then the inquiry will be, Who was the cause of the matter? and so we must arrive to some uncreated being, the cause of all. Whatsoever gives being to any other must be the highest being, and must possess all the perfections of that which it gives being to. What visible creature is there which possesses the perfections of the whole world? If, therefore, an invisible creature made the world, the same inquiries will return, whence that creature had its being? For he could not make himself. If any creature did create the world, he must do it by the strength and virtue of another, which first gave him being; and this is God. For whatsoever hath its existence and virtue of acting from another is not God. If it hath its virtue from another, it is then a second cause, and so supposeth a first cause. It must have some cause of itself, or be eternally existent. If eternally existent, it is not a second cause, but God; if not eternally existent, we must come to

something at length which was the cause of it, or else be bewildered without being able to give an account of anything. We must come at last to an infinite, eternal, independent being that was the first cause of this structure and fabric wherein we and all creatures dwell. The Scripture proclaims this aloud: Isa. xlv. 6, 7, Deut. iv. 35, 'I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and I create darkness.' Man, the noblest creature, cannot of himself make a man, the chiefest part of the world. If our parents only, without a superior power, made our bodies or souls, they would know the frame of them; as he that makes a lock knows the wards of it; he that makes any curious piece of arras knows how he sets the various colours together, and how many threads went to each division in the web; he that makes a watch, having the idea of the whole work in his mind, knows the motions of it, and the reason of those motions. But both parents and children are equally ignorant of the nature of their souls and bodies, and of the reason of their motions. God only, that had the supreme hand in informing us, 'in whose book all our members are written, which in continuance were fashioned,' Ps. cxxxix, 16, knows what we all are ignorant of. If man hath, in an ordinary course of generation, his being chiefly from an higher cause than his parents, the world then certainly had its being from some infinitely wise intelligent being, which is God. If it were, as some fancy, made by an assembly of atoms, there must be some infinite intelligent cause that made them, some cause that separated them, some cause that mingled them together for the piling up so comely a structure as the world. It is the most absurd thing to think they should meet together by hazard, and rank themselves in that order we see without a higher and a wise agent. So that no creature could make the world. For supposing any creature was formed before this visible world, and might have a hand in disposing things, yet he must have a cause of himself, and must act by the virtue and strength of another, and this is God.

*Prop. 3.* From hence it follows, that there is a first cause of things, which we call God. There must be something supreme in the order of nature, something which is greater than all, which hath nothing beyond it or above it, otherwise we must run *in infinitum*. We see not a river but we conclude a fountain; a watch, but we conclude an artificer. As all number begins from unity, so all the multitude of things in the world begins from some unity, oneness, as the principle of it. It is natural to arise from a view of those things to the conception of a nature more perfect than any. As from heat mixed with cold, and light mixed with darkness, men conceive and arise in their understanding to an intense heat and a pure light, and from a corporeal or bodily substance joined with an incorporeal (as man is an earthly body and a spiritual soul), we ascend to a conception of a substance purely incorporeal and spiritual, so from a multitude of things in the world, reason leads us to one choice being above all. And since, in all natures in the world, we still find a superior nature, the nature of one beast above the nature of another, the nature of man above the nature of beasts, and some invisible nature, the worker of strange effects in the air and earth, which cannot be ascribed to any visible cause, we must suppose some nature above all those, of inconceivable perfection.

Every sceptic, one that doubts whether there be anything real or no in the world, that counts everything an appearance, must necessarily own a first cause.\* They cannot reasonably doubt but that there is some first cause, which makes the things appear so to them. They cannot be the cause of their own appearance. For as nothing can have a being from

\* Coccei. Sum. Theol. cap. 8, sec. 33.



itself, so nothing can appear by itself and its own force. Nothing can be and not be at the same time. But that which is not, and yet seems to be, if it be the cause why it seems to be what it is not, it may be said to be and not to be. But certainly such persons must think themselves to exist. If they do not, they cannot think; and if they do exist, they must have some cause of that existence. So that, which way soever we turn ourselves, we must in reason own a first cause in the world.

Well, then, might the psalmist term an atheist a fool, that disowns a God against his own reason. Without owning a God as the first cause of the world, no man can give any tolerable or satisfactory account of the world to his own reason.

And this first cause,

1. Must necessarily exist. It is necessary that he by whom all things are should be before all things, and nothing before him.\* And if nothing be before him, he comes not from any other; and then he always was, and without beginning. He is from himself; not that he once was not, but because he hath not his existence from another, and therefore of necessity he did exist from all eternity. Nothing can make itself or bring itself into being; therefore there must be some being which hath no cause, that depends upon no other, never was produced by any other, but was what he is from eternity, and cannot be otherwise, and is not what he is by will, but nature, necessarily existing, and always existing without any capacity or possibility ever not to be.

2. Must be infinitely perfect. Since man knows he is an imperfect being, he must suppose the perfections he wants are seated in some other being, which hath limited him, and upon which he depends. Whatsoever we conceive of excellency or perfection must be in God; for we can conceive no perfection but what God hath given us a power to conceive. And he that gave us power to conceive a transcendent perfection above whatsoever we saw or heard of, hath much more in himself, or else he could not give us such a conception.

II. As the production of the world, so the harmony of all the parts of it declare the being and wisdom of a God. Without the acknowledging God, the atheist can give no account of those things. The multitude, elegancy, variety, and beauty of all things are steps whereby to ascend to one fountain and original of them.

Is it not a folly to deny the being of a wise agent, who sparkles in the beauty and motions of the heavens, rides upon the wings of the wind, and is writ upon the flowers and fruits of plants? As the cause is known by the effects, so the wisdom of the cause is known by the elegancy of the work, the proportion of the parts to one another. Who can imagine the world could be rashly made, and without consultation, which in every part of it is so artificially framed?† No work of art springs up of its own accord. The world is framed by an excellent art, and therefore made by some skilful artist. As we hear not a melodious instrument but we conclude there is a musician that touches it, as well as some skilful hand that framed and disposed it for those lessons,—and no man that hears the pleasant sound of a lute but will fix his thoughts, not upon the instrument itself, but upon the skill of the artist that made it, and the art of the musician that strikes it, though he should not see the first when he saw the lute, nor see the other when he hears the harmony,—so a rational creature confines not his thoughts to his sense when he sees the sun in its glory and the moon walking in its

\* Petav. Theol. Dog. tom. i. lib. i. cap. 2, page 10, 11.

† Philo. Judæ. Petav. Theol. Dogmat. tom. i. lib. i. cap. 1, page 9.



brightness, but riseth up in a contemplation and admiration of that infinite spirit that composed and filled them with such sweetness.

This appears,

1. In the linking contrary qualities together. All things are compounded of the elements. Those are endued with contrary qualities, dryness and moisture, heat and cold ; these would always be contending with and infesting one another's rights, till the contest ended in the destruction of one or both. Where fire is predominant, it would suck up the water ; where water is prevalent, it would quench the fire : the heat would wholly expel the cold, or the cold overpower the heat. Yet we see them chained and linked one within another in every body upon the earth, and rendering mutual offices for the benefit of that body wherein they are seated, and all conspiring together in their particular quarrels for the public interest of the body. How could those contraries, that of themselves observed no order, that are always preying upon one another, jointly accord together of themselves for one common end, if they were not linked in a common band, and reduced to that order by some incomprehensible wisdom and power, which keeps a hand upon them, orders their motions, and directs their events, and makes them friendly pass into one another's natures ? Confusion had been the result of the discord and diversity of their natures ; no composition could have been of those conflicting qualities for the frame of any body, nor any harmony arose from so many jarring strings, if they had not been reduced into concord by one that is supreme Lord over them, and knows how to dispose their varieties and enmities for the public good.\* If a man should see a large city or country, consisting of great multitudes of men of different tempers, full of frauds, and factions, and animosities in their natures against one another, yet living together in good order and peace, without oppressing and invading one another, and joining together for the public good, he would presently conclude there were some excellent governor, who tempered them by his wisdom and preserved the public peace, though he had never yet beheld him with his eye. It is as necessary to conclude a God, who moderates the contraries in the world, as to conclude a wise prince, who overrules the contrary dispositions in a state, making every one to keep his own bounds and confines. Things that are contrary to one another subsist in an admirable order.

2. In the subserviency of one thing to another. All the members of living creatures are curiously fitted for the service of one another, destined to a particular end, and endued with a virtue to attain that end, and so distinctly placed, that one is no hindrance to the other in its operations.† Is not this more admirable than to be the work of chance, which is incapable to settle such an order, and fix particular and general ends, causing an exact correspondency of all parts with one another, and every part to conspire together for one common end ? One thing is fitted for another. The eye is fitted for the sun, and the sun fitted for the eye. Several sorts of food are fitted for several creatures, and those creatures fitted with organs for the partaking of that food.

(1.) Subserviency of heavenly bodies. The sun, the heart of the world, is not for itself but for the good of the world,‡ as the heart of man is for the good of the body. How conveniently is the sun placed, at a distance from the earth and the upper heavens, to enlighten the stars above and enliven the earth below ! If it were either higher or lower, one part would want its influences. It is not in the higher parts of the heavens ; the earth then,

\* Athanasius, *Petav. Theol.*, Dog. tom. i. lib. i. cap. 1, p. 4, 5.

† Gassend. *Physic*, sect. i. lib. iv. cap. 2, page 315.

‡ Lessius.

which lives and fructifies by its influence, would have been exposed to a perpetual winter and chillness, unable to have produced anything for the sustenance of man or beast ; if seated lower, the earth had been parched up, the world made uninhabitable, and long since had been consumed to ashes by the strength of its heat. Consider the motion, as well as the situation, of the sun. Had it stood still, one part of the world had been cherished by its beams, and the other left in a desolate widowhood, in a disconsolate darkness. Besides, the earth would have had no shelter from its perpendicular beams striking perpetually and without any remission upon it. The same inconveniences would have followed upon its fixedness as upon its too great nearness. By a constant day the beauty of the stars had been obscured, the knowledge of their motions been prevented, and a considerable part of the glorious wisdom of the Creator in those choice 'works of his fingers,' Ps. viii. 3, had been veiled from our eyes. It moves in a fixed line, visits all parts of the earth, scatters in the day its refreshing blessings in every creek of the earth, and removes the mask from the other beauties of heaven in the night, which sparkle out to the glory of the Creator. It spreads its light, warms the earth, cherisheth the seeds, excites the spirit in the earth, and brings fruit to maturity. View also the air, the vast extent between heaven and earth, which serves for a watercourse, a cistern for water to bedew the face of the sunburnt earth, to satisfy the desolate ground, and to cause the 'bud of the tender herb to spring forth,' Job xxxviii. 25, 27. Could chance appoint the clouds of the air to interpose as fans before the scorching heat of the sun and the faint bodies of the creatures ? Can that be the 'father of the rain,' or 'beget the drops of dew' ? ver. 28. Could anything so blind settle those ordinances of heaven for the preservation of creatures on the earth ? Can this either bring or stay the bottles of heaven, when 'the dust grows into hardness and the clods cleave fast together' ? ver. 37, 38.

(2.) Subserviency of the lower world, the earth and sea, which was created to be inhabited, Isa. xlv. 18. The sea affords water to the rivers ; the rivers, like so many veins, are spread through the whole body of the earth to refresh and enable it to bring forth fruit for the sustenance of man and beast : Ps. civ. 10, 11, 'He sends the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field : the wild asses quench their thirst. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and the herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth,' ver. 14. The trees are provided for shades against the extremity of heat, a refuge for the panting beasts, 'an habitation for birds' wherein to make their nests, ver. 17, and a basket for their provision. How are the valleys and mountains of the earth disposed for the pleasure and profit of man ! Every year are the fields covered with harvests, for the nourishing the creatures ; no part is barren, but beneficial to man. The mountains that are not clothed with grass for his food are set with stones to make him an habitation ; they have their peculiar services of metals and minerals, for the conveniency, and comfort, and benefit of man. Things which are not fit for his food are medicines for his cure under some painful sickness. Where the earth brings not forth corn, it brings forth roots for the service of other creatures. Wood abounds more in those countries where the cold is stronger than in others. Can this be the result of chance, or not rather of an infinite wisdom ?

Consider the usefulness of the sea for the supply of rivers to refresh the earth, 'which go up by the mountains and down by the valleys into the place God hath founded for them,' Ps. civ. 8 : a storehouse for fish for the

nourishment of other creatures, a shop of medicines for cure, and pearls for ornament; the band that ties remote nations together, by giving opportunity of passage to, and commerce with one another. How should that natural inclination of the sea to cover the earth submit to this subserviency to the creatures? Who hath pounded in this fluid mass of water in certain limits, and confined it to its own channel for the accommodation of such creatures, who by its common law can only be upon the earth? Naturally the earth was covered with the deep as with a garment, the waters stood above the mountains: 'Who set a bound that they might not pass over, that they return not again to cover the earth?' Ps. civ. 6, 9. Was it blind chance, or an infinite power, that 'shut up the sea with doors, and made thick darkness a swaddling band for it, and said, Hitherto shall thou come, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?' Job xxxviii. 8, 9, 11.

All things are so ordered that they are not *propter se*, but *propter aliud*. What advantage accrues to the sun by its unwearied rolling about the world? Doth it increase the perfection of its nature by all its circuits? No, but it serves the inferior world, it impregnates things by its heat. Not the most abject thing, but hath its end and use. There is a straight connection: the earth could not bring forth fruit without the heavens, the heavens could not water the earth without vapours from it.

(3.) All this subserviency of creatures centres in man. Other creatures are served by those things as well as ourselves, and they are provided for their nourishment and refreshment as well as ours;\* yet both they and all creatures meet in man, as lines in their centres. Things that have no life or sense are made for those that have both life and sense, and those that have life and sense are made for those that are endued with reason. When the psalmist admiringly considers the heavens, moon, and stars, he intimates man to be the end for which they were created: Ps. viii. 3, 4, 'What is man that thou art mindful of him?' He expresseth more particularly the dominion that man hath over 'the beasts of the fields, the fowl of the air, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the sea,' ver. 6-8, and concludes from thence the 'excellency of God's name in all the earth.' All things in the world, one way or other, centre in an usefulness for man: some to feed him, some to clothe him, some to delight him, others to instruct him, some to exercise his wit, and others his strength. Since man did not make them, he did not also order them for his own use. If they conspire to serve him who never made them, they direct man to acknowledge another, who is the joint Creator both of the lord and the servants under his dominion. And therefore, as the inferior natures are ordered by an invisible hand for the good of man, so the nature of man is by the same hand ordered to acknowledge the existence and the glory of the Creator of him. This visible order man knows he did not constitute, he did not settle those creatures in subserviency to himself; they were placed in that order before he had any acquaintance with them, or existence of himself, which is a question God puts to Job, to consider of: Job xxxviii. 4, 'Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding.' All is ordered for man's use, the heavens answer to the earth as a roof to a floor, both composing a delightful habitation for man; 'vapours ascend from the earth,' and the heavens concocts them, and returns them back in welcome showers for the supplying of the earth, Jer. x. 13. The light of the sun descends to beautify the earth, and employs its heat to midwife its fruits, and this for the good of the community, whereof man is the head; and though all creatures have distinct natures, and must act for particular ends,

\* Amyrald. de Trinitate, p. 13 and p. 18.

according to the law of their creation, yet there is a joint combination for the good of the whole as the common end; just as all the rivers in the world, from what part soever they come, whether north or south, fall into the sea, for the supply of that mass of waters; which loudly proclaims some infinitely wise nature who made those things in so exact an harmony. 'As in a clock, the hammer which strikes the bell leads us to the next wheel, that to another, the little wheel to a greater, whence it derives its motion, this at last to the spring, which acquaints us that there was some artist that framed them in this subordination to one another for this orderly motion.'\*

(4.) This order or subserviency is regular and uniform. Everything is determined to its peculiar nature.† The sun and moon make day and night, months and years, determine the seasons, never are defective in coming back to their station and place, they wander not from their roads, shock not against one another, nor hinder one another in the functions assigned them. From a small grain or seed a tree springs, with body, root, bark, leaves, fruit of the same shape, figure, smell, taste; that there should be as many parts in one as in all of the same kind, and no more, and that in the womb of a sensitive creature should be formed one of the same kind, with all the due members and no more, and the creature that produceth it knows not how it is formed or how it is perfected. If we say this is nature, this nature is an intelligent being; if not, how can it direct all causes to such uniform ends? If it be intelligent, this nature must be the same we call God, who ordered every herb to yield seed, and every fruit-tree to yield fruit after its kind, and also every beast and every creeping thing after its kind, Gen. i. 11, 12, 24.

And everything is determined to its particular season. The sap riseth from the root at its appointed time, enlivening and clothing the branches with a new garment at such a time of the sun's returning, not wholly hindered by any accidental coldness of the weather, it being often colder at its return than it was at the sun's departure. All things have their seasons of flourishing, budding, blossoming, bringing forth fruit; they ripen in their seasons, cast their leaves at the same time, throw off their old clothes, and in the spring appear with new garments, but still in the same fashion.

The winds and the rain have their seasons,‡ and seem to be administered by laws for the profit of man. No satisfactory cause of those things can be ascribed to the earth, the sea, to the air or stars. 'Can any understand the spreading of his clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle?' Job xxxvi. 29. The natural reason of those things cannot be demonstrated without recourse to an infinite and intelligent being. Nothing can be rendered capable of the direction of those things but a God.

This regularity in plants and animals is in all nations. The heavens have the same motion in all parts of the world; all men have the same law of nature in their mind; all creatures are stamped with the same law of creation. In all parts the same creatures serve for the same use; and though there be different creatures in India and Europe, yet they have the same subordination, the same subserviency to one another, and ultimately to man, which shews that there is a God, and but one God, who tunes all those different strings to the same notes in all places. It is nature merely conducts these natural causes in due measures to their proper effects, without interfering with one another! Can mere nature be the cause of those musical proportions of time? You may as well conceive a lute to sound its

\* Morn. de Verit. cap. i. p. 7.

† Amyrant.

‡ Coccei. Sum. Theol. cap. viii. sec. 77.

own strings without the hand of an artist, a city well governed without a governor, an army keep its stations without a general, as imagine so exact an order without an orderer. Would any man, when he hears a clock strike, by fit intervals, the hour of the day, imagine this regularity in it, without the direction of one that had understanding to manage it? He would not only regard the motion of the clock, but commend the diligence of the clock-keeper.

(5.) This order and subserviency is constant. Children change the customs and manners of their fathers, magistrates change the laws they have received from their ancestors, and enact new ones in their room; but in the world all things consist as they were created at the beginning; the law of nature in the creatures hath met with no change.\* Who can behold the sun rising in the morning, the moon shining in the night, increasing and decreasing in its due spaces, the stars in their regular motions night after night, for all ages, and yet deny a president over them? And this motion of the heavenly bodies, being contrary to the nature of other creatures, who move in order to rest, must be from some higher cause. But those, ever since the settling in their places, have been perpetually rounding the world.—Whether it be the sun or the earth that moves, it is all one; whence have either of them this constant and uniform motion?—What nature, but one powerful and intelligent, could give that perpetual motion to the sun, which being bigger than the earth a hundred sixty-six times, runs many thousand miles with a mighty swiftness in the space of an hour, with an unwearied diligence performing its daily task, and as a strong man, rejoicing to run its race for above five thousand years together, without intermission but in the time of Joshua? Josh. x. 13. It is not nature's sun, but God's sun, which he 'makes to rise upon the just and unjust,' Mat. v. 45.

So a plant receives its nourishment from the earth, sends forth its juice to every branch, forms a bud which spreads it into a blossom and flower; the leaves of this drop off, and leave a fruit of the same colour and taste, every year, which being ripened by the sun, leaves seed behind it for the propagation of its like, which contains in the nature of it the same kind of buds, blossoms, fruit, which were before; and, being nourished in the womb of the earth, and quickened by the power of the sun, discovers itself at length in all the progresses and motions which its predecessor did. Thus, in all ages, in all places, every year it performs the same task, spins out fruit of the same colour, taste, virtue, to refresh the several creatures for which they are provided.

This settled state of things comes from that God who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever, Ps. civ. 5, and set ordinances for them to act by a stated law, Job xxxviii. 33, according to which they move as if they understood themselves to have made a covenant with their Creator, Jer. xxxiii. 20.

3. Add to this union of contrary qualities, and the subserviency of one thing to another, the admirable variety and diversity of things in the world. What variety of metals, living creatures, plants! What variety and distinction in the shape of their leaves, flowers, smell resulting from them. Who can number up the several sorts of beasts on the earth, birds in the air, fish in the sea? How various are their motions! Some creep, some go, some fly, some swim; and in all this variety each creature hath organs or members fitted for their peculiar motion. If you consider the multitude of stars, which shine like jewels in the heavens, their different magnitude, or the variety of colours in the flowers and tapestry of the earth, you could

\* Petav. ex Athanas. Theol., Dog. tom. i. lib. i. sec. 4.



no more conclude they made themselves, or were made by chance, than you can imagine a piece of arras, with a diversity of figures and colours, either wove itself or were knit together by hazard.

How delicious is the sap of the vine, when turned into wine, above that of a crab? Both have the same womb of earth to conceive them, both agree in the nature of wood and twigs as channels to convey it into fruit. What is that which makes the one so sweet, the other so sour, or makes that sweet which was a few weeks before unpleasantly sharp? Is it the earth? No; they both have the same soil; the branches may touch each other, the strings of their roots may under ground entwine about one another. Is it the sun? Both have the same beams; why is not the taste and colour of the one as gratifying as the other? Is it the root? The taste of that is far different from that of the fruit it bears. Why do they not, when they have the same soil, the same sun, and stand near one another, borrow something from one another's natures? No reason can be rendered, but that there is a God of infinite wisdom hath determined this variety, and bound up the nature of each creature within itself. 'Everything follows the law of its creation, and it is worthy observation that the Creator of them hath not given that power to animals, which arise from different species, to propagate the like to themselves; as mules, that arise from different species. No reason can be rendered of this but the fixed determination of the Creator that those species which were created by him should not be lost in those mixtures, which are contrary to the law of the creation.\* This cannot possibly be ascribed to that which is commonly called nature, but unto the God of nature, who will not have his creatures exceed their bounds or come short of them.

Now, since among those varieties there are some things better than other, yet all are good in their kind, Gen. i. 31, and partake of goodness, there must be something better and more excellent than all those, from whom they derive that goodness, which inheres in their nature and is communicated by them to others. And this excellent being must inherit in an eminent way in his own nature, the goodness of all those varieties, since they made not themselves, but were made by another. All that goodness which is scattered in those varieties must be infinitely concentrated in that nature, which distributed those various perfections to them: Ps. xciv. 9, 'He that planted the ear, shall not he hear? he that formed the eye, shall not he see? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?' The creator is greater than the creature, and whatsoever is in his effects is but an impression of some excellency in himself; there is therefore some chief fountain of goodness, whence all those various goodnesses in the world do flow.

From all this it follows, if there be an order and harmony, there must be an orderer, one that 'made the earth by his power, established the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by his discretion,' Jer. x. 12. Order being the effect, cannot be the cause of itself. Order is the disposition of things to an end, and is not intelligent, but implies an intelligent orderer; and therefore it is as certain that there is a God as it is certain there is order in the world. Order is an effect of reason and counsel; this reason and counsel must have its residence in some being before this order is fixed. The things ordered are always distinct from that reason and counsel whereby they are ordered; and also after it, as the effect is after the cause. No man begins a piece of work but he hath the model of it in his own mind; no man builds a house or makes a watch but he hath the

\* Amyrald. de Trinitate, page 21.

idea or copy of it in his own head. This beautiful world bespeaks an idea of it or a model, since there is such a magnificent wisdom in the make of each creature, and the proportion of one creature to another; this model must be before the world, as the pattern is always before the thing that is wrought by it. This therefore must be in some intelligent and wise agent, and this is God. Since the reason of those things exceed the reason and all the art of man, who can ascribe them to any inferior cause? Chance it could not be; the motions of chance are not constant, and at seasons, as the motions of creatures are. That which is by chance is contingent, this is necessary; uniformity can never be the birth of chance. Who can imagine that all the parts of a watch can meet together, and put themselves in order and motion, by chance? 'Nor can it be nature only, which indeed is a disposition of second causes. If nature hath not an understanding, it cannot work such effects. If nature therefore uses counsel to begin a thing, reason to dispose it, art to effect it, virtue to complete it, and power to govern it, why should it be called nature rather than God?'\* Nothing so sure as that that which hath an end to which it tends hath a cause by which it is ordered to that end. Since therefore all things are ordered in subserviency to the good of man, they are so ordered by him that made both man and them. And man must acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of his Creator, and act in subserviency to his glory, as other creatures act in subserviency to his good. Sensible objects were not made only to gratify the sense of man, but to hand something to his mind as he is a rational creature, to discover God to him as an object of love and desire to be enjoyed.† If this be not the effect of it, the order of the creature, as to such an one, is in vain, and falls short of its true end.

To conclude this; as when a man comes into a palace, built according to the exactest rule of art, and with an unexceptionable conveniency for the inhabitants, he would acknowledge both the being and skill of the builder, so whosoever shall observe the disposition of all the parts of the world,—their connection, comeliness, the variety of seasons, the swarms of different creatures, and the mutual offices they render to one another,—cannot conclude less than that it was contrived by an infinite skill, effected by infinite power, and governed by infinite wisdom. None can imagine a ship to be orderly conducted without a pilot, nor the parts of the world to perform their several functions without a wise guide, considering the members of the body cannot perform theirs without the active presence of the soul. The atheist then is a fool, to deny that which every creature in his constitution asserts, and thereby renders himself unable to give a satisfactory account of that constant uniformity in the motions of the creatures.

*Prop. 4.* As the production and harmony, so particular creatures, pursuing and attaining their ends, manifest that there is a God. All particular creatures have natural instincts, which move them for some end. The intending of an end is a property of a rational creature; since the lower creatures cannot challenge that title, they must act by the understanding and direction of another. And since man cannot challenge the honour of inspiring the creatures with such instincts, it must be ascribed to some nature infinitely above any creature in understanding. No creature doth determine itself. Why doth the fruits and grain of the earth nourish us, when the earth, which instrumentally gives them that fitness, cannot nourish us, but because their several ends are determined by one higher than the world?

1. Several creatures have several natures. How soon will all creatures

\* Lactant.

† Coccei. Sum. Theol. cap. 8, sec. 63, 64.

even as soon as they see the light, move to that whereby they must live, and make use of the natural arms God hath given their kind for their defence, before they are grown to any maturity to afford them that defence. The Scripture makes the appetite of infants to their milk a foundation of the divine glory: Ps. viii. 3, 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength;' that is, matter of praise and acknowledgment of God, in the natural appetite they have to their milk, and their relish of it. All creatures have a natural affection to their young ones, all young ones by a natural instinct move to and receive the nourishment that is proper for them. Some are their own physicians as well as their own caterers, and naturally discern what preserves them in life, and what restores them when sick. The swallow flies to its celandine, and the toad hastens to its plantain.

Can we behold the spider's nets or silkworm's web, the bee's closets or the ant's granaries, without acknowledging a higher being than a creature, who hath planted that genius in them? The consideration of the nature of several creatures God commended to Job (chap. xxxix., where he discourseth to Job of the natural instincts of the goat, the ostrich, horse, and eagle, &c.), to persuade him to the acknowledgment and admiration of God, and humiliation of himself.

The spider, as if it understood the art of weaving, fits its web both for its own habitation and a net to catch its prey. The bee builds a cell which serves for chambers to reside in and a repository for its provision. Birds are observed to build their nests with a clammy matter without, for the firmer duration of it, and with a soft moss and down within, for the conveniency and warmth of their young: 'The stork knows his appointed time,' Jer. viii. 7; 'and the swallows observe the time of their coming;' they go and return according to the seasons of the year. This they gain not by consideration, it descends to them with their nature; they neither gain nor increase it by rational deductions. It is not in vain to speak of these. How little do we improve by meditation those objects, which daily offer themselves to our view, full of instruction for us? And our Saviour sends his disciples to smell God in the lilies, Mat. vi. 28. It is observed also that the creatures offensive to man go single; if they went by troops, they would bring destruction upon man and beast. This is the nature of them for the preservation of others.

2. They know not their end. They have a law in their natures, but have no rational understanding, either of the end to which they are appointed, or the means fit to attain it. They naturally do what they do, and move by no counsel of their own, but by a law impressed by some higher hand upon their natures.

What plant knows why it strikes its root into the earth? Doth it understand what storms it is to contest with, or why it shoots up its branches towards heaven? Doth it know it needs the droppings of the clouds to preserve itself, and make it fruitful? These are acts of understanding: the root is downward to preserve its own standing, the branches upward to preserve other creatures. This understanding is not in the creature itself, but originally in another. Thunders and tempests know not why they are sent, yet by the direction of a mighty hand they are instruments of justice upon a wicked world.

Rational creatures that act for some end, and know the end they aim at, yet know not the manner of the natural motion of the members to it.\* When we intend to look upon a thing, we take no counsel about the natural motion

\* Coccei. Sum. Theolog. cap. 8. sec. 67, &c.

of our eyes, we know not all the principles of their operations ; or how that dull matter whereof our bodies are composed, is subject to the order of our minds. We are not of counsel with our stomachs about the concoction of our meat, or the distribution of the nourishing juice to the several parts of the body.\* Neither the mother nor the foetus sit in council how the formation should be made in the womb. We know no more than a plant knows what stature it is of, and what medicinal virtue its fruit hath for the good of man ; yet all those natural operations are perfectly directed 'to their proper end, by an higher wisdom than any human understanding is able to conceive, since they exceed the ability of an inanimate or fleshly nature, yea, and the wisdom of a man. Do we not often see reasonable creatures acting for one end, and perfecting a higher than what they aimed at, or could suspect ? When Joseph's brethren sold him for a slave, their end was to be rid of an informer, Gen. xxxvii. 12 ; but the action issued in preparing him to be the preserver of them and their families. Cyrus his end was to be a conqueror, but the action ended in being the Jews' deliverer : Prov. xvi. 9, 'A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directs his steps.'

3. Therefore there is some superior understanding and nature which so acts them. That which acts for an end unknown to itself, depends upon some over-ruling wisdom that knows that end. Who should direct them in all those ends, but he that bestowed a being upon them for those ends,† who knows what is convenient for their life, security, and propagation of their natures ? An exact knowledge is necessary, both of what is agreeable to them, and the means whereby they must attain it ; which, since it is not inherent in them, is in that wise God, who puts those instincts into them, and governs them in the exercise of them to such ends. Any man that sees a dart flung, knows it cannot hit the mark without the skill and strength of an archer ; or he that sees the hand of a dial pointing to the hours successively, knows that the dial is ignorant of its own end, and is disposed and directed in that motion by another. All creatures ignorant of their own natures could not universally in the whole kind, and in every climate and country, without any difference in the whole world, tend to a certain end, if some over-ruling wisdom did not preside over the world and guide them ; and if the creatures have a conductor, they have a creator. All things are 'turned round about by his counsel, that they may do whatsoever he commands them upon the face of the world in the earth,' Job xxxvii. 12.

So that in this respect the folly of atheism appears. Without the owning a God no account can be given of those actions of creatures, that are an imitation of reason. To say the bees, &c., are rational, is to equal them to man ; nay, make them his superiors, since they do more by nature than the wisest man can do by art. It is their own counsel whereby they act, or another's : if it be their own, they are reasonable creatures ; if by another's, it is not mere nature that is necessary ; then other creatures would not be without the same skill : there would be no difference among them. If nature be restrained by another, it hath a superior ; if not, it is a free agent : it is an understanding being that directs them. And then it is something superior to all creatures in the world ; and by this, therefore, we may ascend to the acknowledgment of the necessity of a God.

*Prop. 5.* Add to the production and order of the world, and the creatures acting for their end, the preservation of them. Nothing can depend upon itself in its preservation, no more than it could in its being. If the order of the world was not fixed by itself, the preservation of that order cannot be continued by itself.

\* Pearson on the Creed, page 35.

† Lessius. de providen. lib. i. page 652.

Though the matter of the world after creation cannot return to that nothing whence it was fetched, without the power of God that made it (because the same power is as requisite to reduce a thing to nothing as to raise a thing from nothing), yet without the actual exerting of a power that made the creatures they would fall into confusion. Those contesting qualities which are in every part of it could not have preserved, but would have consumed and extinguished one another, and reduced the world to that confused chaos wherein it was before the Spirit moved upon the waters. As contrary parts could not have met together in one form, unless there had been one that had conjoined them, so they could not have kept together after their conjunction unless the same hand had preserved them. Natural contrarieties cannot be reconciled. It is as great power to keep discords knit, as at first to link them. Who would doubt, but that an army made up of several nations and humours, would fall into a civil war, and sheathe their swords in one another's bowels, if they were not under the management of some wise general, or a ship dash against the rocks without the skill of a pilot?\* As the body hath neither life nor motion, without the active presence of the soul, which distributes to every part the virtue of acting, sets every one in the exercise of its proper function, and resides in every part, so there is some powerful cause which doth the like in the world, that rules and tempers it. There is need of the same power and action to preserve a thing, as there was at first to make it. When we consider that we are preserved, and know that we could not preserve ourselves, we must necessarily run to some first cause which doth preserve us. All works of art depend upon nature, and are preserved while they are kept by the force of nature. As a statue depends upon the matter whereof it is made, whether stone or brass, this nature therefore must have some superior by whose influx it is preserved. Since therefore we see a stable order in the things of the world, that they conspire together for the good and beauty of the universe, that they depend upon one another, there must be some principle upon which they depend, something to which the first link of the chain is fastened, which himself depends upon no superior, but wholly rests in his own essence and being. It is the title of God to be the 'preserver of man and beast,' Ps. xxxvi. 6. The psalmist elegantly describeth it: Ps. civ. 24, &c., 'The earth is full of his riches; all wait upon him, that he may give them their meat in due season; when he opens his hand, he fills them with good; when he hides his face, they are troubled: if he take away their breath, they die and return to dust; he sends forth his Spirit, and they are created, and renews the face of the earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever, and the Lord shall rejoice in his works.' Upon the consideration of all which the psalmist, ver. 34, takes a pleasure in the meditation of God, as the cause and manager of all those things, which issues into a joy in God and a praising of him. And why should not the consideration of the power and wisdom of God in the creatures produce the same effect in the hearts of us, if he be our God? Or as some render it, 'my meditation shall be sweet,' or acceptable 'to him,' whereby I find matter of praise in the things of the world, and offer it to the Creator of it.

*Reason 3.* It is a folly to deny that which a man's own nature witnesseth to him. The whole frame of bodies and souls bears the impress of the infinite power and wisdom of the Creator. A body framed with an admirable architecture, a soul endowed with understanding, will, judgment, memory, imagination. Man is the epitome of the world, contains in himself the substance of all natures, and the fulness of the whole universe, not only

\* Gassend. Phys., sect. 6, lib. 4, cap. 2, p. 101.



in regard of the universalness of his knowledge, whereby he comprehends the reasons of many things, but as all the perfections of the several natures of the world are gathered and united in man for the perfection of his own, in a smaller volume. In his soul he partakes of heaven, in his body of the earth. There is the life of plants, the sense of beasts, and the intellectual nature of angels. Gen. ii. 7, 'The Lord breathed into his nostril the breath of life, and man,' &c., *חַיִּים*, of *lives*. Not one sort of life, but several, not only an animal, but a rational life, a soul of a nobler extract and nature than what was given to other creatures.

So that we need not step out of doors, or cast our eyes any further than ourselves to behold a God. He shines in the capacity of our souls and the vigour of our members. We must flee from ourselves and be stripped of our own humanity before we can put off the notion of a deity. He that is ignorant of the existence of God must be possessed with so much folly as to be ignorant of his own make and frame.

1. In the parts whereof he doth consist, body and soul.

First, Take a prospect of the body. The psalmist counts it a matter of praise and admiration: Ps. cxxxix. 14, 15, 'I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. When I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth, in thy book all my members were written.' The scheme of man and every member was drawn in his book; all the sinews, veins, arteries, bones, like a piece of embroidery or tapestry, were wrought by God, as it were, with deliberation, like an artificer that draws out the model of what he is to do in writing, and sets it before him when he begins his work.

And indeed the fabric of man's body, as well as his soul, is an argument for a divinity. The artificial structure of it, the elegance of every part, the proper situation of them, their proportion one to another, the fitness for their several functions, drew from Galen\* (a heathen, and one that had no raised sentiments of a deity) a confession of the admirable wisdom and power of the Creator, and that none but God could frame it.

(1.) In the order, fitness, and usefulness of every part. The whole model of the body is grounded upon reason. Every member hath its exact proportion, distinct office, regular motion. Every part hath a particular comeliness and convenient temperament bestowed upon it according to its place in the body. The heart is hot to enliven the whole; the eye clear to take in objects to present them to the soul. Every member is fitted for its peculiar service and action. Some are for sense, some for motion, some for preparing, and others for dispensing nourishment to the several parts; they mutually depend upon and serve one another. What small strings fasten the particular members together, as 'the earth that hangs upon nothing,' Job xxvi. 7. Take but one part away, and you either destroy the whole, or stamp upon it some mark of deformity. All are knit together by an admirable symmetry; all orderly perform their functions, as acting by a settled law, none swerving from their rule but in case of some predominant humour; and none of those in so great a multitude of parts stifled in so little a room, or jostling against one another to hinder their mutual actions, none can be better disposed. And the greatest wisdom of a man could not imagine it, till his eyes present them with the sight and connection of one part and member with another.

[1.] The heart.† How strongly it is guarded with ribs like a wall, that it might not be easily hurt! It draws blood from the liver through a

\* Lib. 3, de usu partium. Petav. Theol. Dog., tom. 1, lib. 1, cap. 1, p. 6.

† Theod. de providentiâ, Orat. 3.

channel made for that purpose, rarefies it, and makes it fit to pass through the arteries and veins, and to carry heat and life to every part of the body, and by a perpetual motion, it sucks in the blood and spouts it out again, which motion depends not upon the command of the soul, but is pure natural.

[2.] The mouth takes in the meat, the teeth grind it for the stomach, the stomach prepares it, nature strains it through the milky veins, the liver refines it and mints it into blood, separates the purer from the drossy parts, which go to the heart, circuits through the whole body, running through the veins like rivers through so many channels of the world, for the watering of the several parts, which are framed of a thin skin for the straining the blood through for the supplying of the members of the body, and framed with several valves or doors for the thrusting the blood forwards to perform its circular motion.

[3.] The brain, fortified by a strong skull to hinder outward accidents, a tough membrane or skin to hinder any oppression by the skull, the seat of sense, that which coins the animal spirits, by purifying and refining those which are sent to it, and seems like a curious piece of needlework.

[4.] The ear, framed with windings and turnings, to keep anything from entering to offend the brain; so disposed as to admit sounds with the greatest safety and delight, Ecces. xii. 4; filled with an air within, by the motion whereof the sound is transmitted to the brain, as sounds are made in the air by diffusing themselves, as you see circles made in the water by the flinging in a stone. This is the gate of knowledge, whereby we hear the oracles of God, and the instruction of men for arts. It is by this they are exposed to the mind, and the mind of another man framed in our understandings.

[5.] What a curious workmanship is that of the eye, which is in the body as the sun in the world; set in the head as in a watch-tower, having the softest nerves for the receiving the greater multitude of spirits necessary for the act of vision! How is it provided with defence, by the variety of coats, to secure and accommodate the little humour and part whereby the vision is made! Made of a round figure, and convex, as most commodious to receive the species of objects; shaded by the eyebrows and eyelids, secured by the eyelids, which are its ornament and safety, which refresh it when it is too much dried by heat, hinder too much light from insinuating itself into it to offend it, cleanse it from impurities, by their quick motion preserve it from invasion, and by contraction confer to the more evident discerning of things; both the eyes seated in the hollow of the bone for security, yet standing out that things may be perceived more easily on both sides. And this little member can behold the earth, and in a moment view things as high as heaven.

[6.] The tongue\* for speech framed like a musical instrument; the teeth serving for variety of sounds; the lungs serving for bellows to blow the organs, as it were, to cool the heart: by a continual motion transmitting a pure air to the heart, expelling that which was smoky and superfluous. It is by the tongue that communication of truth hath a passage among men; it opens the sense of the mind; there would be no converse and commerce without it. Speech among all nations hath an elegance and attractive force, mastering the affections of men.

Not to speak of other parts, or of the multitude of spirits that act every part, the quick flight of them where there is a necessity of their presence. Solomon, Ecces. xii., makes an elegant description of them in his speech of

\* Coccei. Sum. Theolog., cap. 8, sec. 49.

old age ; and Job speaks of this formation of the body, Job x. 9-11, &c. Not the least part of the body is made in vain. The hairs of the head have their use, as well as are an ornament. The whole symmetry of the body is a ravishing object. Every member hath a signature and mark of God and his wisdom ; he is visible in the formation of the members, the beauty of the parts, and the vigour of the body. This structure could not be from the body : that only hath a passive power, and cannot act in the absence of the soul ; nor can it be from the soul. How comes it then to be so ignorant of the manner of its formation ? The soul knows not the internal parts of its own body, but by information from others, or inspection into other bodies. It knows less of the inward frame of the body than it doth of itself. But he that makes the clock can tell the number and motions of the wheels within, as well as what figures are without.

This short discourse is useful to raise our admirations of the wisdom of God, as well as to demonstrate that there is an infinite, wise Creator. And the consideration of ourselves every day, and the wisdom of God in our frame, would maintain religion much in the world, since all are so framed that no man can tell any error in the constitution of him. If thus the body of man is fitted for the service of his soul by an infinite God, the body ought to be ordered for the service of this God, and in obedience to him.

(2.) In the admirable difference of the features of men, which is a great argument that the world was made by a wise Being. This could not be wrought by chance, or be the work of mere nature, since we find never, or very rarely, two persons exactly alike. This distinction is a part of infinite wisdom ; otherwise, what confusion would be introduced into the world ! Without this, parents could not know their children, nor children their parents, nor a brother his sister, nor a subject his magistrate. Without it there had been no comfort of relations, no government, no commerce. Debtors would not have been known from strangers, nor good men from bad ; propriety could not have been preserved, nor justice executed ; the innocent might have been apprehended for the nocent ; wickedness could not have been stopped by any law.

The faces of men are the same for parts, not for features. A dissimilitude in a likeness ; man, like to all the rest in the world, yet unlike to any, and differenced by some mark from all, which is not to be observed in any other species of creatures. This speaks some wise agent which framed man ; since for the preservation of human society and order in the world, this distinction was necessary.

Secondly, As man's own nature witnesseth a God to him in the structure of his body, so also in the nature of his soul.\* We know that we have an understanding in us : a substance we cannot see, but we know it by its operations, as thinking, reasoning, willing, remembering, and as operating about things that are invisible and remote from sense. This must needs be distinct from the body, for that, being but dust and earth in its original, hath not the power of reasoning and thinking, for then it would have that power when the soul were absent, as well as when it is present. Besides, if it had that power of thinking, it could think only of those things which are sensible and made up of matter, as itself is. This soul hath a greater excellency. It can know itself, rejoice in itself, which other creatures in this world are not capable of. The soul is the greatest glory of this lower world ; and as one saith,† there seems to be no more difference between the soul and an angel, than between a sword in the scabbard and when it is out of the scabbard.

\* Coccei. Sum. Theolog., cap. 8, sec. 50, 51.

† Moro.

1. Consider the vastness of its capacity. The understanding can conceive the whole world, and paint in itself the invisible pictures of all things. It is capable of apprehending and discoursing of things superior to its own nature. 'It is suited to all objects, as the eye to all colours, or the ear to all sounds.'\* How great is the memory to retain such varieties, such diversities! The will also can accommodate other things to itself. It invents arts for the use of man, prescribes rules for the government of states, ransacks the bowels of nature, makes endless conclusions, and steps in reasoning from one thing to another, for the knowledge of truth; it can contemplate and form notions of things higher than the world.

2. The quickness of its motions. 'Nothing is more quick in the whole course of nature. The sun runs through the world in a day: this can do it in a moment. It can, with one flight of fancy, ascend to the battlements of heaven.† The mists of the air, that hinder the sight of the eye, cannot hinder the flights of the soul; it can pass in a moment from one end of the world to the other, and think of things a thousand miles distant. It can think of some mean thing in the world, and presently, by one cast, in the twinkling of an eye, mount up as high as heaven. As its desires are not bounded by sensual objects, so neither are the motions of it restrained by them. It will break forth with the greatest vigour, and conceive things infinitely above it; though it be in the body, it acts as if it were ashamed to be cloistered in it. This could not be the result of any material cause. Who ever knew mere matter understand, think, will? And what it hath not, it cannot give. That which is destitute of reason and will, could never confer reason and will. It is not the effect of the body, for the body is fitted with members to be subject to it.‡ It is in part ruled by the activity of the soul, and in part by the counsel of the soul. It is used by the soul, and knows not how it is used. Nor could it be from the parents, since the souls of the children often transcend those of the parents in vivacity, acuteness, and comprehensiveness. One man is stupid, and begets a son with a capacious understanding; one is debauched and beastly in morals, and begets a son who from his infancy testifies some virtuous inclinations, which sprout forth in delightful fruit with the ripeness of his age.§ Whence should this difference arise, a fool beget the wise man, and a debauched the virtuous man? The wisdom of the one could not descend from the foolish soul of the other, nor the virtues of the son from the deformed and polluted soul of the parent. It lies not in the organs of the body; for if the folly of the parent proceeded not from their souls, but the ill disposition of the organs of their bodies, how comes it to pass that the bodies of the children are better organised beyond the goodness of their immediate cause? We must recur to some invisible hand, that makes the difference, who bestows upon one at his pleasure richer qualities than upon another. You can see nothing in the world endowed with some excellent quality, but you must imagine some bountiful hand did enrich it with that dowry. None can be so foolish as to think that a vessel ever enriched itself with that sprightly liquor wherewith it is filled; or that anything worse than the soul should endow it with that knowledge and activity which sparkles in it. Nature could not produce it. That nature is intelligent, or not; if it be not, then it produceth an effect more excellent than itself, inasmuch as an understanding being surmounts a being that hath no understanding. If the supreme cause of the soul be intelligent, why do we

\* Culverwell.

† Theodoret.

‡ Coccei. Sum. Theolog., cap. 8, sec. 51, 52.

§ I do not dispute whether the soul were generated or no. Suppose the substance of it was generated by the parents, yet those more excellent qualities were not the result of them.

not call it God as well as nature? We must arise from hence to the notion of a God. A spiritual nature cannot proceed but from a spirit higher than itself, and of a transcendent perfection above itself. If we believe we have souls, and understand the state of our own faculties, we must be assured that there was some invisible hand which bestowed those faculties and the riches of them upon us. A man must be ignorant of himself before he can be ignorant of the existence of God. By considering the nature of our souls, we may as well be assured that there is a God, as that there is a sun by the shining of the beams in at our windows. And indeed the soul is a statue and representation of God, as the landscape of a country or map represents all the parts of it, but in a far less proportion than the country itself is. The soul fills the body, and God the world; the soul sustains the body, and God the world; the soul sees, but is not seen; God sees all things, but is himself invisible. How base are they then that prostitute their souls, an image of God, to base things unexpressibly below their own nature!

3. I might add the union of soul and body. Man is a kind of compound of angel and beast, of soul and body; if he were only a soul, he were a kind of angel; if only a body, he were another kind of brute. Now, that a body as vile and dull as earth, and a soul that can mount up to heaven and rove about the world with so quick a motion, should be linked in so strait an acquaintance; that so noble a being as the soul should be an inhabitant in such a tabernacle of clay, must be owned to some infinite power that hath so chained it.

4. Man witnesseth to a God in the operations and reflections of conscience: Rom. ii. 15, 'Their thoughts are accusing or excusing.' An inward comfort attends good actions, and an inward torment follows bad ones; for there is in every man's conscience fear of punishment and hope of reward. There is therefore a sense of some superior judge, which hath the power both of rewarding and punishing. If man were his supreme rule, what need he fear punishment, since no man would inflict any evil or torment on himself; nor can any man be said to reward himself, for all rewards refer to another, to whom the action is pleasing, and is a conferring some good a man had not before. If an action be done by a subject or servant, with hopes of reward, it cannot be imagined that he expects a reward from himself, but from the prince or person whom he eyes in that action, and for whose sake he doth it.

1. There is a law in the minds of men which is a rule of good and evil. There is a notion of good and evil in the consciences of men, which is evident by those laws which are common in all countries, for the preserving human societies, the encouragement of virtue and discouragement of vice; what standard should they have for those laws but a common reason? The design of those laws was to keep men within the bounds of goodness, for mutual commerce; whence the apostle calls the heathen magistrate 'a minister of God for good,' Rom. xiii. 4; and the Gentiles 'do by nature the things contained in the law,' Rom. ii. 14.

Man in the first instant of the use of reason finds natural principles within himself, directing and choosing them; he finds a distinction between good and evil; how could this be if there were not some rule in him to try and distinguish good and evil? If there were not such a law and rule in man, he could not sin; for where there is no law, there is no transgression. If man were a law to himself, and his own will his law, there could be no such thing as evil; whatsoever he willed would be good and agreeable to the law, and no action could be accounted sinful; the worst act would be as commendable as the best. Every thing at man's appointment would be good or



evil. If there were no such law, how should men that are naturally inclined to evil disapprove of that which is unlovely, and approve of that good which they practise not? No man but inwardly thinks well of that which is good while he neglects it, and thinks ill of that which is evil while he commits it. Those that are vicious do praise those that practise the contrary virtues. Those that are evil would seem to be good, and those that are blameworthy, yet will rebuke evil in others. This is really to distinguish between good and evil; whence doth this arise, by what rule do we measure this, but by some innate principle?

And this is universal, the same in one man as in another, the same in one nation as in another; they are born with every man, and inseparable from his nature: Prov. xxvii. 19, 'As in water face answers to face, so the heart of man to man.' Common reason supposeth that there is some hand which hath fixed this distinction in man. How could it else be universally impressed? No law can be without a law-giver; no sparks but must be kindled by some other. Whence should this law then derive its original? Not from man; he would fain blot it out, and cannot alter it when he pleases. Natural generation never intended it; it is settled therefore by some higher hand, which, as it imprinted it, so it maintains it against the violences of men, who, were it not for this law, would make the world, more than it is, an Aceldama and field of blood; for, had there not been some supreme good, the measure of all other goodness in the world, we could not have had such a thing as good. The Scripture gives us an account that this good was distinguished from evil before man fell, they were *objecta scibilia*; good was commanded and evil prohibited, and did not depend upon man. From this a man may rationally be instructed that there is a God; for he may thus argue: I find myself naturally obliged to do this thing and avoid that, I have therefore a superior that doth oblige me; I find something within me that directs me to such actions, contrary to my sensitive appetite, there must be something above me therefore that put this principle into man's nature. If there were no superior, I should be the supreme judge of good and evil. Were I the lord of that law which doth oblige me, I should find no contradiction within myself between reason and appetite.

2. From the transgression of this law of nature fears do arise in the consciences of men. Have we not known or heard of men struck by so deep a dart that could not be drawn out by the strength of men, or appeased by the pleasure of the world, and men crying out with horror upon a death-bed of their past life, when 'their fear hath come as a desolation, and destruction as a whirlwind'? Prov. i. 27. And often in some sharp affliction the dust hath been blown off from men's consciences, which for a while hath obscured the writing of the law. If men stand in awe of punishment, there is then some superior to whom they are accountable. If there were no God, there were no punishment to fear. What reason of any fear, upon the dissolution of the knot between the soul and body, if there were not a God to punish, and the soul remained not in being to be punished?

How suddenly will conscience work upon the appearance of an affliction, rouse itself from sleep like an armed man, and fly in a man's face before he is aware of it? It will 'surprise the hypocrites,' Isa. xxxiii. 14. It will bring to mind actions committed long ago, and set them in order before the face, as God's deputy acting by his authority and omniscience. As God hath not left himself without a witness among the creatures, Acts xiv. 17, so he hath not left himself without a witness in a man's own breast.

1. This operation of conscience hath been universal. No nation hath been any more exempt from it than from reason; not a man but hath one

time or other more or less smarted under the sting of it. All over the world conscience hath shot its darts. It hath torn the hearts of princes in the midst of their pleasures; it hath not flattered them whom most men flatter, nor feared to disturb their rest whom no man dares to provoke. Judges have trembled on a tribunal, when innocents have rejoiced in their condemnation; the iron bars upon Pharaoh's conscience were at last broke up, and he acknowledged the justice of God in all that he did: *Exod. ix. 27*, 'I have sinned, the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.' Had they been like childish frights at the apprehension of bug-bears, why hath not reason shaken them off? But, on the contrary, the stronger reason grows, the smarter those lashes are; groundless fears had been short-lived, age and judgment would have worn them off, but they grow sharper with the growth of persons. The Scripture informs us they have been of as ancient a date as the revolt of the first man: *Gen. iii. 10*, 'I was afraid,' saith Adam, 'because I was naked,' which was an expectation of the judgment of God. All his posterity inherit his fears, when God expresseth himself in any tokens of his majesty and providence in the world. Every man's conscience testifies that he is unlike what he ought to be according to that law engraven upon his heart. In some, indeed, conscience may be seared or dimmer; or, suppose some men may be devoid of conscience, shall it be denied to be a thing belonging to the nature of man? Some men have not their eyes, yet the power of seeing the light is natural to man, and belongs to the integrity of the body; who would argue, that because some men are mad, and have lost their reason by a distemper of the brain, that therefore reason hath no reality, but is an imaginary thing? But I think it is a standing truth, that every man hath been under the scourge of it, one time or other, in a less or greater degree; for, since every man is an offender, it cannot be imagined conscience, which is natural to man and an active faculty, should always lie idle, without doing this part of its office? The apostle tells us of the thoughts, accusing or excusing one another, or by turns, according as the actions were. Nor is this truth weakened by the corruptions in the world, whereby many have thought themselves bound in conscience to adhere to a false and superstitious worship and idolatry, as much as any have thought themselves bound to adhere to a worship commanded by God. This very thing infers that all men have a reflecting principle in them; it is no argument against the being of conscience, but only infers that it may err in the application of what it naturally owns. We can no more say, that because some men walk by a false rule, there is no such thing as conscience, than we can say that because men have errors in their minds, therefore they have no such faculty as an understanding; or, because men will that which is evil, they have no such faculty as a will in them.

2. These operations of conscience are when the wickedness is most secret. These tormenting fears of vengeance have been frequent in men who have had no reason to fear man, since, their wickedness being unknown to any but themselves, they could have no accuser but themselves. They have been in many acts which their companions have justified them in; persons above the stroke of human laws, yea, such as the people have honoured as gods, have been haunted by them. Conscience hath not been frightened by the power of princes, or bribed by the pleasures of courts. David was pursued by his horrors, when he was by reason of his dignity above the punishment of the law, or at least was not reached by the law; since, though the murder of Uriah was intended by him, it was not acted by him. Such examples are frequent in human records. When the crime hath been above any punishment by man, they have had an accuser, judge, and executioner in

their own breasts. Can this be originally from a man's self? He who loves and cherishes himself would fly from anything that disturbs him. It is a greater power and majesty from whom man cannot hide himself, that holds him in those fetters. What should affect their minds for that which can never bring them shame or punishment in this world, if there were not some supreme judge to whom they were to give an account, whose instrument conscience is? Doth it do this of itself; hath it received an authority from the man himself to sting him? It is some supreme power that doth direct and commission it against our wills.

3. These operations of conscience cannot be totally shaken off by man. If there be no God, why do not men silence the clamours of their consciences, and scatter those fears that disturb their rest and pleasures? How inquisitive are men after some remedy against those convulsions? Sometimes they would render the charge insignificant, and sing a rest to themselves, though they 'walk in the wickedness of their own hearts,' Deut. xxix. 19. How often do men attempt to drown it by sensual pleasures, and perhaps overpower it for a time; but it revives, reinforceeth itself, and acts a revenge for its former stop. It holds sin to a man's view, and fixes his eyes upon it, whether he will or no: 'The wicked are like a troubled sea, and cannot rest,' Isa. lvii. 20. They would wallow in sin without control, but this inward principle will not suffer it; nothing can shelter men from those blows. What is the reason it could never be cried down? Man is an enemy to his own disquiet; what man would continue upon the rack, if it were in his power to deliver himself? Why have all human remedies been without success, and not able to extinguish all those operations, though all the wickedness of the heart hath been ready to assist and second the attempt? It hath pursued men notwithstanding all the violence used against it, and renewed its scourges with more severity, as men deal with their resisting slaves. Man can as little silence those thunders in his soul, as he can the thunders in the heavens. He must strip himself of his humanity before he can be stripped of an accusing and affrighting conscience: it sticks as close to him as his nature. Since man cannot throw out the process it makes against him, it is an evidence that some higher power secures its throne and standing. Who should put this scourge into the hand of conscience, which no man in the world is able to wrest out?

4. We may add, the comfortable reflections of conscience. There are excusing as well as accusing reflections of conscience, when things are done as works of the law of nature, Rom. ii. 15. As it doth not forbear to accuse and torture, when a wickedness, though unknown to others, is committed, so when a man hath done well, though he be attacked with all the calumnies the wit of man can forge, yet his conscience justifies the action, and fills him with a singular contentment. As there is torture in sinning, so there is peace and joy in well-doing. Neither of those it could do, if it did not understand a sovereign judge, who punishes the rebels and rewards the well-doer. Conscience is the foundation of all religion; and the two pillars upon which it is built, are the being of God, and the bounty of God to those that diligently seek him, Heb. xi. 6.

This proves the existence of God. If there were no God, conscience were useless; the operations of it would have no foundation, if there were not an eye to take notice, and a hand to punish or reward the action. The accusations of conscience evidence the omniscience and the holiness of God; the terrors of conscience, the justice of God; the approbations of conscience, the goodness of God. All the order in the world owes itself, next to the providence of God, to conscience: without it the world would be a

Golgotha. As the creatures witness there was a first cause that produced them, so this principle in man evidenceth itself to be set by the same hand for the good of that which it had so framed. There could be no conscience if there were no God, and man could not be a rational creature if there were no conscience. As there is a *rule* in us, there must be a *judge*, whether our actions be according to the rule; and since conscience in our corrupted state is in some particular misled, there must be a power superior to conscience to judge how it hath behaved itself in its deputed office: we must come to some supreme judge, who can judge conscience itself. As a man can have no surer evidence that he is a being, than because he thinks, he is a thinking being, so there is no surer evidence in nature that there is a God, than that every man hath a natural principle in him, which continually cites him before God, and puts him in mind of him, and makes him one way or other fear him, and reflects upon him whether he will or no. A man hath less power over his conscience than over any other faculty. He may choose whether he will exercise his understanding about, or move his will to, such an object, but he hath no such authority over his conscience; he cannot limit it, or cause it to cease from acting and reflecting; and therefore both that, and the law about which it acts, are settled by some supreme authority in the mind of man, and this is God.

*Prop. 4.* The evidence of a God results from the vastness of the desires in man, and the real dissatisfaction he hath in every thing below himself. Man hath a boundless appetite after some sovereign good. As his understanding is more capacious than any thing below, so is his appetite larger. This affection of desire exceeds all other affections. Love is determined to something known: fear to something apprehended; but desires approach nearer to infiniteness, and pursue, not only what we know, or what we have a glimpse of, but what we find wanting in what we already enjoy. That which the desire of man is most naturally carried after, is *bonum*; some fully satisfying good. We desire knowledge by the sole impulse of reason; but we desire good before the excitement of reason, and the desire is always after good, but not always after knowledge.

Now the soul of man finds an imperfection in every thing here, and cannot scrape up a perfect satisfaction and felicity. In the highest fruitions of worldly things, it is still pursuing something else, which speaks a defect in what it already hath. The world may afford a felicity for our dust, the body, but not for the inhabitant in it; it is too mean for that. Is there any one soul among the sons of men, that can upon due inquiry say, it was at rest and wanted no more, that hath not sometimes had desires after an immaterial good? The soul 'follows hard' after such a thing, and hath frequent looks after it, Ps. lxiii. 8. Man desires a stable good, but no sublunary thing is so; and he that doth not desire such a good, wants the rational nature of a man. This is as natural as understanding, will, and conscience. Whence should the soul of man have those desires? How came it to understand that something is still wanting to make its nature more perfect, if there were not in it some notion of a more perfect being, which can give it rest?

Can such a capacity be supposed to be in it without something in being able to satisfy it? If so, the noblest creature in the world is miserablest, and in a worse condition than any other: other creatures obtain their ultimate desires, 'they are filled with good,' Ps. civ. 28; and shall man only have a vast desire without any possibility of enjoyment? Nothing in man is in vain: he hath objects for his affections, as well as affections for objects. Every member of his body hath its end, and doth attain it. Every affection of his soul hath an object, and that in this world; and shall there be none

for his desire, which comes nearest to infinite of any affection planted in him? This boundless desire had not its original from man himself. Nothing would render itself restless; something above the bounds of this world implanted those desires after a higher good, and made him restless in everything else. And since the soul can only rest in that which is infinite, there is something infinite for it to rest in. Since nothing in the world, though a man had the whole, can give it a satisfaction, there is something above the world only capable to do it, otherwise the soul would be always without it, and be more in vain than any other creature.

There is therefore some infinite being that can only give a contentment to the soul, and this is God. And that goodness which implanted such desires in the soul would not do it to no purpose, and mock it in giving it an infinite desire of satisfaction, without intending it the pleasure of enjoyment, if it doth not by its own folly deprive itself of it. The felicity of human nature must needs exceed that which is allotted to other creatures.

*Reason 4, and last.* As it is a folly to deny that which all nations in the world have consented to, which the frame of the world evidenceth, which man in his body, soul, operations of conscience, witnesseth to, so it is a folly to deny the being of God, which is witnessed unto by extraordinary occurrences in the world.

1. In extraordinary judgments. When a just revenge follows abominable crimes, especially when the judgment is suited to the sin, by a strange concatenation and succession of providences, methodised to bring such a particular punishment; when the sin of a nation or person is made legible in the inflicted judgment, which testifies that it cannot be a casual thing. The Scripture gives us an account of the necessity of such judgments, to keep up the reverential thoughts of God in the world: Ps. ix. 16, 'The Lord is known by the judgment which he executes, the wicked is snared in the work of his own hand.' And jealousy is the name of God: Exod. xxxiv. 14, 'Whose name is Jealous.' He is distinguished from false gods by the judgments which he sends, as men are by their names.

Extraordinary prodigies in many nations have been the heralds of extraordinary judgments, and presages of the particular judgments which afterwards they have felt, of which the Roman histories and others are full. That there are such things is undeniable, and that the events have been answerable to the threatening, unless we will throw away all human testimonies, and count all the histories of the world forgeries. Such things are evidences of some invisible power which orders those affairs. And if there be invisible powers, there is also an efficacious cause which moves them; a government certainly there is among them as well as in the world, and then we must come to some supreme governor which presides over them.

Judgments upon notorious offenders have been evident in all ages, the Scripture gives many instances. I shall only mention that of Herod Agrippa, which Josephus\* mentions. He receives the flattering applause of the people, and thought himself a god; but by the sudden stroke upon him was forced by his torture to confess another, Acts xii. 21-23. I am God, saith he, in your account, but a higher calls me away; the will of the heavenly Deity is to be endured. The angel of the Lord smote him. The judgment here was suited to the sin; he that would be a god is eaten up of worms, the vilest creatures. Tully Hostilius, a Roman king, who counted it the most unroyal thing to be religious, or own any other God but his sword, was consumed himself and his whole house by lightning from heaven.

Many things are unaccountable unless we have recourse to God. The

\* Lib. 19, Antiq.



strange revelations of murderers, that have most secretly committed their crimes ; the making good some dreadful imprecations, which some wretches have used to confirm a lie, and immediately have been struck with that judgment they wished ; the raising often unexpected persons to be instruments of vengeance on a sinful and perfidious nation ; the overturning the deepest and surest counsels of men, when they have had a successful progress, and came to the very point of execution ; the whole design of men's preservation hath been beaten in pieces by some unforeseen circumstances, so that judgments have broken in upon them without control, and all their subtilities been outwitted ; the strange crossing of some in their estates, though the most wise, industrious, and frugal persons, and that by strange and unexpected ways ; and it is observable how often everything contributes to carry on a judgment intended, as if they rationally designed it. All those loudly proclaim a God in the world ; if there were no God, there would be no sin ; if no sin, there would be no punishment.

2. In miracles. The course of nature is uniform, and when it is put out of its course it must be by some superior power invisible to the world, and by whatsoever invisible instruments they are wrought, the efficacy of them must depend upon some first cause above nature. Ps. lxxii. 18, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things,' by himself and his sole power.

That which cannot be the result of a natural cause, must be the result of something supernatural ; what is beyond the reach of nature is the effect of a power superior to nature. For it is quite against the order of nature, and is the elevation of something to such a pitch, which all nature could not advance it to. Nature cannot go beyond its own limits ; if it be determined by another, as hath been formerly proved, it cannot lift itself above itself without that power that so determined it. Natural agents act necessarily. The sun doth necessarily shine, fire doth necessarily burn. That cannot be the result of nature which is above the ability of nature. That cannot be the work of nature which is against the order of nature. Nature cannot do anything against itself, or invert its own course.

We must own that such things have been, or we must accuse all the records of former ages to be a pack of lies, which whosoever doth destroys the greatest and best part of human knowledge. The miracles mentioned in the Scripture, wrought by our Saviour, are acknowledged by the heathen, by the Jews at this day, though his greatest enemies. There is no dispute whether such things were wrought, the dead raised, the blind restored to sight. The heathens have acknowledged the miraculous eclipse of the sun at the passion of Christ, quite against the rule of nature, the moon being then in opposition to the sun ; the propagation of Christianity contrary to the methods whereby other religions have been propagated, that in a few years the nations of the world should be sprinkled with this doctrine, and give in a greater catalogue of martyrs courting the devouring flames than all the religions of the world.

To this might be added the strange hand that was over the Jews, the only people in the world professing the true God, that should so often be befriended by their conquerors, so as to rebuild their temple, though they were looked upon as a people apt to rebel. Dion and Seneca observe, that wherever they were transplanted they prospered and gave laws to the victors ; so that this proves also the authority of the Scripture, the truth of Christian religion, as well as the being of a God, and a superior power over the world.

To this might be added the bridling the tumultuous passions of men for the preservation of human societies, which else would run the world into

unconceivable confusions : Ps. lxxv. 7, ' Which stilleth the noise of the sea, and the tumults of the people ; ' as also the miraculous deliverance of a person or nation, when upon the very brink of ruin ; the sudden answer of prayer when God hath been sought to, and the turning away a judgment, which in reason could not be expected to be averted, and the raising a sunk people from a ruin which seemed inevitable, by unexpected ways.

3. Accomplishments of prophecies. Those things which are purely contingent, and cannot be known by natural signs and in their causes, as eclipses and changes in nations, which may be discerned by an observation of the signs of the times, such things that fall not within this compass, if they be foretold and come to pass, are solely from some higher hand, and above the cause of nature. This in Scripture is asserted to be a notice of the true God : Isa. xli. 23, ' Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are God ; ' and Isa. xlv. 10, ' I am God, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. ' And prophecy was consented to by all the philosophers to be from divine illumination. That power which discovers things future, which all the foresight of men cannot ken and conjecture, is above nature. And to foretell them so certainly as if they did already exist, or had existed long ago, must be the result of a mind infinitely intelligent ; because it is the highest way of knowing, and a higher cannot be imagined ; and he that knows things future in such a manner must needs know things present and past. Cyrus was prophesied of by Isaiah, chap. xlv. 28 and xlv., long before he was born ; his victories, spoils, all that should happen in Babylon, his bounty to the Jews, came to pass, according to that prophecy ; and the sight of that prophecy which the Jews shewed him, as other historians report, was that which moved him to be favourable to the Jews.

Alexander's sight of Daniel's prophecy concerning his victories moved him to spare Jerusalem. And are not the four monarchies plainly deciphered in that book, before the fourth rose up in the world ? That power which foretells things beyond the reach of the wit of man, and orders all causes to bring about those predictions, must be an infinite power, the same that made the world, sustains it and governs all things in it according to his pleasure, and to bring about his own ends ; and this being is God.

Use 1. If atheism be a folly, it is then pernicious to the world, and to the atheist himself. Wisdom is the band of human societies, the glory of man. Folly is the disturber of families, cities, nations, the disgrace of human nature.

1. It is pernicious to the world.

(1.) It would root out the foundations of government. It demolisheth all order in nations. The being of a God is the guard of the world. The sense of a God is the foundation of civil order ; without this there is no tie upon the consciences of men. What force would there be in oaths for the decisions of controversies, what right could there be in appeals made to one that had no being ? A city of atheists would be a heap of confusion ; there could be no ground of any commerce when all the sacred bands of it in the consciences of men were snapped asunder, which are torn to pieces and utterly destroyed by denying the existence of God. What magistrate could be secure in his standing, what private person could be secure in his right ? \* Can that then be a truth that is destructive of all public good ? If the atheist's sentiment, that there were no God, were a truth, and the contrary, that there were a God, were a falsity, it would then follow that falsity made men

\* Lessius de Provid., p. 665.

good and serviceable to one another; that error were the foundation of all the beauty, and order, and outward felicity of the world, the fountain of all good to man. If there were no God, to believe there is one would be an error, and to believe there is none would be the greatest wisdom, because it would be the greatest truth. And then as it is the greatest wisdom to fear God upon the apprehension of his existence, Ps. cxi. 10, so it would be the greatest error to fear him, if there were none. It would unquestionably follow, that error is the support of the world, the spring of all human advantages, and that every part of the world were obliged to a falsity for being a quiet habitation, which is the most absurd thing to imagine. It is a thing impossible to be tolerated by any prince, without laying an axe to the root of the government.

(2.) It would introduce all evil into the world. If you take away God, you take away conscience, and thereby all measures and rules of good and evil. And how could any laws be made when the measure and standard of them were removed? All good laws are founded upon the dictates of conscience and reason, upon common sentiments in human nature, which spring from a sense of God; so that if the foundation be demolished, the whole superstructure must tumble down. A man might be a thief, a murderer, an adulterer, and could not in a strict sense be an offender. The worst of actions could not be evil if a man were a god to himself, a law to himself. Nothing but evil deserves a censure, and nothing would be evil if there were no God, the rector of the world, against whom evil is properly committed. No man can make that morally evil that is not so in itself. As where there is a faint sense of God, the heart is more strongly inclined to wickedness, so where there is no sense of God, the bars are removed, the flood-gates set open for all wickedness to rush in upon mankind. Religion pinions men from abominable practices, and restrains them from being slaves to their own passions; an atheist's arms would be loose to do anything.\* Nothing so villanous and unjust but would be acted, if the natural fear of a deity were extinguished. The first consequence issuing from the apprehension of the existence of God, is his government of the world. If there be no God, then the natural consequence is that there is no supreme government of the world. Such a notion would cashier all sentiments of good, and be like a Trojan horse, whence all impurity, tyranny, and all sorts of mischiefs would break out upon mankind. Corruption and abominable works in the text are the fruit of the fool's persuasion that there is no God. The perverting of the ways of men, oppression, and extortion, owe their rise to a forgetfulness of God: Jer. iii. 21, 'They have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God;' Ezek. xxii. 12, 'Thou hast greedily gained by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord.' The whole earth would be filled with violence, all flesh would corrupt their way as it was before the deluge, when probably atheism did abound more than idolatry; and if not a disowning the being, yet denying the providence of God by the posterity of Cain, those of the family of Seth only calling upon the name of the Lord, Gen. vi. 11, 12 compared with Gen. iv. 26.

The greatest sense of a deity in any hath been attended with the greatest innocence of life and usefulness to others, and a weaker sense hath been attended with a baser impurity.† If there were no God, blasphemy would be praiseworthy; as the reproach of idols is praiseworthy, because we testify that there is no divinity in them. What can be more contemptible than that which hath no being? Sin would be only a false opinion of a

\* Lessius de Provid., p. 664.

† Lessius de Provid., p. 665.

violated law and an offended deity. If such apprehensions prevail, what a wide door is opened to the worst of villainies? If there be no God, no respect is due to him; all the religion in the world is a trifle and error, and thus the pillars of all human society, and that which hath made commonwealths to flourish, are blown away.

Secondly, 2, It is pernicious to the atheist himself. If he fear no future punishment, he can never expect any future reward; all his hopes must be confined to a swinish and despicable manner of life, without any imaginations of so much as a dram of reserved happiness. He is in a worse condition than the silliest animal, which hath something to please it in its life; whereas an atheist can have nothing here to give him a full content, no more than any other man in the world, and can have less satisfaction hereafter. He deposeth the noble end of his own being, which was to serve a God and have a satisfaction in him, to seek a God and be rewarded by him; and he that departs from this end, recedes from his own nature. All the content any creature finds is in performing its end, moving according to its natural instinct; as it is a joy to the sun to run its race, Ps. xix. 5, in the same manner it is a satisfaction to every other creature, and its delight, to observe the law of its creation. What content can any man have that runs from his end, opposeth his own nature, denies a God by whom and for whom he was created, whose image he bears, which is the glory of his nature, and sinks into the very dregs of brutishness? How elegantly is it described by Bildad: Job xviii. 7, 8, &c., to the end, 'His own counsel shall cast him down, terrors shall make him afraid on every side; destruction shall be ready at his side, the first-born of death shall devour his strength. His confidence shall be rooted out, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors: brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation. He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world. They that come after him shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were affrighted. And this is the place of him that knows not God.' If there be a future reckoning (as his own conscience cannot but sometimes inform him of), his condition is desperate, and his misery dreadful and unavoidable. It is not righteous a hell should entertain any else if it refuse him.

Use 2. How lamentable is it that in our times this folly of atheism should be so rife! that there should be found such monsters in human nature, in the midst of the improvements of reason and shinings of the gospel, who not only make the Scripture the matter of their jeers, but scoff at the judgments and providences of God in the world, and envy their Creator a being, without whose goodness they had had none themselves; who contradict in their carriage what they assert to be their sentiment, when they dreadfully imprecate damnation to themselves! Whence should [come] that damnation they so rashly wish be poured forth upon them, if there were not a revenging God? Formerly atheism was as rare as prodigious, scarce two or three known in an age. And those that are reported to be so in former ages, are rather thought to be counted so for mocking at the senseless deities the common people adored, and laying open their impurities. A mere natural strength would easily discover that those they adored for gods could not deserve that title, since their original was known, their uncleanness manifest and acknowledged by their worshippers. And probably it was so, since the Christians were termed *atheoi*, as Justin informs us, because they acknowledged not their vain idols.

I question whether there ever was or can be in the world an uninterrupted and internal denial of the being of God, or that men (unless we can suppose conscience utterly dead) can arrive to such a degree of impiety. For before

they can stifle such sentiments in them (whatsoever they may assert), they must be utter strangers to the common conceptions of reason, and despoil themselves of their own humanity. He that dares to deny a God with his lips, yet sets up something or other as a god in his heart. Is it not lamentable that this sacred truth, consented to by all nations, which is the band of civil societies, the source of all order in the world, should be denied with a bare face and disputed against in companies, and the glory of a wise Creator ascribed to an unintelligent nature, to blind chance? Are not such worse than heathens? They worshipped many gods, these none; they preserved a notion of God in the world under a disguise of images, these would banish him both from earth and heaven, and demolish the statues of him in their own consciences; they degraded him, these would destroy him; they coupled creatures with him—Rom. i. 25, 'Who worshipped the creature with the Creator,' as it may most properly be rendered. And these would make him worse than a creature, a mere nothing. Earth is hereby become worse than hell. Atheism is a persuasion, which finds no footing anywhere else. Hell, that receives such persons, in this point reforms them; they can never deny or doubt of his being while they feel his strokes. The devil, that rejoices at their wickedness, knows them to be in an error; for he 'believes, and trembles' at the belief, James ii. 19. This is a forerunner of judgment; boldness in sin is a presage of vengeance, especially when the honour of God is more particularly concerned therein. It tends to the overturning human society, taking off the bridle from the wicked inclinations of men. And God appears not in such visible judgments against sin immediately committed against himself, as in the case of those sins that are destructive to human society. Besides, God as governor of the world will uphold that, without which all his ordinances in the world would be useless. Atheism is point blank against all the glory of God in creation, and against all the glory of God in redemption, and pronounceth at one breath both the Creator and all acts of religion and divine institutions useless and insignificant.

Since most have had, one time or other, some risings of doubt, whether there be a God, though few do in expressions deny his being, it may not be unnecessary to propose some things for the further impressing this truth, and guarding themselves against such temptations.

1. It is utterly impossible to demonstrate there is no God. He can choose no medium, but will fall in as a proof for his existence, and a manifestation of his excellency rather than against it. The pretences of the atheist are so ridiculous, that they are not worth the mentioning.

They never saw God, and therefore know not how to believe such a being; they cannot comprehend him. He would not be God if he could fall within the narrow model of an human understanding; he would not be infinite if he were comprehensible, or to be terminated by our sight. How small a thing must that be which is seen by a bodily eye, or grasped by a weak mind! If God were visible or comprehensible, he would be limited. Shall it be a sufficient demonstration from a blind man that there is no fire in the room, because he sees it not, though he feel the warmth of it? The knowledge of the effect is sufficient to conclude the existence of the cause. Who ever saw his own life? Is it sufficient to deny a man lives, because he beholds not his life, and only knows it by his motion? He never saw his own soul, but knows he hath one by his thinking power. The air renders itself sensible to men in its operations, yet was never seen by the eye.

If God should render himself visible, they might question as well as now



whether that which was so visible were God or some delusion. If he should appear glorious, we can as little behold him in his majestic glory as an owl can behold the sun in its brightness; we should still but see him in his effects, as we do the sun by his beams. If he should shew a new miracle, we should still see him but by his works; so we see him in his creatures, every one of which would be as great a miracle as any can be wrought to one that had the first prospect of them. To require to see God, is to require that which is impossible: 1 Tim. vi. 16, 'He dwells in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see.' It is visible *that* he is, for 'he covers himself with light as with a garment,' Ps. civ. 2; it is invisible *what* he is, for 'he makes darkness his secret place,' Ps. xviii. 11. Nothing more clear to the eye than light, and nothing more difficult to the understanding than the nature of it; as light is the first object obvious to the eye, so is God the first object obvious to the understanding. The arguments from nature do with greater strength evince his existence, than any pretences can manifest there is no God. No man can assure himself by any good reason there is none; for as for the 'likeness of events to him that is righteous and him that is wicked, to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not,' Eccles. ix 2, it is an argument for a reserve of judgment in another state, which every man's conscience dictates to him, when the justice of God shall be glorified in another world as much as his patience is in this.

2. Whosoever doubts of it makes himself a mark, against which all the creatures fight.

All the stars fought against Sisera for Israel; all the stars in heaven, and the dust on earth, fight for God against the atheist. He hath as many arguments against him as there are creatures in the whole compass of heaven and earth. He is most unreasonable that denies or doubts of that whose image and shadow he sees round about him; he may sooner deny the sun that warms him, the moon that in the night walks in her brightness, deny the fruits he enjoys from earth, yea, and deny that he doth exist. He must tear his own conscience, fly from his own thoughts, be changed into the nature of a stone, which hath neither reason nor sense, before he can disengage himself from those arguments which evince the being of a God. He that would make the natural religion professed in the world a mere romance, must give the lie to the common sense of mankind; he must be at an irreconcilable enmity with his own reason, resolve to hear nothing that it speaks, if he will not hear what it speaks in this case with a greater evidence than it can ascertain anything else. God hath so settled himself in the reason of man, that he must vilify the noblest faculty God hath given him, and put off nature itself, before he can blot out the notion of a God.

3. No question but those that have been so bold as to deny that there was a God have sometimes been much afraid they have been in an error, and have at least suspected there was a God, when some sudden prodigy hath presented itself to them and roused their fears. And whatsoever sentiments they might have in their blinding prosperity, they have had other kind of motions in them in their stormy afflictions, and, like Jonah's mariners, have been ready to cry to him for help, whom they disdained to own so much as in being while they swam in their pleasures. The thoughts of a deity cannot be so extinguished but they will revive and rush upon a man, at least under some sharp affliction. Amazing judgments will make them question their own apprehensions. God sends some messengers to keep alive the apprehension of him as a judge, while men resolve not to own or reverence him as a governor. A man cannot but keep a scent of what was born with

him ; as a vessel that hath been seasoned first with a strong juice will preserve the scent of it, whatsoever liquors are afterwards put into it.

4. What is it for which such men rack their wits, to form notions that there is no God ? Is it not that they would indulge some vicious habit, which hath gained the possession of their soul, which they know cannot be favoured by that holy God, whose notion they would raze out ? Ps. xciv. 6, 7. Is it not for some brutish affection, as degenerative of human nature, as derogatory to the glory of God ; a lust as unmanly as sinful ?

The terrors of God are the effects of guilt ; and therefore men would wear out the apprehensions of a deity, that they might be brutish without control. They would fain believe there were no God, that they might not be men, but beasts. How great a folly is it to take so much pains in vain for a slavery and torment ! to cast off that which they call a yoke for that which really is one ! There is more pains and toughness of soul requisite to shake off the apprehensions of God than to believe that he is, and cleave constantly to him. What a madness is it in any to take so much pains to be less than a man, by razing out the apprehensions of God, when with less pains he may be more than an earthly man, by cherishing the notions of God, and walking answerably thereunto.

5. How unreasonable is it for any man to hazard himself at this rate in the denial of a God ! The atheist saith he knows not that there is a God ; but may he not reasonably think there may be one for aught he knows ? And if there be, what a desperate confusion will he be in, when all his bravadoes shall prove false ! What can they gain by such an opinion ? A freedom, say they, from the burdensome yoke of conscience, a liberty to do what they list, that doth not subject them to divine laws. It is a hard matter to persuade any that they can gain this. They can gain but a sordid pleasure, unworthy the nature of man. But it were well that such would argue thus :—If there be a God, and I fear and obey him, I gain a happy eternity ; but if there be no God, I lose nothing but my sordid lusts by firmly believing there is one. If I be deceived at last, and find a God, can I think to be rewarded by him for disowning him ? Do not I run a desperate hazard to lose his favour, his kingdom, and endless felicity, for an endless torment ? By confessing a God, I venture no loss ; but by denying him, I run the most desperate hazard if there be one.

He is not a reasonable creature that will not put himself upon such a reasonable arguing.

What a doleful meeting will there be between the God who is denied and the atheist that denies him, who shall meet with reproaches on God's part, and terrors of his own ! All that he gains is a liberty to defile himself here, and a certainty to be despised hereafter, if he be in an error, as undoubtedly he is.

6. Can any such person say he hath done all that he can to inform himself of the being of God, or of other things which he denies ? Or rather, they would fain imagine there is none, that they may sleep securely in their lusts, and be free (if they could) from the thunder-claps of conscience ? Can such say they have used their utmost endeavours to instruct themselves in this, and can meet with no satisfaction ? Were it an abstruse truth, it might not be wondered at ; but not to meet with satisfaction in this which everything minds us of and helpeth, is the fruit of an extreme negligence, stupidity, and a willingness to be unsatisfied, and a judicial process of God against them. It is strange any man should be so dark in that upon which depends the conduct of his life, and the expectation of happiness hereafter.

I do not know what some of you may think, but I believe these things

are not useless to be proposed for ourselves to answer temptations. We know not what wicked temptation in a debauched and sceptic age, meeting with a corrupt heart, may prompt men to, and though there may not be any atheist here present, yet I know there is more than one who have accidentally met with such who openly denied a deity. And if the like occasion happen, these considerations may not be unuseful to apply to their consciences. But I must confess, that since those that live in this sentiment do not judge themselves worthy of their own care, they are not worthy of the care of others; and a man must have all the charity of the Christian religion, which they despise, not to condemn them, and leave them to their own folly. As we are to pity madmen, who sink under an unavoidable distemper, we are as much to abominate them who will fully hug this prodigious frenzy.

*Use 3.* If it be the atheist's folly to deny or doubt of the being of God, it is our wisdom to be firmly settled in this truth, that God is. We should never be without our arms in an age wherein atheism appears barefaced without a disguise.

You may meet with suggestions to it; though the devil formerly never attempted to demolish this notion in the world, but was willing to keep it up, so the worship due to God might run in his own channel; and was necessitated to preserve it, without which he could not have erected that idolatry which was his great design in opposition to God; yet since the foundations of that are torn up, and never like to be rebuilt, he may endeavour, as his last refuge, to banish the notion of God out of the world, that he may reign as absolutely without it, as he did before by the mistakes about the divine nature. But we must not lay all upon Satan; the corruption of our own hearts ministers matter to such sparks. It is not said, Satan hath suggested to the fool, but 'The fool hath said *in his heart*, There is no God.' But let them come from what principle soever, silence them quickly, give them their dismiss, oppose the whole scheme of nature to fight against them, as the stars did against Sisera. Stir up sentiments of conscience to oppose sentiments of corruption. Resolve sooner to believe that yourselves are not than that God is not. And if you suppose they at any time come from Satan, object to him that you know he believes the contrary to what he suggests. Settle this principle firmly in you, let us behold him that is invisible, as Moses did, Heb. xi. 27. Let us have the sentiments following upon the notion of a God, to be restrained by a fear of him, excited by a love to him, not to violate his laws and offend his goodness. He is not a God careless of our actions, negligent to inflict punishment and bestow rewards: 'He forgets not the labour of our love,' Heb. vi. 10, nor the integrity of our ways. He were not a God if he were not a governor; and punishments and rewards are as essential to government as a foundation to a building. His being and his government in rewarding, Heb. xi. 6, which implies punishment (for the neglects of him are linked together), are not\* to be separated in our thoughts of him.

1. Without this truth fixed in us, we can never give him the worship due to his name. When the knowledge of any thing is fluctuating and uncertain, our actions about it are careless. We regard not that which we think doth not much concern us. If we do not firmly believe there is a God, we shall pay him no steady worship; and if we believe not the excellency of his nature, we shall offer him but a slight service; Mal. i. 13, 14. The Jews† call the knowledge of the being of God, the foundation and pillar of wisdom. The

\* Qu. 'His being and government in rewarding, which implies punishment for the neglect of him, are linked together, and are not,' &c.?—Ed.

† Maimon. Funda. Legis, cap. i.

whole frame of religion is dissolved without this apprehension, and totters if this apprehension be wavering. Religion in the heart is as water in a weather glass, which rises or falls according to the strength or weakness of this belief. How can any man worship that which he believes not to be, or doubts of? Could any man omit the paying an homage to one whom he did believe to be an omnipotent, wise being, possessing (infinitely above our conceptions) the perfections of all creatures? He must either think there is no such being, or that he is an easy, drowsy, inobservant God, and not such a one as our natural notions of him, if listened to, as well as the Scripture, represent him to be.

2. Without being rooted in this, we cannot order our lives. All our baseness, stupidity, dulness, wanderings, vanity, spring from a wavering and unsettledness in this principle. This gives ground to brutish pleasures, not only to solicit but conquer us. Abraham expected violence in any place where God was not owned: Gen. xx. 11, 'Surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will slay me for my wife's sake.' The natural knowledge of God firmly impressed, would choke that which would stifle our reason and deface our souls. The belief that God is, and what he is, would have a mighty influence to persuade us to a real religion, and serious consideration, and casting about how to be like to him and united with him.

3. Without it we cannot have any comfort of our lives. Who would willingly live in a stormy world, void of a God? If we waver in this principle, to whom should we make our complaints in our afflictions? Where should we meet with supports? How could we satisfy ourselves with the hopes of a future happiness? There is a sweetness in the meditation of his existence, and that he is a creator, Ps. civ. 24. Thoughts of other things have a bitterness mixed with them: houses, lands, children now are, shortly they will not be; but God is, that made the world; his faithfulness as he is a creator, is a ground to deposit our souls and concerns in our innocent sufferings, 1 Peter iv. 19. So far as we are weak in the acknowledgment of God, we deprive ourselves of our content in the view of his infinite perfections.

4. Without the rooting of this principle, we cannot have a firm belief of Scripture. The Scripture will be a slight thing to one that hath weak sentiments of God. The belief of a God must necessarily precede the belief of any revelation; the latter cannot take place without the former as the foundation. We must firmly believe the being of a God, wherein our happiness doth consist, before we can believe any means which conduct us to him. Moses begins with the author of creation, before he treats of the promise of redemption. Paul preached God as a creator to a university, before he preached Christ as mediator, Acts xvii. 24. What influence can the testimony of God have in his revelation upon one that doth not firmly assent to the truth of his being? All would be in vain that is so often repeated, *Thus saith the Lord*, if we do not believe there is a Lord that speaks it. There could be no awe from his sovereignty in his commands, nor any comfortable taste of his goodness in his promises. The more we are strengthened in this principle, the more credit we shall be able to give to divine revelation, to rest in his promise, and to reverence his precept; the authority of all depends upon the being of the revealer.

To this purpose, since we have handled this discourse by natural arguments,

1. Study God in the creatures as well as in the Scriptures. The primary use of the creatures, is to acknowledge God in them; they were made to be witnesses of himself and his goodness, and heralds of his glory, which

glory of God as creator 'shall endure for ever,' Ps. civ. 31. That whole psalm is a lecture of creation and providence. The world is a sacred temple, man is introduced to contemplate it, and behold with praise the glory of God in the pieces of his art. As grace doth not destroy nature, so the book of redemption blots not out that of creation. Had he not shewn himself in his creatures, he could never have shewn himself in his Christ. The order of things required it. God must be read wherever he is legible; the creatures are one book, wherein he hath writ a part of the 'excellency of his name,' Ps. viii. 9, as many artists do in their works and watches. God's glory, like the filings of gold, is too precious to be lost wherever it drops; nothing so vile and base in the world, but carries in it an instruction for man, and drives in further the notion of a God. As he said of his cottage, enter here, *sunt hic etiam Dii*, God disdains not this place, so the least creature speaks to man, every shrub in the field, every fly in the air, every limb in a body: Consider me, God disdains not to appear in me; he hath discovered in me his being and a part of his skill, as well as in the highest. The creatures manifest the being of God and part of his perfections. We have indeed a more excellent way, a revelation setting him forth in a more excellent manner, a firmer object of dependence, a brighter object of love, raising our hearts from self-confidence to a confidence in him. Though the appearance of God in the one be clearer than in the other, yet neither is to be neglected. The Scripture directs us to nature to view God; it had been in vain else for the apostle to make use of natural arguments. Nature is not contrary to Scripture, nor Scripture to nature, unless we should think God contrary to himself, who is the author of both.

2. View God in your own experiences of him. There is a taste and sight of his goodness, though no sight of his essence, Ps. xxxiv. 38. By the taste of his goodness you may know the reality of the fountain, whence it springs and from whence it flows. This surpasseth the greatest capacity of a mere natural understanding. Experience of the sweetness of the ways of Christianity is a mighty preservative against atheism. Many a man knows not how to prove honey to be sweet by his reason, but by his sense; and if all the reason in the world be brought against it, he will not be reasoned out of what he tastes.

Have not many found the delightful illapses of God into their souls, often sprinkled with his inward blessings upon their seeking of him; had secret warnings in their approaches to him; and gentle rebukes in their consciences upon their swervings from him? Have not many found sometimes an invisible hand raising them up when they were dejected, some unexpected providence stepping in for their relief, and easily perceived that it could not be a work of chance, nor many times the intention of the instruments he hath used in it? You have often found that he is, by finding that he is a rewarder, and can set to your seals that he is what he hath declared himself to be in his word: Isa. xliii. 12, 'I have declared, and have saved, therefore you are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.' The secret touches of God upon the heart, and inward converses with him, are a greater evidence of the existence of a supreme and infinitely good being, than all nature.

Use 4. Is it a folly to deny or doubt of the being of God? It is a folly also not to worship God, when we acknowledge his existence. It is our wisdom then to worship him. As it is not indifferent whether we believe there is a God or no, so it is not indifferent whether we will give honour to that God or no. A worship is his right as he is the author of our being, and fountain of our happiness. By this only we acknowledge his deity. Though we



profess his being, yet we deny that profession in neglects of worship. To deny him a worship is as great a folly as to deny his being. He that renounceth all homage to his Creator, envies him the being which he cannot deprive him of. The natural inclination to worship is as universal as the notion of a God; idolatry else had never gained footing in the world. The existence of God was never owned in any nation, but a worship of him was appointed; and many people who have turned their backs upon some other parts of the law of nature, have paid a continual homage to some superior and invisible being. The Jews gave a reason why man was created in the evening of the Sabbath, because he should begin his being with the worship of his Maker. As soon as ever he found himself to be a creature, his first solemn act should be a particular respect to his Creator. 'To fear God and keep his commandment, is the whole of man,' Eccles. xii. 13, or is 'whole man' (*Hebrew*); he is not a man but a beast, without observance of God. Religion is as requisite as reason to complete a man. He were not reasonable if he were not religious; because by neglecting religion, he neglects the chiefest dictate of reason. Either God framed the world with so much order, elegancy, and variety, to no purpose, or this was his end at least, that reasonable creatures should admire him in it, and honour him for it. The notion of God was not stamped upon men, the shadows of God did not appear in the creatures to be the subject of an idle contemplation, but the motive of a due homage to God. He created the world for his glory, a people for himself, that he might have the honour of his works; that since we live and move in him and by him, we should live and move to him and for him. It was the condemnation of the heathen world, that when they knew there was a God, they did not give him the glory due to him, Rom. i. 21. He that denies his being is an atheist to his essence: he that denies his worship is an atheist to his honour.

5. If it be a folly to deny the being of God, it will be our wisdom then, since we acknowledge his being, often to think of him. Thoughts are the first issue of a creature as reasonable, Prov. iv. 23. He that hath given us the faculty whereby we are able to think, should be the principal object about which the power of it should be exercised. It is a justice to God the author of our understandings, a justice to the nature of our understandings, that the noblest faculty should be employed about the most excellent object. Our minds are a beam from God; and therefore, as the beams of the sun, when they touch the earth, should reflect back upon God. As we seem to deny the being of God, not to think of him, we seem also to unsoul our souls, in misemploying the activity of them any other way: like flies, to be oftener on dunghills than flowers.

It is made the black mark of an ungodly man or an atheist, that 'God is not in all his thoughts,' Ps. x. 4. What comfort can be had in the being of God without thinking of him with reverence and delight! A God forgotten is as good as no God to us.