

THE  
LIVING TEMPLE,

OR

A DESIGNED IMPROVEMENT OF THAT NOTION,

THAT

*A GOOD MAN*

IS

THE TEMPLE OF GOD.

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PART I.

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CONCERNING

God's Existence,

AND

HIS CONVERSABLENESS WITH MAN.

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*Against Atheism, or the Epicurean Deism.*



TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
WILLIAM LORD PAGETT,  
BARON OF BEUDESERT,  
IN THE COUNTY OF STAFFORD.

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My honoured Lord,

I HAVE not the opportunity of begging your Lordship's foregoing leave to prefix your name to these papers; but despair not of your following pardon. Your name must be acknowledged great, through two potent empires, Christian and Mahometan; and the services greater which you have done to many that may perhaps not have heard the sound of your name. Your prudent and prosperous negotiations in the Austrian and Ottoman courts, have obliged multitudes, whose better genius hath taught them more to value themselves, than to think they were born to slavery; from which you have found means, in great part, to save Europe: *somewhere*, by charming great power, so as to conquer the inclination to use it to so ill a purpose; *elsewhere*, by preventing its increase, where that inclination was invincible. And hereby you have dignified England, in letting it be seen what it can signify in the world, when it is so happy as to have its interest managed by a fit and able hand.

Yet that knowledge your Lordship hath heretofore allowed me to have of you, cannot suffer me to think you will account your name too great to patronise the cause asserted in the following discourse. That it is unpolished, will not affect your Lordship; let that rest where it ought: the subject and design will, I doubt not, have your Lordship's countenance. And the rather, that it is not the temple of this or that party that is here defended, which would little agree to the amplitude of your Lordship's large mind, and your great knowledge of the world, but that wherein mankind have a common concern. A temple that is the seat of serious, living religion, is the more venerable, and the more extensive; the more defensible, and the more worthy to be defended, by how much it is the less appropriate to this or that sect and sort of men, or distinguished by this or that affected, modifying form; that which according to its primitive designation may be hoped, and ought to be the resort of all nations: which it is vain to imagine any one, of this or that external form, not prescribed by God himself, can ever be; unless we should suppose it possible, that one and the same human prince, or power, could ever come to govern the world. Such uniformity must certainly suppose such a universal monarchy as never was, and we easily apprehend can never be. Therefore, the belief that the Christian religion shall ever become the religion of the world, and the Christian church become the common universal

temple of mankind; that "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and all nations flow to it;" (as, besides that, many other texts of holy Scripture do plainly speak;) and an intemperate contentious zeal for one *external, human form of God's temple* on earth, are downright inconsistencies. That belief, and this zeal, must destroy one another; especially, that which makes particular temples, engines to batter down each other, because they agree not in some human additions, though all may be charitably supposed to have somewhat of divine life in them. Therefore we plainly see, that this universal, Christian, living temple must be formed and finished, not by human might or power, but by the Spirit of the living God; which Spirit, poured forth, shall instruct princes, and the potentates of the world, to receive and cherish among their subjects the great essentials of Christian religion, and whatsoever is of plain divine revelation, wherein all may agree, rejecting, or leaving arbitrary, the little human additions about which there is so much disagreement.

Heaven did favour us with such a king: and thanks be to God, that he hath given us such a queen, who is not for destroying any temples that may have true vital religion in them, because they neither all have, or have not, the same pinnacles, or other pieces of ornamēnt alike. God grant all Christian princes and powers may herein equally imitate them both; as many do seriously lament the loss of the former.

It has been long the honour of your family to have had great esteem and reverence for such a temple. And I doubt not, but its having spread its branches into divers other worthy families of the Hampdens, Foleys, Ashbursts, Hunts, has given your Lordship much the more grateful and complacential view, for the affinity to your own in this respect. A temple so truly (and even only) august and great, spreads a glory over the families, kingdoms, and nations where it can have place. What is here written is a mean oblation, for the service of this temple; but acceptable, as even goats' hair was, by being consecrated, with a sincere mind, for the use of the tabernacle of old.

The First Part betakes itself to your Lordship as an orphan, upon the decease of its former patron, in hope of some sort of a postliminary reception. And for the Second Part, it is (as your Lordship shall vouchsafe to receive it) originally and entirely yours.

The former, your Lordship will see, had a former dedication: and I cannot think it will be displeasing to your Lordship, that I let it stand. For though it may seem somewhat uncouth and unusual to have two such epistles come so near one another, yet the unfashionableness hereof, I conceive, will, in your Lordship's judgment, be over-balanced by considerations of a preponderating weight, that are suggested to the reader. While, in the mean time, I cannot suppose it unacceptable to your Lordship, that a person of true worth in his time, related to the same county in which your Lordship hath so considerable concerns, and not altogether unrelated to yourself, should have had a participation with you in the same sort of patronage; with whom your Lordship hath also a true participation, in all the honour, esteem, and sincere prayers that ever were conceived for him, by

Your Lordship's most obedient,

And most devoted, humble Servant,

JOHN HOWE.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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Reader,

**B**E pleased to take notice, that the former part of this work was heretofore inscribed to that worthy person, Sir John Skeffington, of Fisherswick, in Staffordshire, Baronet: and who was at that time also, Viscount Lord Masserene, governor of the county of Londonderry, and one of the lords of his Majesty Charles the Second's most honourable Privy Council in the kingdom of Ireland; and now, since, deceased.

I have, however, thought fit to let it be reprinted, (the incongruity being, by this advertisement, avoided, of making an address anew, in this new impression, to one no longer in our world,) that the memory of a person so truly valuable may, so far as this can contribute thereto, be preserved; and because also, many things in this epistle may be useful, as a preface, to shew the design of the following discourse. And as this purpose may be equally served by it as it is, the other purpose being also, thus, better served, I have not judged it necessary, though that had been easy, to alter the form; which was as follows:

**ALTHOUGH** I am not, my Lord, without the apprehension that a temple ought to have another sort of dedication, yet I have no such pique at the custom of former days, but that I can think it decent and just that a discourse concerning one conceived under your roof, though born out of your house, should openly own the relation which it thereby hath, and the Author's great obligations to your Lordship; and upon this account I can easily persuade myself (though that custom hath much given place to this latter one) not to be so fashionable, as even to write in masquerade.

It were indeed most unbecoming, in the service of so noble a cause, to act in disguise, or decline to tell one's name. And as the prefixing of one so obscure as that which the title page bears, will be without suspicion of a design to recompense, by the authority of a name, any feared weakness of the cause itself; so were it very unworthy, having nothing better, to grudge the bringing even of so mean a thing, as a sacrifice to the door of the temple.

And although your Lordship's is of so incomparably greater value, yet also is it (as the equity of the case requires) exposed with less hazard; since in common account, the vouchsafement of pardon (whereof I cannot despair) for such assumed liberty, can with no justice be understood to import more than only a favourable aspect on the design, without any interest or participation in the disrepute of its ill management. So that your honour is in no more jeopardy than the main cause itself, which is but little concerned in the successfulness or miscarriage of this or that effort, which is made on behalf of it; and which, you are secure, can receive no real damage. For the foundations of this temple are more stable than those of heaven and earth, it being built upon that Rock against which the gates of hell can never prevail.

And if, in any unforeseen state of things, you should ever receive pre-

judice, or incur danger by any real service you should design unto the temple of God, your adventure would be the more honourable, by how much it were more hazardous. The Order of Templars, your Lordship well knows, was not, in former days, reckoned inglorious.

But as this temple is quite of another constitution and make than that at Jerusalem, and (to use those words of the Sacred Writer) ἀχειροποίητος, τῆς αὐτῆς τῆς κτίσεως.—*not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building*; (Heb. 9. 11.) so what is requisite to the interest and service of it, is much of another nature. Entire devotedness to God, sincerity, humility, charity, refinedness from the dross and baseness of the earth, strict sobriety, dominion of one's self, mastery over impotent and ignominious passions, love of justice, a steady propension to do good, delight in doing it, have contributed more to the security and beauty of God's temple on earth; conferred on it more majesty and lustre; done more to procure it room and reverence among men, than the most prosperous violence ever did: the building up of this temple, even to the laying on the top-stone, (to be followed with the acclamations of Grace, Grace,) being that which must be done, not by might or power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. Which, inasmuch as the structure is spiritual, and to be situated and raised up in the mind or spirit of man, works, in order to it, in a way suitable thereto. That is, very much by soft and gentle insinuations, unto which are subservient the self-recommending amiableness and comely aspect of religion; the discernible gracefulness and uniform course of such in whom it bears rule, and is a settled, living law. Hereby the hearts of others are captivated and won to look towards it: made not only desirous to taste its delights, but, in order thereto, patient also of its rigours, and the rougher severities which their drowsy security and unmortified lusts do require should accompany it; the more deeply and thoroughly to attemper and form them to it. Merely notional discourses about the temple of God, and the external forms belonging to it, (how useful soever they be in their own kind and order,) being unaccompanied with the life and power whereto they should be adjoined, either as subservient helps, or comely expressions thereof, do gain but little to it in the estimation of discerning men.

Much more have the apparently useless and unintelligible notions, with the empty formalities too arbitrarily affixed to it, by a very great, namely, the unreformed part of the Christian world, even there exposed it to contempt, where the professed (but most irrational and hopeless) design hath been to draw to it respect and veneration.

And when these have become matter of strife, and filled the world with noise and clamour, through the imperious violence of some, and the factious turbulency of others; it hath made it look with a frightful aspect, and rendered the divine presence, so represented, an undesired, dreadful thing. This may make that the language of fear with some, (which is of enmity with the most,) "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

Most of all; when a glorying in these things, and contention about them, are joined with gross immoralities; either manifest impiety, sensual debaucheries, acts of open injustice, or the no less criminal evil of a proud, wrathful, ungovernable temper of spirit; *this* hath made it a most hateful thing in the eyes of God and men, and turned that which should be the house of prayer unto all nations, into a den of robbers;

hath cast the most opprobrious contumely upon him whom they would entitle the owner of it. That is, when men will steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; and yet cry, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, &c.; it is as if they would make the world believe, that the holy God, the great Lover and Patron of purity and peace, had erected, on purpose, a house on earth, to be the common harbour and sanctuary of the vilest of men, the very pests of human society, and disturbers of mankind.

And if they were not the very worst, yet how absurd and senseless a thing were it, that he should be thought to appropriate a people to himself, have them solemnly baptized into his name, and trained up in a professed belief of those his more peculiar revelations, which are without the common notice of the most; and in the use of certain (somewhat different) external institutes, being yet content that, in all things else, they be but just like the rest of the world.

Though he may be, for some time, patient of this indignity, and connive at such a state and posture of things, (as he did a great while towards the Jews of old,) yet, that this should be thought the top of his design, and the thing he lastly aimed at, and would acquiesce in, supposes such a notion of God, as than which, worshipping a stock were not more foolish and impious; and professed atheism as rational and innocent.

This hath spoiled and slurred the glory of the Christian temple, the most august and magnificent the world hath, (and which, indeed, only hath right to the name,) made the religion of Christians look like an empty vanity, and appear, for many ages, but as an external badge of civil distinction between them and another sort of men, that are only contending for enlarging of empire, and who shall grasp most power into their hands; both having also their sub-distinguishing marks besides, under which too probably divers of those who have adjoined themselves to the so differenced parties, furiously drive at the same design. And these zealously pretend for religion and the temple of God; when, in the mean time, it were a thing perfectly indifferent (even in itself, as well as in the opinion of the persons concerned) what religion or way they were of, true or false, right or wrong, Paganish, Mahometan, Jewish, Christian, Popish, Protestant, Lutheran, Calvinistical, Episcopal, Presbyterial, Independent, &c.: supposing there be any of each of these denominations that place their religion in nothing else but a mere assent to the peculiar opinions, and an observation of the external formalities, of their own party; and that they never go further, but remain finally alienated from the life of God, and utter strangers to the soul-refining, governing power of the true religion. Only, that their case is the worse, the nearer they approach, in profession, to the truth.

And really, if we abstract from the design and end, the spirit and life, the tranquillity and pleasure, of religion, one would heartily wonder what men can see in all the rest, for which they can think it worth the while to contend, to the disquieting themselves and the world. Nobody can believe they regard the authority of God, in this doctrine or institution, rather than another, who neglect and resist the substance and main scope of religion, recommended to them by the same authority. And as to the matters themselves which will then remain to be disputed,

we have first the distinguishing name; and if we run over all those before recited, is it a matter of that consequence, as to cut throats, and lay towns and countries desolate, only upon this quarrel, which of these hath the handsomer sound? The different rites of this or that way, to them who have no respect to the authority enjoining them, must, in themselves, signify as little. And for the peculiar opinions of one or another sect, it may be soberly said, that a very great part understand no more of the distinguishing principles of their own, than he that was yet to learn how many legs a sectary had. Only they have learned to pronounce the word which is the *Shibboleth* of their party, to follow the common cry, and run with the rest, that have agreed to do so to.

But if they all understood the notions ever so well, (not to speak of only those which are peculiar to their way, but,) which are most necessary to true religion itself; were it not, in them, a strange frenzy, to contend with clubs and swords about a mere notion, which has no influence on their practice, and they intend never shall? If any should profess to be of opinion that a triangle is a figure that hath four corners, sober men would think it enough to say they were mad, but would let them quietly enjoy their humour, and never think it fit to levy armies against them, or embroil the world upon so slender a quarrel. And wherein can the notions belonging to religion be rationally of higher account, with them, who never purpose to make any use of them, and against which it is impossible for any to fight so mischievously by the most vehement, verbal opposition, as themselves do, by their opposite practice, most directly assaulting, and striking at, even what is most principally fundamental to religion and the temple of God? Not that these great things are unworthy to be contended for. All that I mean is, what have these men to do with them? or how irrationally and inconsistently with themselves do they seem so concerned about them?

For even lesser things, the appendages to this sacred frame, are not without their just value, to them who understand their intent and use. Nor am I designing to tempt your Lordship to the neglect or disesteem of any, the least thing appertaining to religion. And if any other should, I rejoice daily to behold in you that resolute adherence to whatsoever apparently divine truth and institution, to common order, decency, peace and unity, (which so greatly contribute both to the beauty and stability of God's house,) that may even defy and dismay the attempt; and gives ground, however, to be confident it would be labour bestowed as vainly, as it were impiously designed. So much greater assurance do you give of your constant fidelity and devotedness to the substance of practical religion itself.

Only how deeply is it to be resented, that while it should be so with all others, so few understand wherein that substance doth consist. I shall not now take notice of men's very different (which must infer some men's mistaken) apprehensions concerning the things necessary to be believed. But, besides that, though some religious sentiments be most deeply natural to men, (and, for aught we certainly know, as far extended as the true notion of humanity can be,) yet, in all times, there has been a too general mistake (not peculiar to the Paganish world only) of the true design, and proportionably of the genuine principle of it.

That is, it has not been understood as a thing designed to purify and refine men's spirits, to reconcile and join them to God, associate them with him, and make them finally blessed in him. But only to avert or

pacify his wrath, procure his favourable aspect on their secular affairs, (how unjust soever,) while, in the mean time, they have thought of nothing less than becoming like to him, acquainted with him, and happy in him. A reconciliation hath only been dreamed of on one side, namely, on his, not their own; on which, they are not so much as inclined to any thing else, than the continuance of the former distance and disaffection.

Consonantly whereto, it is plainly to be seen, that the great principle which hath mostly animated religion in the world hath not been a generous love, but a basely servile fear and dread. Whence the custom of sacrificing hath so generally prevailed (whencesoever it took its rise) in the Pagan world. And with so deep an apprehension of its absolute necessity, that men of even so vile and barbarous manners\* as the Gauls of old, chose, in matters of controversy, to submit their greatest concerns to the pleasure and arbitrement of their Druids, (those sacred persons, as they reckoned them) rather than be interdicted the sacrifices (the only punishment they could inflict) in case of their refusal: which punishment (as is testified by Julius Cæsar†) they accounted the most grievous imaginable. And it needs not be said in what part of the world the same engine hath had the same power with men, even since they obtained to be called *Christian*. Which, while it hath been of such force with them, who, notwithstanding, persisted in courses of the most profligate wickedness; whence could their religion, such as it was, proceed, save only from a dread of divine revenge? What else could it design (though that most vainly) but the averting it, without even altering their own vile course?

Now let this be the account and estimate of religion; only to propitiate the Deity towards flagitious men, still remaining so; and how monstrous a notion doth it give us of God, that he is one that by such things can ever be rendered favourable to such men! Let it not be so, (while you sever its true and proper end also,) how most despicably inept and foolish a thing doth it make religion! A compages and frame of merely scenical observances and actions, intended to no end at all.

In a word, their religion is nothing but foolery, which is not taken up and prosecuted with a sincere aim to the bettering their spirits; the making them holy, peaceful, meek, humble, merciful, studious of doing good, and the composing them into temples, some way meet for the residence of the blessed God; with design and expectation to have his intimate, vital presence, settled and made permanent there.

The materials and preparation of which temple are no where entirely contained and directed, but in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: as, hereafter, we may with divine assistance labour to evince. The greater is the ignominy done to the temple of God, and the Christian name, by only titular and nick-named Christianity. Will they pretend themselves the temple of God, partakers in the high privilege and dignity of the Emmanuel, (in whom most eminently the Deity inhabiteth,) who are discernibly, to all that know them, as great strangers to God, and of a temper of spirit as disagreeing to him, of as worldly spirits, as unmortified passions, as proud, wrathful, vain-glorious, envious, morose, merciless, disinclined to do good, as any other men? When God cleanses his house, and purges his floor, where will these be found?

\* See the character given of them by Cicero, Orat. pro Marc. Fon.

† Comment. lib. 6.

And for this temple itself, it is a structure whereto there is a concurrence of truth and holiness; the former letting in (it were otherwise a darksome, disorderly, uncomfortable house) a vital, directive, formative light, to a heavenly, calm, God-like frame of spirit, composed and made up of the latter.

It is this temple, my Lord, which I would invite you both to continue your respect unto in others, and, more and more, to prepare and beautify in yourself.

You will find little, in this part, offered to your view, more than only its *vestibulum*, or rather a very plain (if not rude) frontispiece; with the more principal pillars that must support the whole frame. Nor, whereas (by way of introduction to the discourse of this temple, and as most fundamental to the being of it) the existence of the great Inhabitant is so largely insisted on, that I think that altogether a needless labour. Of all the sects and parties in the world, (though there are few that avow it, and fewer, if any, that are so, by any formed judgment, unshaken by a suspicion and dread of the contrary,) that of atheists we have reason enough to suppose the most numerous, as having diffused and spread itself through all the rest. And though, with the most, under disguise, yet uncovering, with too many, its ugly face: and scarce ever more than in our own days. Wherefore, though it hath never been in any age more strongly impugned; yet, because the opposition can never be too common, to so common an enemy, this additional endeavour may prove not wholly out of season. And the Epicurean atheist is chiefly designed against in this discourse; that being the atheism most in fashion.

Nor is any thing more pertinent to the design of the discourse intended concerning God's temple; which, importing worship to be done to him, requires, first, a belief that he is.

And surely the [E?] inscribed of old, as Plutarch tells us, on the Delphic Temple; signifying, (as, after divers other conjectures, he concludes it to do,) *Thou dost exist*, is an inscription much more fitly set in view, at our entrance into the temple of the living God, whose name is, *I AM*.

Amidst the pleasant entertainments of which temple, (made more intimate to you than human discourse can make it,) may you spend many happy days in this world, as a preparative and introduction to a happier eternity in the other. Whereto he is under many and deep obligations, by any means, to contribute to his uttermost, who must (especially in the offices relating to this temple) profess himself,

My honoured Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble,

Devoted Servant,

JOHN HOWE.

THE  
LIVING TEMPLE,  
OR  
THE NOTION IMPROVED,  
THAT  
*A GOOD MAN IS THE TEMPLE OF GOD.*

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PART I.

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CHAP. I.

This notion common. Authorities needless. Insignificant with the atheistical, who have made it more necessary to defend religion, and a temple in general, than this, or that. Better defended against them by practice and use, than argument, whereof they are incapable. Frequent disputes of its principles not necessary to the practice of religion. Some consideration of those supposed in the general notion of a temple, pertinent, however, to this discourse.

I. **I**T is so well known that this notion hath long obtained in the world, that we need not quote sayings to avouch it; wherewith not the sacred writings only, but others, even of Pagans themselves, would plentifully furnish us.

But as authorities are, in a plain case, needless to unprejudiced minds; so will they be useless to the prejudiced, be the case ever so plain. Nor is any prejudice deeper, or less vincible, than that of profane minds against religion. With such, it would in the present argument signify little, to tell them what hath been said or thought before by any others. Not because it is their general course to be so very circumspect and wary, as never to approve or assent to any thing, unless upon the clearest and most convincing demonstration: but from their peculiar dislike of those things only, that are of this special import and tendency. Discourse to them what you will of a *temple*, and it will be nauseous and unsavoury: not as being cross to their reason, (which they are as little curious

to gratify as any other sort of men,) but to their ill humour, and the disaffected temper of their mind ; whence also (though they cannot soon or easily get that mastery over their understandings herein, yet because they would fain have it so) they do what they can to believe *religion* nothing else but the effect of timorous fancy, and *a temple*, consequently, one of the most idle impertinencies in the world.

To these, the discussion of the notion we have proposed to consider, will be thought a beating the air, an endeavour to give consistency to a shadow. And if their reason and power could as well serve their purpose as their anger and scorn, they would soon tear up the holy ground on which a temple is set, and wholly subvert the sacred frame.

I speak of such as deny the existence of the ever-blessed Deity ; or, if they are not arrived to that express and formed misbelief, whose hearts are inclined, and ready to determine, even against their misgiving and more suspicious minds, that there is no God : who, if they cannot as yet believe, do wish there were none ; and so strongly, as in a great degree to prepare them for that belief : and who would fain banish him not only out of all their thoughts, but the world too ; and to whom it is so far from being a grateful sound, That the tabernacle of God is with men on earth, that they grudge to allow him a place in heaven. At least, if they are willing to admit the existence of any God at all, do say to him, Depart from us ; and would have him so confined to heaven, that he and they may have nothing to do with one another : and do therefore rack their impious wits to serve their hypothesis either way ; that under its protection they may securely indulge themselves in a course, upon which they find the apprehension of a God, interesting himself in human affairs, would have a very unfavourable and threatening aspect.

They are therefore constrained to take great pains with themselves to discipline and chastise their minds and understandings, to that tameness and patience, as contentedly to suffer the razing out of their most natural impressions and sentiments. And they reckon they have arrived to a very heroical perfection, when they can pass a scoff upon any thing, that carries the least signification with it of the fear of God ; and can be able to laugh at the weak and squeamish folly of those softer and effeminate minds, that will trouble themselves with any thoughts or cares, how to please and propitiate *a Deity* : and doubt not but they have made all safe, and effectually done their business, when they have learned to put the ignominious



titles of frenzy, and folly, upon devotion, in whatsoever dress or garb; to cry *canting*, to any serious mention of the name of God, and break a bold adventurous jest upon any the most sacred mysteries, or decent and awful solemnities, of religion.

II. These content not themselves to encounter this or that *sect*, but *mankind*; and reckon it too mean and inglorious an achievement, to overturn one sort of temple or another; but would down with them all, even to the ground.

And they are bound, in reason and justice, to pardon the emulation which they provoke, of vying with them as to the universality of their design: and not to regret it, if they find there be any that think it their duty to wave a while serving the temple of this or that party, as less considerable, to defend that *one* wherein all men have a common interest and concernment, since matters are brought to that exigency and hazard, that it seems less necessary to contend about this or that *mode* of religion, as whether there ought to be any at all. What was said of a former age, could never better agree to any, than our own, "that none was ever more fruitful of religions, and barren of religion or true piety." It concerns us to consider, whether the fertility of those many doth not as well cause as accompany a barrenness in this one. And since the iniquity of the world hath made that too suitable, which were otherwise unseemly in itself, to speak of a temple as a fortified place, whose own sacredness ought ever to have been its sufficient fortification, it is time to be aware lest our forgetful heat and zeal in the defence of this or that *out-work*, do expose (not to say betray) the *main fortress* to assault and danger. For it hath long been by this means, a neglected, forsaken thing; and is more decayed by vacancy and disuse, than it could ever have been by the most forcible battery; so as even to promise the rude assailant an easy victory. Who fears to insult over an empty, dispirited, dead religion! which alive and shining in its native glory, (as that temple doth, which is compacted of lively stones united to the living corner stone,) bears with it a magnificence and state that would check a profane look, and dazzle the presumptuous eye that durst venture to glance at it obliquely, or with disrespect. The temple of the living God, manifestly animated by his vital presence, would not only dismay opposition, but command veneration also; and be both its own ornament and defence. Nor can it be destitute of that presence, if we ourselves render it not inhospitable, and make not its proper inhabitant become a stranger

at home. If we preserve in ourselves a capacity of the divine presence, and keep the temple of God in a posture fit to receive him, he would then no more forsake it, than the soul would a sound and healthy body, not violated in any vital part. But if he forsake it once, it then becomes an exposed and despised thing. And as the most impotent, inconsiderable enemy can securely trample on the dead body of the greatest hero, that alive carried awfulness and terror in his looks; so is the weak-spirited atheist become as bold now, as he was willing before, to make rude attempts upon the temple of God, when *He* hath been provoked to leave it, who is its life, strength, and glory.

III. Therefore as they who will not be treacherous to the interest of God and man must own an obligation and necessity to apply themselves to the serious endeavour of restoring the life and honour of religion; so will the case itself be found to point out to us the proper course in order hereto. That is, that it must rather be endeavoured by practice, than by disputation; by contending, every one with himself, to excite the love of God in his own breast, rather than with the profane adversary to kindle his anger, more aiming to foment and cherish the domestic, continual fire of God's temple and altar, than transmit a flame into the enemies' camp. For what can this signify? And it seldom fails to be the event of disputing against prejudice, (especially of disputing for the sum of religion at once against the prepossession of a sensual profane temper, and a violent inclination and resolvedness to be wicked,) to beget more wrath than conviction, and sooner to incense the impatient wretch than enlighten him. And by how much the more cogent and enforcing reasonings are used, and the less is left the confounded, baffled creature to say, on behalf of a cause so equally deplorable and vile; the more he finds himself concerned to fortify his obstinate will; to supply his want of reason with resolution; to find out the most expedite ways of diverting, from what he hath no mind to consider; and to entertain himself with the most stupifying pleasures, (which must serve the same turn that opium is wont to do in the case of broken, unquiet sleep,) or whatsoever may most effectually serve to mortify any divine principle, and destroy all sense of God out of his soul.

And how grateful herein, and meritorious often, are the assistant railleries of servile, and it may be mercenary, wits? How highly will he oblige them, that can furnish out a libel against religion, and help them with more artificial spite to blaspheme

what they cannot disprove. And now shall the scurrilous pasquil and a few bottles, work a more effectual confutation of religion, than all the reason and argument in the world shall be able to countervail. This proves too often the unhappy issue of misapplying what is most excellent in its own kind and place, to improper and incapable subjects.

IV. And who sees not this to be the case with the modern atheist, who hath been pursued with that strength and vigour of argument, even in our days, that would have baffled persons of any other temper than their own, into shame and silence? And so as no other support hath been left to irreligion, than a senseless stupidity, an obstinate resolvedness not to consider, a faculty to stifle an argument with a jest, to charm their reason by sensual softnesses into a dead sleep; with a strict and circumspect care that it may never awake into any exercise above the condition of dozed and half-witted persons; or if it do, by the next debauch, presently to lay it fast again. So that the very principle fails in this sort of men, whereto, in reasoning, we should appeal, and apply ourselves. And it were almost the same thing, to offer arguments to the senseless images, or forsaken carcasses of men. It belongs to the grandeur of religion to neglect the impotent assaults of these men: as it is a piece of glory, and bespeaks a worthy person's right understanding, and just value of himself, to disdain the combat with an incompetent or a foiled enemy. It is becoming and seemly, that the grand, ancient, and received truth, which tends to, and is the reason of the godly life, do sometimes keep state; and no more descend to perpetual, repeated janglings with every scurrilous and impertinent trifler, than a great and redoubted prince would think it fit to dispute the rights of his crown, with a drunken, distracted fool, or a mad-man.

Men of atheistical persuasions having abandoned their reason, need what will more powerfully strike their sense—storms and whirlwinds, flames and thunderbolts; things not so apt immediately to work upon their understanding, as their fear, and that will astonish, that they may convince, that the great God makes himself known by the judgments which he executes. Stripes are for the back of fools (as they are justly styled, that say in their hearts, There is no God). But if it may be hoped any gentler method may prove effectual with any of them, we are rather to expect the good effect from the steady, uniform course of *their* actions and conversation, who profess reverence and devotedness to an eternal Being; and the correspondence of their *way*, to their avowed *principle*, that

acts them on agreeably to itself, and may also incur the sense of the beholder, and gradually invite and draw his observation; than from the most severe and necessitating argumentation that exacts a sudden assent.

V. At least, in a matter of so clear and commanding evidence, reasoning many times looks like trifling; and out of a hearty concernedness and jealousy for the honour of religion, one would rather it should march on with an heroic neglect of bold and malapert cavillers, and only demonstrate and recommend itself by its own vigorous, comely, coherent course, than make itself cheap by discussing at every turn its principles: as that philosopher who thought it the fittest way to confute the sophisms against motion, only by walking.

But we have nothing so considerable objected against practical religion, as well to deserve the name of a *sophism*; at least, no sophism so perplexing in the case of *religious*, as of *natural* motion; jeers and sarcasms are the most weighty, convincing arguments: and let the deplorate crew mock on. There are those in the world, that will think they have however, reason enough to persist in the way of godliness; and that have already laid the foundation of that reverence which they bear to a Deity, more strongly than to be shaken and beaten off from it by a jest: and therefore will not think it necessary to have the principles of their religion vindicated afresh, every time they are called to the practice of it. For surely they would be religious upon very uncertain terms, that will think themselves concerned to suspend or discontinue their course as often as they are encountered in it with a wry mouth or a distorted look; or that are apt to be put out of conceit with their religion by the laughter of a fool; or by their cavils and taunts against the rules and principles of it, whom only their own sensual temper, and impatience of serious thoughts, have made willing to have them false. That any indeed should commence religious, and persist with blind zeal in this or that discriminating profession, without ever considering why they should do so, is unmanly and absurd; especially when a gross ignorance of the true reasons and grounds of religion shall be shadowed over with a pretended awe and scrupulousness to inquire about things *so sacred*. And an inquisitive temper shall have an ill character put upon it, as if *rational* and *profane* were words of the same signification. Or, as if reason and judgment were utterly execrated, and an unaccountable, enthusiastic fury, baptized and hallowed, were the only principle of religion. But when the matter hath undergone already, a severe inquisi-

tion, and been searched to the bottom ; when principles have been examined ; when the strength and firmness of its deepest and most fundamental grounds have been tried, and an approving judgment been past in the case, and a resolution thereupon taken up, of a suitable and correspondent practice ; it were a vain and unwarrantable curiosity, after all this, to be perpetually perplexing one's easy path with new and suspicious researches into the most acknowledged things. Nor were this course a little prejudicial to the design and end of religion, (if we will allow it any at all,) the refining of our minds, and the fitting us for a happy eternity. For when shall that building be finished, the foundations whereof must be every day torn up anew, upon pretence of further caution, and for more diligent search ? Or when will he reach his journey's end, that is continually vexed (and often occasioned to go back from whence he came) by causeless anxieties about his way ; and whether ever he began a right course, yea or no ?

Many go securely on in a course most ignominiously wicked and vile, without ever debating the matter with themselves, or inquiring if there be any rational principle to justify or bear them out. Much more may they, with a cheerful confidence persist in their well-chosen way, that have once settled their resolutions about it upon firm and assured grounds and principles, without running over the same course of reasonings with themselves in reference to each single, devotional act ; or thinking it necessary every time they are to pray, to have it proved to them, that there is a God. But many of these do need excitation ; and though they are not destitute of pious sentiments and inclinations, and have somewhat in them of the ancient foundations and frame of a temple, have yet, by neglect, suffered it to grow into decay. It is therefore the principal intendment of this discourse, not to assert the principles of religion against those with whom they have no place, but to propound what may some way tend to reinforce and strengthen them, where they visibly languish ; and awaken such as profess a devotedness to God, to the speedy and vigorous endeavour of repairing the ruins of his temple in their own breasts ; that they may thence hold forth a visible representation of an indwelling Deity, in effects and actions of life worthy of such a presence, and render his enshrined glory, transparent to the view and conviction of the irreligious and profane. Which hath more of hope in it, and is likely to be to better purpose, than disputing with them that more know how to jest, than rea-

son ; and better understand the relishes of meat and drink, than the strength of an argument.

VI. But though it would be both an ungrateful and insignificant labour, and as talking to the wind, to discourse of religion, with persons that have abjured all seriousness, and that cannot endure to think ; and would be like fighting with a storm, to contend against the blasphemy and outrage of insolent mockers at whatever is sacred and divine ; and were too much a debasing of religion, to retort sarcasms with men not capable of being talked with in any other than such (that is, their own) language : yet it wants neither its use nor pleasure, to the most composed minds, and that are most exempt from wavering herein, to view the frame of their religion, as it aptly and even naturally rises and grows up from its very foundations ; and to contemplate its first principles, which they may in the mean time find no present cause or inclination to dispute. They will know how to consider its most fundamental grounds, not with doubt or suspicion, but with admiration and delight ; and can with a calm and silent pleasure enjoy the repose and rest of a quiet and well-assured mind, rejoicing and contented to know to themselves, (when others refuse to partake with them in this joy,) and feel all firm and stable under them, whereupon either the practice or the hopes of their religion do depend.

And there may be also many others of good and pious inclinations, that have never yet applied themselves to consider the principal and most fundamental grounds of religion, so as to be able to give, or discern, any tolerable reason of them. For either the sluggishness of their own temper may have indisposed them to any more painful and laborious exercise of their minds, and made them to be content with the easier course of taking every thing upon trust, and imitating the example of others ; or they have been unhappily misinformed, that it consists not with the reverence due to religion, to search into the grounds of it. Yea, and may have laid this for one of its main grounds, that no exercise of reason may have any place about it. Or perhaps having never tried, they apprehend a greater difficulty in coming to a clear and certain resolution herein, than indeed there is. Now such need to be excited to set their own thoughts to work this way, and to be assisted herein. They should therefore consider who gave them the understandings which they fear to use. And can they use them to better purpose, or with more gratitude to him who made them

*intelligent*, and not *brute* creatures, than in labouring to know, that they may also by a reasonable service worship and adore their Maker? Are they not to use their very senses about the matters of religion? For the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen, &c. And their faith comes by hearing. But what? are these more sacred and divine, and more akin to religion, than their reason and judgment, without which also their sense can be of no use to them herein? Or is it the best way of making use of what God hath revealed of himself, by whatsoever means, not to understand what he hath revealed? It is most true indeed, that when we once come clearly to be informed that God hath revealed this or that thing, we are then readily to subject (and not oppose) our feeble reasonings to his plain revelation. And it were a most insolent and uncreaturally arrogance, to contend or not yield him the cause, though things have to us seemed otherwise. But it were as inexcusable negligence, not to make use of our understandings to the best advantage; that we may both know that such a revelation is divine, and what it signifies, after we know whence it is. And any one that considers, will soon see it were very unseasonable, at least, to allege the written, divine revelation, as the ground of his religion, till he have gone lower, and fore-known some things (by and by to be insisted on) as preparatory and fundamental to the knowledge of this.

And because it is obvious to suppose how great an increase of strength and vigour pious minds may receive hence, how much it may animate them to the service of the temple, and contribute to their more cheerful progress in a religious course; it will therefore not be besides our present purpose, but very pursuant to it, to consider awhile, not in the contentious way of brawling and captious disputation, (the noise whereof is as unsuitable to the temple as that of axes and hammers,) but of calm and sober discourse, the more principal and lowermost grounds upon which the frame of religion rests, and to the supposal whereof, the notion and use of any such thing as a temple in the world, do owe themselves.

## CHAP. II.

I. The two more principal grounds which a temple supposes. *FIRST*, The existence of God. *SECONDLY*, His conversableness with men: both argued from common consent. Doubtful if the first were ever wholly denied in former days. The second also implied, *First*, In the known general practice of some or other religion. Evidenced, *Secondly*, In that some, no strangers to the world, have thought it the difference of man. II. The immodesty and rashness of the persons from whom any opposition can be expected. III. These two grounds, namely, the existence of God, and his conversableness with men, proposed to be more strictly considered apart. And, *FIRST*, The existence of God, where the *notion* of God is assigned. The parts whereof are proposed to be evinced severally of some existent being. *First*, Eternity. *Secondly*, Self-origination. *Thirdly*, Independency. *Fourthly*, Necessity of existence. *Fifthly*, Self-activity. (The impossibility that this world should be this necessary self-active being. The inconsistency of necessary alterable matter, more largely deduced in a marginal digression.) *Sixthly*, Life. *Seventhly*, Vast and mighty power. A corollary.

I. **N**OW the grounds more necessary to be laid down, and which are supposed in the most general notion of a temple, are especially these two; The existence of God, and his conversableness with men. For no notion of a temple can more easily occur to any one's thoughts, or is more agreeable to common acceptation, than that it is a habitation wherein God is pleased to dwell among men.

Therefore to the designation and use of it, or (which is all one) to the intention and exercise of religion, the belief or persuasion is necessary of those two things, (the same which we find made necessary on the same account,) "That God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" Heb. 11. 6. as will appear when the manner and design of that his abode with men shall be considered.

These are the grounds upon which the sacred frame of a temple ought to stand, and without which it must be acknowledged an unsupported, airy fabric. And since it were vain to discourse what a temple is, or whereto the notion of it may be applied, unless it be well resolved that there is, or ought to be, any such thing. The strength and firmness of this its double ground should be tried and searched, and of its pretensions thereto.

And though it be not necessary in a matter that is so plain, and wherein so much is to be said otherwise; yet it will not be impertinent to consider, here, what prescription (which in clear-



ing of titles is wont to signify nothing) will signify in the present case. And,

First, For the existence of God, we need not labour much to shew how constantly and generally it hath been acknowledged through the whole world; it being so difficult to produce an uncontroverted instance, of any that ever denied it in more ancient times. For as for them whose names have been infamous amongst \* men heretofore upon that account, there hath been that said, that at least wants not probability for the clearing them of so foul an imputation. That is, that they were maliciously represented as having denied the existence of a Deity, because they impugned and derided the vulgar conceits and poetical fictions of those days, concerning the multitude and the ridiculous attributes of their imaginary Deities. Of which sort Cicero † mentions not a few; their being inflamed with anger, and mad with lust; their wars, fights, wounds; their hatreds, discords; their births and deaths, &c.: who though he speaks less favourably of some of these men, and mentions one ‡ as doubting whether there were any gods or no, (for which cause his book in the beginning whereof he had intimated that doubt, (as Cotta is brought in, informing us,) was publicly burnt at Athens, and himself banished his country,) and two others § as expressly denying them; yet the more generally decried patron || of atheism (as he hath been accounted) he makes Velleius highly vindicate from this imputation, and say of him, that he was the first that took notice that even nature itself had impressed the notion of God upon the minds of all men: who also gives us these as his words; “What nation is there or sort of men that hath not, without teaching, a certain anticipation of the gods, which he calls a prolepsis, a certain preventive, or fore-conceived information of a thing in the mind, without which nothing can be understood, or sought, or disputed of?” Unto which purpose the same author ¶ (as is commonly observed) elsewhere speaks; that there is no nation so barbarous, no one of all men so savage, as that some apprehension of the gods hath not tinctured his mind; that many

\* Parker Tentamen.

† De natura Deorum, liber 1.

‡ Protagoras Abderites.

§ Diagoras and Theodorus Cyrenaicus, who (as Diogenes Laertius, in Aristipides, reports) was surnamed ἀθεῖς, afterwards ὁ θεῖς.

|| Epicurus, whom also his own Epistle to Menæceus in Diogenes Laertius acquits of atheism, but not of irreligion; as hereafter may be observed.

¶ Cicero, Tusculan Questions, l. 1.

do think indeed corruptly of them, which is (saith he) the effect of vicious custom; but all do believe there is a divine power and nature. Nor (as he there proceeds) hath men's talking and agreeing together effected this. It is not an opinion settled in men's minds by public constitutions and sanctions; but in every matter the consent of all nations is to be reckoned a law of nature.

And whatever the apprehensions of those few (and some others that are wont to be mentioned under the same vile character) were in this matter, yet so inconsiderable hath the dissent been, that as another most ingenious pagan author\* writes, "In so great a contention and variety of opinions, (that is, concerning what God is,) herein you shall see the *ὁμόφωνον νόμον και λόγον*—*law and reason* of every country to be *harmonious and one*; that there is one God, the King and Father of all; that the many are but the servants and *συνάρχοντες θεῷ*—*co-rulers unto God*; that herein the Greek and the Barbarian say the same thing, the islander and the inhabitant of the continent, the wise and the foolish: go to the utmost bounds of the ocean, and you find God there. But if (says he) in all times, there have been two or three, *ἄθεον καὶ ταπεινόν, καὶ ἀναισθητὸς γένος*—*an atheistical, vile, senseless sort of persons*, whose own eyes and ears deceive them, and who are maimed in their very soul, an irrational and steril sort, as monstrous creatures, as a lion without courage, an ox without horns, or a bird without wings; yet, out of those, you shall understand somewhat of God: for they know and confess him, whether they will or no."

SECONDLY, His conversableness with men, as well as his existence, is *first* implied in the use of a temple, and the exercise of religion, which have been so common, (though not altogether equally common with the former,) that it is the observation of that famed moralist, † "That if one travel the world, it is possible to find cities without walls, without letters, without kings, without wealth, without coin, without schools and theatres. But a city without a temple, or that useth no worship, prayers, &c. no one ever saw. And he believes a city may more easily be built *ἐδάφησιν χωρίς*—*without a foundation, or ground* to set it on, than any community of men have or keep a consistency without religion.

And, *secondly*, it is no mean argument of the commonness of religion, that there have been some in the world, and those no idiots neither, that have accounted it the most constituent and

\* Maximus Tyrius dissertationes I.

† Plutarch adversus Colotem.

distinguishing thing in human nature. So that Platonic Jew \* judgeth invocation “of God, with hope towards him, to be, if we will speak the truth, the only genuine property of man, and saith that *only he who is acted by such a hope, is a man, and he that is destitute of this hope, is no man;*” † preferring this account to the common definition, (which he says is only of the concrete of man,) that he is a reasonable, and mortal, living creature. And yet he extends not reason further, that is, to the inferior creatures; for he had expressly said above, “That they who have no hope towards God, have no part or share in the rational nature.” And a noble person ‡ of our own says, “That upon accurate search, religion and faith appear the only ultimate differences of man; whereof neither *divine perfection* is capable, nor *brutal imperfection;*” reason, in his account, descending low among the inferior creatures. But *these* agreeing more peculiarly to man, and so universally, that he affirms, “There is no man well and entirely in his wits, that doth not worship some Deity.” Who therefore accounted it a less absurdity to admit such a thing as a rational beast, than an irreligious man. Now if these have taken notice of any instances that seemed to claim an exemption from this notion of man, they have rather thought fit to let them pass as an anomalous sort of creatures, reducible to no certain rank or order in the creation, than that any should be admitted into the account, or be acknowledged of the society of men, that were found destitute of an inclination to worship the common Author of our beings. And according to this opinion, by whatsoever steps any should advance in the denial of a Deity, they should proceed by the same, to the abandoning their own humanity; and by saying there is *no God*, should proclaim themselves *no men*.

However, it discovers (which is all that is at present intended by it) the commonness, not to say absolute universality of religion, in the observation of these persons, whom we must suppose no strangers to the world, in their own and former times. And if it afford any less ground for such an observation in our present time, we only see that as the world grows older it grows worse, and sinks into a deeper oblivion of its original, as it recedes further from it.

And (notwithstanding) this so common a consent is yet not

\* Philo. libr. de eo quod deterius potiori insid.

† μόνον ἡ ἐνελπισ, ἀνθρώπου—ὁ δὲ δούσελπισ ἐν ἀνθρώπου.

‡ Herbert de veritate.

without its weight and significancy to our present purpose ; if we consider how impossible it is to give or imagine any tolerable account of its original, if we do not confess it natural, and refer it to that common Author of all nature whom we are inquiring about : of which so much is said by divers others,\* that nothing more needs here to be said about it.

II. And at least so much is gained by it to a temple, that unless some very plain and ungainsayable demonstration be brought against the grounds of it, (which will be time enough to consider when we see it pretended to,) no opposition, fit to be regarded, can ever be made to it. That is, none at all can possibly be made, but what shall proceed from the most *immodest* and *rash* confidence, animated and borne up only by a design of being most licentiously wicked, and of making the world become so. *Immodest* confidence it must be, for it is not a man, or a nation, or an age, that such have to oppose, but mankind ; upon which they shall cast, not some lighter reflection, but the vilest and most opprobrious contumely and scorn that can be imagined. That is, the imputation of so egregious folly and dotage, as all this while to have worshipped a *shadow*, as the *author of their being* ; and a *figment*, for their *common parent*. And this not the ruder only, and uninquisitive vulgar, but the wisest and most considering persons in all times. Surely less than clear and pregnant demonstration (at least not wild, incoherent, self-confounding suppositions and surmises, of which more hereafter) will never be thought sufficient to justify the boldness of an attempt that shall carry this signification with it. And it will be a confidence equally *rash*, as *immodest*. For what can be the undertakers' hope, either of success or reward ? Do they think it an easy enterprise, and that a few quirks of malapert wit will serve the turn to baffle the Deity into nothing, and unteach the world religion, and raze out impressions renewed and transmitted through so many ages, and persuade the race of men to descend a peg lower, and believe they ought to live, and shall die, like the perishing beast ? Or, do they expect to find men indifferent in a matter that concerns their common practice and hope, and wherein their zeal hath been wont to be such as that it hath obtained to be proverbial, to

\* See Cicero in sundry places. *Grotius de veritate Christianæ Religionis*. *Du Plessis*, same subject and title. *Calvin's Institutes*. *Episcopius* his *Institutiones Theologicæ*, who hath written nervously on this subject ; with many more : but especially Dr. Stillingfleet, in his *Orig. Sacr.*

strive as for the very altars? And what should their reward be, when the natural tendency of their undertaking is to exclude themselves from the expectation of any in another world? And what will they expect in this, from them whose temples and altars they go about to subvert? Besides, that if they be not hurried by a blind impetuous rashness, they would consider their danger, and apprehend themselves concerned to strike very sure. For if there remain but the least possibility that the matter is otherwise, and that *the being* doth exist, whose honour and worship they contend against, they must understand his favour to be of some concernment to them; which they take but an ill course to entitle themselves unto. Much more have they reason to be solicitous, when their horrid cause not only wants evidence, nor hath hitherto pretended to more than a bare possibility of truth on their side, but hath so clear (and as yet altogether unrefuted) evidence lying against it, that quite takes away that very possibility, and all ground for that miserable languishing hope, that it could ever have afforded them. Therefore is it left also wholly unimaginable, what principle can animate their design, other than a sensual humour, impatient of restraints, or of any obligation to be sober, just, and honest, beyond what their own inclination, and much-mistaken interest or conveniency, would lead them to.

By all which we have a sufficient measure of the persons from whom any opposition unto religion can be expected, and how much their authority, their example, or their scorn, ought to signify with us. And that a more valuable opposition can never be made, our experience, both that hitherto it hath not been, and that it would have been if it could, might render us tolerably secure. For surely it may well be supposed, that in a world so many ages lost in wickedness, all imaginable trials would have been made to disburthen it of religion; and somewhat that had been specious at least, to that purpose, had been hit upon, if the matter had been any way possible. And the more wicked the world hath been, so directly contrary and so continually assaulted a principle, not yet vanquished, appears the more plainly invincible. And that the assaults have been from the lusts of men, rather than their reason, shews the more evidently, that their reason hath only wanted a ground to work upon, which if it could have been found, their lusts had certainly pressed it to their service in this warfare, and not have endured, rather, the molestation of continual checks and rebukes from it.

Nor need we yet to let our minds hang in suspense, or be in a dubious expectation, that possibly some or other great wit may arise, that shall perform some great thing in this matter, and discover the groundlessness and folly of religion, by plain and undeniable reasons that have not as yet been thought on; but betake ourselves to a stricter and closer consideration of our own grounds, which if we can once find to be certainly true, we may be sure they are of eternal truth, and no possible contrivance or device can ever make them false.

III. Having therefore seen what *common consent* may contribute to the establishing of them jointly; we may now apply ourselves to consider and search into each of them (so far as they are capable of a distinct consideration) severally and apart. Having still this mark in our eye, our own confirmation and excitation in reference to what is the proper work and business of a temple, religion and conversation with God: how little soever any endeavour in this kind may be apt to signify with the otherwise minded.

FIRST, And for the existence of God; that we may regularly and with evidence make it out to ourselves, *that he is, or doth exist*, and may withal see what the belief of his existence will contribute towards the evincing of the reasonableness of erecting a temple to him, it is requisite, before we evince the *several parts* of some existent being, that we settle a true *notion* of him in our minds; or be at an agreement with ourselves, what it is that we mean, or would have to be signified by the name of God: otherwise we know not what we seek, nor when we have found him.

And though we must beforehand professedly avow, that we take him to be such a one as we can never comprehend in our thoughts; that this knowledge is too excellent for us, or he is more excellent than that we can perfectly know him; yet it will be sufficient to guide us in our search after his existence, if we can give such a description, or assign such certain characters of his being, as will severally or together distinguish him from all things else. For then we shall be able to call him by his own name, and say, This is God; whatever his being may contain more, or whatsoever other properties may belong to it, beyond what we can as yet compass in our present thoughts of him.

And such an account we shall have of what we are inquiring after, if we have the conception in our minds of an eternal, uncaused, independent, necessary Being, that hath active power, life, wisdom, goodness, and whatsoever other

supposable excellency, in the highest perfection originally, in and of itself.

Such a Being we would with common consent express by the name of *God*. Even they that would profess to deny or doubt of his existence, yet must acknowledge this to be the notion of that which they deny or doubt of. Or if they should say this is not it, or (which is all one) that they do not deny or doubt of the existence of such a Being as this; they on the other hand that would argue for his existence, may conclude the cause is yielded them; *this* being that, which they designed to contend for.

It must indeed be acknowledged, that some things belonging to the *notion* of God might have been more expressly named. But it was not necessary they should, being sufficiently included here, as will afterwards appear: nor perhaps so convenient; some things, the express mention whereof is omitted, being such as more captious persons might be apt at first to startle at; who yet may possibly, as they are insinuated under other expressions, become by degrees more inclinable to receive them afterwards. And if this be not a *full* and *adequate notion*, (as who can ever tell when we have an express, distinct, particular notion of God, which we are sure is adequate and full?) it may however suffice, that it is a *true one*, as far as it goes, and such as cannot be mistaken for the notion of any thing else. And it will be more especially sufficient to our present purpose, if enough be comprehended in it to recommend him to us as a fit and worthy object of religion; and whereto a temple ought to be designed, as it will appear there is, when also we shall have added what is intended, concerning his conversableness with men. The ground whereof is also in great part included in this account of him; so that the consideration of it cannot be wholly severed from that of his existence; as hath been intimated above. That is, that if such a Being exist, unto which this notion belongs, it will sufficiently appear, he is such as that *he can* converse with men, though it doth not thence certainly follow that *he will*. For it were a rash and bold adventure, to say he could not be God, if he did not condescend to such terms of reconciliation and converse with apostate creatures. Whereof, therefore, more is to be said, than the mere manifesting his existence, in its own place.

And as to this, we shall endeavour to proceed gradually, and in the most familiar and intelligible way we can.

I am not unapprehensive that I might here indeed, following great examples, have proceeded in another method than

that which I now choose. And because we can have no true, appropriate, or distinguishing idea or conception of Deity, which doth not include necessity of existence in it, have gone that shorter way, immediately to have concluded the existence of God, from his idea itself. And I see not, but treading those very steps which the incomparable Dr. Cudworth (in his *Intell. System.*) hath done, that argument admits, in spite of cavil, of being managed with demonstrative evidence. Yet since some most pertinaciously insist that it is at the bottom, but a mere sophism; therefore (without detracting any thing from the force of it as it stands in that excellent work, and the writings of some other noted authors) I have chosen to go this other way, as plainer and less liable to exception, though further about. And beginning lower, to evince from the certain present existence of things not existing necessarily, or of themselves, their manifest dependence on what doth exist necessarily or of itself; and how manifestly impossible it was that any thing should exist now, or hereafter to all eternity, if somewhat had not existed necessarily and of itself, from all eternity. And I trust that not only this will appear with competent evidence in the sequel of this discourse, but also that this necessary self-existent Being, is God, a Being absolutely perfect, such to whom the rest of his idea must belong; and to whom religion or the honour of a temple is due.

And because that was the point at which this discourse principally aims, and wherein it finally terminates, not merely the discovering of atheism, but irreligion; (from an apprehension that as to use and practice, it was all one to acknowledge no God at all, as only such a one to whom no temple or religion could belong :) it was besides my purpose, to consider the several *forms* or *schemes* of atheism, that have been devised in any age, as that excellent person hath done; and enough for my purpose, to refute the *Epicurean* atheism, or theism, (it is indifferent which you call it,) because that sect master while he was liberal in granting there were deities, yet was so impious as to deny worship to any, accounting they were such, as between whom and man there could be no conversation; on *their part*, by *providence*, or on *man's*, by *religion*. Therefore, if we shall have made it evident in the issue, that God is, and is conversable with men, both the *Epicurean* atheism vanishes from off the stage, and with it *all* atheism besides, and irreligion.

We therefore begin with God's existence. For the evincing whereof we may be most assured, *First*, That there hath been



somewhat or other from all eternity, or that looking backward, somewhat of real being must be confessed eternal. Let such as have not been used to think of any thing more than what they could see with their eyes, and to whom reasoning only seems difficult, because they have not tried what they can do in it, but use their thoughts a little, and by moving them a few easy steps, they will soon find themselves as sure of this, as that they see, or hear, or understand, or are any thing.

For being sure that something now is, (that you see, for instance, or are something,) you must then acknowledge, that certainly either something always was, and hath ever been, or been from all eternity; or else you must say, that sometime, nothing was; or that all being once was not. And so, since you find that something *now* is, that there was a time when any thing of being did *begin* to be, that is, that till that time, there was nothing; but now, at that time, somewhat first began to be. For what can be plainer than that, if all being *sometime* was not, and *now* some being is, every thing of being had a beginning? And thence it would follow that some being, that is, the first that ever began to be, did of itself start up out of nothing, or made itself to be, when before, nothing was.

But now, do you not plainly see that it is altogether impossible any thing should do so: that is, when it was as yet nothing, and when nothing at all as yet was, that it should make itself, or come into being of itself? For surely making itself is doing something. But can that which is nothing do any thing? Unto all doing there must be some doer. Wherefore a thing must be, before it can do any thing; and therefore it would follow that it was before it was: or *was* and *was not*, *was something* and *nothing*, at the same time. Yea, and it was diverse from itself. For a cause must be a distinct thing from that which is caused by it. Wherefore it is most apparent that some being hath *ever* been, or did *never begin* to be.

Whence further, it is also evident, *Secondly*, That some being was uncaused, or was ever of itself without any cause. For what never was from another had never any cause, since nothing could be its own cause. And somewhat, as appears from what hath been said, never was from another. Or it may be plainly argued thus; that either some being was uncaused, or all being was caused. But if all being were caused, then some one at least, was the cause of itself: which hath been already shewn impos-

sible. Therefore the expression commonly used concerning the first Being that it was of itself, is only to be taken *negatively*, that is, that it was not of another, not *positively*, as if it did sometime make itself. Or, what there is positive, signified by that form of speech, is only to be taken thus, that it was a being of that nature, as that it was impossible it should ever not have been. Not that it did ever of itself, step out of not being into being : of which more hereafter.

And now it is hence further evident, *Thirdly*, That some being is independent upon any other, that is, whereas it already appears that some being did never depend on any other, as a productive cause ; or was not beholden to any other, that it might come into being. It is thereupon equally evident that it is simply independent, or cannot be beholden to any for its continued being. For what did never need a productive cause, doth as little need a sustaining or conserving cause. And to make this more plain, either some being is independent, or all being is dependent. But there is nothing without the compass of all being, whereon it may depend. Wherefore to say, that all being doth depend, is to say it depends on nothing, that is, that it depends not. For to depend on nothing, is not to depend. It is therefore a manifest contradiction, to say that all being doth depend : against which it is no relief to say, that all beings do circularly depend on one another. For so, however, the whole circle or sphere of being should depend on nothing, or one at last depend on itself ; which negatively taken, as before, is true, and the thing we contend for ; that one, the common support of all the rest, depends not on any thing without itself.

Whence also it is plainly consequent, *Fourthly*, That such a Being is necessary, or doth necessarily exist : that is, that it is of such a nature as that it could not, or cannot but be. For what is in being neither by its own choice, or any other's, is necessarily. But what was not made by itself (which hath been shewn impossible that any thing should) nor by any other, (as it hath been proved something was not,) it is manifest, it neither depended on its own choice, nor any other's that it is. And therefore its existence is not owing to choice at all, but to the necessity of its own nature. Wherefore it is always by a simple, absolute, natural necessity ; being of such a nature, to which it is altogether repugnant, and impossible ever not to have been, or ever to cease from being. And now having gone thus far, and being assured that hitherto we feel the ground firm under us ; that is, having gained a full certainty that there

is an eternal, uncaused, independent, necessary Being, and therefore actually and everlastingly existing; we may advance one step further;

And with equal assurance add, *Fifthly*, That this eternal, independent, uncaused, necessary Being, is self-active, that is, (which is at present meant,) not such as acts upon itself, but that hath the power of acting upon other things, in and of itself, without deriving it from any other. Or at least that there is such a Being as is eternal, uncaused, &c. having the power of action in and of itself. For either such a Being as hath been already evinced is of itself active, or unactive, or either hath the power of action of itself, or not. If we will say the latter, let it be considered what we say, and to what purpose we say it.

1. We are to weigh what it is we affirm, when we speak of an eternal, uncaused, independent, necessary Being, that is of itself totally unactive, or destitute of any active power. If we will say there is some such thing, we will confess, when we have called it something, it is a very silly, despicable, idle something, and a something (if we look upon it alone) as good as nothing. For there is but little odds between being nothing, and being able to do nothing. We will again confess, eternity, self-origination, independency, necessity of existence, to be very great and highly dignifying attributes; and that import a most inconceivable excellency. For what higher glory can we ascribe to any being, than to acknowledge it to have been from eternity of itself,\* without being beholden to any other, and to be such as that it can be, and cannot but be in the same state, self-subsisting, and self-sufficient to all eternity? And what

\* We will acknowledge an impropriety in this word, and its conjugate, *self-originate*, sometimes hereafter used: which yet is recompensed by their conveniency; as they may perhaps find who shall make trial how to express the sense intended by them in other words. And they are used without suspicion, that it can be thought they are meant to signify as if ever God gave original to himself; but in the negative sense, that he never received it from any other; yea, and that he is, what is more than equivalent to his being, self-caused; namely, a Being of himself so excellent as not to need or be capable to admit any cause. Vid. c. 4. Sect. 3. And with the expectation of the same allowance which hath been given to *αὐλξίτιος*, or other like words. We also take it for granted, (which it may suffice to hint here once for all,) that when we use here the word *self-subsistent*, it will be understood we intend by it, (without logical or metaphysical nicety,) not the mere exclusion of dependence on a subject, but on a cause.

inconceivable myriads of little senseless deities must we upon that supposition admit ! (as would appear if it were fit to trouble the reader with an explication of the nature and true notion of matter, which the being now supposed, must be found to be !) but what can our reason either direct or endure, that we should so incongruously misplace so magnificent attributes as these, and ascribe the prime glory of the most excellent Being, unto that which is next to nothing ? What might further be said to demonstrate the impossibility of a self-subsisting and self-original, unactive Being, will be here unreasonable and pre-occupying. But if any in the mean time will be so sullen as to say such a thing, let it,

2. Be considered to what purpose they say it. Is it to exclude a necessary self-active Being ? But it can signify nothing to that purpose. For such a Being they will be forced to acknowledge, let them do what they can (besides putting out their own eyes) notwithstanding. For why will they acknowledge any necessary being at all, that was ever of itself ? Is it not because they cannot, otherwise, for their hearts tell how it was ever possible that any thing at all could come into being ? But finding that something is, they are compelled to acknowledge that something hath ever been, necessarily and of itself. No other account could be given how other things came to be. But what ! doth it signify any thing towards the giving an account of the original of all other things, to suppose only an eternal, self-subsisting, unactive Being ? Did that cause other things to be ? Will not their own breath choke them if they attempt to utter the self-contradicting words, an unactive cause (that is, efficient or author) of any thing. And do they not see they are as far from their mark ; or do no more towards the assigning the original of all other things, by supposing an eternal, unactive being only ; than if they supposed none at all. That which can *do nothing*, can no more be the productive cause of another, than that which *is nothing*. Wherefore by the same reason that hath constrained us to acknowledge an eternal, uncaused, independent, necessary Being, we are also unavoidably led to acknowledge this being to be self-active, or such as hath the power of action in and of itself ; or that there is certainly such a being, that is the cause of all the things which our sense tells us are, besides, existent in the world.

For what else is left us to say or think ? Will we think fit to say, that all things we behold, were, as they are, necessarily existent from all eternity ? That were to speak

against our own eyes, which continually behold the rise and fall of living things, of whatsoever sort or kind, that can come under their notice. And it were to speak against the thing itself, that we say, and to say and unsay the same thing in the same breath. For all the things we behold are in some respect or other (internal, or external) continually changing, and therefore could never long be beheld as they are. And to say then, they have been continually changing from eternity, and yet have been necessarily, is unintelligible, and flat nonsense. For what is necessarily, is always the same; and what is in this or that posture necessarily, (that is, by an intrinsic, simple, and absolute necessity, which must be here meant,) must be ever so. Wherefore to suppose the world in this or that state necessarily; and yet that such a state is changeable, is an impossible and self-contradicting supposition.†

† And whether by the way this will not afford us (though that be none of our present business) plain evidence that there can be no such thing as necessary, alterable matter, may be examined by such as think fit to give themselves the diversion. For let it be considered, if every part and particle that makes up the matter of this universe were itself a necessary being, and of itself from all eternity, it must have not only its simple being, but its being such or such, of itself necessarily; or rather every thing of it, or any way belonging to it, must be its very simple being itself. For whence should it receive any accession to itself, when it is supposed equally independent upon its fellows, as any of them upon it? Suppose then only their various intercurrent motion among themselves, requisite to prepare them to, and unite them in, the composition of particular bodies, and no other change of any other individual particle needful thereto, but only of their figure, place, and situation, till they shall come aptly to be disposed in the now attempted composition. How is even this change possible? For suppose one of these particles from eternity of such or such a figure, as triangular, hooked, &c. how can it lose any thing from itself, or suffer any alteration of its figure which essentially and necessarily belonged to it from eternity? That to which it is necessary to be such it is impossible to it not to be such. Or suppose no alteration of figure (which Epicurus admits not) were necessary; but of situation and motion till it become conveniently situate. Even this change also will be simply impossible. Because you can frame no imagination of the existence of this or that particle, but you must suppose it in some or other *ubi*, or point of space, and if it be necessarily, it is here necessarily; for what is simply nowhere is nothing. But if it be here necessarily, (that is, in this or that point of space, for in some or other it must be, and it cannot be here and there at once,) it must be here eternally, and can never not be here. Therefore we can have no notion of necessary alterable or moveable matter, which is not inconsistent and repugnant to itself. Therefore also motion must proceed from an immoveable mover, as hath been (though upon another ground) concluded of old. But how action *ad extra* stands with the immutability of the Deity, must be fetched from the consider-

And to say any thing is changing from eternity, signifies it is always undergoing a change which is never past over, that is, that it is eternally unchanged, and is ever the same. For the least imaginable degree of change is some change. What is in any, the least respect changed, is not in every respect the same. Suppose then any thing in this present state or posture, and that it is eternally changing in it; either a new state and posture is acquired, or not. If it be, the former was temporary, and hath an end; and therefore the just and adequate measure of it was not eternity, which hath no end; much less of the change of it, or the transition from the one state to the other. But if no new state or posture be acquired, (which any, the least gradual alteration would make,) then it is eternally unchanged in any, the least degree. Therefore eternal changing is a manifest contradiction.

But if it be said, though eternity be not the measure of one change, it may be of infinite changes, endlessly succeeding one another; even this also will be found contradictory and impossible. For, (not to trouble the reader with the more in-

ation of other perfections belonging thereto. Of which metaphysicians and schoolmen may be consulted, discoursing at large. See *Suarez. Le-desma de divina perfectione*, with many more, at leisure. Whatsoever difficulty we may apprehend in this case, or if we cannot so easily conceive how an eternal mind foreseeing perfectly all futurity, together with an external efficacious determination of will concerning the existence of such and such things to such an instant or point of time, can suffice to their production without a super-added efflux of power at that instant; which would seem to infer somewhat of mutation: yet as the former of these cannot be demonstrated insufficient, (nor shall we ever reckon ourselves pinched in this matter till we see that plainly and fully done,) so they are very obstinately blind that cannot see upon the addition of the latter the vast difference of these two cases, namely, the facile silent egress of a sufficient power, in pursuance to a calm, complacential, eternal purpose; for the production of this creation, by which the agent acts not upon itself, but upon its own creature made by its own action; and the eternal, blind, ungoverned action of matter upon itself, by which it is perpetually changing itself, while yet it is supposed necessarily what it was before. And how much more easily conceivable that is, than this; how also liberty of action consists with necessity of existence, divers have shown: to which purpose somewhat not inconsiderable may be seen, *Ficin. lib. 2. cap. 12. de immortal. &c.* But in this there can be little pretence to imagine a difficulty. For our own being, though not simply, yet as to us is necessary, that is, it is imposed upon us: for we come not into being by our own choice; and yet are conscious to ourselves of no prejudice hereby to our liberty of acting. Yea, and not only doth the former consist with this latter, but is inferred by it. Of which see *Gibbes de libertati Dei, & creature.*

tricate controversy of the possibility or impossibility of infinite or eternal succession, about which they who have a mind may consult others, \*) if this signify any thing to the present purpose, it must mean the infinite or eternal changes of a necessary being. And how these very terms do clash with one another, methinks any sound mind might apprehend at the first mention of them; and how manifestly repugnant the things are, may be collected from what hath been said; and especially from what was thought more fit to be annexed in the margin.

But now since we find that the present state of things is changeable, and actually changing, and that what is changeable is not necessarily, and of itself: and since it is evident that there is some necessary being; (otherwise nothing could ever have been, and that without action nothing could be from it;) since also all change imports somewhat of passion, and all passion supposes action, and all action, active power, and active power, an original seat or subject, that is self-active, or that hath the power of action in and of itself: (for there could be no derivation of it from that which hath it not, and no first derivation, but from that which hath it originally of itself; and a first derivation there must be, since all things that are, or ever have been, furnished with it, and not of themselves, must either mediately or immediately have derived it from that which had it of itself;) it is therefore manifest that there is a necessary, self-active Being, the Cause and Author of this perpetually variable state and frame of things.

And hence, since we can frame no notion of life which self-active power doth not, at least, comprehend, (as upon trial we shall find that we cannot,) it is consequent, *Sixthly*, That this being is also originally vital, and the root of all vitality, such as hath life in or of itself, and from whence it is propagated to every other living thing. †

And so as we plainly see that this sensible world did sometime begin to be, it is also evident that it took its beginning

\* Parker Tentamen Physico-Theologicum. Derodon. Philos. cont. Dr. More's Enchirid. Metaphys.

† Which will also prove it to be a *Spirit*; unto which order of beings essential vitality, or that life be essential to them, seems as distinguishing a property between it and a body; as any other we can fasten upon; that is, that though a body may be truly said to live, yet it lives by a life that is accidental, and separable from it, so as that it may cease to live, and yet be a body still; whereas a spirit lives by its own essence; so that it can no more cease to live than to be. And as where that essence is borrowed and derived only, as it is with all created spirits, so its life must needs be

from a Being essentially vital and active, that had itself no beginning.

Nor can we make a difficulty to conclude, *Seventhly*, That this Being (which now we have shewn is active, and all action implies some power) is of vast and mighty power, (we will not say infinite, lest we should step too far at once; not minding now to discuss whether creation require infinite power,) when we consider and contemplate the vastness of the work performed by it. Unto which (if we were to make our estimate by nothing else) we must, at least, judge this power to be proportionable. For when our eyes behold an effect exceeding the power of any cause which they can behold, our mind must step in and supply the defect of our feebler sense; so as to make a judgment that there is a cause we see not, equal to this effect. As when we behold a great and magnificent fabric, and entering in we see not the master, or any living thing, (which was Cicero's observation \* in reference to this present purpose.) besides mice and weasels, we will not think that mice or weasels built it. Nor need we in a matter so obvious, insist further. But only when our severer reason hath made us confess, our further contemplation should make us admire a power which is at once both so apparent, and so stupendous.

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COROLLARY. And now, from what hath been hitherto discoursed, it seems a plain and necessary consequence, that this world had a cause diverse from the matter whereof it is composed.

For otherwise matter that hath been more generally taken to be of itself altogether unactive, must be stated the only cause and fountain of all the action and motion that is now to be found in the whole universe: which is a conceit, wild and absurd enough; not only as it opposes the common judgment of such as have with the greatest diligence inquired into things of this nature, but as being in itself manifestly impossible to be true; as would easily appear, if it were needful to press far-

therewithal: so the eternal, self-subsisting Spirit, lives necessarily, and of itself, according as necessarily and of itself, it is, or hath its being.

Which is only annoted, with a design not to trouble this discourse with any disquisition concerning the nature and other properties of a spiritual Being. Of which enough hath been, with great evidence, said, by the incomparable Dr. More.

\* De natura Deorum.



ther Dr. More's \* reasonings to this purpose; which he hath done sufficiently for himself.

And also that otherwise all the great and undeniable changes which continually happen in it must proceed from its own constant and eternal action upon itself, while it is yet feigned to be a necessary being; with the notion whereof they are notoriously inconsistent. Which therefore we taking to be most clear, may now the more securely proceed to what follows.

## CHAP. III.

I. The subject continued, wherein, *Eighthly*, Wisdom is asserted to belong to this Being. The production of this world by a mighty agent destitute of wisdom impossible. On consideration of, 1. What would be adverse to this production. 2. What would be wanting; some effects to which a designing cause will, on all hands, be confessed necessary, having manifest characters of skill and design upon them. II. Absurd here to except the works of nature; wherein at least equal characters of wisdom and design are to be seen, as in any the most confessed pieces of art, instanced in the frame and motion of heavenly bodies. III. A mean, unphilosophical temper, to be more taken with novelties, than common things of greater importance. Further instance, in the composition of the bodies of animals. IV. Two contrary causes of men's not acknowledging the wisdom of their Maker herein. V. Progress is made from the consideration of the parts and frame, to the powers and functions of terrestrial creatures. Growth, nutrition, propagation of kind, spontaneous motion, sensation. VI. The pretence considered, that the bodies of animals are machines. *First*, How improbable it is. *Secondly*, How little to the purpose. VII. The powers of the human soul. It appears, *First*, *Notwithstanding them*, it had a cause; *Secondly*, *By them*, a wise and intelligent cause. It is not matter: *that* not capable of reason. They not here reflected on who think reasonable souls made of refined matter, by the Creator. Not being matter, nor arising from thence, it must have a cause that is intelligent. VIII. Subject of the former chapter continued, and, *Ninthly*, Goodness asserted to belong to this Being.

I. **T**HE subject continued, and we therefore add, *Eighthly*, That this Being is wise and intelligent, as well as powerful; upon the very view of this world, it will appear so vast power was guided by equal wisdom in the framing of it. Though this is wont to be the principal labour in evincing the existence of a Deity, namely, the proving that this universe owes its rise to a wise and

\* Both in his *Immortality of the Soul*; and *Enchirid. Metaphys.*

designing cause ; (as may be seen in Cicero's excellent performance in this kind, and in divers later writers ;) yet the placing so much of their endeavour herein, seems in great part to have proceeded hence, that this hath been chosen for the great medium to prove that it had a cause diverse from itself. But if that once be done a shorter way, and it fully appear that this world is not itself a necessary being, having the power of all the action and motion to be found in it, of itself ; (which already seems plain enough ;) and it does most evidently thence also appear to have had a cause foreign to, or distinct from, itself ; though we shall not therefore the more carelessly consider this subject ; yet no place of doubt seems to remain, but that this was an *intelligent cause*, and that this world was the product of wisdom and counsel, and not of mere power alone. For what imagination can be more grossly absurd, than to suppose this orderly frame of things to have been the result of so mighty power, not accompanied or guided by wisdom and counsel ? that is, (as the case must now unavoidably be understood,) that there is some being necessarily existent, of an essentially active nature, of inconceivably vast and mighty power and vigour, destitute of all understanding and knowledge, and consequently of any self-moderating principle, but acting always by the necessity of its own nature, and therefore to its very uttermost, that raised up all the alterable matter of the universe (to whose nature it is plainly repugnant to be of itself, or exist necessarily) out of nothing ; and by the utmost exertion of that ungoverned power, put all the parts and particles of that matter into a wild hurry of impetuous motion, by which they have been compacted and digested into particular beings, in that variety and order which we now behold. And surely to give this account of the world's original, is, as Cicero speaks, not to consider, but to cast lots what to say ; and were as mad a supposition, "as if one should suppose the one and twenty letters, formed (as the same author elsewhere speaks) in great numbers, of gold, or what you please else, and cast of any careless fashion together, and that of these loosely shaken out upon the ground, *Ennius's Annals* should result, so as to be distinctly legible as now we see them." Nay it were the supposition of a thing a thousand-fold more manifestly impossible.

I. For before we consider the gross absurdity of such a supposed production, that is, that a thing should be brought to pass by so mere a casualty, that so evidently requires an exquisitely-formed and continued design, even though there

were nothing positively to resist or hinder it, let it be considered what there will be that cannot but most certainly hinder any such production. To this purpose we are to consider, that it is a vast power which so generally moves the diffused matter of the universe.

Hereof make an estimate, by considering what is requisite to the continual whirling about of such huge bulks as this whole massy globe of earth; (according to some;) or, which is much more strange, the sun, (according to others,) with that inconceivably swift motion which this supposition makes necessary, together with the other planets, and the innumerable heavenly bodies besides, that are subject to the laws of a continual motion. Adding hereto how mighty a power it is which must be sufficient to all the productions, motions, and actions, of all other things.

Again, consider that all this motion, and motive power, must have some source and fountain diverse from the dull and sluggish matter moved thereby, unto which it already hath appeared impossible it should originally and essentially belong.

Next, that the *mighty, active Being*, which hath been proved necessarily existent, and whereto it must *first* belong, if we suppose it destitute of the self-moderating principle of wisdom and counsel, cannot but be always exerting its motive power, invariably and to the same degree: that is, to its very utmost, and can never cease or fail to do so. For its act knows no limit but that of its power; (if this can have any;) and its power is essential to it, and its essence is necessary.

Further, that the motion impressed upon the matter of the universe must hereupon necessarily have received a continual increase, ever since it came into being.

That supposing this motive power to have been exerted from eternity, it must have been increased long ago to an infinite excess.

That hence the coalition of the particles of matter for the forming of any thing had been altogether impossible. For let us suppose this exerted, motive power to have been, any instant, but barely sufficient for such a formation, because that could not be dispatched in an instant, it would by its continual, momentarily increase, be grown so over-sufficient, as, in the next instant, to dissipate the particles, but now beginning to unite.

At least, it would be most apparent, that if ever such a frame of things as we now behold could have been produced, that

motive power, increased to so infinite an excess, must have shattered the whole frame in pieces, many an age ago ; or rather, never have permitted, that such a thing, as we call an age, could possibly have been.

Our experience gives us not to observe any so destructive or remarkable changes in the course of nature : and this (as was long ago foretold) is the great argument of the atheistical scoffers in these latter days, that things are as they were from the beginning of the creation to this day. But let it be soberly weighed, how it is possible the general consistency, which we observe things are at throughout the universe, and their steady orderly posture, can stand with this momentarily increase of motion.

And that such an increase could not, upon the supposition we are now opposing, but have been, is most evident. For, not to insist that nothing of impressed motion is ever lost, but only imparted to other things, (which, they that suppose it, do not *therefore* suppose, as if they thought, being once impressed, it could continue of itself, but that there is a constant, equal supply from the first mover,) we will admit that there is a continual decrease, or loss, but never to the degree of its continual increase. For we see when we throw a stone out of our hand, whatever of the impressed force it imparts to the air, through which it makes its way, or not being received, vanishes of itself, it yet retains a part a considerable time, that carries it all the length of its journey, and all does not vanish and die away on the sudden. Therefore when we here consider the continual, momentarily renewal of the same force, always necessarily going forth from the same mighty Agent, without any moderation or restraint ; every following *impetus* doth so immediately overtake the former, that whatever we can suppose lost, is yet so abundantly over-supplied, that, upon the whole, it cannot fail to be ever growing, and to have grown to that all-destroying excess before mentioned. Whence therefore that famed restorer and improver of some principles of the ancient philosophy, hath seen a necessity to acknowledge it, as a manifest thing, “ That God himself is the universal and primary Cause of all the motions that are in the world, who in the beginning created matter, together with motion and rest ; and doth now, by his ordinary concourse only, continue so much of motion and rest in it, as he first put into it.—For (saith he) we understand it as a perfection in God, not only that he is unchangeable in himself, but that he works after a most constant and unchangeable manner. So that, excepting

those changes which either evident experience or divine revelation renders certain, and which we know or believe to be without change in the Creator, we ought to suppose none in his works, lest thereby any inconstancy should be argued in himself." \* Whereupon he grounds the laws and rules concerning motion, which he afterwards lays down, whereof we referred to one, a little above.

It is therefore evident, that as without the supposition of a *self-active* Being there could be no such thing as *motion*; so without the supposition of an *intelligent* Being (that is, that the same Being be both *self-active*, and *intelligent*) there could be no *regular* motion; such as is absolutely necessary to the forming and continuing of any the compacted, bodily substances, which our eyes behold every day: yea, or of any whatsoever, suppose we their figures, or shapes, to be as rude, deformed, and useless, as we can imagine; much less, such as the exquisite compositions, and the exact order of things, in the universe, do evidently require and discover.

2. And if there were no such thing carried in this supposition, as is positively adverse to what is supposed, so as most certainly to hinder it, (as we see plainly there is,) yet the mere want of what is necessary to such a production, is enough to render it impossible, and the supposition of it absurd. For it is not only absurd to suppose a production which somewhat shall certainly resist and hinder, but which wants a cause to effect it: and it is not less absurd, to suppose it effected by a manifestly insufficient and unproportionable cause, than by none at all. For as nothing can be produced without a cause, so no cause can work above or beyond its own capacity and natural aptitude. Whatsoever therefore is ascribed to any cause, above and beyond its ability, all that surplusage is ascribed to no cause at all: and so an effect, in that part at least, were supposed without a cause. And if then it follow when an effect is produced, that it had a cause; why doth it not equally follow, when an effect is produced, having manifest characters of wisdom and design upon it, that it had a wise and designing cause? If it be said, there be some fortuitous or casual (at least undesigned) productions, that look like the effects of wisdom and contrivance, but indeed are not, as the birds so orderly and seasonably making their nests, the bees their comb, and the spider its web, which are capable of no design; that exception needs to be well proved before it be

\* D. Cartes Princip. Philosoph. part 2.

admitted ; and that it be plainly demonstrated, both that these creatures are not capable of design, and that there is not a universal, designing cause, from whose directive as well as operative influence, no imaginable effect or event can be exempted ; (in which case it will no more be necessary, that every creature that is observed steadily to work towards an end should itself design and know it, than that an artificer's tools should know what he is doing with them ; but if they do not, it is plain he must ; ) and surely it lies upon them who so except, to prove in this case what they say, and not to be so precarious as to beg or think us so easy, as to grant so much, only because they have thought fit to say it, or would fain have it so. That is, that this or that strange event happened without any designing cause.

II. But, however, I would demand of such as make this exception, whether they think there be any effect at all, to which a designing cause was necessary, or which they will judge impossible to have been otherwise produced, than by the direction and contrivance of wisdom and counsel ? I little doubt but there are thousands of things, laboured and wrought by the hand of man, concerning which they would presently, upon first sight, pronounce they were the effects of skill, and not of chance ; yea, if they only considered their frame and shape, though they yet understood not their use and end. They would surely think (at least) some effects or other sufficient to argue to us a designing cause. And would they but soberly consider and resolve what characters or footsteps of wisdom and design might be reckoned sufficient to put us out of doubt, would they not, upon comparing, be brought to acknowledge that there are nowhere *any* more conspicuous and manifest, than in the things daily in view, that go ordinarily, with us, under the name of *the works of nature* ? Whence it is plainly consequent, that what men commonly call *universal nature*, if they would be content no longer to lurk in the darkness of an obscure and uninterpreted word, they must confess is nothing else but *common providence*, that is, the *universal power* which is everywhere active in the world, in conjunction with the *unerring wisdom* which guides and moderates all its exertions and operations ; or the wisdom which directs and governs that power. Otherwise, when they see cause to acknowledge that such an exact order and disposition of parts, in very neat and elegant compositions, do plainly argue wisdom and skill in the contrivance ; only they will distinguish, and say, It is so in the effects of *art*, but not of *nature*. What is this, but to

deny in particular what they granted in general? To make what they have said signify nothing more than if they had said, Such exquisite order of parts is the effect of wisdom, where it is the effect of wisdom, but it is not the effect of wisdom, where it is not the effect of wisdom? And to trifle, instead of giving a reason why things are so and so? And whence take they their advantage for this trifling, or do hope to hide their folly in it, but that they think, while what is meant by art, is known, what is meant by nature, cannot be known? But if it be not known, how can they tell but their distinguishing members are co-incident, and run into one? Yea, and if they would allow the thing itself to speak, and the effect to confess and dictate the name of its own cause, how plain is it that they do run into one, and that the expression imports no impropriety which we somewhere find in Cicero; *The art of nature*; or rather, that nature is nothing else but divine art, at least in as near an analogy as there can be, between any things divine and human? For, that this matter (even the thing itself, waving for the present the consideration of names) may be a little more narrowly discussed and searched into, let some curious piece of workmanship be offered to such a sceptic's view, the making whereof he did not see, nor of any thing like it, and we will suppose him not told that this was made by the hand of any man, nor that he hath any thing to guide his judgment about the way of its becoming what it is, but only his own view of the thing itself; and yet he shall presently, without hesitation, pronounce, This was the effect of much skill. I would here inquire, Why do you so pronounce? Or, What is the reason of this your judgment? Surely he would not say he hath no reason at all for this so confident and unwavering determination; for then he would not be determined, but speak by chance, and be indifferent to say that, or any thing else. Somewhat or other there must be, that, when he is asked, Is this the effect of skill? shall so suddenly and irresistibly captivate him into an assent that it is, that he cannot think otherwise. Nay, if a thousand men were asked the same question, they would as undoubtingly say the same thing; and then, since there is a reason for this judgment, what can be devised to be the reason, but that there are so manifest characters and evidences of skill in the composure, as are not attributable to anything else? Now here I would further demand, Is there anything in this reason, yea, or no? Doth it signify anything, or is it of any value to the purpose for which it is alleged? Surely it is of very great, inasmuch as, when it

is considered, it leaves it not in a man's power to think anything else; and what can be said more potently and efficaciously to demonstrate? But now, if this reason signify anything, it signifies thus much; that wheresoever there are equal characters, and evidences of skill, (at least where there are equal,) a skilful agent must be acknowledged. And so it will (in spite of cavil) conclude universally, and abstractly from what we can suppose distinctly signified by the terms of *art*, and *nature*, that whatsoever effect hath such, or equal characters of skill upon it, did proceed from a skilful cause. That is, that if this effect be said to be from a skilful cause, as such, namely, as having manifest characters of skill upon it, then, every such effect, namely, that hath equally manifest characters of skill upon it, must be, with equal reason, concluded to be from a skilful cause.

We will acknowledge skill to act, and wit to contrive, very distinguishable things, and in reference to some works, (as the making some curious *automaton*, or self-moving engine,) are commonly lodged in divers subjects; that is, the contrivance exercises the wit and invention of one, and the making, the manual dexterity and skill of others: but the manifest characters of both, will be seen in the effect. That is, the curious elaborateness of each several part shews the latter, and the order and dependence of parts, and their conspiracy to one common end, the former. Each betokens design; or at least the smith or carpenter must be understood to design his own part, that is, to do as he was directed: both together, do plainly bespeak an agent, that knew what he did; and that the thing was not done by chance, or was not the casual product of only being busy at random, or making a careless stir, without aiming at any thing. And this, no man that is in his wits, would, upon sight of the whole frame, more doubt to assent unto, than that two and two make four. And he would certainly be thought mad, that should profess to think that only by some one's making a blustering stir among several small fragments of brass, iron, and wood, these parts happened to be thus curiously formed, and came together into this frame, of their own accord.

Or lest this should be thought to intimate too rude a representation of their conceit, who think this world to have fallen into this frame and order, wherein it is, by the agitation of the moving parts, or particles of matter, without the direction of a wise mover; and that we may also make the case as plain as is possible to the most ordinary capacity, we will suppose (for instance) that one who had never before seen a watch, or any



thing of that sort, hath now this little engine first offered to his view; can we doubt, but he would upon the mere sight of its figure, structure, and the very curious workmanship which we will suppose appearing in it, presently acknowledge the artificer's hand? But if he were also made to understand the use and purpose for which it serves, and it were distinctly shewn him how each thing contributes, and all things in this little fabric concur to this purpose, the exact measuring and dividing of time by minutes, hours, and months, he would certainly both confess and praise the great ingenuity of the first inventor. But now if a by-stander, beholding him in this admiration, would undertake to shew a profounder reach and strain of wit, and should say,—Sir, you are mistaken concerning the composition of this so much admired piece; it was not made or designed by the hand or skill of any one; there were only an innumerable company of little atoms or very small bodies, much too small to be perceived by your sense, that were busily frisking and plying to and fro about the place of its nativity; and by a strange chance (or a stranger fate, and the necessary laws of that motion which they were unavoidably put into, by a certain boisterous, undesigning mover) they fell together into this small bulk, so as to compose it into this very shape and figure, and with this same number and order of parts which you now behold: one squadron of these busy particles (little thinking what they were about) agreeing to make up one wheel, and another some other, in that proportion which you see: others of them also falling, and becoming fixed in so happy a posture and situation, as to describe the several figures by which the little moving fingers point out the hour of the day, and the day of the month: and all conspired to fall together, each into its own place, in so lucky a juncture, as that the regular motion failed not to ensue which we see is now observed in it,—what man is either so wise or so foolish (for it is hard to determine whether the excess or the defect should best qualify him to be of this faith) as to be capable of being made believe this piece of natural history? And if one should give this account of the production of such a trifle, would he not be thought in jest? But if he persist, and solemnly profess that thus he takes it to have been, would he not be thought in good earnest mad? And let but any sober reason judge whether we have not unspeakably more manifest madness to contend against in such as suppose this world, and the bodies of living creatures, to have fallen into

this frame and orderly disposition of parts wherein they are, without the direction of a wise and designing cause? And whether there be not an incomparably greater number of most wild and arbitrary suppositions in *their fiction*, than in *this*? Besides the innumerable supposed repetitions of the same strange chances all the world over; even as numberless, not only as productions, but as the changes that continually happen to all the things produced. And if the concourse of atoms could make this world, why not (for it is but little to mention such a thing as this) a porch, or a temple, or a house, or a city, (as Tully speaks in the before recited place,) which were less operous and much more easy performances?

III. It is not to be supposed that all should be astronomers, anatomists, or natural philosophers, that shall read these lines; and therefore it is intended not to insist upon particulars, and to make as little use as is possible of terms that would only be agreeable to that supposition. But surely such general, easy reflections on the frame of the universe, and the order of parts in the bodies of all sorts of living creatures, as the meanest ordinary understanding is capable of, would soon discover incomparably greater evidence of wisdom and design in the contrivance of these, than in that of a watch or a clock. And if there were any whose understandings are but of that size and measure as to suppose that the whole frame of the heavens serves to no other purpose than to be of some such use as that, to us mortals here on earth; if they would but allow themselves leisure to think and consider, might discern the most convincing and amazing discoveries of wise contrivance and design (as well as of vastest might and power) in disposing things into so apt a subserviency to that meaner end. And that so exact a knowledge is had thereby of times and seasons, days and years, as that the simplest idiot in a country may be able to tell you, when the light of the sun is withdrawn from his eyes, at what time it will return, and when it will look in at such a window, and when at the other; and by what degrees his days and nights shall either increase or be diminished; and what proportion of time he shall have for his labours in this season of the year, and what in that; without the least suspicion or fear that it shall ever fall out otherwise.

But that some in later days whose more enlarged minds have by diligent search and artificial helps got clearer notices (even than most of the more learned of former times) concerning the true frame and vastness of the universe, the matter,

nature, and condition of the heavenly bodies, their situation, order, and laws of motion ; and the great probability of their serving to nobler purposes, than the greater part of learned men have ever dreamed of before ; that, I say, any of these should have chosen it for the employment of their great intellects, to devise ways of excluding intellectual power from the contrivance of this frame of things, having so great advantages beyond the most of mankind besides to contemplate and adore the great Author and Lord of all, is one of the greatest wonders that comes under our notice ; and might tempt even a sober mind, to prefer vulgar and popular ignorance before their learned, philosophical deliration.

Though yet indeed, not their philosophy by which they would be distinguished from the common sort, but what they have in common with them, ought in justice to bear the blame. For is it not evident, how much soever they reckon themselves exalted above the vulgar sort, that their miserable shifting in this matter proceeds only from what is most meanly so ; that is, their labouring under the most vulgar and meanest diseases of the mind, disregard of what is common, and an aptness to place more in the strangeness of new, unexpected, and surprising events, than in things unspeakably more considerable, that are of every day's observation ? Than which nothing argues a more abject, unphilosophical temper.

For let us but suppose (what no man can pretend is more impossible, and what any man must confess is less considerable, than what our eyes daily see) that in some part of the air near this earth, and within such limits as that the whole scene might be conveniently beheld at one view, there should suddenly appear a little globe of pure flaming light resembling that of the sun ; and suppose it fixed as a centre to another body, or moving about that other as its centre, (as this or that hypothesis best pleases us,) which we could plainly perceive to be a proportionably-little earth, beautified with little trees and woods, flowery fields and flowing rivulets with larger lakes into which these discharge themselves ; and suppose we the other planets all of proportionable bigness to the narrow limits assigned them, placed at their due distances, and playing about this supposed earth or sun, so as to measure their shorter and soon absolved days, months, and years, or two, twelve, or thirty years, according to their supposed lesser circuits ;—would they not presently, and with great amazement confess an intelligent contriver and maker of this whole frame, above a Posidonius or any mortal ? And have we not

in the present frame of things a demonstration of wisdom and counsel, as far exceeding that which is now supposed, as the making some toy or bauble to please a child is less an argument of wisdom than the contrivance of somewhat that is of apparent and universal use? Or, if we could suppose this present state of things to have but newly begun, and ourselves pre-existent, so that we could take notice of the very passing of things out of horrid confusion into the comely order they are now in, would not this put the matter out of doubt? And that this state had once a beginning needs not be proved over again. But might what would yesterday have been the effect of wisdom, better have been brought about by chance five or six thousand years, or any longer time ago? It speaks not want of evidence in the thing, but want of consideration, and of exercising our understandings, if what were *new* would not only convince but astonish, and what is *old*, of the same importance, doth not so much as convince!

And let them that understand any thing of the composition of a human body (or indeed of any living creature) but bethink themselves whether there be not equal contrivance at least, appearing in the composure of that admirable fabric, as of any the most admired machine or engine devised and made by human wit and skill. If we pitch upon any thing of known and common use, as suppose again a clock or watch, which is no sooner seen than it is acknowledged (as hath been said) the effect of a designing cause; will we not confess as much of the body of a man? Yea, what comparison is there, when in the structure of some one single member, as a hand, a foot, an eye, or ear, there appears upon a diligent search, unspeakably greater curiosity, whether we consider the variety of parts, their exquisite figuration, or their apt disposition to the distinct uses and ends these members serve for, than is to be seen in any clock or watch? Concerning which uses of the several parts in man's body, Galen, \* so largely discoursing in seventeen books, inserts on the by, this epiphonema, upon the mention of one particular instance of our most wise Maker's provident care; "Unto whom (saith he) I compose these commentaries," (meaning his present work of unfolding the useful figuration of the human body,) "as certain hymns, or songs of praise, esteeming true piety more to consist in this, that I first may know, and then declare to others, his wisdom, power,

\* *Lib. 2. De usu part. ex Lacun. Epit.*

providence, and goodness, than in sacrificing to him many hecatombs : and in the ignorance whereof there is greatest impiety, rather than in abstaining from sacrifice. \* Nor" (as he adds in the close of that excellent work) " is the most perfect natural artifice to be seen in man only ; but you may find the like industrious design and wisdom of the Author, in any living creature which you shall please to dissect : and by how much the less it is, so much the greater admiration shall it raise in you ; which those artists shew, that describe some great thing (contractedly) in a very small space : as that person (saith he) who lately engraved Phaeton carried in his chariot with his four horses upon a little ring—a most incredible sight ! But there is nothing in matters of this nature, more strange than in the structure of the leg of a flea." How much more might it be said of all its inward parts ? " Therefore (as he adds) the greatest commodity of such a work accrues not to physicians, but to them who are studious of nature, namely, the knowledge of our Maker's perfection, and that (as he had said a little above) it establishes the principle of the most perfect theology ; which theology (saith he) is much more excellent than all medicine."

It were too great an undertaking, and beyond the designed limits of this discourse, (though it would be to excellent purpose, if it could be done without amusing terms, and in that easy, familiar way as to be capable of common use,) to pursue and trace distinctly the prints and footsteps of the admirable wisdom which appears in the structure and frame of this outer temple. For even our bodies themselves are said to be the temples of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 6. 19. And do dwell a while in the contemplation and discovery of those numerous instances of most apparent, ungainsayable sagacity and providence which offer themselves to view in every part and particle of this fabric ; how most commodiously all things are ordered in it ! With how strangely cautious circumspection and foresight, not only destructive, but even (perpetually) vexatious and afflicting incongruities are avoided and provided against, to pose ourselves upon the sundry obvious questions that might be put for the evincing of such provident foresight. As for instance, how comes it to pass that the several parts which we find to be *double* in our bodies, are not *single* only ? Is this altogether by chance ? That there are two eyes, ears, nostrils, hands, feet, &c. : what a miserable, shiftless creature had man

\* Sub. fin. l. 17.

been, if there had only been allowed him one foot? A seeing, hearing, talking, unmoving statue. That the hand is divided into fingers? Those so conveniently situate, one in so fitly opposite a posture to the rest?

And what if some one pair or other of these parts had been universally wanting? The hands, the feet, the eyes, the ears. How great a misery had it inferred upon mankind! and is it only a casualty that it is not so? That the back-bone is composed of so many joints, (twenty-four, besides those of that which is the basis and sustainer of the whole,) and is not all of a piece, by which stooping, or any motion of the head or neck, diverse from that of the whole body, had been altogether impossible; that there is such variety and curiosity in the ways of joining the bones together in that, and other parts of the body; that in some parts, they are joined by mere adherence of one to another, \* either with or without an intervening medium, and both these ways, so diversely; that others are fastened together by proper jointing, so as to suit and be accompanied with motion, either more obscure or more manifest, and this, either by a deeper or more superficial insertion of one bone into another, or by a mutual insertion, and that so different ways; and that all these should be so exactly accommodated to the several parts and uses to which they belong and serve:—was all this without design? Who, that views the curious and apt texture of the eye, can think it was not made on purpose to see with, † and the ear, upon the like view, for hearing, when so many things must concur that these actions might be performed by these organs, and are found to do so? Or who can think that the sundry little engines belonging to the eye were not made with design to move it upwards, downwards, to this side or that, or whirl it about as there should be occasion; without which instruments and their appendages, no such motion could have been? Who, that is not stupidly perverse, can think that the sundry inward parts (which it would require a volume distinctly to speak of, and but to mention them and their uses would too unproportionably swell this part of this discourse) were not made purposely by a designing Agent, for the ends they so aptly and constantly serve for? The want of some one among divers whereof, or

\* Bartholin. Riolanus.

† How foolish to think that art intended an end in making a window to see through, and that nature intended none in making an eye to see with; as Campanella in that rapturous discourse of his *Atheismus triumphatus*.

but a little misplacing, or if things had been but a little otherwise than they are, had inferred an impossibility that such a creature as man could have subsisted, or been propagated upon the face of the earth. As what if there had not been such a receptacle prepared as the stomach is, and so formed, and placed as it is, to receive and digest necessary nutriment? \* Had not the whole frame of man besides been in vain? Or what if the passage from it downward, had not been made somewhat, a little way ascending, so as to detain a convenient time what is received, but that what was taken in were suddenly transmitted? It is evident the whole structure had been ruined as soon as made. What (to instance in what seems so small a matter) if that little cover had been wanting at the entrance of that passage through which we breathe; (the depression whereof by the weight of what we eat or drink, shuts it and prevents meat and drink from going down that way;) had not unavoidable suffocation ensued? And who can number the instances that might be given besides? Now when there is a concurrence of so many things absolutely necessary, (concerning which the common saying is as applicable, more frequently wont to be applied to matters of morality, "Goodness is from the concurrence of all causes, evil, from any defect,") *each* so aptly and opportunely serving its own proper use, and *all*, one common end, certainly to say that so manifold, so regular and stated a subserviency to that end, and the end itself, were undesigned, and things casually fell out thus, is to say we know or care not what.

We will only, before we close this consideration, concerning the mere frame of a human body, (which hath been so hastily and superficially proposed,) offer a supposition which is no more strange (excluding the vulgar notion by which nothing is strange, but what is not common) than the thing itself, as it actually is; namely, That the whole more external covering of the body of a man were made, instead of skin and flesh, of some very transparent substance, flexible, but clear as very crystal; through which, and the other more inward (and as transparent) integuments or enfoldings, we could plainly perceive the situation and order of all the internal parts, and how they each of them perform their distinct offices: if we could discern the continual motion of the blood, how it is conveyed, by its proper conduits, from its first source and

\* Non prodest cibus neque corpori accedit, qui statim sumptus emittitur. Seneca.

fountain, partly downwards to the lower entrails, (if rather it ascend not from thence, as at least, what afterwards becomes blood doth,) partly upwards, to its admirable elaboratory, the heart; where it is refined and furnished with fresh vital spirits, and so transmitted thence by the distinct vessels prepared for this purpose: could we perceive the curious contrivance of those little doors, by which it is let in and out, on this side and on that; the order and course of its circulation, its most commodious distribution by two social channels, or conduit-pipes, that every where accompany one another throughout the body: could we discern the curious artifice of the brain, its ways of purgation; and were it possible to pry into the secret chambers and receptacles of the less or more pure spirits there; perceive their manifold conveyances, and the rare texture of that net, commonly called the *wonderful one*: could we behold the veins, arteries, and nerves, all of them arising from their proper and distinct originals; and their orderly dispersion for the most part, by pairs and conjugations, on this side and that, from the middle of the back; with the curiously wrought branches, which, supposing these to appear duly diversified, as so many more duskish strokes in this transparent frame, they would be found to make throughout the whole of it; were every smaller fibre thus made at once discernible; especially those innumerable threads into which the spinal marrow is distributed at the bottom of the back: and could we, through the same medium, perceive those numerous little machines made to serve unto voluntary motions, (which in the whole body are computed, by some, \* to the number of four hundred and thirty, or thereabouts, or so many of them as according to the present supposition could possibly come in view,) and discern their composition; their various and elegant figures—round, square, long, triangular, &c. and behold them do their offices, and see how they ply to and fro, and work in their respective places, as any motion is to be performed by them: were all these things, I say, thus made liable to an easy and distinct view, who would not admiringly cry out, *How fearfully and wonderfully am I made?* And sure there is no man sober, who would not, upon such a sight, pronounce that man mad, that should suppose such a production to have been a mere undesigned casualty. At least, if there be any thing in the world that may be thought to carry sufficiently convincing evidences in it, of its having been made

\* Riolanus.



industriously, and on purpose, not by chance, would not this composition, thus offered to view, be esteemed to do so much more? Yea, and if it did only bear upon its characters equally evidential, of wisdom and design, with what doth certainly so, though in the lowest degree, it were sufficient to evince our present purpose. For if one such instance as this would bring the matter no higher than to a bare equality, that would at least argue a maker of man's body, as wise, and as properly designing, as the artificer of any such slighter piece of workmanship, that may yet, certainly, be concluded the effect of skill and design. And then, enough might be said, from other instances, to manifest him unspeakably superior. And that the matter would be brought, at least, to an equality, upon the supposition now made, there can be no doubt, if any one be judge that hath not abjured his understanding and his eyes together. And what then, if we lay aside that supposition, (which only somewhat gratifies fancy and imagination,) doth that alter the case? Or is there the less of wisdom and contrivance expressed in this work of forming man's body, only for that it is not so easily and suddenly obvious to our sight? Then we might with the same reason say, concerning some curious piece of carved work, that is thought fit to be kept locked up in a cabinet, when we see it, that there was admirable workmanship shewn in doing it; but as soon as it is again shut up in its repository, that there was none at all. Inasmuch as we speak of the objective characters of wisdom and design, that are in the thing itself, (though they must some way or other come under our notice, otherwise we can be capable of arguing nothing from them, yet,) since we have sufficient assurance that there really are such characters in the structure of the body of man as have been mentioned, and a thousand more than have been thought necessary to be mentioned here; it is plain that the greater or less facility of finding them out, so that we be at a certainty that they are, (whether by the slower and more gradual search of our own eyes, or by relying upon the testimony of such as have purchased themselves that satisfaction by their own labour and diligence,) is merely accidental to the thing itself we are discoursing of; and neither adds to, nor detracts from, the rational evidence of the present argument. Or if it do either, the more abstruse paths of divine wisdom in this, as in other things, do rather recommend it the more to our adoration and reverence, than if every thing were obvious, and lay open to the first glance of a more careless eye. The things which we are sure (or may be, if we

do not shut our eyes) the wise Maker of this world hath done, do sufficiently serve to assure us that he could have done this also; that is, have made every thing in the frame and shape of our bodies conspicuous in the way but now supposed, if he had thought it fit. He hath done greater things. And since he hath not thought *that* fit, we may be bold to say, the doing of it would signify more trifling, and less design. It gives us a more amiable and comely representation of the Being we are treating of, that his works are less for ostentation than use; and that his wisdom and other attributes appear in them rather to the instruction of sober, than the gratification of vain minds.

We may therefore confidently conclude, that the figuration of the human body carries with it as manifest, unquestionable evidences of design, as any piece of human artifice, that most confessedly, in the judgment of any man, doth so; and therefore had as certainly a designing cause. We may challenge the world to shew a disparity, unless it be that the advantage is unconceivably great on our side. For would not any one that hath not abandoned at once both his reason\* and his modesty, be ashamed to confess and admire the skill that is shewn in making a statue, or the picture of a man, that (as one ingeniously says) is but the shadow of his skin, and deny the wisdom that appears in the composure of his body itself, that contains so numerous and so various engines and instruments for sundry purposes in it, as that it is become an art, and a very laudable one, but to discover and find out the art and skill that are shewn in the contrivance and formation of them?

IV. It is in the mean time strange to consider from how different and contrary causes it proceeds, that the wise Contriver of this fabric hath not his due acknowledgments on the account of it. For with some, it proceeds from their supine and drowsy ignorance, and that they little know or think what prints and footsteps of a Deity they carry about them, in their bone and flesh, in every part and vein and limb. With others, (as if too much learning had made them mad, or an excess of light had struck them into a mopish blindness,) these things are so well known and seen, so common and obvious, that they are the less regarded. And because they can give a very punctual account *that things are so*, they think it, now, not worth the considering, *how they come to be so*. They can trace all these hidden paths and footsteps, and therefore all seems very

\* Parker Tentam. Physico-Theolog.

easy, and they give over wondering. As they that would detract from Columbus's acquists of glory by the discovery he had made of America,\* by pretending the achievement was easy; whom he ingeniously rebuked, by challenging them to make an egg stand erect, alone, upon a plain table; which when none of them could do, he only by a gentle bruising of one end of it makes it stand on the table without other support, and then tells them this was more easy than his voyage to America, now they had seen it done; before, they knew not how to go about it. Some may think the contrivance of the body of a man, or other animal, easy, now they know it; but had they been to project such a model without a pattern, or any thing leading thereto, how miserable a loss had they been at! How easy a confession had been drawn from them of the finger of God, and how silent a submission to his just triumph over their, and all human wit, when the most admired performances in this kind, by any mortal, have been only faint and infinitely distant imitations of the works of God! As is to be seen in the so much celebrated exploits of Posidonius, Regiomontanus, and others of this sort.

V. And now if any should be either so incurably blind as not to perceive, or so perversely wilful as not to acknowledge, an appearance of wisdom in the frame and figuration of the body of an animal (peculiarly of man) more than equal to what appears in any the most exquisite piece of human artifice, and which no wit of man can ever fully imitate; although, as hath been said, an acknowledged equality would suffice to evince a wise maker thereof, yet because it is the existence of God we are now speaking of, and that it is therefore not enough to evince, but to magnify, the wisdom we would ascribe to him; we shall pass from the parts and frame, to the consideration of the more principal powers and functions of terrestrial creatures; ascending from such as agree to the less perfect orders of these, to those of the more perfect, namely, of man himself. And surely to have been the Author of faculties that shall enable to such functions, will evidence a wisdom that defies our imitation, and will dismay the attempt of it.

We begin with that of *growth*. Many sorts of rare engines we acknowledge contrived by the wit of man, but who hath ever made one that could grow, or that had in it a self-improving power? A tree, an herb, a pile of grass, may upon this account challenge all the world to make such a thing. That is,

\* Archbishop Abbot's Geograph.

to implant the power of growing into any thing to which it *doth not* natively belong, or to make a thing to which it *doth*.

By what art would they make a seed? And which way would they inspire it with a seminal form? And they that think this whole globe of the earth was compacted by the casual (or fatal) coalition of particles of matter, by what magic would they conjure up so many to come together as should make one clod? We vainly hunt with a lingering mind after miracles: if we did not more vainly mean by them nothing else but novelties, we are compassed about with such. And the greatest miracle is, that we see them not. You with whom the daily productions of nature (as you call it) are so cheap, see if you can do the like. Try your skill upon a rose. Yea, but you must have pre-existent matter? But can you ever prove the Maker of the world had so, or even defend the possibility of uncreated matter? And suppose they had the free grant of all the matter between the crown of their head and the moon, could they tell what to do with it, or how to manage it, so as to make it yield them one single flower, that they might glory in, as their own production?

And what mortal man, that hath reason enough about him to be serious, and to think a while, would not even be amazed at the miracle of *nutrition*? Or that there are things in the world capable of nourishment? Or who would attempt an imitation here, or not despair to perform any thing like it? That is, to make any nourishable thing. Are we not here infinitely out-done? Do we not see ourselves compassed about with wonders, and are we not ourselves such, in that we see, and are creatures, from all whose parts there is a continual defluxion, and yet that receive a constant gradual supply and renovation, by which they are continued in the same state? As the bush burning, but not consumed. It is easy to give an artificial frame to a thing that shall gradually decay and waste till it be quite gone, and disappear. You could raise a structure of snow, that would soon do that. But can your manual skill compose a thing that, like our bodies, shall be continually melting away, and be continually repaired, through so long a tract of time? Nay, but you can tell how it is done; you know in what method, and by what instruments, food is received, concocted, separated, and so much as must serve for nourishment, turned into chyle, and that into blood, first grosser, and then more refined, and that distributed into all parts for this purpose. Yea, and what then? Therefore you are as wise as your Maker. Could you have made such a

thing as the stomach, a liver, a heart, a vein, an artery? Or are you so very sure what the digestive quality is? Or if you are, and know what things best serve to maintain, to repair, or strengthen it, who implanted that quality? Both where it is so immediately useful, or in the other things you would use for the service of that? Or how, if such things had not been prepared to your hand, would you have devised to persuade the particles of matter into so useful and happy a conjuncture, as that such a quality might result? Or, (to speak more suitably to the most,) how, if you had not been shewn the way, would you have thought it were to be done, or which way would you have gone to work, to turn meat and drink into flesh and blood?

Nor is *propagation of their own kind*, by the creatures that have that faculty implanted in them, less admirable, or more possible to be imitated by any human device. Such productions stay in their first descent. Who can, by his own contrivance, find out a way of making any thing that can produce another like itself. What machine did ever man invent, that had this power? And the ways and means by which it is done, are such (though he that can do all things well knew how to compass his ends by them) as do exceed not our understanding only, but our wonder.

And what shall we say of *spontaneous motion*, wherewith we find also creatures endowed that are so mean and despicable in our eyes, (as well as ourselves,) that is, that so silly a thing as a fly, a gnat, &c. should have a power in it to move itself, or stop its own motion, at its own pleasure? How far have all attempted imitations in this kind fallen short of this perfection? And how much more excellent a thing is the smallest and most contemptible insect, than the most admired machine we ever heard or read of; (as Archytas Tarentinus's dove so anciently celebrated, or more lately Regiomontanus's fly, or his eagle, or any the like;) not only as having this *peculiar power*, above any thing of this sort, but as having the *sundry other powers*, besides, meeting in it, whereof these are wholly destitute?

And should we go on to instance further in the several powers of *sensation*, both external and internal, the various instincts, appetitions, passions, sympathies, antipathies, the powers of memory, (and we might add of speech,) that we find the inferior orders of creatures either generally furnished with, or some of them, as to this last, disposed unto. How should we even over-do the present business; and too needlessly insult over human wit, (which we must suppose to have already yielded

the cause,) in challenging it to produce and offer to view a hearing, seeing engine, that can imagine, talk, is capable of hunger, thirst, of desire, anger, fear, grief, &c. as its own creature, concerning which it may glory and say, I have done this?

It is so admirable a performance, and so ungainsayable an evidence of skill and wisdom, with much labour and long travail of mind, a busy, restless agitation of working thoughts, the often renewal of frustrated attempts, the varying of defeated trials; this way and that, at length to hit upon, and by much pains, and with a slow, gradual progress, by the use of who can tell how many sundry sorts of instruments or tools, managed by more (possibly) than a few hands, by long hewing, hammering, turning, filing, to compose one only single machine of such a frame and structure, as that by the frequent reinforcement of a skilful hand, it may be capable of some (and that, otherwise, but a very short-lived) motion? And it is no argument, or effect of wisdom, so easily and certainly, without labour, error, or disappointment, to frame both so infinite a variety of kinds, and so innumerable individuals of every such kind of living creatures, that cannot only, with the greatest facility, move themselves with so many sorts of motion, downwards, upwards, to and fro, this way or that, with a progressive or circular, a swifter or a slower motion, at their own pleasure; but can also grow, propagate, see, hear, desire, joy, &c. Is this no work of wisdom, but only either blind fate or chance? Of how strangely perverse and odd a complexion is that understanding, (if yet it may be called an understanding,) that can make this judgment!

VI. And they think they have found out a rare knack, and that gives a great relief to their diseased minds, who have learned to call the bodies of living creatures, (even the human not excepted,) by way of diminution, *machines*, or a sort of automatus engines.

But how little cause there is to hug or be fond of this fancy, would plainly appear, if we would allow ourselves leisure to examine with *how small pretence* this appellation is so placed and applied: and, *next*, if it be applied rightly, to *how little purpose* it is alleged; or that it signifies nothing to the exclusion of divine wisdom from the formation of them.

And for the *first*, because we know not a better, let it be considered how defective and unsatisfying the account is, which the great\* and justly admired master in this faculty gives,

\* D. Cartes de passionibus animæ. part 1. atque alibi.

how divers of those things, which he would have to be so, are performed only in the mechanical way.

For though his ingenuity must be acknowledged, in his modest exception of some nobler operations belonging to ourselves from coming under those rigid necessitating laws, yet certainly, to the severe inquiry of one not partially addicted to the sentiments of so great a wit, because they were his, it would appear there are great defects, and many things yet wanting, in the account which is given us of some of the meaner of those functions, which he would attribute only to organized matter, or (to use his own expression) to the conformation of the members of the body, and the course of the spirits, excited by the heat of the heart, &c.

For howsoever accurately he describes the instruments and the way, his account seems very little satisfying of the principle, either of spontaneous motion, or of sensation.

As to *spontaneous motion*, though it be very apparent that the muscles, seated in that opposite posture wherein they are mostly found paired throughout the body, the nerves and the animal spirits in the brain, and (suppose we) that *glandule* seated in the inmost part of it, are the instruments of the motion of the limbs and the whole body; yet, what are all these to the prime causation, or much more, to the spontaneity of this motion? And whereas, with us, (who are acknowledged to have such a faculty independent on the body,) an act of will doth so manifestly contribute, so that, when we will, our body is moved with so admirable facility, and we feel not the cumbersome weight of an arm to be lifted up, or of our whole corporeal bulk, to be moved this way or that, by a slower or swifter motion. Yea, and when as also, if we will, we can, on the sudden, in a very instant, start up out of the most composed, sedentary posture, and put ourselves, upon occasion, into the most violent course of motion or action. But if we have no such will, though we have the same agile spirits about us, we find no difficulty to keep in a posture of rest; and are, for the most part, not sensible of any endeavour or urgency of these active particles, as if they were hardly to be restrained from putting us into motion; and against a reluctant act of our will, we are not moved but with great difficulty to them, and that will give themselves, and us, the trouble. This being, I say, the case with us; and it being also obvious to our observation, that it is so very much alike, in these mentioned respects, with brute creatures, how inconceivable is it, that the directive principle of their motions, and

ours, should be so vastly and altogether unlike? (whatsoever greater perfection is required, with us, as to those more noble and perfect functions and operations which are found to belong to us.) That is, that *in us*, an act of will should signify so very much, and be, for the most part, necessary to the beginning, the continuing, the stopping, or the varying of our motions; and *in them*, nothing like it, nor any thing else besides, only that corporeal principle\* which he assigns as common to them and us, the continual heat in the heart, (which he calls a sort of fire,) nourished by the blood of the veins; the instruments of motion already mentioned, and the various representations and impressions of external objects, as there and elsewhere† he expresses himself! upon which last, (though much is undoubtedly to be attributed to it,) that so main a stress should be laid, as to the diversifying of motion, seems strange; when we may observe so various motions of some silly creatures, as of a fly in our window, while we cannot perceive, and can scarce imagine, any change in external objects about them: yea, a swarm of flies, so variously frisking and plying to and fro, some this way, others that, with a thousand diversities and interferences in their motion, and some resting; while things are in the same state, externally, to them all. So that what should cause, or cease, or so strangely vary such motions, is from thence, or any thing else he hath said, left unimaginable. As it is much more, how, in creatures of much strength, as a bear or a lion, a paw should be moved sometimes so gently, and sometimes with so mighty force, only by mere mechanism, without any directive principle, that is not altogether corporeal. But most of all, how the strange regularity of motion in some creatures, as of the spider in making its web, and the like, should be owing to no other than such causes as he hath assigned of the motions in general of brute creatures. And what though some motions of our own seem wholly involuntary, (as that of our eye-lids, in the case which he supposes,) doth it therefore follow they must proceed from a principle‡ only corporeal, as if our soul had no other act belonging to it, but that of willing? Which he doth not downright say; but that it is its only, or its chief act: and if it be its chief act only, what hinders but that such a motion may proceed from an act that is not chief? Or that it may have a power that may, sometimes, step forth into act (and in greater matters

\* De Passion. part. 1. art. 8.

† Princip. Philosoph. Dioptric. c. 4. Dissertat. de method.

‡ De Pass. art. 18.



than that) without any formal, deliberated command or direction of our will? So little reason is there to conclude, that all our motions\* common to us with beasts, or even their motions themselves, depend on nothing else than the conformation of the members, and the course which the spirits, excited by the heat of the heart, do naturally follow, in the brain, the nerves, and the muscles, after the same manner with the motion of an automaton, &c.

But as to the matter of *sensation*, his account seems much more defective and unintelligible, that is, how it should be performed (as he supposes every thing common to us with beasts may be) without a soul. For, admit that it be (as who doubts but it is) by the instruments which he assigns, we are still to seek what is the sentient, or what useth these instruments, and doth sentire or exercise sense by them. That is, suppose it be performed in the brain, † and that (as he says) by the help of the nerves, which from thence, like small strings, ‡ are stretched forth unto all the other members; suppose we have the three things to consider in the nerves, which he recites—their interior substance, which extends itself like very slender threads from the brain to the extremities of all the other members into which they are knit; the very thin little skins which inclose these, and which, being continued with those that inwrap the brain, do compose the little pipes which contain these threads; and lastly, the animal spirits which are conveyed down from the brain through these pipes—yet which of these is most subservient unto sense? That he undertakes elsewhere § to declare, namely, that we are not to think (which we also suppose) some nerves to serve for sense, others for motion only, as some have thought, but that the inclosed spirits serve for the motion of the members, and those little threads (also inclosed) for sense. Are we yet any nearer our purpose? Do these small threads sentire? Are these the things that ultimately receive and discern the various impressions of objects? And since they are all of one sort of substance, how comes it to pass that some of them are seeing threads, others hearing threads, others tasting, &c. Is it from the diverse and commodious figuration of the organs unto which these descend from the brain? But though we acknowledge and admire the cu-

\* As art. 16.

† Princip. Philosoph. Sect. 189.

‡ De Passione. art. 11.

§ Dioptr. c. 4. S. 4, 5.

nious and exquisite formation of those organs, and their most apt usefulness (as organs, or instruments) to the purposes for which they are designed, yet what do they signify, without a proportionably apt and able agent to use them, or percipient to entertain and judge of the several notices, which by them are only transmitted from external things? That is, suppose we a drop of ever so pure and transparent liquor, or let there be three, diversely tintured or coloured, and (lest they mingle) kept asunder by their distinct, infolding coats; let these encompass one the other, and together compose one little shining globe: are we satisfied that now this curious, pretty ball can see? Nay, suppose we it ever so conveniently situate; suppose we the fore-mentioned strings fastened to it, and these, being hollow, well replenished with as pure air or wind or gentle flame as you can imagine; yea, and all the before-described little threads to boot; can it yet do the feat? Nay, suppose we all things else to concur that we can suppose, except a living principle, (call that by what name you will,) and is it not still as incapable of the act of seeing, as a ball of clay or a pebble stone? Or can the substance of the brain itself perform that or any other act of sense, (for it is superfluous to speak distinctly of the rest,) any more than the pulp of an apple or a dish of cards? So that, trace this matter whither you will, within the compass of your assigned limits, and you are still at the same loss: range through the whole body, and what can you find but flesh and bones, marrow and blood, strings and threads, humour and vapour; and which of these is capable of sense? These are your materials and such like: order them as you will, put them into what method you can devise, and except you can make it *live*, you cannot make it so much as *feel*, much less perform all other acts of sense besides, unto which, these tools alone seem as unproportionable, as a plough-share to the most curious sculpture, or a pair of tongs to the most melodious music.

But how much more inconceivable it is, that the figuration and concurrence of the fore-mentioned organs can alone suffice to produce the several passions of love, fear, anger, &c. whereof we find so evident indications in brute creatures it is enough but to hint. And (but that all persons do not read the same books) it were altogether unnecessary to have said so much, after so plain demonstration \* already extant, that matter, how-

\* In Doctor More's Immortality of the Soul.

soever modified, any of the mentioned ways is incapable of sense.

Nor would it seem necessary to attempt any thing in this kind, in particular and direct opposition to the very peculiar sentiments of this most ingenious author, (as he will undoubtedly be reckoned in all succeeding time,) who, when he undertakes to shew what *sense* is, and how it is performed, makes it the proper business of the soul, comprehends it under the name of *cogitation*; \* naming himself a thinking thing, adds by way of question, What is that? and answers, A thing doubting, understanding, affirming, denying, willing, nilling, and also imagining, and exercising sense; says † expressly it is evident to all that it is the soul that exercises sense, not the body, ‡ in as direct words as the so much celebrated Poet of old. The only wonder is, that under this general name of *cogitation* he denies it unto brutes; under which name, he may be thought less fitly to have included it, than to have affirmed them incapable of any thing to which that name ought to be applied; as he doth not only affirm, but esteems himself by most firm reasons to have proved. §

And yet that particular reason seems a great deal more pious than it is cogent, which he gives for his choosing his particular way of differencing brutes from human creatures, namely, lest any prejudice should be done to the doctrine of the human soul's immortality: there being nothing, as he truly says, that doth more easily turn off weak minds from the path of virtue, than if they should think the souls of brutes to be of the same nature with our own; and therefore that nothing remains to be hoped or feared after this life, more by us than by flies or pismires. For surely there were other ways of providing against that danger, besides that of denying them so much as sense, (other than merely organical, || as he somewhere alleviates the harshness of that position, but without telling us what useth these organs,) and the making them nothing else but well-formed machines.

But yet if we should admit the propriety of this appellation, and acknowledge (the thing itself intended to be signified by it) that all the powers belonging to mere brutal nature are purely mechanical, and no more.

To what purpose, *secondly*, is it here alleged, or what can it be understood to signify? What is lost from our cause

\* Princip. Phil. part. 4. 189.

† Medit. 2.

‡ Dioptr. c. 4.

§ Resp. sextæ. Dissert. De Method. c. 5.

|| Resp. sextæ.

by it? And what have atheists whereof to glory? For was the contrivance of these machines their's? Were they the authors of this rare invention, or of any thing like it? Or can they shew any product of human device and wit, that shall be capable of vying with the strange powers of those machines? Or can they imagine what so highly exceeds all human skill, to have fallen by chance, and without any contrivance or design at all, into a frame capable of such powers and operations?

If they be machines, they are (as that free-spirited author speaks) to be considered as a sort of machine \* made by the hand of God, which it is by infinite degrees better ordered, and hath in it more admirable motions, than any that could ever have been formed by the art of man. Yea, and we might add, so little disadvantage would accrue to the present cause (whatever might to some other) by this concession, that rather (if it were not a wrong to the cause, which justly disdains we should allege any thing false or uncertain for its support) this would add much, we will not say to its victory, but to its triumph, that we did acknowledge them nothing else than mere mechanical contrivances. For, since they must certainly either be such, or have each of them a soul to animate, and enable them to their several functions; it seems a much more easy performance, and is more conceivable, and within the nearer reach of human apprehension, that they should be furnished with such a one, than be made capable of so admirable operations without it; and the former (though it were not a surer) were a more amazing, unsearchable, and less comprehensible discovery of the most transcendent wisdom, than the latter.

VII. But because whatsoever comes under the name of cogitation, properly taken, is assigned to some higher cause than mechanism; and that there are operations belonging to man, which lay claim to a reasonable soul, as the immediate principle and author of them; we have yet this further step to advance, that is, to consider the most apparent evidence we have of a wise, designing agent, in the powers and nature of this more excellent, and, among things more obvious to our notice, the noblest of his productions.

And were it not for the slothful neglect of the most to study themselves, we should not here need to recount unto men the common and well-known abilities and excellencies which pe-

\* Dissert. de Method. Sect. 5.

culiarly belong to their own nature. They might take notice, without being told, that first, as to their *intellectual faculty*, they have somewhat about them, that can think, understand, frame notions of things ; that can rectify or supply the false or defective representations which are made to them by their external senses and fancies ; that can conceive of things far above the reach and sphere of sense, the moral good or evil of actions or inclinations, what there is in them of rectitude or pravity ; whereby they can animadvert, and cast their eye inward upon themselves ; observe the good or evil acts or inclinations, the knowledge, ignorance, dulness, vigour, tranquillity, trouble, and, generally, the perfections or imperfections, of their own minds ; that can apprehend the general natures of things, the future existence of what, yet, is not, with the future appearance of that, to us, which, as yet, appears not.

Of which last sort of power, the confident assertion, "No man can have a conception of the future," (Hobbs's Human Nature,) needs not, against our experience, make us doubt ; especially being enforced by no better, than that *pleasant reason* there subjoined, *for, the future is not yet* ; that is to say, because it is future ; and so (which is all this reason amounts to) *we cannot conceive it, because we cannot*. For though our conceptions of former things guide us in forming notions of what is future, yet sure our conception of any thing as future, is much another sort of conception from what we have of the same thing as past, as appears from its different effects ; for if an object be apprehended good, we conceive of it as past with sorrow, as future with hope and joy ; if evil, with joy as past, with fear and sorrow as future. And (which above all the rest discovers and magnifies the intellectual power of the human soul) that they can form a conception, howsoever imperfect, of this absolutely perfect Being, whereof we are discoursing. Which even they that acknowledge not its existence, cannot deny ; except they will profess themselves blindly, and at a venture, to deny they know not what, or what they have not so much as thought of.

They may take notice of their *power of comparing things*, of discerning and making a judgment of their agreements and disagreements, their proportions and dispositions to one another ; of affirming or denying this or that, concerning such or such things ; and of pronouncing, with more or less confidence, concerning the truth or falsehood of such affirmations or negations.

And moreover, of their *power of arguing*, and inferring one thing from another, so as from one plain and evident principle, to draw forth a long chain of consequences, that may be discerned to be linked therewith.

They have withal to consider the liberty and the large capacity of *the human will*, which, when it is itself, rejects the dominion of any other than the supreme Lord's, and refuses satisfaction in any other than the supreme and most comprehensive good.

And upon even so hasty and transient a view of a thing furnished with such powers and faculties, we have sufficient occasion to bethink ourselves, How came such a thing as this into being; whence did it spring, or to what original doth it owe itself? More particularly we have here two things to be discoursed of.—That, notwithstanding so high excellencies, the soul of man doth yet appear to be a caused being, that sometime had a beginning.—That, by them, it is sufficiently evident, that it owes itself to a wise and intelligent cause.

As to the *first* of these, we need say the less, because *that sort* of atheists with whom we have chiefly now to do, deny not human souls to have had a beginning, as supposing them to be produced by the bodies they animate, by the same generation, and that such generation did sometimes begin; that only rude and wildly moving matter was from eternity; and that by infinite alterations and commixtures in that eternity, it fell at last into this orderly frame and state wherein things now are, and became prolific, so as to give beginning to the several sorts of living things which do now continue to propagate themselves; the mad folly of which random fancy we have been so largely contending against hitherto. The *other sort*, who were for an eternal succession of generations, have been sufficiently refuted by divers others, and partly by what hath been already said in this discourse; and we may further meet with them ere it be long. We in the mean time find not any professing atheism, to make human souls, as such, necessary and self-originate beings.

Yet it is requisite to consider not only what persons of atheistical persuasions *have said*, but what also they possibly *may say*. And moreover, some, that have been remote from atheism, have been prone, upon the contemplation of the excellencies of the human soul, to over-magnify, yea and even no less than deify it. It is therefore needful to say somewhat in this matter. For if nothing of direct and downright atheism had been designed, the rash hyperboles, as we will cha-

ritably call them, and unwarrantable rhetoricians of these latter, should they obtain to be looked upon and received as severe and strict assertions of truth, were equally destructive of religion, as the others' more strangely bold and avowed opposition to it. \*

Such, I mean, as have spoken of the souls of men as parts of God, one thing with him; a particle of divine breath; *αποσπασμὲν ἑαυτοῦ*—an extract or derivation of himself; that have not feared to apply to them his most peculiar attributes, or say that of them, which is most appropriate and incommunicably belonging to him alone. Nay, to give them his very name, and say in plain words they were God. †

Now it would render a temple alike insignificant, to suppose no worshipper, as to suppose none who should be worshipped. And what should be the worshipper, when our souls are thought the same thing with what should be the object of our worship? But methinks, when we consider their necessitous, indigent state, their wants and cravings, their pressures and groans, their grievances and complaints, we should find enough to convince us they are not the self-originate or self-sufficient being. And might even despair any thing should be plain and easy to them, with whom it is a difficulty to distinguish themselves from God. Why are they in a state which they dislike? Wherefore are they not full and satisfied? Why do they wish and complain? Is this God-like? But if any have a doubt hanging in their minds concerning the unity of souls with one another, or with the soul of the world, let them read what is already extant: and supposing them, thereupon, distinct beings: there needs no more to prove them not to be necessary, independent, uncaused

\* Seneca. Epistle 92. Hor. Serm. Marcus Antoninus.

† The Pythagoreans, concerning whom it is said, they were wont to admonish one another to take heed, *Μὴ διασπᾶν τον, εν ἑαυτοῖς, θεόν*—lest they should rent God in themselves. Jamblich. de vita. Pythag. Plato, who undertakes to prove the immortality of the soul by such arguments as, if they did conclude any thing, would conclude it to be God; that it is the fountain, the principle *πηγὴ, καὶ ἀρχὴ* of motion; and adds, that the principle is unbegotten, &c. in Phædro. Makes it the cause of all things, and the ruler of all, De Leg. l. 10. though his words there seem meant of the soul of the world. Concerning which soul, afterwards, inquiring whether all ought not to account it God, he answers, Yes certainly, except any one be come to extreme madness. And whether an identity were not imagined of our souls, with that of the world, or with God, is too much left in doubt, both as to him and some of his followers; to say nothing of modern enthusiasts.

ones,\* than their subjection to so frequent changes; their ignorance, doubts, irresolution, and gradual progress to knowledge, certainty, and stability in their purposes; their very being united with these bodies in which they have been but a little while, as we all know; whereby they undergo no small change, (admitting them to have been pre-existent,) and wherein they experience so many. Yea, whether those changes import any immutation of their very essence or no, the repugnancy being so plainly manifest of the very terms, *necessary* and *changeable*. And inasmuch as it is so evident that a necessary being can receive no accession to itself; that it must always have, or keep itself, after the same manner, and in the same state; that if it be necessarily such, or such, (as we cannot conceive it to be, but we must, in our own thoughts, affix to it some determinate state or other,) it must be eternally such, and ever in that particular unchanged state.

Therefore be the perfection of our souls as great as our most certain knowledge of them can possibly allow us to suppose it, it is not yet *so great*, but that we must be constrained to confess them no necessary, self-originate beings, and, by consequence, dependent ones, that owe themselves to some cause.

Nor yet, *secondly*, (that we may pass over to the other strangely distant extreme,) is the perfection of our souls *so little*, as to require less than an intelligent cause, endowed with the wisdom which we assert and challenge unto the truly necessary, uncaused Being. Which, because he hath no other rival or competitor for the glory of this production, than only the fortuitous jumble of the blindly-moving particles of matter, directs our inquiry to this single point: Whose image does the thing produced bear? Or which does it more resemble? *Stupid, senseless, inactive matter*, (or at the best only supposed moving, though no man, upon the atheists' terms, can imagine how it came to be so,) or the *active, intelligent Being*, whom we affirm the cause of all things, and who hath peculiarly entitled himself, *the Father of spirits*.

That is, we are to consider whether the powers and operations belonging to the reasonable soul do not plainly argue—That it neither rises from, nor is, mere matter; whence it will be consequent, it must have an efficient, diverse from matter—and, That it owes itself to an intelligent efficient.

\* Dr. More's Poem. Antimonopsuchia. His Immortality of the Soul. Mr. Baxter's Appendix to the Reasons of Christian Religion, &c.



I. As to the former, we need not deal distinctly and severally concerning their original and their nature. For if they are not mere matter, it will be evident enough they do not arise from thence.

(L.) So that all will be summed up in this inquiry, Whether reason can agree to matter considered alone, or by itself?

But here the case requires closer discourse. For, in order to this inquiry, it is requisite the subject be determined we inquire about. It hath been commonly taken for granted, that all substance is either *matter*, or *mind*; when yet it hath not been agreed what is the distinct notion of the one or the other. And for the stating their difference, there is herein both an apparent difficulty and necessity.

A *difficulty*; for the ancient difference, that the former is extended, having parts lying without each other; the latter unextended, having no parts; is now commonly exploded, and, as it seems, reasonably enough; both because we scarce know how to impose it upon ourselves, to conceive of a mind or spirit that is unextended, or that hath no parts; and that, on the other hand, the atoms of matter, strictly taken, must also be unextended, and be without parts. And the difficulty of assigning the proper difference between these two, is further evident, from what we experience how difficult it is to form any clear distinct notion of substance itself, so to be divided into matter and mind, stripped of all its attributes. \* Though, as that celebrated author also speaks, we can be surer of nothing, than that there is a real somewhat, that sustains those attributes.

Yet also, who sees not a *necessity* of assigning a difference? For how absurd is it, to affirm, deny, or inquire, of what belongs, or belongs not, to matter, or mind, if it be altogether unagreed, what we mean by the one, or the other.

That the former, speaking of any continued portion of matter, hath parts actually separable; the other being admitted to have parts too, but that cannot be actually separated; with the power of self-contraction, and self-dilatation, ascribed to this latter, denied of the former, seem as intelligible differences, and as little liable to exception, as any we can think of. Besides what we observe of dulness, inactivity, insensibility, in one sort of substance; and of vigour, activity, capacity of sensation, and spontaneous motion, with what we can conceive

\* As is to be seen in that accurate discourse of Mr. Locke. His Essay on the Human Understanding, published since this was first written.

of self-vitality, in this latter sort : that is, that whereas matter is only capable of having life imparted to it, from somewhat that lives of itself, created mind or spirit, though depending for its being on the supreme cause, hath life essentially included in that being, so that it is inseparable from it, and it is the same thing to it, to live, and to be. But a merely materiate being, if it live, borrows its life, as a thing foreign to it, and separable from it.

But if, instead of such distinction, we should shortly and at the next have pronounced, that as mind is a cogitant substance, matter is incogitant ; how would this have squared with our present inquiry ? What antagonist would have agreed with us upon this state of the question ? that is, in effect, whether *that* can reason or think, that is incapable of reason or thought ? Such, indeed, as have studied more to hide a bad meaning, than express a good one, have confounded the terms *matter* or *body*, and *substance*. But take we matter as contradistinguished to mind and spirit, as above described : and it is concerning *this* that we intend this inquiry.

And here we shall therefore wave the consideration of their conceits, concerning the manner of the first origination of men, who thought their whole being was only a production of the earth. Whereof the philosophical account deserves as much laughter, instead of confutation, as any the most fabulously poetical : that is, how they were formed (as also the other animals) in certain little bags, or wombs of the earth, out of which, when they grew ripe, they broke forth, &c. *Gassendi Epicur. Syntag.*

And only consider what is said of the constitution and nature of the human soul itself ; which is said Ἐξ ἀτόμων αὐτὴν συγκεῖσθαι λειοτάτων, καὶ στρογγυλατάτων, &c.\* *to be composed of the smoothest and the roundest atoms ;* and which are of the neatest fashion, and every way, you must suppose, the best conditioned the whole country could afford ; of a more excellent make, as there is added, than those of the fire itself. And these are the things you must know, which think, study, contemplate, frame syllogisms, make theorems, lay plots, contrive business, act the philosopher, the logician, the mathematician, statesman, and every thing else ; only you may except the priest, for of him there was no need.

(2.) This therefore is our present theme, whether such things as these be capable of such, or any acts of reason, yea or no ?

\* Syntag. and in Epicurus's Epist. to Herodot. in Laert.

And if such a subject may admit of serious discourse ; in this way it may be convenient to proceed, namely, either any such small particle, or atom (for our business is not now with Des Cartes, but Epicurus) alone, is rational, or a good convenient number of them assembled, and most happily met together. It is much to be feared the former way will not do. For we have nothing to consider in any of these atoms, in its solitary condition, besides its magnitude, its figure, and its weight, and you may add also its motion, if you could devise how it should come by it.

And now, because it is not to be thought that all atoms are rational, (for then the stump of a tree or a bundle of straw might serve to make a soul of, for aught we know, as good as the best,) it is to be considered by which of those properties an atom shall be entitled to the privilege of being rational, and the rational atoms be distinguished from the rest. Is it their peculiar magnitude or size that so far ennobles them? Epicurus would here have us believe, that the *least* are the fittest for this turn. Now if you consider how little we must suppose them generally to be, according to his account of them ; (that is, that looking upon any of those little motes a stream whereof you may perceive when the sun shines in at a window, and he doubts not but many myriads of even ordinary atoms, go to the composition of any one of these scarcely discernible motes ;) how sportful a contemplation were it, to suppose one of those furnished with all the powers of a reasonable soul? Though it is likely they would not laugh at the jest, that think thousands of souls might be conveniently placed upon the point of a needle. And yet, which makes the matter more admirable, that very few, except they be very carefully picked and chosen, can be found among those many myriads, but will be *too big* to be capable of rationality. Here sure the fate is very hard, of those that come nearest the size, but only, by a very little too much corpulency, happen to be excluded, as unworthy to be counted among the rational atoms. But sure if all sober reason be not utterly lost and squandered away among these little entities, it must needs be judged altogether incomprehensible, why, if upon the account of mere littleness any atom should be capable of reason, all should not be so : and then we could not but have a very rational world. At least, the difference in this point being so very small among them, and they being all so very little, methinks they should all be capable of some reason, and have only less or more of it, according as they are bigger and less. But there is little doubt, that single

property of less magnitude, will not be stood upon as the characteristical difference of rational and irrational atoms; and because their more or less gravity is reckoned necessarily and so immediately to depend on that, (for those atoms cannot be thought porous, but very closely compacted each one within itself,) this, it is likely, will as little be depended on.\* And so their peculiar figure must be the more trusted to, as the differencing thing. And because there is in this respect so great a variety among this little sort of people, or *nation*, as this author somewhere calls them, (whereof he gives so punctual an account,† as if he had been the generalissimo of their armies, and were wont to view them at their rendezvous, to form them into regiments and squadrons, and appoint them to the distinct services he found them aptest for,) no doubt it was a difficulty to determine which sort of figure was to be pitched on to make up the rational regiment. But since his power was absolute, and there was none to gainsay or contradict, the round figure was judged best, and most deserving this honour. Otherwise, a reason might have been asked (and it might have been a greater difficulty to have given a good one) why some other figure might not have done as well; unless respect were had to fellow-atoms, and that it was thought, they of this figure could better associate for the present purpose; and *that* we shall consider of by and by. We now proceed on the supposition that possibly, a single atom, by the advantage of this figure, might be judged capable of this high achievement. And in that case, it would not be impertinent to inquire whether, if an atom were perfectly round, and so, very rational; but by an unexpected misadventure, it comes to have one little corner somewhere clapped on, it be hereby quite spoiled of its rationality? And again, whether one that comes somewhat near that figure, only it hath some little protuberancies upon it, might not by a little filing, or the friendly rubs of other atoms, become rational? And yet, now we think on it, of this

\* Where yet it falls out somewhat crossly, that the least (and consequently the lightest) should be thought fitter to be the matter of the rational soul, because they are aptest for motion, when yet no other cause is assigned of their motion besides their gravity, which cannot but be more, as they are bigger; (for no doubt if you should try them in a pair of scales, the biggest would be found to out-weigh;) whence also it should seem to follow, that the heaviest having most in them of that which is the cause of motion, should be the most moveable, and so by consequence the biggest.

† That they are round, oblong, oval, plain, hooked, rough, smooth, hunch-backed, &c.

improvement he leaves no hope, because he tells us, though they have parts, yet they are so solidly compacted that they are by no force capable of dissolution. And so whatever their fate is in this particular, they must abide it without expectation of change. And yet, though we cannot really alter it for the better with any of them, yet we may think as favourably of the matter as we please; and for any thing that yet appears, whatever peculiar claim the round ones lay to rationality, we may judge as well; and shall not easily be disproved of any of the rest.

Upon the whole, no one of these properties alone, is likely to make a rational atom: what they will all do, meeting together, may yet seem a doubt. That is, supposing we could hit upon one single atom that is at once of a very little size, and consequently very light and nimble, and most perfectly smooth, and unexceptionably round, (and possibly there may be found a good many such,) will not this do the business? May we not now hope to have a rational sort of people among them, that is, those of this peculiar family or tribe? And yet still the matter will be found to go very hard; for if we cannot imagine or devise how any one of these properties should contribute any thing (as upon our utmost disquisition we certainly cannot) towards the power of reasoning, it is left us altogether unimaginable how all these properties together should make a rational atom! There is only one relief remaining, that is, that we add to these other properties some peculiarly-brisk sort of actual motion: (for to be barely moveable will not serve, inasmuch as all are so :) but will not actual motion, added to its being irreprehensibly little, light, and round, especially if it be a very freakish one, and made up of many odd, unexpected windings and turns, effect the business? Possibly it might do something to actual reasoning, supposing the power were there before; for who can tell but the little thing was fallen asleep, and by this means its power might be awakened into some exercise? But that it should give the power itself, is above all comprehension; and there is nothing else to give it. These that have been mentioned, being all the prime qualities that are assigned to atoms singly considered; all other that can be supposed, belonging to concrete bodies, that are composed of many of them meeting together. And therefore hither in the next place our inquiry must be directed, whether any number of atoms, definite or indefinite, being in themselves severally irrational, can become rational by association, or compose and make up a rational soul?

Hitherto it must be acknowledged we have not fought with any adversary ; not having met with any that have asserted the rationality of single, corporeal atoms ; yet because we know not what time may produce, and whither the distress and exigency of a desperate cause may drive the maintainers of it, it was not therefore fit to say nothing to that supposable or possible assertion, I mean possible to be asserted, howsoever impossible it is to be true. Nor yet could it well admit of any thing to be said to it, but in that ludicrous and sportful way. If we will suppose any to be so foolish, they are to be dealt with according to their folly.

But now as to this other conceit, that atoms, provided they be of the right stamp or kind, may, a competent number of them assembled together, compose a reasonable soul, is an express article of the Epicurean creed. And therefore, here, we are to deal more cautiously ; not that this is any whit a wiser fancy than the other, but that the truth in this matter, is surer to meet with opposition in the minds of some persons, already formed unto that wild apprehension, and tintured with it.

Wherefore such must be desired to consider in the first place, if they will be true disciples of Epicurus throughout, what he affirms of all atoms universally, that they must be simple, uncompounded bodies, (or, if you will, corpuscles,) not capable of division or section, by no force dissoluble, and therefore immutable, or in themselves void of any mutation.

Hereupon let it be next considered, if there were in them, those that are of the right size, shape, and weight, severally, some certain sparks or seeds of reason, (that we may make the supposition as advantageous as we can,) or dispositions thereto, yet how shall it be possible to them to communicate, or have that communion with one another, as *together* to constitute an actually and completely rational or thinking thing ? If every one could bring somewhat to a common stock that might be serviceable to that purpose ; how shall each one's proportion or share be imparted ? They can none of them emit any thing, there can possibly be no such thing as an *effluxium* from any of them, inasmuch as they are incapable of diminution ; and are themselves each of them as little as the least imaginable *effluxium*, that we would suppose to proceed from this or that particular atom. They can at the most but touch one another ; penetrate, or get into one another they cannot ; insomuch as if any one have a treasure in it, which is in readiness for the making up an intellectual faculty or power

among them that should be common to them all ; yet each one remains so locked up within itself, and is so reserved and incommunicative, that no other, much less the whole body of them, can be any jot the wiser. So that this is like to be a very dull assembly.

But then, if there be nothing of reason to be communicated, we are yet at a greater loss ; for if it be said, having nothing else to communicate, they communicate themselves, what is that self ? Is it a rational self ? Or is every single atom that enters this composition, reason ? Or is it a principle of reason ? Is it a seed ? Or is it a part ? Is it a thought ? What shall we suppose ? Or what is there in the properties assigned to this sort of atoms that can bespeak it any of these ? And if none of these can be supposed, what doth their association signify towards ratiocination ? They are little, what doth that contribute ? Therefore there may need the more of them to make a good large soul ; but why must a *little thing*, devoid of reason, contribute more towards it, than another somewhat bigger ? They are *light*, doth that mend the matter ? They are the sooner blown away, they can the less cohere, or keep together ; they are the more easily capable of dissipation, the less of keeping their places in solemn counsel. They are *round*, and exactly *smooth*. But why do they the more conveniently associate upon that account for this purpose ? They cannot therefore come so close together as they might have done, had they been of various figures. They cannot, indeed, give or receive so rude touches. This signifies somewhat towards the keeping of state, but what doth it to the exercise of reason ? Their being so perfectly and smoothly round, makes them the more incapable of keeping a steady station, they are the more in danger of rolling away from one another ; they can upon this account lay no hold of each other. Their counsels and resolves are likely to be the more lubricous, and liable to an uncertain volubility. It is not to be imagined what a collection of individuals, only thus qualified, can do when they are come together, an assembly thus constituted. Are we hence to expect oracles, philosophical determinations, maxims of state ? And since they are supposed to be so much alike, how are the mathematical atoms to be distinguished from the moral ? those from the political ? the contemplative from the active ? Or when the assembly thinks fit to entertain itself with matters of this or that kind, what must be its different composure or posture ? Into what mould or figure must it cast itself for one purpose, and into what, for another ? It is hard to

imagine that these little globular bodies, that we may well suppose to be as like as one egg can be to another, should by the mere alteration of their situation, in respect of one another, (and no alteration besides can be so much as imagined among them,) make so great a change in the complexion of this assembly : so that now, it shall be disposed to seriousness, and by some transposition of the spherical particles, to mirth, now to business, and by and by to pleasure. And seeing all human souls are supposed made of the same sort of material, how are the atoms modelled in one man, and how in another ? What atoms are there to dispose to this sect more, and what to another ? Or if a good reason can be assigned for their difference, what shall be given for their agreement ? Whence is it that there are so unquestionable, common notions every where received ? Why are not all things transposed in some minds, when such a posture of the atoms as might infer it, is as supposable as any other ! Yea, and since men are found not always to be of one mind with themselves, it is strange and incomprehensible, that one situation of these atoms, that constitute his soul, should dispose him to be of one opinion, and another of another. How are they to be ranged ? When for the affirmative,—how for the negative ? And yet a great deal more strange, that since their situation is so soon changed, and so continually changing, (the very substance of the soul being supposed nothing else than a thing very like, but a little finer than a busy and continually moving flame of fire,) any man should ever continue to be of the same opinion with himself, one quarter of an hour together ; that all notions are not confounded and jumbled ; that the same thing is not thought and unthought, resolved and unresolved a thousand times in a day. That is, if any thing could be thought, or resolved at all, or if this were a subject capable of framing, or receiving any sort of notion.

But still that is the greatest difficulty, how there can be such a thing as thinking, or forming of notions. The case is plain of such notions as have no relation to matter, or dependence upon external sense. For what doth that contribute to my contemplation of my own mind, and its acts and powers ; to my animadversion, or knowing that I think, or will, this or that ?

But besides, and more generally, what proportion is there, between a thought, and the motion of an atom ? Will we appeal to our faculties, to our reason itself ? And whither else will we ? Is there any cognation or kindred between the ideas



we have of these things, the casual agitation of a small particle of matter, (be it as little or as round as we please to imagine,) and an act of intellection or judgment? And what if there be divers of them together? What can they do more towards the composing an intelligent thing, than many ciphers to the arithmetical composition of a number? It would be as rational to suppose a heap of dust, by long lying together, might at last become rational. Yes, these are things that have, some way or other, the power of motion; and what can they effect by that? They can frisk about, and ply to and fro, and interfere among themselves, and hit, and jostle and tumble over one another, and that will contribute a great deal; about as much, we may suppose, as the shaking of such dust well in a bag, by which means it might possibly become finer and smaller something; and by continuing that action, at length rational! No; but these atoms, of which the soul is made, have a great advantage by their being disposed into a so well-contrived and fitly-organized receptacle as the body is. It is indeed true, and admirable, that the body is, as hath been before observed, so fitly framed for the purposes whereto the whole of it, and its several parts, are designed. But how unfitly is that commodious structure of it so much as mentioned, by such as will not allow themselves to own and adore the wisdom and power of its great Architect.

And what if the composure of the body be so apt and useful, so excellent in its own kind; is it so in every kind, or to all imaginable purposes? Or what purpose can we possibly imagine more remote or foreign to the composition of the body, than that the power of ratiocination should be derived thence? It might as well be said it was so made, to whirl about the sun, or to govern the motions of the moon and stars, as to confer the power of reason, or enable the soul to think, to understand, to deliberate, to will, &c. Yea, its organs, some of them, are much more proportionable to those actions, than any of them unto these. Which, though a well-habited body, while the soul remains in this imprisoned state, do less hinder, yet how doth it help? And that it might perform these acts without bodily organs, is much more apprehensible than how they can properly be said to be performed by them. And that, though they are done in the body, they would be done much better out of it.

But shall it be granted that these soul-constituting atoms, till they be (or otherwise than as they are) united with a duly organized body, are utterly destitute of any reasoning or in-

telligent power? Or are they, by themselves, apart from this grosser body, irrational? If this be not granted, the thing we intend must be argued out. Either then, they are, or they are not. If the *latter* be said, then they have it of themselves, without dependence on the organized body; and so we are fairly agreed to quit that pretence, without more ado, of their partaking reason from thence. And are only left to weigh over again what hath been already said to evince the contrary, that is, how manifestly absurd it is, to imagine that particles of matter, by their peculiar size, or weight, or shape, or motion, or all of these together; and that, whether single or associated, should be capable of reasoning. If the former be the thing which is resolved to be stuck to, that is, that they are of themselves irrational, but they become reasonable by their being united in such a prepared and organized body, this requires to be a little further considered. And to this purpose it is necessary to obviate a pitiful shift that it is possible some may think fit to use, for the avoiding the force of this dilemma; and may rely upon as a ground, why they may judge this choice the more secure; that is, that they say they are rational by dependence on the body they animate; because they are only found so united with one another there; that there they have the first coalition; there they are severed from such as serve not this turn; there they are pent in, and held together as long as its due temperament lasts; which, when it fails, they are dissipated, and so lose their great advantage for the acts of reason, which they had in such a body. What pleasure soever this may yield, it will soon appear it does them little service. For it only implies, that they have their rationality of themselves, so be it that they were together; and not immediately from the body; or any otherwise, than that they are somewhat beholding to it, for a fair occasion of being together; as if it were, else, an unlawful assembly; or that they knew not, otherwise, how to meet and hold together. They will not say that the body gives them being, for they are eternal, and self-subsisting, as they will have it. Yea and of themselves (though the case be otherwise with the Cartesian particles) undiminshable, as to their size, and, as to their figure and weight, unalterable; so that they have neither their littleness, their roundness, nor their lightness, from the body, but only their so happy meeting. Admit this, and only suppose them to be met out of the body. And why may not this be thought supposable? If they be not rational till they be met, they cannot have wit enough to scruple meeting, at

least somewhere else, than in the body. And who knows but such a chance may happen? As great as this, are by these persons supposed to have happened, before the world could have come to this pass it is now at; who can tell but such a number of the same sort of atoms (it being natural for things so much of a complexion and temper to associate and find out one another) might ignorantly, and thinking no harm, come together? And having done so, why might they not keep together? Do they need to be pent in? How are they pent in, whilst in the body? If they be disposed, they have ways enough to get out. And if they must needs be inclined to scatter when the crasis of the body fails, surely a way might be found to hem them in, if that be all, at the time of expiration, more tightly and closely, than they could be in the body. And what reason can be devised, why, being become rational, by their having been assembled in the body, they may not agree to hold together, and do so in spite of fate, or managre all ordinary accidents, when they find it convenient to leave it? And then upon these no-way impossible suppositions, (according to their principles, so far as can be understood, with whom we have to do.) will they now be rational out of the body? Being still endowed (as they cannot but be) with the same high privileges of being little, round, and light, and being still also together; and somewhat more, it may be, at liberty, to roll and tumble, and mingle with one another, than in the body? If it be now affirmed, they will, in this case, be rational, at least as long as they hold together, then we are but where we were. And this shift hath but diverted us a little; but so, as it was easy to bring the matter, again, about, to the same point we were at before. Wherefore the shelter of the body being thus quite again forsaken, this poor expelled crew of dislodging atoms are exposed to fight in the open air, for their rationality, against all that was said before.

But if this refuge and sanctuary of the body be not merely pretended to, but really and plainly trusted in and stuck to, then are we sincerely and honestly to consider what a body so variously organized can do, to make such a party of atoms (that of themselves are not so, singly, nor together) become rational. And surely, if the cause were not saved before, it is now deplorate, and lost without remedy. For what do they find here that can thus, beyond all expectation, improve them to so high an excellency? Is it flesh, or blood, or bones, that puts this stamp upon them? Think, what is the substance of the nobler parts, the liver, or heart, or brain, that they

should turn these, before, irrational atoms, when they fall into them, into rational, any more than if they were well soaked in a quagmire, or did insinuate themselves into a piece of soft dough? But here they meet with a benign and kindly heat and warmth, which comfortably fosters and cherishes them, till at length it hath hatched them into rational. But methinks they should be warm enough of themselves, since they are supposed so much to resemble fire. And, however, wherein do we find a flame of fire more rational, than a piece of ice? Yea but here they find a due temper of moisture as well as heat. And that surely doth not signify much; for if the common maxim be true, that the dry soul is the wisest, they might have been much wiser, if they had kept themselves out of the body. And since it is necessary the soul should consist of that peculiar sort of atoms before described; and the organical body (which must be said for distinction sake, the soul being all this while supposed a body also) consists of atoms too, that are of a much coarser alloy, methinks a mixture should not be necessary, but a hinderance, and great debasement, rather, to this rational composition. Besides, that it cannot be understood, if it were necessary these atoms should receive any tincture from the body, in order to their being rational, what they can receive, or how they can receive any thing. They have not pores that can admit an adventitious moisture, though it were of the divinest nectar, and the body could ever so plentifully furnish them with it. Wherein then lies the great advantage these atoms have by being in the body, to their commencing rational? If there be such advantage, why can it not be understood? Why is it not assigned? Why should we further spend our guesses what may possibly be said? But yet, may not much be attributed to the convenient and well fenced cavity of the brain's receptacle, or the more secret chambers within that, where the studious atoms may be very private and free from disturbance? Yet sure it is hard to say, why they that are wont to do it *here*, might not as well philosophize in some well-chosen cavern, or hole of a rock; nor were it impossible to provide them *there*, with as soft a bed. And yet would it not be some relief to speak of the fine slender pipes, winding to and fro, wherein they may be conveyed so conveniently from place to place, that if they do not fall into a reasoning humour in one place, they may in another? Why, what can this do? It seems somewhat like Balaam's project, to get into a vein of incantation, by changing stations. And transplace them as you will, it

requires more magic than ever he was master of, to make those innocent, harmless things, masters of reason.

For do but consider, what if you had a large phial capable of as great a quantity as you can think needful, of very fine particles, and, replenished with them, closely stopped, and well luted; suppose these as pure and fit for the purpose as you can imagine, only not yet rational; will their faring to and fro, through very close and stanch tubes, from one such receptacle to another, make them at last become so? It seems then, do what you will with them, toss and tumble them hither and thither, rack them from vessel to vessel, try what methods you can devise of sublimation or improvement, every thing looks like a vain and hopeless essay. For indeed, do what you please or can think of, they are such immutable entities, you can never make them less, or finer, than they originally were: and rational they were not, before their meeting in the body; wherefore it were a strange wonder, if that should so far alter the case with them, that they should become rational by it.

And now, I must, upon the whole, profess not to be well pleased with the strain of this discourse; not that I think it unsuitable to its subject, (for I see not how it is fitly to be dealt with in a more serious way,) but that I dislike the subject. And were it not that it is too obvious, how prone the minds of some are to run themselves into any the grossest absurdities rather than admit the plain and easy sentiments of religion; it were miserable trifling to talk at this rate, and a loss of time not to be endured. But when an unaccountable aversion to the acknowledgment and adoration of the ever-blessed Deity, hurries away men, affrighted and offended at the lustre of his so manifest appearances, to take a bad, but the only shelter the case can admit, under the wings of any the most silly, foolish figment; though the ill temper and dangerous state of the persons is to be thought on with much pity, yet the things which they pretend being in themselves ridiculous, if we will entertain them into our thoughts at all, cannot fitly be entertained but with derision. Nor doth it more unbecome a serious person to laugh at what is ridiculous, than gravely to weigh and ponder what is weighty and considerable; provided he does not seek occasions of that former sort, on purpose to gratify a vain humour; but only allow himself to discourse suitably to them, when they occur. And their dotage who would fain serve themselves of so wildly extravagant and impossible suppositions, for the fostering their horrid misbelief,

that they have no God to worship, would certainly justify as sharp ironies, as the prophet Elijah bestows upon them who worshipped Baal, instead of the true God.

(3.) Nor is any thing here said intended as a reflection on such, as being unfurnished with a notion of created, intelligent spirits, that might distinguish their substance from the most subtile matter, have therefore thought that their mind or thinking power might have some such *substratum*, unto which it is super-added, or impressed thereon by a divine hand ; in the mean time not doubting their immortality, much less the existence of a Deity, the Author and Former of them, and all things. For they are no way guilty of that blasphemous nonsense, to make them consist of necessary, self-subsistent matter, every minute partick whereof is judged eternal and immutable, and in themselves, for aught we can find asserted, destitute of reason : and which yet acquire it by no one knows what coalition. without the help of a wise efficient, that shall direct and order it to so unimaginable an improvement. These persons do only think more refined matter capable of that impression and stamp ; or of having such a power put into it, by the Creator's all-disposing hand. Wherein, to do them right, though they should impose somewhat hardly upon themselves, if they will make this estimate of the natural capacity of matter ; or if they think the acts and power of reason in man, altogether unnatural to him : yet they do, in effect, the more befriend the cause we are pleading for ; (as much as it can be befriended by a mis-apprehension : which yet is a thing of that untoward genius, and doth so ill consort with truth, that it is never admitted as a friend, in any one respect ; but it repays it with a mischievous revenge, in some other, as might many ways be shewn in this instance, if it were within the compass of our present design ; ) it being evident, that if any portion of matter shall indeed be certainly found the actual subject of such powers, and to have such operations belonging to it, there is the plainer and more undeniable necessity and demonstration of his power and wisdom, who can make any thing, of any thing ; of stones raise up children to Abraham ! and who shall then have done that which is so altogether impossible, except to him to whom all things are possible. There is the more manifest need of his hand to heighten dull matter, to a qualifiedness for performances, so much above its nature ; to make the loose and independent parts of so fluid matter, cohere, and hold together ; that, if it were once made capable of knowledge, and the actual subject of it ; whatso-

ever notions were impressed thereon, might not be, in a moment, confounded and lost : as indeed they could not but be, if the particles of matter were the immediate seat of reason ; and so steady a hand did not hold them, in a settled composure, that they be not disordered, and men have, thence, the necessity of beginning afresh, to know any thing, every hour of the day. Though yet it seems a great deal more reasonable to suppose the souls of men to be of a substance in itself more consistent, and more agreeable to our experience : who find a continual ebbing and flowing of spirits, without being sensible of any so notable and sudden changes in our knowledge, as we could not but, thereupon, observe in ourselves : if they, or any as fluid finer matter, were the immediate subjects of it. It is therefore however sufficiently evident, and out of question, that the human soul (be its own substance what it will) must have an efficient diverse from matter ; which it was our present intendment to evince.

2. Our way is clear to proceed to the second inquiry, whether it be not also manifest, from the powers and operations which belong to it as it is reasonable, that it must have had an intelligent efficient ? That is. since we find, and are assured, that there is a sort of being in the world (yea somewhat of ourselves, and that hath best right, of any thing else about us, to be called ourselves) that can think, understand, deliberate, argue, &c. and which we can most certainly assure ourselves (whether it were pre-existent in any former state, or no) is not an independent or uncaused being : and hath therefore been the effect of some cause, whether it be not apparently the effect of a wise cause ?

And this, upon supposition of what hath been before proved, seems not liable to any the least rational doubt. For it is already apparent, that it is not itself matter ; and if it were, it is however the more apparent, that its cause is not matter ; inasmuch, as if it be itself matter, its powers and operations are so much above the natural capacity of matter, as that it must have had a cause, so much more noble and of a more perfect nature than that, as to be able to raise and improve it, beyond the natural capacity of matter : which it was impossible for that, itself, to do. Whence it is plain, it must have a cause diverse from matter.

Wherefore this its immaterial cause must either be wise and intelligent, or not so. But is it possible any man should ever be guilty of a greater absurdity than to acknowledge some certain immaterial agent, destitute of wisdom, the only cause

and fountain of all that wisdom, that *is*, or hath ever been, in the whole race of mankind. That is as much as to say, that all the wisdom of mankind hath been caused without a cause. For it is the same thing, after we have acknowledged any thing to be caused, to say it was caused by no cause, as to say it was caused by such a cause, as hath nothing of that in it, whereof we find somewhat to be in the effect. Nor can it avail any thing, to speak of the disproportion or superior excellency in some effects to their second, or to their only partial causes. As that there are sometimes learned children of unlearned parents. For who did ever in that case say the parents were the productive causes of that learning? Or of them, as they were learned? Sure that learning comes from some other cause. But shall it then be said, the souls of men have received their being from some such immaterial agent destitute of wisdom; and afterward, their wisdom and intellectual ability came some other way; by their own observation, or by institution and precept, from others? Whence then came their capacity of observing, or of receiving such instruction? Can any thing naturally destitute even of seminal reason, (as we may call it,) or of any aptitude or capacity tending thereto, ever be able to make observations, or receive instructions, whereby at length it may become rational? And is not that capacity of the soul of man a real something? Or is there no difference between being capable of reason and incapable? What, then, did this real something proceed from nothing? Or was the soul itself caused, and this its capacity, uncaused? Or was its cause, only, capable of intellectual perfection, but not actually furnished therewith? But if it were only capable, surely its advantages for the actual attainment thereof have been much greater than ours. Whence it were strange if that capacity should never have come into act. And more strange, that we should know, or have any ground to pretend, that it hath not. But that there was an actual exercise of wisdom in the production of the reasonable soul is most evident. For is it a necessary being? That we have proved it is not. It is therefore a contingent, and its being depended on a free cause, into whose pleasure, only, it was resolvable, that it should be, or not be; and which therefore had a dominion over its own acts. If this bespeak not an intelligent agent, what doth?

And though this might also be said concerning every thing else which is not necessarily, and so might yield a more general argument to evince a free designing cause; yet it concludes with greater evidence concerning the reasonable soul,



whose powers and operations it is so manifestly impossible should have proceeded from matter. And therefore even that vain and refuted pretence itself, that other things might, by the necessary laws of its motion, become what they are, can have less place here. Whence it is more apparent that the reasonable soul must have had a free and intelligent cause, that used liberty and counsel, in determining that it should be, and especially that it should be such a sort of thing as we find it is. For when we see how aptly its powers and faculties serve for their proper and peculiar operations, who that is not besides himself can think that such a thing was made by one that knew not what he was doing? Or that such powers were not given on purpose for such operations? And what is the capacity, but a power that should sometime be reduced into act, and arrive to the exercise of reason itself?

Now was it possible any thing should give that power that had it not any way? That is, in the same kind, or in some more excellent and noble kind? For we contend not that this Agent whereof we speak is in the strict and proper sense rational, taking that term to import an ability or faculty of inferring what is less known from what is more. For we suppose all things equally known to him, (which, so far as is requisite to our present design, that is, the representing him the proper object of religion, or of that honour which the dedication of a *temple* to him imports, we may in due time come more expressly to assert,) and that the knowledge which is with us the *end* of reasoning, is *in him* in its highest perfection, without being at all beholden to that *means*; that all the connexion of things with one another lie open to one comprehensive view, and are known to be connected, but not because they are so. We say, is it conceivable that man's knowing power should proceed from a cause that hath it not, in the same, or this more perfect kind? And may use those words to this purpose, not for their authority, (which we expect not should be here significant,) but for the convincing evidence they carry with them, "He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" That we may drive this matter to an issue, it is evident the soul of man is not a necessary, self-originate thing; and had therefore some cause. We find it to have knowledge, or the power of knowing, belonging to it. Therefore we say, So had its cause. We rely not here upon the credit of vulgar maxims, (whereof divers might be mentioned,) but the reason of them, or of the thing itself we

allege. And do now speak of the whole, entire cause of this being, the human soul, or of whatsoever is causal of it; or of any perfection naturally appertaining to it. It is of an intelligent nature. Did this intelligent nature proceed from an unintelligent, as the whole and only cause of it? That were to speak against our own eyes, and most natural, common sentiments; and were the same thing as to say that something came of nothing. For it is all one to say so, and to say that any thing communicated what it had not to communicate. Or (which is alike madly absurd,) to say that the same thing was such, and not such, intelligent, and not intelligent, able to communicate an intelligent nature, (for sure what it doth it is able to do,) and not able, (for it is not able to communicate what it hath not,) at the same time.

It is hardly here worth the while to spend time in countermining that contemptible refuge, (which is as incapable of offending us, as of being defended,) that human souls may perhaps only have proceeded in the ordinary course of generation from one another. For that none have ever said any thing to that purpose deserving a confutation, except that some sober and pious persons, for the avoiding of some other difficulties, have thought it more safe to assert the traduction of human souls, who yet were far enough from imagining that they could be total, or first causes to one another: and doubted not, but they had the constant necessary assistance of that same Being we are pleading for, acting in his own sphere, as the first cause in *all such*, as well as *any other* productions. Wherein they nothing oppose the main design of this discourse; and therefore it is not in our way to offer at any opposition unto them.

But if any have a mind to indulge themselves the liberty of so much dotage as to say the souls of men were first and only causes to one another; either they must suppose them to be *material* beings; and then we refer them to what hath been already said, shewing that their powers and operations cannot belong to matter, nor arise from it; or *immaterial*; and then they cannot produce one another in the way of generation. For of what pre-existent substance are they made? Theirs who beget them? Of that they can part with nothing, separability, at least, of parts being a most confessed property of matter. Or some other? Where will they find that other spiritual substance, that belonged not inseparably to some individual being before? And besides, if it were pre-

existent, as it must be if a soul be generated out of it, then they were not the first and only causes of this production. And in another way than that of generation, how will any form the notion of making a soul? Let experience and the making of trial convince the speculators. By what power, or by what art, will they make a reasonable soul spring up out of nothing?

It might be hoped that thus, without disputing the possibility of an eternal, successive production of souls, this shift may appear vain. But if any will persist, and say, that how or in what way soever they are produced, it is strange if they need any nobler cause than themselves; for may not any living thing well enough be thought capable of producing another of the same kind, of no more than equal perfection with itself? To this we say, besides that no one living thing is the only cause of another such; yet if that were admitted possible, what will it avail? For hath every soul that hath ever existed, or been in being, been produced, in this way, by another? This it were ridiculous to say; for if every one were so produced, there was then *some one*, before *every one*; inasmuch as that which produces, must surely have been before that which is produced by it. But how can *every one* have *one* before it? A manifest contradiction in the very terms! For then there will be one without the compass of every one. And how is it then said to be every one? There is then it seems one, besides, or more than all. And so all is not all. And if this be thought a sophism, let the matter be soberly considered thus. The soul of man is either a thing of that nature universally (and consequently every individual soul) as that it doth exist of itself, necessarily and independently, or not. If it be, then we have, however, a wise intelligent being necessarily existing. The thing we have been proving all this while. Yet this concession we will not accept, for though it is most certain there is such a being, we have also proved the human soul is not it. Whence it is evidently a dependent being, in its own nature, that could never have been of itself, and consequently not at all, had it not been put into being by somewhat else. And being so in its own nature, it must be thus with every one that partakes of this nature. And consequently it must be somewhat of another nature that did put the souls of men into being. Otherwise, the whole stock and lineage of human souls is said to have been dependent on a productive cause, and yet had nothing whereon to depend; and so is both caused by another, and not caused. And therefore since it is hereby evident it was

somewhat else, and of another nature, than a human soul, by which all human souls were produced into being: we again say, that distinct being either was a dependent, caused being, or not. If not, it being proved that the soul of man cannot but have had an intelligent, or wise cause, we have now what we seek—an independent, necessary, intelligent being, if it do depend, or any will be so idle to say so; that, however, will infallibly and very speedily lead us to the same mark. For though some have been pleased to dream of an infinite succession of individuals of this or that kind, I suppose we have no dream as yet, ready formed, to come under confutation, of infinite kinds or orders of beings, gradually superior, one above another; the inferior still depending on the superior, and all upon nothing. And therefore, I conceive, we may fairly take leave of this argument from the human soul, as having gained from it sufficient evidence of the existence of a necessary being, that is intelligent, and designingly active, or guided by wisdom and counsel, in what it doth.

We might also, if it were needful, further argue the same thing from a power or ability manifestly superior to, and that exceeds the utmost perfection of human nature, namely, that of prophecy, or the prediction of future contingencies; yea, and from another that exceeds the whole sphere of all created nature, and which crosses and countermands the known and stated laws thereof, namely, that of working miracles; both of them exercised with manifest design; as might evidently be made appear, by manifold instances, to as many as can believe any thing to be true, more than what they have seen with their own eyes. And that do not take present sense, yea and their own only, to be the alone measure of all reality. But it is not necessary we insist upon every thing that may be said, so that enough be said to serve our present purpose.

VIII. The subject of the preceding chapter continued; and that our purpose may yet be more fully served, and such a being evidenced to exist as we may with satisfaction esteem to merit a *temple* with us, and the *religion* of it, it is necessary, *Ninthly*, that we add somewhat concerning the *divine goodness*; for unto that eternal Being, whose existence we have hitherto asserted, goodness also cannot but appertain; together with those his other attributes we have spoken of.

It is not needful here to be curious about the usual scholastical notions of goodness, or what it imports, as it is wont to be attributed to being in the general, what, as it belongs in a pe-

cular sense to intellectual beings, or what more special import it may have, in reference to *this*. That which we at present chiefly intend by it, is a propension to do good with delight; or most freely, without other inducement than the agreeableness of it to his nature who doth it; and a certain delectation and complacency, which, hence, is taken in so doing. The name of goodness (though thus it more peculiarly signifies the particular virtue of liberality) is of a significancy large enough, even in the moral acceptation, to comprehend all other perfections or virtues, that belong to, or may any way commend, the will of a free agent. These therefore we exclude not; and particularly whatsoever is wont to be signified, as attributable unto God, by the names of *holiness*, as a steady inclination unto what is intellectually pure and comely, with an aversion to the contrary; *justice*, as that signifies an inclination to deal equally, which is included in the former, yet as more expressly denoting what is most proper to a governor over others, namely, a resolution not to let the transgression of laws, made for the preservation of common order, pass without due animadversion and punishment; *truth*, whose signification also may be wholly contained under those former more general terms, but more directly contains sincerity, unaptness to deceive, and constancy to one's word: for these may properly be styled good things in a moral sense; as many other things might, in another notion of goodness, which it belongs not to our present design to make mention of. But these are mentioned as more directly tending to represent to us an amiable object of religion. And are referred hither, as they fitly enough may, out of an unwillingness to multiply, without necessity, particular heads or subjects of discourse.

In the mean time, as was said, what we principally intend, is, That the Being whose existence we have been endeavouring to evince, is *good*, as that imports a ready inclination of will to communicate unto others what may be good to them; creating, first, its own object, and then issuing forth to it, in acts of free beneficence, suitable to the nature of every thing created by it. Which, though it be the primary or first thing carried in the notion of this goodness, yet because that inclination is not otherwise good than as it consists with holiness, justice, and truth, these therefore may be esteemed secondarily, at least, to belong to it, as inseparable qualifications thereof.

Wherefore it is not a merely natural and necessary emanation we here intend, that prevents any act or exercise of coun-

sel or design ; which would no way consist with the liberty of the Divine will, and would make the Deity as well a necessary Agent, as a necessary Being ; yea, and would therefore make all the creatures merely natural and necessary emanations, and so destroy the distinction of necessary and contingent beings : and, by consequence, bid fair to the making all things God. It would infer not only the eternity of the world, but would seem to infer either the absolute infinity of it, or the perfection of it, and of every creature in it, to that degree, as that nothing could be more perfect in its own kind, than it is ; or would infer the finiteness of the Divine Being. For it would make what he *hath done* the adequate measure of what he *can do*, and would make all his administrations necessary, yea, and all the actions of men, and consequently take away all law and government out of the world, and all measures of right and wrong, and make all punitive justice, barbarous cruelty : and consequently, give us a notion of goodness, at length, plainly inconsistent with itself.

All this is provided against, by our having first asserted the *wisdom* of that Being, whereunto we also attribute *goodness* ; which guides all the issues of it, according to those measures or rules which the essential rectitude of the divine will gives, or rather is, unto it : whereby also a foundation is laid of answering such cavils against the *divine goodness*, as they are apt to raise to themselves, who are wont to magnify this attribute to the suppression of others ; which is, indeed, in the end, to magnify it to nothing. And such goodness needs no other demonstration, than the visible instances and effects we have of it in the creation and conservation of this world ; and particularly, in his large, munificent bounty and kindness towards man, whereof his designing him for his temple and residence, will be a full and manifest proof.

And of all this, his own self-sufficient fulness leaves it impossible to us to imagine another reason, than the delight he takes in dispensing his own free and large communications. Besides, that when we see some semblances and imitations of this goodness in the natures of some men, which we are sure are not nothing, they must needs proceed from something, and have some fountain and original, which can be no other than the common Cause and Author of all things. In whom therefore, this goodness doth firstly and most perfectly reside.

## CHAP. IV.

I. Generally all supposable perfection asserted of this Being, where,  
*First*, A being absolutely perfect is endeavoured to be evinced from the (already proved) necessary being, which is shewn to import, in the general, the utmost fulness of being. Also divers things in particular that tend to evince that general. 1. As that it is at the remotest distance from no being. 2. Most purely actual. 3. Most abstracted being. 4. The productive and conserving cause of all things else. 5. Undiminishable. 6. Incapable of addition. *Secondly*, Hence is more expressly deduced, 1. The infiniteness of this being. II. An inquiry whether it be possible the creature can be actually infinite? III. Difficulties concerning the absolute fulness and infiniteness of God considered. 2. The onliness of this Being. The Trinity not thereby excluded.

I. **SOME** account hath been thus far given of that *Being*, whereunto we have been designing to assert the honour of a *temple*. Each of the particulars having been severally insisted on, that concur to make up that notion of this being, which was at first laid down. And more largely, what hath been more opposed, by persons of an atheistical or irreligious temper. But because, in that fore-mentioned account of God, there was added to the particulars there enumerated (out of a just consciousness of human inability to comprehend every thing that may possibly belong to him) this general supplement, “That all other supposable excellencies whatsoever, do in the highest perfection appertain also originally unto this Being,” it is requisite that somewhat be said concerning this addition. Especially in as much as it comprehends in it, or may infer, some things (not yet expressly mentioned) which may be thought necessary to the evincing the reasonableness of religion, or our self-dedication as a temple to him.

For instance, it may possibly be alleged, that if it were admitted there is somewhat that is eternal, uncaused, independent, necessarily existent, that is self-active, living, powerful, wise, and good; yet all this will not infer upon us a universal obligation to religion, unless it can also be evinced, That this Being is every way sufficient to supply and satisfy all our real wants and just desires. And, That this Being is but *one*, and

so that all be at a certainty where their religion ought to terminate ; and that the worship of *every* temple must centre and meet in the *same* object. Now the eviction of an absolutely perfect Being would include each of these ; and answer both the purposes which may seem hitherto not so fully satisfied. It is therefore requisite that we endeavour,

*First*, To shew that the Being hitherto described is absolutely or every way perfect ; and,

*Secondly*, To deduce, from the same grounds, the absolute *infinity*, and the *unity* or the onliness thereof.

And for the *first* part of this undertaking, it must be acknowledged absolute or universal perfection cannot be pretended to have been expressed in any, or in all the works of God together. Neither in *number*, for aught we know, (for as we cannot conceive, nor consequently speak, of divine perfections, but under the notion of many, whatsoever their real identity may be, so we do not know, but that within the compass of universal perfection there may be some particular ones, of which there is no footstep in the creation, and whereof we have never formed any thought,) nor (more certainly) in *degree* ; for surely the world, and the particular creatures in it, are not so perfect in correspondence to those attributes of its great Architect, which we have mentioned, namely, his power, wisdom, and goodness, as he might have made them, if he had pleased. And indeed, to say the world were absolutely and universally perfect, were to make *that* God.

Wherefore it must also be acknowledged that an absolutely perfect Being cannot be immediately demonstrated from its effects, as whereto they neither do, nor is it within the capacity of created nature that they can, adequately correspond. Whence therefore, all that can be done for the evincing of the absolute and universal perfection of God, must be in some other way or method of discourse.

And though it be acknowledged that it cannot be immediately evidenced from the creation, yet it is to be hoped that mediately it may. For from thence (as we have seen) a necessary self-originate being, such as hath been described, is, with the greatest certainty, to be concluded ; and, from thence, if we attentively consider, we shall be led to an absolutely perfect one. That is, since we have the same certainty of such a necessary self-originate being, as we have that there is any thing existent at all. If we seriously weigh what kind of being this must needs be, or what its notion must import, above what hath been already evinced ; we shall not be found, in



this way, much to fall short of our present aim, though we have also other evidence that may be produced in its own fitter place.

Here therefore let us a while make a stand, and more distinctly consider how far we are already advanced, that we may with the better order and advantage make our further progress.

These two things then are already evident. That there is a necessary being that hath been eternally of itself, without dependence upon any thing, either as a productive or conserving cause ; and, of itself, full of activity and vital energy, so as to be a productive and sustaining cause, to other things. Of this any the most confused and indistinct view of this world, or a mere taking notice that there is any thing in being that lives and moves, and withal that alters and changes, (which it is impossible the necessary being itself should do,) cannot but put us out of doubt. And, that this necessary self-originate, vital, active being hath very vast power, admirable wisdom, and most free and large goodness belonging to it. And of this, our nearer and more deliberate view and contemplation of the word do equally ascertain us. For of these things we find the manifest prints and footsteps in it. Yea, we find the derived things themselves, power, wisdom, goodness, in the creatures : and we are most assured they have not sprung from nothing : nor from any thing that had them not. And that which originally had them, or was their first fountain, must have them necessarily and essentially, (together with whatsoever else belongs to its being,) in and of itself. So that the asserting of any other necessary being, that is in itself destitute of these things, signifies no more towards the giving any account how these things came to be in the world, than if no being, necessarily existing, were asserted at all. We are therefore, by the exigency of the case itself, constrained to acknowledge, not only that there is a necessary being, but that there is such a one as could be, and was, the fountain and cause of all those several kinds and degrees of being and perfection that we take notice of in the world besides. Another sort of necessary being should not only be asserted to no purpose, there being nothing to be gained by it, no imaginable use to be made of it, as a principle that can serve any valuable end : (for suppose such a thing as necessary matter, it will, as hath been shewn, be unalterable ; and therefore another sort of matter must be supposed besides it, that may be the matter of the universe, raised up out of nothing for that purpose, unto

which this so unwieldy and unmanageable an entity, can never serve;) but also it will be impossible to be proved. No man can be able with any plausible shew of reason to make it out. Yea, and much may be said, I conceive with convincing evidence, against it. As may perhaps be seen in the sequel of this discourse.

In the mean time, that there is, however, a necessary being, unto which all the perfections whereof we have any footsteps or resemblances in the creation do originally and essentially belong, is undeniably evident.

Now, that we may proceed, what can self-essentiate, unde-rived power, wisdom, goodness, be, but most perfect power, wisdom, goodness? Or such, as than which there can never be more perfect? For since there can be no wisdom, power, or goodness, which is not either original and self-essentiate, or derived and participated from thence; who sees not that the former must be the more perfect? Yea, and that it comprehended all the other (as what was from it) in itself, and consequently that it is simply the most perfect? And the reason will be the same, concerning any other perfection, the stamps and characters whereof we find signed upon the creatures.

But that the being unto which these belong is absolutely and universally perfect in every kind, must be further evidenced by considering more at large the notion and import of such a self-originate necessary being.

Some indeed, both more anciently,\* and of late, have inverted this course; and from the supposition of absolute perfection, have gone about to infer necessity of existence, as being contained in the idea of the former. But of this latter we are otherwise assured upon clearer and less exceptionable terms. And being so, are to consider what improvement may be made of it to our present purpose.

And in the general, this seems manifestly imported in the notion of the necessary being we have already evinced, that it have in it (some way or other, in what way there will be occasion to consider hereafter) the entire sum and utmost fulness of being, beyond which or without the compass whereof no

\* So that whatever there is of strength in that way of arguing, the glory of it cannot be without injury appropriated to the present age, much less to any particular person therein: it having, since Anselm, been ventilated by divers others heretofore. D. Scot. dist. 2. Q. 2. Th. Aquin. P. 1. Q. 2. art. 1. contra Gentil. l. 1. c. 10. Bradwardin, l. 1. c. 1. And by divers of late, as is sufficiently known, some rejecting, others much confiding in it, both of these former, and of modern writers.

perfection is conceivable, or indeed (which is of the same import) nothing.

Let it be observed, that we pretend not to argue this from the bare terms *necessary being* only, but from hence, that it is such as we have found it; though indeed these very terms import not a little to this purpose. For that which is necessarily of itself, without being beholden to any thing, seems as good as all things, and to contain in itself an immense fulness, being indigent of nothing. Nor by indigence is here meant cravingness, or a sense of want only; in opposition whereto, every good and virtuous man hath or may attain a sort of *αυτάρεσις*, or self-fulness, and be satisfied from him-self: (which yet is a stamp of divinity, and a part of the image of God, or such a participation of the divine nature, as is agreeable to the state and condition of a creature :) but we understand by it (what is naturally before that) want itself really, and not in opinion, as the covetous is said to be poor. On the other hand, we here intend not a merely rational, (much less an imaginary,) but a real self-fulness. And so we say, what is of that nature, that it is, and subsists wholly and only of itself, without depending on any other, must owe this absoluteness to so peculiar an excellency of its own nature, as we cannot well conceive to be less than whereby it comprehends in itself the most boundless and unlimited fulness of being, life, power, or whatsoever can be conceived under the name of a perfection. For taking notice of the existence of any thing whatsoever, some reason must be assignable, whence it is that this particular being doth exist, and hath such and such powers and properties belonging to it, as do occur to our notice therein. When we can now resolve its existence into some cause that put it into being, and made it what it is, we cease so much to admire the thing, how excellent soever it be, and turn our admiration upon its cause, concluding it to have all the perfection in it which we discern in the effect, whatsoever unknown perfection (which we may suppose is very great) it may have besides. And upon this ground we are led, when we behold the manifold excellencies that lie dispersed among particular beings in this universe, with the glory of the whole resulting thence, to resolve their existence into a common cause, which we design by the name of *God*. And now considering him as a wise Agent, (which hath been proved,) and consequently a free one, that acted not from any necessity of nature, but his mere good pleasure herein, we will not only conclude him to have all that perfection and excellency in him which

we find him to have displayed in so vast and glorious a work, but will readily believe him (supposing we have admitted a conviction concerning what hath been discoursed before) to have a most inconceivable treasure of hidden excellency and perfection in him, that is not represented to our view in this work of his : and account, that he who could do all this which we see is done, could do unspeakably more. For though, speaking of natural and necessitated agents, which always act to their uttermost, it would be absurd to argue from their having done some lesser thing, to their power of doing somewhat that is much greater ; yet as to free agents, that can choose their own act, and guide themselves by wisdom and judgment therein, the matter is not so. As when some great prince bestows a rich largess upon some mean person, especially that deserved nothing from him, or was recommended by nothing to his royal favour, besides his poverty and misery ; we justly take it for a very significant demonstration of that princely munificence and bounty, which would incline him to do much greater things, when he should see a proportionable cause.

But now, if taking notice of the excellencies that appear in caused beings, and inquiring how they come to exist and be what they are, we resolve all into their cause ; which, considering as perfectly free and arbitrary in all his communications, we do thence rationally conclude, that if he had thought fit, he could have made a much more pompous display of himself ; and that there is in him, besides what appears, a vast and most abundant store of undiscovered perfection.

When next we turn our inquiry and contemplation more entirely upon the cause, and bethink ourselves, But how came he to exist and be what he is ? Finding this cannot be refunded upon any superior cause ; and our utmost inquiry can admit of no other result but this, that he is of himself what he is, we will surely say then, He is all in all. And that perfection which before we judged vastly great, we will now conclude altogether absolute, and such beyond which no greater can be thought.

Adding, I say, to what pre-conceptions we had of his greatness, from the works which we see have been done by him, (for why should we lose any ground we might esteem ourselves to have gained before ?) the consideration of his necessary self-subsistence : and that no other reason is assignable of his being what he is, but the peculiar and incommunicable excellency of his own nature ; whereby he was not only able to make such a world, but did possess eternally and invariably in himself

all that he is, and hath : we cannot conceive that *all* to be less than absolutely universal, and comprehensive of whatsoever can lie within the whole compass of being.

For when we find that among all other beings, (which is most certainly true not only of actual, but all possible beings also,) how perfect soever they are or may be in their own kinds, none of them, nor all of them together, are or ever can be of that perfection, as to be of themselves without dependence on somewhat else as their productive, yea and sustaining cause ; we see besides, that their cause hath all the perfection, some way, in it that is to be found in them all : there is also that appropriate perfection belonging thereto, that it could be ; and eternally is (yea and could not but be) only of itself, by the underived and incommunicable excellency of its own being. And surely, what includes in it all the perfection of all actual and possible beings, besides its own. (for there is nothing possible which some cause, yea and even this, cannot produce,) and inconceivably more, must needs be absolutely and every way perfect. Of all which perfections this is the radical one, that belongs to this common Cause and Author of all things, that he is necessarily and only self-subsisting. For if this high prerogative in point of being had been wanting, nothing at all had ever been. Therefore we attribute to God the greatest thing that can be said or thought, (and not what is wholly diverse from all other perfection, but which contains all others in it,) when we affirm of him that he is necessarily of himself. For though when we have bewildered and lost ourselves (as we soon may) in the contemplation of this amazing subject, we readily indulge our wearied minds the ease and liberty of resolving this high excellency of self or necessary existence into a mere negation, and say that we mean by it nothing else than that he was not from another ; yet surely, if we would take some pains with ourselves, and keep our slothful shifting thoughts to some exercise in this matter, though we can never comprehend that vast fulness of perfection which is imported in it, (for it were not what we plead for, if we could comprehend it,) yet we should soon see and confess that it contains unspeakably more than a negation, even some great thing that is so much beyond our thoughts, that we shall reckon we have said but a little in saying we cannot conceive it. And that, when we have stretched our understandings to the utmost of their line and measure, though we may suppose ourselves to have conceived a great deal, there is infinitely more that we conceive not.

Wherefore that is a sober and most important truth which is occasionally drawn forth (as is supposed) from the so admired Des Cartes, by the urgent objections of his very acute, friendly adversary,\* that the inexhaustible power of God is the reason for which he needed no cause; and that since that unexhausted power, or the immensity of his essence, is most highly positive, therefore he may be said to be of himself positively, that is, not as if he did ever by any positive efficiency cause himself (which is most manifestly impossible) but that the positive excellency of his own being was such, as could never need, nor admit of, being caused.

And that seems highly rational, (which is so largely insisted on by Doctor Jackson, and divers others,†) that what is without cause must also be without limit of being; because all limitation proceeds from the cause of a thing, which imparted to it so much and no more; which argument, though it seems neglected by Des Cartes, and is opposed by his antagonist; yet I cannot but judge the longer one meditates, the less he shall understand, how any thing can be limited *ad intra*, or from itself, &c. As the author of the *Tentam. Phys. Theol.* speaks.

But that we may entertain ourselves with some more particular considerations of this necessary being, which may evince that general assertion of its absolute plenitude or fulness of essence:

1. It appears to be such as is at the greatest imaginable distance from non-entity. For what can be at a greater, than that which is necessarily, which signifies as much as whereto not to be is utterly impossible? Now an utter impossibility not to be, or the uttermost distance from *no* being, seems plainly to imply the absolute plenitude of *all* being. And, if here it be said that to be necessarily and of itself needs be understood to import no more than a firm possession of that being which a thing hath, be it ever so scant or minute a portion of being; I answer, it seems indeed so, if we measure the signification of this expression by its first and more obvious appearance. But if you consider the matter more narrowly, you will find here is also signified the nature and kind of the being possessed, as well as the manner of possession, namely, that it is a being of so excellent and noble a kind, as that it can subsist alone without being beholden: which is so great an excellency, as that it manifestly comprehends all other, or is the

\* Ad ob. in Med. resp. quartæ.

† Of the Essence and Attributes of God.

foundation of all that can be conceived besides. Which, they that fondly dream of necessary matter, not considering, unwarily make one single atom a more excellent thing than the whole frame of heaven and earth : *that* being supposed simply necessary, *this* the merest piece of hap-hazard, the strangest chance imaginable, and beyond what any but themselves could ever have imagined. And which, being considered, would give us to understand that no minute or finite being can be necessarily.

And hence we may see what it is to be nearer, or at a further distance from not-being.

For these things that came contingently into being, or at the pleasure of a free cause, have all but a finite and limited being, whereof some, having a smaller portion of being than others, approach so much the nearer to not-being. Proportionably, what hath its being necessarily and of itself, is at the farthest distance from no-being, as comprehending all being in itself. Or, to borrow the expressions of an elegant writer, translated into our own language,\* “We have much more non-essence than essence ; if we have the essence of a man, yet not of the heavens, or of angels.” “We are confined and limited within a particular essence, but God, who is what he is, comprehendeth all possible essences.”

Nor is this precariously spoken, or as what may be hoped to be granted upon courtesy. But let the matter be rigidly examined and discussed, and the certain truth of it will most evidently appear. For if any thing be, in this sense, remoter than other from no-being, it must either be, what is necessarily of itself, or what is contingently at the pleasure of the other. But since nothing is, besides that self-originate necessary being, but what was from it ; and nothing from it but what was within its productive power ; it is plain all that, with its own being, was contained in it. And therefore, even in that sense, it is at the greatest distance from no-being ; as comprehending the utmost fulness of being in itself, and consequently absolute perfection. Which will yet further appear, in what follows.

2. We therefore add, that necessary being is most unmixed or purest being, without allay. That is pure which is full of itself. Purity is not here meant in a corporeal sense, nor in the moral ; but as, with metaphysicians, it signifies simplicity of essence. And in its present use is more especially intended to

\* *Causin.*

signify that simplicity which is opposed to the composition of act and possibility. We say then, that necessary being imports purest actuality : which is the ultimate and highest perfection of being. For it signifies no remaining possibility, yet unrecplete or not filled up, and consequently the fullest exuberancy and entire confluence of all being, as in its fountain and original source. We need not here look further to evince this, than the native import of the very terms themselves ; *necessity* and *possibility* ; the latter whereof is not so fitly said to be excluded the former, as contingency is, but to be swallowed up of it ; as fulness takes up all the space which were otherwise nothing but vacuity or emptiness. It is plain then that necessary being engrosses all possible being, both that is, and (for the same reason) that ever was so. For nothing can be, or ever was, in possibility to come into being, but what either must spring, or hath sprung, from the necessary self-subsisting being.

So that unto all that vast possibility, a proportionable actuality of this being must be understood to correspond. Else the other were not possible. For nothing is possible to be produced which is not within the actual productive power of the necessary being : I say within *its* actual productive power ; for if its power for such production were not already actual, it could never become so, and so were none at all : inasmuch as necessary being can never alter, and consequently can never come actually to be what it already is not ; upon which account it is truly said, *In æternis posse & esse sunt idem.*—*In eternal things, to be capable of being and to be are the same thing.* Wherefore in it, is nothing else but pure actuality, as profound and vast as is the utmost possibility of all created or producible being ; that is, it can be nothing other than it is, but can do all things, of which more hereafter. It therefore stands opposed, not only, more directly, to impossibility of being, which is the most proper notion of no-being, but some way, even to possibility also. That is, the possibility of being any thing but what it is ; as being every way complete and perfectly full already.

3. Again, we might further add, that it is the most abstracted being, or is being in the very abstract. A thing much insisted on by some of the schoolmen. And the notion which with much obscurity they pursue after their manner, may carry some such sense as this, (if it may, throughout, be called sense,) that whereas no created nature is capable of any other



than mere mental abstraction, but exists always in concretion with some subject, that, be it ever so refined, is grosser and less perfect than itself; so that we can distinguish the mentally abstracted essence, and the thing which hath that essence; by which concretion, essence is limited, and is only the particular essence of this or that thing, which hath or possesses that essence. The necessary being is, in strict propriety, not so truly said to have essence, as to be it, and exist separately by itself; not as limited to this or that thing. Whence it is, in itself, universal essence, containing therefore, not formally, but eminently, the being of all things in perfect simplicity. Whence all its own attributes are capable of being affirmed of it in the abstract,\* that it is wisdom, power, goodness; and not only hath these, and that upon this account it is a being, which is necessarily and of itself. For that which is necessarily and of itself, is not whatsoever it is by the accession of any thing to itself, whereof necessary being is incapable; but by its own simple and unvariable essence. Other being is upon such terms powerful, wise, yea, and existent, as that it may cease to be so. Whereas to necessary being, it is manifestly repugnant, and impossible either simply not to be, or to be any thing else but what and as it is. And though other things may have properties belonging to their essence not separable from it, yet they are not their very essence itself. And, whereas they are in a possibility to lose their very existence, the knot and ligament of whatsoever is most intimate to their actual being, all then falls from them together. Here, essence, properties, and existence, are all one simple thing that can never cease, decay, or change, because the whole being is necessary, Now, all this being supposed, of the force of that form of speech, when we affirm any thing in the abstract of another, we may admit the common sense of men to be the interpreter.

\* To which purpose we may take notice of the words of one, not the less worthy to be named, for not being reckoned of that forementioned order. *Si enim denominative de eo quippiam prædicaretur abstractum esset tum aliud ab ipso, tum ipso prius. Quod sane impium est, quare neque ens est sed essentia, neque bonus sed bonitas est*—If any quality were to be affirmed concerning the Deity, in expressions derived from an abstract term, the idea answering to that abstract term would be both distinct in existence from him and prior to him; which would certainly be impious. It follows therefore that the Deity is not so properly something possessed of an essence, as the essence itself; not so properly a being possessed of goodness, as goodness itself. *Julius Scaliger, Exerc. 265.*

For every body can tell, though they do not know the meaning of the word *abstract*, what we intend when we use that phrase or manner of speaking. As when we say, by way of hyperbolical commendation, Such a man is not only learned, but learning itself; or he not only hath much of virtue, justice, and goodness in him, but he is virtue, justice, and goodness itself, (as was once said of an excellent Pagan *virtuoso*, that I may borrow leave to use that word in the moral sense,) every one knows the phrase intends the appropriating all learning, virtue, justice, goodness, to such a one. Which, because they know unappropriable to any man, they easily understand it to be, in such a case, a rhetorical strain and form of speech. And yet could not know that, if also they did not understand its proper and native import. And so it may as well be understood what is meant by saying of God, He is being itself. With which sense may be reconciled that of (the so named) Dionysius the Areopagite; \* that God is not so properly said to be of, or be in, or to have, or partake, of being, as that it is of him, &c. Inasmuch as he is the pre-existent Being to all being; that is, if we understand him to mean all besides his own. In which sense taking being for that which is communicated and imparted, he may truly be said, (as this author and the Platonists generally speak, Proclus in Plat. Theol. l. 2, c. 4.) to be super-essential or super-substantial. But how fitly being is taken in that restrained sense, we may say more hereafter.

In the mean time, what hath been said concerning this abstractedness of the necessary being, hath in it some things so unintelligible, and is accompanied with so great (unmentioned) difficulties, (which it would give us, perhaps, more labour than profit to discuss,) and the absolute perfection of God appears so evidencible otherwise, by what hath been and may be further said, that we are no way concerned to lay the stress of the cause on this matter only.

4. Moreover, necessary being is the cause and author of all being besides. Whatsoever is not necessary, is caused; for not having being of itself, it must be put into being by some-

\* Καὶ αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ εἶναι ἐκ τῆ προούσης, καὶ αὐτὴ ἐστὶ δὲ τὸ εἶναι, καὶ ἡ αὐτὸς τῷ εἶναι, καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ ἐστὶ τὸ εἶναι, καὶ ἐκ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ εἶναι, καὶ αὐτὸν ἔχει τὸ εἶναι, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχει τὸ εἶναι—His very being is of himself, as previously possessed of being; being is of him, and not he of being; being is in him, and not he in being; and being hath him, more properly than he hath being. *De Divinis nomin. Co. 5.*

what else. And inasmuch as there is no middle sort of being betwixt necessary and not necessary, and all that is not necessary is caused, it is plain that which is necessary must be the cause of all the rest. And surely what is the cause of all being besides its own, must needs, one way or other, contain its own and all other in itself, and is consequently comprehensive of the utmost fulness of being; or is the absolutely perfect being, (as must equally be acknowledged,) unless any one would imagine himself to have got the notice of some perfection that lies without the compass of all being.

Nor is it an exception worth the mentioning, that there may be a conception of possible being or perfection, which the necessary being hath not caused. For it is, manifestly, as well the possible cause of all possible being and perfection, as the actual cause of what is actual. And what it is possible to it to produce, it hath within its productive power, as hath been said before.

And if the matter did require it, we might say further, that the same necessary being which hath been the productive cause, is also the continual root and basis of all being, which is not necessary. For what is of itself, and cannot, by the special privilege of its own being, but be, needs nothing to sustain it, or needs not trust to any thing besides its own eternal stability. But what is not so, seems to need a continual reproduction every moment, and to be no more capable of continuing in being by itself, than it was, by itself, of coming into being. For (as is frequently alleged by that so often mentioned author) since there is no connexion betwixt the present and future time, but what is easily capable of rupture, it is no way consequent that, because I am now, I shall therefore be the next moment, further than as the free Author of my being shall be pleased to continue his own most arbitrary influence, for my support. This seems highly probable to be true, whether that reason signify any thing or nothing. And that, thence also, continual conservation differs not from creation. Which, whether (as is said by the same author) it be one of the things that are manifest by natural light, or whether a positive act be needless to the annihilation of created things, but only the withholding of influence, let them examine that apprehend the cause to need it. And if, upon inquiry, they judge it at least evidenceable by natural light to be so, (as I doubt not they will,) they will have this further ground upon which thus to reason: that, inasmuch as the necessary being subsists wholly by itself, and is that whereon all other doth

totally depend, it hereupon follows, that it must, some way, contain in itself all being. We may yet further add,

5. That the necessary being we have evinced, though it hath caused and doth continually sustain all things, yet doth not itself in the mean time suffer any diminution. It is not possible, nor consistent with the very terms *necessary being*, that it can. It is true, that if such a thing as a necessary atom were admitted, that would be also undiminishable, it were not else an atom. But as nothing then can flow from it, as from a perfect parvitude nothing can, so it can effect nothing. And the reason is the same of many as of one. Nor would undiminishableness, upon such terms, signify any thing to the magnifying the value of such a trifle.

But this is none of the present case: for our eyes tell us here is a world in being, which we are sure is not itself necessarily; and was therefore made by him that is. And that, without mutation or change in him; against which the very notion of a necessary being is most irreconcilably reluctant; and therefore without diminution, which cannot be conceived without change. \*

Wherefore how inexhaustible a fountain of life, being, and all perfection, have we here represented to our thoughts! from whence this vast universe is sprung, and is continually springing, and that in the mean time receiving no recruits or foreign supplies, yet suffers no impairment or lessening of itself! What is this but absolute all-sufficiency! And it is so far from arguing any deficiency or mutability in his nature, that there is this continual issue of power and virtue from him, that it demonstrates its high excellency that this can be without decay or mutation. For of all this, we are as certain as we can be of any thing: that many things are not necessarily, that the being must be necessary from whence all things else proceed, and that with necessary being change is inconsistent. It is therefore unreasonable to entertain any doubt that things *are so*, which most evidently appear to be so, only because it is beyond our measure and compass to apprehend *how they are so*. And it would be to doubt, against our own eyes, whether there be any such thing as motion in the world, or com-

\* Ἐν δὲ ταύτῃ τῇ χορείᾳ, κάδοι αἱ πηγὴν μὲν ζωῆς, πηγὴν δὲ νῆς, ἀρχὴν ὄντος, ἀρχὰς αἰτίαν, ῥίζαν ψυχῆς ἐκ ἐκχεομένων ἀπ' αὐτῆς οὐ ἐκείνων ἐλαττέων—  
In this harmonic arrangement, behold the fountain both of life and of intellect, the beginning of all that exists, the efficient cause of good; while neither he, nor those primordial principles themselves, are capable of any diminution. *Plotinus Enn. 6. l. 9. c. 9.*

position of bodies, because we cannot give a clear account, so as to avoid all difficulties, and the entanglement of the common sophisms about them, how these things are performed. In the present case, we have no difficulty but what is to be resolved into the perfection of the Divine Nature, and the imperfection of our own. And how easily conceivable is it, that somewhat may be more perfect, than that we can conceive it. If we cannot conceive the manner of God's causation of things, or the nature of his causative influence, it only shews their high excellency, and gives us the more ground (since this is that into which both his own revelation and the reason of things most naturally lead us to resolve all) to admire the mighty efficacy of his all-creating and all-sustaining will and word; that in that easy unexpensive way, by his mere fiat, so great things should be performed.

6. We only say further, that this necessary Being is such to which nothing can be added; so as that it should be really greater, or better, or more perfect, than it was before. And this not only signifies that nothing can be joined to it, so as to become a part of it, (which necessary being, by its natural immutability, manifestly refuses,) but we also intend by it, that all things else, with it, contain not more of real perfection than it doth alone. Which, though it carries a difficulty with it that we intend not wholly to overlook when it shall be seasonable to consider it, is a most apparent and demonstrable truth. For it is plain that all being and perfection which is not necessary, proceeds from that which is, as the cause of it; and that no cause could communicate any thing to another which it had not, some way, in itself. Wherefore it is manifestly consequent that all other being was wholly before comprehended in that which is necessary, as having been wholly produced by it. And what is wholly comprehended of another, that is, within its productive power, before it be produced, can be no real addition to it, when it is.

Now what can be supposed to import fulness of being and perfection, more than this impossibility of addition, or that there can be nothing greater or more perfect?

And now these considerations are mentioned, without solicitude whether they be so many exactly distinct heads. For admit that they be not all distinct, but some are involved with others of them, yet the same truth may more powerfully strike some understandings in one form of representation, others in another. And it suffices, that (though not severally) they do together plainly evidence that the necessary being includes the

absolute, entire fulness of all being and perfection actual and possible within itself.

Having therefore thus dispatched that *first* part of this undertaking, the eviction of an every way perfect being, we shall now need to labour little in the *second*, namely, the more express deduction of the infiniteness and onliness thereof.

I. For as to the former of these, it is in effect the same thing that hath been already proved; since to the fullest notion of infiniteness, absolute perfection seems every way most fully to correspond. For absolute perfection includes all conceivable perfection, leaves nothing excluded. And what doth most simple infiniteness import, but to have nothing for a boundary, or, which is the same, not to be bounded at all?

We intend not now, principally, infiniteness extrinsically considered, with respect to time and place, as to be *eternal* and *immense* do import; but *intrinsically*, as importing bottomless profundity of essence, and the full confluence of all kinds and degrees of perfection, without bound or limit. This is the same with absolute perfection: which yet, if any should suspect not to be so, they might, however, easily and expressly prove it of the necessary being, upon the same grounds that have been already alleged for proof of that:—as that the necessary being hath actuality answerable to the utmost possibility of the creature; that it is the only root and cause of all other being, the actual cause of whatsoever is actually; the possible cause of whatsoever is possible to be: which is most apparently true, and hath been evidenced to be so, by what hath been said, so lately, as that it needs not be repeated. That is, in short, that nothing that is not necessarily, and of itself, could ever have been or can be, but as it hath been or shall be put into being by that which is necessarily, and of itself. So that this is as apparent as that any thing is, or can be.

But now let sober reason judge, whether there can be any bounds or limits set to the possibility of producible being; either in respect of kinds, numbers, or degrees of perfection? Who can say or think, when there can be so many sorts of creatures produced, (or at least individuals of those sorts,) that there can be no more? Or that any creature is so perfect as that none can be made more perfect? Which indeed, to suppose, were to suppose an actual infiniteness in the creature. And then it being, however, still but somewhat that is created or made, how can its maker but be infinite? For surely nobody will be so absurd as to imagine an infinite effect of a finite cause.

II. Having evinced the infiniteness of this Being, it will be

necessary, before we proceed to the onliness thereof, to inquire if the creature can be actually infinite: for it follows either that the creature is, or some time may be, actually made so perfect that it cannot be more perfect, or not. If not, we have our purpose; that there is an infinite possibility on the part of the creature, always unrepente; and consequently, a proportionable infinite actuality of power on the Creator's part. Infinite power, I say, otherwise there were not that acknowledged infinite possibility of producible being. For nothing is producible, that no power can produce, be the intrinsic possibility of it (or its not-implying in itself, a contradiction that it should exist) what it will. And I say infinite actual power, because the Creator, being what he is necessarily, what power he hath not actually, he can never have, as was argued before. But if it be said, the creature either is, or may some time be, actually so perfect as that it cannot be more perfect; that, as was said, will suppose it then actually infinite; and therefore much more that its cause is so. And therefore in this way our present purpose would be gained also. But we have no mind to gain it this latter way, as we have no need. It is in itself plain, to any one that considers, that this possibility on the creature's part can never actually be filled up; that it is a bottomless abyss, in which our thoughts may still gradually go down deeper and deeper, without end: that is, that still more might be produced, or more perfect creatures, and still more, everlastingly, without any bound; which sufficiently infers what we aim at, that the Creator's actual power is proportionable. And indeed the supposition of the former can neither consist with the Creator's perfection, nor with the imperfection of the creature; it would infer that the Creator's productive power might be exhausted; that he could do no more, and so place an actual boundary to him, and make him finite. It were to make the creature actually full of being, that it could receive no more, and so would make that infinite. But it may be said, since all power is in order to act, and the very notion of possibility imports that such a thing, of which it is said, may, some time, be actual; it seems very unreasonable to say, that the infinite power of a cause cannot produce an infinite effect; or that infinite possibility can never become infinite actuality. For that were to say and unsay the same thing, of the same; to affirm omnipotency and impotency of the same cause; possibility and impossibility of the same effect.

How urgent soever this difficulty may seem, there needs

nothing but patience and attentive consideration to disentangle ourselves, and get through it. For if we will but allow ourselves the leisure to consider, we shall find that *power* and *possibility* must here be taken not simply and abstractly, but as each of them is in conjunction with *infinite*. And what is infinite, but that which can never be travelled through, or whereof no end can be ever arrived unto? Now suppose infinite power had produced all that it could produce, it were no longer infinite, there were an end of it: that is, it had found limits and a boundary beyond which it could not go. If infinite possibility were filled up, there were an end of that also; and so neither were infinite.

It may then be further urged, that there is therefore no such thing as infinite power or possibility. For how is that cause said to have infinite power, which can never produce its proportionable effect, or that effect have infinite possibility, which can never be produced? It would follow then, that power and possibility, which are said to be infinite, are neither power nor possibility; and that *infinite* must be rejected as a notion either repugnant to itself, or to any thing unto which we shall go about to affix it.

I answer, It only follows, they are neither power nor possibility, whereof there is any bound or end; or that can ever be gone through. And how absurd is it that they shall be said, as they cannot but be, to be both very vast, if they were finite; and none at all, for no other reason but their being infinite! And for the pretended repugnancy of the very notion of infinite, it is plain, that though it cannot be to us distinctly comprehensible, yet it is no more repugnant than the notion of finiteness. Nor when we have conceived of power, in the general, and in our own thoughts set bounds to it, and made it finite, is it a greater difficulty (nay, they that try will find it much easier) again to think away these bounds, and make it infinite? And let them that judge the notion of infiniteness inconsistent, therefore reject it if they can. They will feel it reimposing itself upon them, whether they will or no, and sticking as close to their minds as their very thinking power itself. And who was therefore ever heard of, that did not acknowledge some or other infinite? Even the Epicureans themselves, though they confined their gods, they did not the universe. Which, also, though some *Peripatetic* atheists made finite in respect of place, yet in duration they made it infinite. Though the notion of an eternal world is incumbered with such absurdities and impossibilities, as whereof there



is not the least shadow, in that, of an every way infinite Deity.

Briefly, it consists not with the nature of a contingent being, to be infinite. For what is upon such terms, only, in being, is reducible to nothing, at the will and pleasure of its maker ; but it is a manifest repugnancy, that what is at the utmost distance from nothing (as infinite fulness of being cannot but be) should be reducible thither. Therefore actual infinity cannot but be the peculiar privilege of that which is necessarily.

Yet may we not say, that it is not within the compass of infinite power to make a creature that may be infinite. For it argues not want of power that this is never to be done, but a still infinitely abounding surplusage of it, that can never be drained or drawn dry. Nor, that the thing itself is simply impossible. It may be, as is compendiously expressed by that most succinct and polite writer, Dr. Boyle, \* *in fieri*, not *in facto esse*. That is, it might be a thing always *in doing*, but *never done*. Because it belongs to the infinite perfection of God, that his power be never actually exhausted ; and to the infinite imperfection of the creature, that its possibility or capacity be never filled up : to the necessary self-subsisting being, to be always full and communicative ; to the communicated contingent being, to be ever empty and craving. One may be said to have that, some way, in his power, not only which he can do presently, all at once, but which he can do by degrees, and supposing he have sufficient time. So a man may be reckoned able to do that, as the uttermost, adequate effect of his whole power, which it is only possible to him to have effected, with the expiration of his life's-time. God's measure is eternity. What if we say then, this is a work possible to be accomplished, even as the ultimate, proportionable issue of *divine power*, (if it were his will, upon which all contingent being depends,) that the creature should be ever growing in the mean while, and be absolutely perfect at the expiration of eternity ? If then you be good at suppositions, suppose that expired, and this work finished, both together. Wherefore if you ask, Why can the work of making created being infinite, never be done ? The answer will be, Because eternity (in every imaginable instant whereof, the inexhaustible power of God can, if he will, be still adding either more creatures, or more perfection to a creature) can never be at an end.

\* Bishop of Clogher, in his *Contemplat. Metaphys.*

We might further argue the infinity of the necessary being, from what hath been said of its *undiminishableness*, by all its vast communications. \* Its impossibility to receive any *accession* to itself, by any its so great productions, both which are plainly demonstrable, as we have seen, of the necessary being, even as it is such, and do clearly, as any thing can, bespeak *infinity*. But we have thence argued its absolute perfection, which so evidently includes the same thing, that all this latter labour might have been spared; were it not that it is the genius of some persons not to be content that they have the substance of a thing said, unless it be also said in their own terms. And that the express asserting of God's simple infiniteness, in those very terms, is, in that respect, the more requisite, as it is a form of expression more known and usual.

III. There are yet some remaining difficulties in the matter we have been discoursing of; which partly through the debility of our own minds we cannot but find, and which partly the subtlety of sophistical wits doth create to us. It will be requisite we have some consideration of at least some of them, which we will labour to dispatch with all possible brevity; leaving those that delight in the sport of tying and loosing knots, or of weaving snares wherein cunningly to entangle themselves, to be entertained by the *school-men*; among whom they may find enough, upon this subject, to give them exercise unto *weariness*; and, if their minds have any relish of what is more savory, I may venture to say, unto *loathing*.

It may possibly be here said, in short, But what have we all this while been doing? We have been labouring to prove that necessary being comprehends the absolute fulness of all being: and what doth this signify, but that all being is necessary? That God is all things, and so that every thing is God; that we hereby confound the being of a man, yea, of a stone, or whatever we can think of, with one another, and all with the being of God.

And again, how is it possible there should be an infinite self-subsisting being? For then how can there be any finite, since such infinite being includes all being, and there can be nothing beyond all?

\* For howsoever disputable it may be, whether whatsoever is infinite can have nothing added to it; yet it is without dispute, that whatsoever is so full as that nothing can be added to it, is infinite.

Here therefore it is requisite, having hitherto only asserted, and endeavoured to evince that, some way, necessary being doth include all being, to shew in what way. And it is plain it doth not include all, in the same way. It doth not so include that which is created by it and depends on it, as it doth its own, which is uncreated and independent.

The one it includes as its own, or rather as itself; the other, as what it is, and ever was, within its power to produce. If any better like the terms *formally* and *virtually*, they may serve themselves of them at their own pleasure, which yet, as to many, will but more darkly speak the same sense.

We must here know, the productive power of God terminates not upon himself, as if he were, by it, capable of adding any thing to his own appropriate being, which is (as hath been evinced already) infinitely full, and incapable of addition, and is therefore all pure act; but on the creature, where there is still a perpetual possibility, never filled up; because *divine power* can never be exhausted. And thus all that of being is virtually in him, which, either having produced, he doth totally sustain, or not being produced, he can produce.

Whereupon it is easy to understand, how necessary being may comprehend all being, and yet all being not be necessary. It comprehends all being, besides what itself is, as having had, within the compass of its productive power, whatsoever hath actually sprung from it, and having within the compass of the same power, whatsoever is still possible to be produced. Which no more confounds such produced or producible being with that necessary being which is its cause, than it confounds all the effects of human power with one another, and with the being of a man, to say, that he virtually comprehended them (so far as they were producible by him) within his power. And it is no wiser an inference from the former, than it would be from this latter, that a house, a book, and a child, are the same thing with one another, and with the person that produced them; because, so far as they were produced by him, he had it in his power to produce them. And that the effects of *divine power* are produced thereby *totally*, whereas those of human power are produced by it but in *part only*, doth, as to the strength and reasonableness of the argument, nothing alter the case.

And as to the next, That infinite being should seem to exclude all finite. I confess that such as are so disposed, might here even wrangle continually, as they might do about any

thing in which infiniteness is concerned ; and yet therein shew themselves (as Seneca I remember speaks in another case) not a whit the more learned, but the more troublesome. But if one would make short work of it, and barely deny that infinite being excludes finite, (as Scotus doth little else ;\* besides denying the consequence of the argument, by which it was before enforced, namely, [that an infinite body would exclude a finite ; for where should the finite be, when the infinite should fill up all space? And therefore by parity of reason, why should not infinite being exclude finite?] shewing the disparity of the two cases,) it would perhaps give them some trouble also to prove it. For which way would they go to work? Infinite self-subsisting being includes all being, very true ; and therefore, we say, it includes finite. And what then? Doth it, because it includes it, therefore exclude it? And let the matter be soberly considered ; somewhat of finite being and power, we say, (and apprehend no knot or difficulty in the matter,) can extend so far as to produce some proportionable effect, or can do such and such things. And what, doth it seem likely then, that infinite being and power can therefore do just nothing? Is it not a reason of mighty force, and confoundingly demonstrative, that an agent can do nothing, or cannot possibly produce any the least thing, only because he is of infinite power?

For if there be a simple inconsistency between an infinite being and a finite, that will be the case ; that, because the former is infinite, therefore it can produce nothing. For what it should produce cannot consist with it, that is, even not being *finite* ; and then certainly if we could suppose the effect *infinite*, much less. But what, therefore, is power the less for being infinite? or can infinite power, even because it is infinite, do nothing? What can be said or thought more absurd, or void of sense? Or shall it be said that the infiniteness of power is no hinderance, but the infiniteness of being? But how wild an imagination were that of a finite being, that were of infinite power? And besides, is that power somewhat, or nothing? Surely it will not be said it is nothing. Then it is some being ; and if some power be some being, what then is infinite power, is not that infinite being? And now, therefore, if this infinite can produce any thing, which it were a strange madness to deny, it can at least produce some finite thing. Wherefore there is no inconsistency between the infinite and

\* Distinct. 2. Q. 2. Q. 1.

finite beings, unless we say the effect produced, even by being produced, must destroy, or even infinitely impair its cause, so as to make it cease at least to be infinite ! But that also cannot possibly be said of that which is infinite and necessary ; which, as hath been shewn, cannot, by whatsoever productions, suffer any diminution or decay. If here it be further urged, But here is an infinite being now supposed ; let, next, be supposed the production of a finite : this is not the same with the other ; for surely infinite, and finite, are distinguishable enough, and do even infinitely differ. This finite is either something or nothing ; nothing it cannot be said ; for it was supposed a being, and produced ; but the production of nothing, is no production. It is somewhat then ; here is therefore an infinite being, and a finite, now besides. The infinite, it was said, cannot be diminished ; the finite, a real something, is added. Is there therefore nothing more of existent being than there was before this production ? It is answered, Nothing more than virtually was before ; for when we suppose an infinite being, and afterwards a finite ; this finite is not to be looked upon as emerging or springing up of itself out of nothing, or as proceeding from some third thing as its cause, but as produced by that infinite, or springing out of that, which it could not do, but as being before virtually contained in it. For the infinite produces nothing, which it could not produce. And what it could produce, was before contained in it, as in the power of its cause. And to any one that attends, and is not disposed to be quarrelsome, this is as plain and easy to be understood, as how any finite thing may produce another, or rather, more plain and easy, because a finite agent doth not entirely contain its effect within itself, or in its own power, as an infinite doth. If yet it be again said, that which is limited is not infinite, but suppose any finite thing produced into being after a pre-existent infinite, this infinite becomes now limited ; for the being of the finite, is not that of the infinite, each hath its own distinct being. And it cannot be said of the one, it is the other ; therefore each is limited to itself. I answer ; that which was infinite becomes not hereby less than it was ; for it hath produced nothing but what was before virtually contained in it, and still is, for it still totally sustains the other. But whatsoever it actually doth, it can do, or hath within its power : therefore it were infinite before, and is not now become less, it is still infinite.

Wherefore the true reason why the position of a finite thing after a supposed all-comprehending infinite, doth no way in-

trench upon or detract from the other's all-comprehensive infinity, is, that it was formerly contained, and still is, within the virtue and power of the other.

It is true, that if we should suppose any thing besides that supposed infinite to be of itself, that would infer a limitation of the former. Infer, I say, not cause it, that is, it would not make it cease to be all-comprehendingly infinite, but it would argue it not to have been so before; and that the supposition of its infinity was a false supposition, because it would then appear that the former did not comprehend all being any way in itself. Somewhat being now found to be in being, which hath no dependence thereon; whence it would be evident neither can be so. Of which, some good use may be made to a further purpose by and by.

Here only we may by the way annex, as a just corollary, from the foregoing discourse, that as the supposition of necessary self-subsisting matter was before shewn to be a *vain*, it now also appears plainly to be altogether an *impossible* supposition. For since the necessary self-subsisting being is infinite and all-comprehensive; and if matter were supposed necessary, we must have another necessary being to form the world, inasmuch as matter is not self-active, much less intelligent, as it hath both been proved it cannot be, and that the Former of this world must be. It is therefore out of question, that because both cannot be all-comprehensive, they cannot both be necessary. Nor can the vastly different kinds or natures of these things salve the business; for be they of what kinds they will, they are still beings. Besides, if matter were necessary and self-subsisting, every particle of it must be so. And then we shall have not only two, but an infinite number of such infinities, and all of the same kind. But being, only of this or that sort, (as is apparent where more sorts do exist than one,) could not be simply infinite, except as the other depends thereon: and as this one is radically comprehensive of all the rest, that can come under the general and most common notion of being. For that there is some general notion wherein all being agrees, and by which it differs from no being, is, I think, little to be doubted; how unequally soever, and dependently the one upon the other, the distinct sorts do partake therein. Whereupon the expressions, *super-essential*, and others like it, spoken of God, must be understood as rhetorical strains, importing more reverence than rigid truth. Except by essence, as was formerly said, only that which is created be meant. And that only a purer and more noble kind of essence

were intended to be asserted to him,\* which yet seems also unwarrantable and injurious, that a word of that import should be so misapplied and transferred from the substance, to signify nothing but the shadow, rather, of being. And that they who would seem zealously concerned to appropriate all being unto God, should, in the height of their transport, so far forget themselves as to set him above all being, and so deny him any at all. For surely that which simply is above all being, is no being.

2. And as to the unity, or onliness rather, of this being, or of the God-head, the deduction thereof seems plain and easy from what hath been already proved; that is, from the absolute perfection thereof. For though some do toil themselves much about this matter, and others plainly conclude that it is not to be proved at all in a rational way, but only by divine revelation; yet I conceive, they that follow the method (having proved some necessary self-subsisting being, the root and original spring of all being and perfection, actual and possible, which is as plain as any thing can be) of deducing from thence the absolute, all-comprehending perfection of such necessary being, will find their work as good as done. For nothing seems more evident, than that there cannot be two (much less more) such beings, inasmuch as one comprehends in itself all being and perfection; for there can be but one all, without which is nothing. So that, one such being supposed, another can have nothing remaining to it. Yea, so far is it therefore, if we suppose one infinite and absolutely perfect being, that there can be another, independent thereon, (and of a depending infinity, we need not say more than we have, which if any such could be, cannot possibly be a distinct God,) that there cannot be the minutest, finite thing, imaginable, which that supposed infinity doth not comprehend, or that can stand apart from it, on any distinct basis of its own. And that this matter may be left as plain as we can make it; supposing it already most evident, namely, That there is, actually existing, an absolute, entire fulness of wisdom, power, and so of all

\* And we must suppose somewhat agreeable to this to be the meaning of Plotinus, when he denies knowledge to be in God, and yet also denies that there is in him any ignorance; that is, that he means his intelligence is of an infinitely distinct and more excellent sort from that which he causes in us, as appears by his annexed reason, τὸ δὲ πάντων αἴτιον, ἂν εἴη ἐξ ἑωυτοῦ—*That which is the efficient cause of all things, cannot be one of those things of which it is the cause.* Enn. 6. l. 9. c. 6.

other perfection—That such absolute entire fulness of perfection, is infinite—That this infinite perfection must have its primary seat somewhere—That its primary, original seat can be nowhere, but in necessary self-subsisting being. We hereupon add, that if we suppose multitude, or any plurality of necessary self-originate beings, concurring to make up the seat or subject of this infinite perfection; each one must either be of finite and partial perfection, or infinite and absolute. Infinite and absolute it cannot be, because one self-originate, infinitely and absolutely perfect being will necessarily comprehend all perfection, and leave nothing to the rest. Nor finite, because many finites can never make one infinite; much less can many broken parcels or fragments of perfection ever make infinite and absolute perfection; even though their number, if that were possible, were infinite. For the perfection of unity would still be wanting, and their communication and concurrence to any work (even such as we see is done) be infinitely imperfect and impossible.

We might, more at large, and with a much more pompous number and apparatus of arguments, have shewn that there can be no more Gods than one. But to such as had rather be informed, than bewildered and lost, clear proof that is shorter, and more comprehensive, will be more grateful.

Nor doth this proof of the *unity* of the God-head any way impugn the *trinity*, which is by Christians believed, therein, (and whereof some heathens, as is known, have not been wholly without some apprehension, however they came by it,) or exclude a sufficient, uncreated ground of trinal distinction. As would be seen, if that great difference of beings, *necessary* and *contingent*, be well stated, and what is by eternal, necessary emanation of the divine nature, be duly distinguished from the arbitrary products of the divine will; And the matter be thoroughly examined, whether herein be not a sufficient distinction of that which is increated, and that which is created. In this way it is possible it might be cleared, how a *trinity* in the God-head may be very consistently with the *unity* thereof. But that it is, we cannot know, but by his telling us so. It being among the many things of God, which are not to be known, but by the Spirit of God revealing and testifying them, in and according to the holy Scriptures: as the things of a man are not known but by the spirit of a man. And what further evidence we may justly and reasonably take from those Scriptures, even in reference to some of the things hitherto discoursed, may be hereafter shewn.



## CHAP. V.

I. Demands in reference to what hath been hitherto discoursed, with some reasonings thereupon: *First*, Is it possible that, upon supposition of *this being's* existence, it may be, in any way suitable to our present state, made known to us that it doth exist? Proved, 1. That it may. 2. That, since any other fit way that can be thought on is as much liable to exception as that we have already, *this* must be, therefore, sufficient. II. Strong impressions. III. Glorious apparitions. IV. Terrible voices. V. Surprising transformations. VI. If these necessary, is it needful they be universal? frequent? VII. If not, more rare things of this sort not wanting. *Second*, Demand. Can subjects, remote from their prince, sufficiently be assured of his existence? *Third*, Demand. Can we be sure there are men on earth? VIII. Reflections.

I. **A**ND if any should in the mean time still remain either doubtful, or apt to cavil, after all that hath been said for proof of *that being's* existence which we have described, I would only add these few things, by way of inquiry or demand; namely,

*First*, Do they believe, upon supposition of the existence of such a Being, that it is possible it may be made known to us, in our present state and circumstances, by means not unsuitable thereto, or inconvenient to the order and government of the world, that it doth exist? It were strange to say or suppose, that a Being of so high perfection as this we have hitherto given an account of, *if he is*, cannot in any fit way make it known that *he is*, to an intelligent and apprehensive sort of creatures.

1. If indeed *he is*; and be the common Cause, Author, and Lord of us and all things, (which we do now but suppose: and we may defy cavil to allege any thing that is so much as colourable against the possibility of the supposition,) surely he hath done greater things than the making of it known that he is. It is no unapprehensible thing. There hath been no inconsistent notion hitherto given of him; nothing said concerning him, but will well admit that it is possible such a Being may be now existent. Yea, we not only can conceive, but we actually have, and cannot but have, some conception of the several attributes we have ascribed to him; so as to apply them, severally, to somewhat else, if we will not apply them,

jointly, to him. We cannot but admit there is some eternal, necessary being ; somewhat that is of itself active ; somewhat that is powerful, wise, and good. And these notions have in them no repugnancy to one another ; wherefore it is not impossible they may meet, and agree together, in full perfection to one and the same existent being. And hence it is manifestly no unapprehensible thing, that such a Being doth exist. Now supposing that it doth exist, and hath been to us the cause and Author of our being ; hath given us the reasonable, intelligent nature which we find ourselves possessors of ; and that very power whereby we apprehend the existence of such a Being as he is to be possible, (all which we for the present do still but suppose,) while also his actual existence is not unapprehensible ; were it not the greatest madness imaginable to say, that if he do exist, he cannot also make our apprehensive nature understand this apprehensible thing that he doth exist ? We will therefore take it for granted, and as a thing which no man well in his wits will deny, that upon supposition such a Being, the Cause and Author of all things, do exist, he might, in some convenient way or other, with sufficient evidence, make it known to such creatures as we, so as to beget in us a rational certainty that he doth exist.

2. Upon which presumed ground we will only reason thus or assume to it ; That there is no possible and fit way of doing it which is not liable to as much exception as the evidence we already have. Whence it will be consequent, that if the thing be possible to be fitly done, it is done already. That is, that if we can apprehend how it may be possible such a Being, actually existent, might give us that evidence of his existence that should be suitable to our present state, and sufficient to out-weigh all objections to the contrary ; (without which it were not rationally sufficient :) and that we can apprehend no possible way of doing this, which will not be liable to the same, or equal objections, as may be made against the present means we have for the begetting of this certainty in us, then we have already sufficient evidence of this Being's existence. That is, such as ought to prevail against all objections, and obtain our assent that it doth exist.

Here it is only needful to be considered what ways can be thought of, which we will say might assure us in this matter, that we already have not. And what might be objected against them, equally, as against the means we now have.

II. Will we say such a Being, if he did actually exist, might ascertain us of his existence, by some *powerful impres-*

sion of that truth upon our minds? We will not insist, what there is already. Let them consider, who gainsay what they can find of it in their own minds; and whether they are not engaged by their atheistical inclinations in a contention against themselves, and their more natural sentiments, from which they find it a matter of no small difficulty to be delivered? It was not for nothing, that even Epicurus himself calls this of an existing Deity, a *proleptical notion*. But you may say, the impression might have been simply universal, and so irresistible, as to prevent or overbear all doubt, or inclination to doubt.

And, for the *universality* of it, why may we not suppose it already *sufficiently universal*? As hath been heretofore alleged. With what confidence can the few dissenting atheists, that have professed to be of another persuasion, put that value upon themselves, as to reckon their dissent considerable enough to implead the universality of this impression! Or what doth it signify more to that purpose, than some few instances may do, of persons so stupidly foolish, as to give much less discovery of any rational faculty than some beasts; to the impugning the universal rationality of mankind.

Besides that, your contrary profession is no sufficient argument of your contrary persuasion, much less, that you never had any stamp or impression of a Deity upon your minds, or that you have quite razed it out. It is much to be suspected that you hold not your contrary persuasion, with that unshaken confidence, and freedom from all fearful and suspicious misgivings, as that you have much more reason to brag of your disbelief for the strength, than you have for the goodness of it. And that you have those qualmish fits, which bewray the impression, (at least to your own notice and reflection, if you would but allow yourselves the liberty of so much converse with yourselves,) that you will not confess, and yet cannot utterly deface. But if in this you had quite won the day, and were masters of your design, were it not pretty to suppose that the common consent of mankind would be a good argument of the existence of a Deity, except only that it wants your concurrence? If it were *so universal* as to include your vote and suffrage, it would then be a firm and solid argument: (as no doubt it is, without you, a stronger one than you can answer;) but when you have made a hard shift to withdraw your assent, you have undone the Deity, and religion! Doth this cause stand and fall with you? Unto which you can con-

tribute about as much as the fly to the triumph ! Was that true before, which now your hard-laboured dissent had made false ? But if this impression were simply universal, so as also to include you, it matters not what men would say or object against it ; (it is to be supposed they would be in no disposition to object any thing ; ) but what were to be said, or what the case itself, objectively considered, would admit. And though it would not (as now it doth not) admit of any thing to be said to any purpose, yet the same thing were still to be said, that you now say. And if we should but again unsuppose so much of the former supposition, as to imagine that some few should have made their escape, and disburthened themselves of all apprehensions of God, would they not, with the same impudence as you now do, say that all religion were nothing else but enthusiastical fanaticism ; and that all mankind, besides themselves, were enslaved fools ?

And for the mere *irresistibleness* of this impression ; it is true, it would take away all disposition to oppose, but it may be presumed this is none of the rational evidence which we suppose you to mean ; when you admit (if you do admit) that, some way or other, the existence of such a being might be possibly made so evident, as to induce a rational certainty thereof. For to believe such a thing to be true only upon a strong impulse, (how certain soever the thing be,) is not to assent to it upon a foregoing reason. Nor can any, in that case, tell *why* they believe it, but *that* they believe it. You will not surely think any thing the truer for this, only, that such and such believe it with a sturdy confidence. It is true, that the universality and naturalness of such a persuasion, as pointing us to a common cause thereof, affords the matter of an argument, or is a medium not contemptible nor capable of answer, as hath been said before.

But to be *irresistibly* captivated into an assent, is no medium at all ; but an immediate persuasion of the thing itself, without a reason.

III. Therefore must it yet be demanded of atheistical persons, what means, that you yet have not, would you think sufficient to have put this matter out of doubt ? Will you say, Some kind of very *glorious apparitions*, becoming the majesty of such a one as this Being is represented, would have satisfied ? But if you know how to fancy, that such a thing as the sun, and other luminaries, might have been compacted of a certain peculiar sort of atoms, coming together of their

own accord, without the direction of a wise agent ; yea, and consist so long, and hold so strangely regular motions ; how easy would it be to object that, with much advantage, against what any temporary apparition, be it as glorious as you can imagine, might seem to signify to this purpose.

IV. Would *dreadful loud voices* proclaiming him to be, of whose existence you doubt, have served the turn ? It is likely, if your fear would have permitted you to use your wit, you would have had some subtle invention how, by some odd encounter of angry atoms, the air or clouds might become thus terribly vocal. And when you know already, that they do sometimes salute your ears with very loud sounds, (as when it thunders,) there is little doubt but your great wit can devise a way how possibly such sounds might become articulate. And for the sense and coherent import of what were spoken ; you that are so good at conjecturing how things might casually happen, would not be long in making a guess that might serve that turn also ; except you were grown very dull and barren, and that fancy that served you to imagine how the whole frame of the universe, and the rare structure of the bodies of animals, yea, and even the reasonable soul itself, might be all casual productions, cannot now devise how, by chance, a few words (for you do not say you expect long orations) might fall out to be sense though there were no intelligent speaker.

V. But would *strange and wonderful effects* that might surprise and amaze you do the business ? We may challenge you to try your faculty, and stretch it to the uttermost ; and then tell us what imagination you have formed of any thing more strange and wonderful, than the already extant frame of nature, in the whole, and the several parts of it. Will he that hath a while considered the composition of the world ; the exact and orderly motions of the sun, moon, and stars ; the fabric of his own body, and the powers of his soul, expect yet a wonder, to prove to him there is a God ? But if that be the complexion of your minds, that it is not the greatness of any work, but the novelty and surprisingness of it, that will convince you, it is not rational evidence you seek : nor is it your reason, but your idle curiosity, you would have gratified ; which deserves no more satisfaction than that fond wish, that one might come from the dead to warn men on earth, lest they should come into the place of torment.

VI. And if such means as these that have been mentioned should be thought necessary, I would ask, Are they necessary

to every individual person, so as that no man shall be esteemed to have had sufficient means of conviction, who hath not with his own eyes beheld some such *glorious apparition*; or himself heard some such *terrible voice*; or been the immediate witness or subject of some *prodigious wonderful work*? Or will the *once* seeing, hearing, or feeling them suffice? Is it not necessary there should be a *frequent repetition* and renewal of these amazing things, lest the impression wearing off, there be a relapse, and a gradual sliding into an oblivion, and unapprehensiveness of that Being's existence, whereof they had, sometime, received a conviction. Now if such a continual iteration of these strange things were thought necessary, would they not hereby soon cease to be strange? And then if their strangeness was necessary, by that very thing, wherein their sufficiency for conviction is said to consist, they should become useless. Or if by their frequent variations (which it is possible to suppose) a perpetual amusement be still kept up in the minds of men, and they be always full of consternation and wonder, doth this temper so much befriend the exercise of reason, or contribute to the sober consideration of things? As if men could not be rational, without being half mad! And indeed they might soon become altogether so, by being but a while beset with objects so full of terror, as are by this supposition made the necessary means to convince them of a Deity. \* And were this a fit means of ruling the world, of preserving order among mankind? What business could then be followed? Who could attend the affairs of their callings? Who could either be capable of governing, or of being governed, while all men's minds should be wholly taken up, either in the amazed view or the suspenseful expectation, of nought else but strange things? To which purpose much hath been of late, with so excellent reason, † discoursed by a noted author, that it is needless here to say more. And the aspect and influence of this state of things would be most pernicious upon religion, that should be most served thereby, and which requires the greatest severity and most peaceful composure of mind to the due managing the exercises of it. How little would that contribute to pious and devout

\* Now were not that a most improper course, and unsuitable to the nature of man, that should rather tend to destroy his reason or judgment, than convince it?

† Dr. Spencer, of *Prodigies*. A discourse, which, though it disproves not the reality or true significancy of such portents, yet aptly tends to prevent or correct the ill use of them.

converses with God, that should certainly keep men's minds in a continual commotion and hurry? This course, as our present condition is, what could it do but craze men's understandings, as a too bright and dazzling light causeth blindness, or any over-excelling sensible object destroys the sense; so that we should soon have cause to apply the Erpen. proverb, "Shut the windows, that the house may be light." And might learn to put a sense, not intolerable, upon those passages of some mystical writers, \* that God is to be seen *τὴν ὁ θῆος γνόφῳ*—*in a ditive cloud or darkness*, as one; and as another † speaks, with closed eyes; though what was their very sense I will not pretend to tell; *μύσαντας ἐνεδρεύειν τῇ ἀγνώστῃ καὶ κρυφίῳ τῶν ὄντων ἐνάδι*—*shutting their eyes to endeavour to comprehend or attain the knowledge of the unknown and hidden unity; the source of beings*.

Besides that, by this means, there would naturally ensue the continual excitation of so vexatious and enthralling passions, so servile and tormenting fears and amazements, as could not but hold the souls of men under a constant and comfortless restraint from any free and ingenuous access to God, or conversation with him; wherein the very life of religion consists. And then, to what purpose doth the discovery and acknowledgment of the Deity serve? Inasmuch as it is never to be thought that the existence of God is a thing to be known, only that it may be known; but that the end it serves for, is religion; a complacential and cheerful adoration of him, and application of ourselves, with, at once, both dutiful and pleasant affections towards him. That were a strange means of coming to know that he is, that should only tend to destroy or hinder the very end itself of that knowledge. Wherefore all this being considered, it is likely it would not be insisted upon as necessary to our being persuaded of God's existence, that he should so multiply strange and astonishing things, as that every man might be a daily, amazed, beholder and witness of them.

VII. And if their frequency and constant iteration be acknowledged not necessary, but shall indeed be judged wholly inconvenient, more *rare* discoveries of him, in the very ways we have been speaking of, have not been wanting. What would we think of such an appearance of God as that was upon Mount Sinai, when he came down (or caused a sensible glory

\* Dionysius Areop. l. de myster. Theol. c. 1.

† Proclus in Plat. Theol.

to descend) in the sight of all that great people ; wherein the several things concurred that were above mentioned ! Let us but suppose such an appearance, in all the concurrent circumstances of it, as that is said to have been. That is, we will suppose an equally great assembly or multitude of people is gathered together, and solemn forewarning is given and proclaimed among them, by appointed heralds or officers of state, that, on such a prefixed day, now very nigh at hand, the Divine majesty and glory (even his glory set in majesty) will visibly appear, and shew itself to them. They are most severely enjoined to prepare themselves, and be in readiness against that day. Great care is taken to sanctify the people, and the place ; bounds are set about the designed theatre of this great appearance ; all are strictly required to observe their due and awful distances, and abstain from more audacious approaches and gazings ; lest that terrible glory break out upon them, and they perish : an irreverent or disrespectful look, they are told, will be mortal to them, or a very touch of any part of this sacred inclosure. In the morning of the appointed day, there are thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the hallowed mount. The exceeding loud sound of trumpet proclaims the Lord's descent. He descends in fire, the flames whereof envelop the trembling mount, (now floored with a sapphire pavement, clear as the body of heaven,) and ascend into the middle region, or, as it is expressed, into the midst or heart of the heavens. The voice of words, (a loud and dreadful voice,) audible to all that mighty assembly, in which were six hundred thousand men, (probably more than a million of persons,) issues forth from amidst that terrible glory, pronouncing to them that *I am Jehovah thy God*. And thence proceeding to give them precepts so plain and clear, so comprehensive and full, so unexceptionably just and righteous, so agreeable to the nature of man, and subservient to his good, that nothing could be more worthy the great Creator, or more aptly suitable to such a sort of creatures.

It is very likely, indeed, that such a demonstration would leave no spectator in doubt concerning the existence of God ; and would puzzle the philosophy of the most sceptical atheist to give an account, otherwise, of the phenomenon. And if such could devise to say any thing that should seem plausible to some very easy half-witted persons, that were not present, they would have a hard task of it to quiet the minds of those that were ; or make them believe this was nothing else but some odd conjuncture of certain fiery atoms, that, by some



strange accident happened into this occursion and conflict with one another ; or some illusion of fancy, by which so great a multitude were all at once imposed upon ; so as that they only seemed to themselves to hear and see, what they heard and saw not. Nor is it likely they would be very confident of the truth of their own conjecture, or be apt to venture much upon it themselves ; having been the eye and ear-witnesses of these things.

But is it necessary this course shall be taken to make the world know there is a God ? Such an appearance, indeed, would more powerfully strike sense ; but unto sober and considerate reason were it a greater thing than the making such a world as this, and the disposing this great variety of particular beings in it, into so exact and elegant an order ; and the sustaining and preserving it in the same state, through so many ages ? Let the vast and unknown extent of the whole, the admirable variety, the elegant shapes, the regular motions, the excellent faculties and powers of that inconceivable number of creatures contained in it, be considered. And is there any comparison between that temporary, transient, occasional, and this steady, permanent, and universal discovery of God ? Nor (supposing the truth of the history) can it be thought the design of this appearance to these Hebrews was to convince them of the existence of a Deity, to be worshipped ; when of both they had so convincing evidence many ways before ; and the other nations, that which they left, and those whither they went, were not without their religion and worship, such as it was : but to engage them, by so majestic a representation thereof, to a more exact observance of his will, now made known. Though, had there been any doubt of the former, (as we can hardly suppose they could before have more doubted of the being of a God, than that there were men on earth,) this might collaterally, and besides its chief intention, be a means to confirm them concerning that also : but that it was necessary for that end, we have no pretence to imagine. The like may be said, concerning other miracles heretofore wrought, that the intent of them was to justify the divine authority of him who wrought them, to prove him sent by God, and so countenance the doctrine or message delivered by him. Not that they tended (otherwise than on the by) to prove God's existence : much less, was this so amazing an appearance needful, or intended for that end ; and least of all, was it necessary that this should be God's ordinary way of making it known to men that he doth exist : so as that for

this purpose he should often repeat so terrible representations of himself. And how inconvenient it were to mortal men, as well as unnecessary, the astonishment wherewith it possessed that people, is an evidence; and their passionate affrighted wish thereupon, "Let not God any more speak to us, lest we die." They apprehended it impossible for them to outlive such another sight!

And if that so amazing an appearance of the Divine Majesty (sometime afforded) were not necessary; but some way, on the by, useful, for the confirming that people in the persuasion of God's existence, why may it not be useful also, for the same purpose even now, to us? Is it that we think that can be less true now, which was so gloriously evident to be true four thousand years ago? Or is it that we can disbelieve or doubt the truth of the history? What should be the ground or pretence of doubt? If it were a fiction, it is manifest it was feigned by some person that had the use of his understanding, and was not beside himself, as the coherence and contexture of parts doth plainly shew. But would any man not beside himself, designing to gain credit to a forged report of a matter of fact, ever say there were six hundred thousand persons present at the doing of it? Would it not rather be pretended that it was done in a corner? Or is it imaginable it should never have met with contradiction? That none of the pretended bystanders should disclaim the avouchment of it, and say they knew of no such matter? Especially if it be considered that the laws said to be given at that time, chiefly those which were reported to have been written in the two tables, were not so favourable to vicious inclinations, nor that people so strict and scrupulous observers of them; but that they would have been glad to have had any thing to pretend, against the authority of the legislature, if the case could have admitted it. When they discovered, in that and succeeding time, so violently prone and unretractable a propension to idolatry and other wickednesses, directly against the very letter of that law, how welcome and covetable a plea had it been, in their frequent, and, sometimes, almost universal apostasies, could they have had such a thing to pretend, that the law itself that curbed them was a cheat! But we always find, that though they laboured, in some of their degeneracies, and when they were lapsed into a more corrupted state, to render it more easy to themselves by favourable glosses and interpretations; yet, even in the most corrupt, they never went about to deny or implead its divine original, whereof they were ever so religious

assertors, as no people under heaven could be more ; and the awful apprehension whereof prevailed so far with them, as that care was taken (as is notoriously known) by those appointed to that charge, that the very letters should be numbered of the sacred writings, lest there should happen any the minutest alteration in them. Much more might be said, if it were needful, for the evincing the truth of this particular piece of history : and it is little to be doubted but any man who, with sober and impartial reason, considers the circumstances relating to it ; the easily evidenceable antiquity of the records whereof this is a part ; the certain nearness of the time of writing them, to the time when this thing is said to have been done ; the great reputation of the writer even among pagans ; the great multitude of the alleged witnesses and spectators ; the no-contradiction ever heard of ; the universal consent and suffrage of that nation through all times to this day, even when their practice hath been most contrary to the laws then given ; the securely confident and unsuspicious reference of later pieces of sacred Scripture thereto, (even some parts of the New Testament,) as a most known and undoubted thing ; the long series and tract of time through which that people are said to have had extraordinary and sensible indications of the divine presence ; (which, if it had been false, could not, in so long a time, but have been evicted of falsehood ;) their miraculous and wonderful eduction out of Egypt, not denied by any, and more obscurely acknowledged by some heathen writers ; their conduct through the wilderness, and settlement in Canaan ; their constitution and form of polity, known for many ages to have been a theocracy ; their usual ways of consulting God, upon all more important occasions :—whosoever, I say, shall soberly consider these things, (and many more might easily occur to such as would think fit to let their thoughts dwell awhile upon this subject,) will not only, from some of them, think it highly improbable, but from others of them, plainly impossible that the history of this appearance should have been a contrived piece of falsehood. Yea, and though, as was said, the view of such a thing with one's own eyes would make a more powerful impression upon our fancy, or imagination, yet, if we speak of rational evidence (which is quite another thing) of the truth of a matter of fact that were of this astonishing nature, I should think it were as much (at least if I were credibly told that so many hundred thousand persons saw it at once) as if I had been the single unaccompanied spectator of it myself. Not to say that it were ap-

parently, in some respect, much greater; could we but obtain of ourselves to distinguish between the pleasing of our curiosity, and the satisfying of our reason. So that, upon the whole, I see not why it may not be concluded, with the greatest confidence, that both the (supposed) existence of a Deity is possible to be certainly known to men on earth, in some way that is suitable to their present state; that there are no means fitter to be ordinary, than those we already have, and that more extraordinary, additional confirmations are partly, therefore, not necessary, and partly not wanting.

Again, *Secondly*, It may be further demanded, (as that which may both immediately serve our main purpose, and may also shew the reasonableness of what was last said,) Is it sufficiently evident to such subjects of some great prince as live remote from the royal residence, that there is such a one now ruling over them?

To say No, is to raze the foundation of civil government, and reduce it wholly to domestical, by such a ruler as may ever be in present view. Which yet is upon such terms never possible to be preserved also. It is plain many do firmly enough believe that there is a king reigning over them, who not only never saw the king, but never heard any distinct account of the splendour of his court, the pomp of his attendance, or, it may be, never saw the man that had seen the king. And is not all dutiful and loyal obedience wont to be challenged and paid of such, as well as his other subjects? Or would it be thought a reasonable excuse of disloyalty, that any such persons should say they had never seen the king, or his court? Or a reasonable demand, as the condition of required subjection, that the court be kept, sometime, in their village, that they might have the opportunity of beholding at least some of the insignia of regality, or more splendid appearances of that majesty, which claims subjection from them? Much more would it be deemed unreasonable and insolent, that every subject should expect to see the face of the prince every day, otherwise they will not obey, nor believe there is any such person. Whereas it hath been judged rather more expedient and serviceable to the continuing the veneration of majesty, (and in a monarchy of no mean reputation for wisdom and greatness,) that the prince did very rarely offer himself to the view of the people. Surely more ordinary and remote discoveries of an existing prince and ruler over them, (the effects of his power, and the influences of his government,) will be reckoned sufficient, even as to many parts of his dominions

that possibly through many succeeding generations never had any other. And yet how mispeakably less sensible, less immediate, less constant, less necessary, less numerous, are the effects and instances of regal human power and wisdom, than of the divine; which latter we behold which way soever we look, and feel in every thing we touch, or have any sense of, and may reflect upon in our very senses themselves, and in all the parts and powers that belong to us; and so certainly, that if we would allow ourselves the liberty of serious thoughts, we might soon find it were utterly impossible such effects should ever have been without that only cause: that without its influence, it had never been possible that we could hear, or see, or speak, or think, or live, or be any thing, nor that any other thing could ever have been, when as the effects that serve so justly to endear and recommend to us civil government. (as peace, safety, order, quiet possession of our rights,) we cannot but know, are not inseparably and incommunicably appropriate, or to be attributed to the person of this or that particular and mortal governor, but may also proceed from another: yea and the same benefits may (for some short time at least) be continued without any such government at all. Nor is this intended merely as a rhetorical scheme of speech, to beguile or amuse the unwary reader: but, without arrogating any thing, or attributing more to it, than that it is an altogether in-artificial and very defective, but true and naked representation of the very case itself as it is. It is professedly propounded, as having somewhat solidly argumentative in it. That is, that (whereas there is most confessedly sufficient, yet) there is unspeakably less evidence to most people in the world, under civil government; that there actually is such a government existent over them; and that they are under obligation to be subject to it; than there is of the existence of a Deity, and the consequent reasonableness of religion. If therefore the ordinary effects and indications of the former be sufficient, which have so contingent and uncertain a connexion with their causes, (while those which are more extraordinary are so exceeding rare with the most,) why shall not the more certain ordinary discoveries of the latter be judged sufficient, though the most have not the immediate notice of any such extraordinary appearances as those are which have been before mentioned?

Moreover, *Thirdly*, I yet demand further, whether it may be thought possible for any one to have a full rational certainty that another person is a reasonable creature, and hath

in him a rational soul, so as to judge he hath sufficient ground and obligation to converse with him, and carry towards him as a man? Without the supposition of this, the foundation of all human society and civil conversation is taken away. And what evidence have we of it, whereunto that which we have of the being of God (as the foundation of religious and godly conversation) will not at least be found equivalent.

Will we say that mere human shape is enough to prove such a one a man? A philosopher would deride us, as the Stagyrice's disciples are said to have done the Platonic man. But we will not be so nice. We acknowledge it is, if no circumstances concur (as sudden appearing, vanishing, transformation or the like) that plainly evince the contrary; so far as to infer upon us an obligation not to be rude and uncivil; that we use no violence, nor carry ourselves abusively towards one that only thus appears a human creature. Yea, and to perform any duty of justice or charity towards him within our power, which we owe to a man as a man. As suppose we see him wronged or in necessity, and can presently right or relieve him; though he do not or cannot represent to us more of his case than our own eyes inform us of. And should an act of murder be committed upon one whose true humanity was not otherwise evident, would not the offender be justly liable to the known and common punishment of that offence? Nor could he acquit himself of transgressing the laws of humanity, if he should only neglect any seasonable act of justice or mercy towards him, whereof he beholds the present occasion. But if any one were disposed to cavil, or play the sophist, how much more might be said, even by infinite degrees, to oppose this single evidence of any one's true humanity, than ever was or can be brought against the entire concurrent evidence we have of the existence of God. It is, here, most manifestly just and equal, thus to state the case, and compare the whole evidence we have of the latter, with that one of the former; inasmuch as that one alone is apparently enough to oblige us to carry towards such a one as a man. And if that alone be sufficient to oblige us to acts of justice or charity towards man, he is strangely blind that cannot see infinitely more to oblige him to acts of piety towards God.

But if we would take a nearer and more strict view of this parallel, we would state the general and more obvious aspect of this world on the one hand, and the external aspect and shape of a man on the other; and should then see the former

doth evidence to us an in-dwelling Deity diffused through the whole and actuating every part with incomparably greater certainty, than the latter doth, an in-dwelling reasonable soul. In which way we shall find what will aptly serve our present purpose, though we are far from apprehending any such union of the blessed God with this world, as is between the soul and body of a man. It is manifestly possible to our understandings, that there may be, and (if any history or testimony of others be worthy to be believed) certain to experience and sense, that there often hath been, the appearance of human shape and of agreeable actions without a real man. But it is no way possible such a world as this should have ever been without God. That there is a world, proves that eternal Being to exist, whom we take to be God, (suppose we it as rude a heap as at first it was, or as we can suppose it,) as external appearance represents to us that creature which we take to be a man: but *that* as a certain infallible discovery, necessarily true; *this* but as a probable and conjectural one, and (though highly probable) not impossible to be false.

And if we will yet descend to a more particular inquiry into this matter, which way can we fully be ascertained that this supposed man is truly and really what he seems to be? This we know not how to go about, without recollecting what is the differencing notion we have of a man; that he is a reasonable, living creature, or a reasonable soul, inhabiting, and united with a body. And how do we think to descry that, here, which may answer this common notion we have of a man? Have we any way besides that discovery which the acts and effects of reason do make of a rational or intelligent Being? We will look more narrowly, that is, unto somewhat else than his external appearance; and observe the actions that proceed from a more distinguishing principle in him, that he reasons, discourses, doth business, pursues designs; in short, he talks and acts as a reasonable creature: and hence we conclude him to be one, or to have a reasonable soul in him.

And have we not the same way of procedure in the other case? Our first view or taking notice of a world full of life and motion, assures us of an eternal active Being, besides it, which we take to be God, having now before our eyes a darker shadow of him only, as the external bulk of the human body is only the shadow of a man. Which, when we behold it stirring and moving, assures us there is somewhat besides that grosser bulk, (that of itself could not so move,) which we take to be the soul of a man. Yet, as a principle that can move

the body makes not up the entire notion of this soul, so an eternal active being, that moves the matter of the universe, makes not up the full notion of God. We are thus far sure in both cases, that is, of some mover distinct from what is moved. But we are not yet sure, by what we hitherto see, what the one or the other is. But as when we have upon the first sight thought it was a reasonable soul that was acting in the former; or a man, (if we will speak according to their sense who make the soul the man,) in order to being sure, (as sure as the case can admit,) we have no other way, but to consider what belongs more distinguishingly to the notion of a man, or of a reasonable soul; and observe how actions and effects, which we have opportunity to take notice of, do answer thereto, or serve to discover that. So when we would be sure what that eternal active Being is (which that it is, we are already sure, and) which we have taken to be God, that, I say, we may be sure of that also, we have the same thing to do. That is, to consider what more peculiarly belongs to the entire notion of God, (and would even in the judgment of opposers be acknowledged to belong to it,) and see whether his works, more narrowly inspected, do not bear as manifest correspondency to that notion of God, as the works and actions of a man do to the notion we have of him. And certainly we cannot but find they do correspond as much. And that upon a serious and considerate view of the works and appearances of God in the world; having diligently observed and pondered the vastness and beauty of this universe, the variety, the multitude, the order, the exquisite shapes and numerous parts, the admirable and useful composure, of particular creatures; and especially the constitution and powers of the reasonable soul of man itself; we cannot, surely, if we be not under the possession of a very voluntary and obstinate blindness, and the power of a most vicious prejudice, but acknowledge the making, sustaining, and governing such a world, is as God-like, as worthy of God, and as much becoming him, according to the notion that hath been assigned of him, as at least the common actions of ordinary men, are of a man; or evidence the doer of them to be a human creature. Yea, and with this advantageous difference, that the actions of a man do evidence a human creature more uncertainly, and so as it is possible the matter may be otherwise. But these works of God do with so plain and demonstrative evidence discover him the Author of them, that it is altogether impossible they could ever otherwise have been done.

Now therefore, if we have as clear evidence of a Deity, as



we can have, in a way not unsuitable to the nature and present state of man ; (and we can have in a suitable way, that which is sufficient :) if we have clearer and more certain evidence of God's government over the world, than most men have or can have, of the existence of their secular rulers ; yea, more sure than that there are men on earth, and that thence (as far as the existence of God will make towards it) there is a less disputable ground for religions than for civil conversation ; we may reckon ourselves competently well ascertained, and have no longer reason to delay the dedication of a temple to him, upon any pretence of doubt, whether we have an object of worship existing, yea or no.

Wherefore we may also by the way take notice how impudent a thing is atheism, that by the same fulsome and poisonous breath whereby it would blast religion, would despoil man of his reason and apprehensive power, even in reference to the most apprehensible thing ; would blow away the rights of princes, and all foundations of policy and government, and destroy all civil commerce and conversation out of the world, and yet blushes not at the attempt of so foul things.

VIII. And here it may perhaps prove worth our while (though it can be no pleasant contemplation) to pause a little, and make some short *reflections* upon the atheistical temper and genius, so as therein to remark some few more obvious characters of atheism itself.

And such as have not been themselves seized by the infatuation, cannot but judge it, *first*, a most unreasonable thing, a perverse and cross-grained humour, that so oddly writhes and warps the mind of a man, as that it never makes any effort or offer at any thing against the Deity ; but it therein doth (by a certain sort of serpentine involution and retortion) seem to design a quarrel with itself : that is, with (what one would think should be most intimate and natural to the mind of man) his very reasoning power, and the operations thereof. So near indeed was the ancient alliance between God and man, (his own Son, his likeness and living image,) and consequently between reason and religion, that no man can ever be engaged in an opposition to God and his interest, but he must be equally so to himself and his own. And any one that takes notice how the business is carried by an atheist, must think, in order to his becoming one, his first plot was upon himself : to assassine his own intellectual faculty, by a sturdy resolution, and violent imposing on himself, not to consider, or use his thoughts, at least, with any indifferency, but with a treacherous predeter-

mination to the part resolved on before-hand. Otherwise, it is hard to be imagined how it should ever have been possible that so plain and evident proofs of a Deity as every where offer themselves unto observation, even such as have been here proposed, (that do even lie open, for the most part, to common apprehension, and needed little search to find them out; so that it was harder to determine what not to say, than what to say,) could be over-looked.

For what could be more easy and obvious, than taking notice that there is somewhat in being, to conclude that somewhat must be of itself, from whence whatever is not so, must have sprung? That, since there is somewhat effected or made, (as is plain, in that some things are alterable, and daily altered, which nothing can be that is of itself, and therefore, a necessary being,) those effects have then had an active being for their cause? That since these effects are partly such as bear the manifest characters of wisdom and design upon them, and are partly, themselves, wise and designing; therefore they must have had a wisely active and designing cause? So much would plainly conclude the sum of what we have been pleading for; and what can be plainer or doth require a shorter turn of thoughts? At this easy expense might any one that had a disposition to use his understanding to such a purpose, save himself from being an atheist. And where is the flaw? What joint is not firm and strong in this little frame of discourse? which yet arrogates nothing to the contriver; for there is nothing in it worthy to be called contrivance: but things do themselves lie thus. And what hath been further said concerning the perfection and oneness of this Cause of all things, (though somewhat more remote from common apprehension,) is what is likely would appear plain and natural to such as would allow themselves the leisure to look more narrowly into such things.

Atheism therefore seems to import a direct and open hostility against the most native, genuine, and facile dictates of common reason. And being so manifest an enemy to it, we cannot suppose it should be at all befriended by it. For reason will be always true and constant to itself, whatsoever false shews of it a bad cause doth sometimes put on; that having yet somewhat a more creditable name, and being of a little more reputation in the world, than plain downright madness and folly. And it will appear how little it is befriended, by any thing that can justly bear that name, if we consider the pitiful shifts the atheist makes for his forlorn cause; and what infirm tottering supports the whole frame of atheism rests upon.

For what is there to be said for their hypothesis, or against the existence of God, and the dueness of religion? For it, there is directly nothing at all. Only a possibility is alleged, things might be as they are, though God did not exist. And if this were barely possible, how little doth that signify? Where reason is not injuriously dealt with, it is permitted the liberty of balancing things equally, and of considering which scale hath most weight. And is he not perfectly blind, that sees not what violence is done to free reason in this matter? Are there not thousands of things, not altogether impossible, which yet he would be concluded altogether out of his wits, that should profess to be of the opinion they are, or were actually so? And as to the present case, how facile and unexceptionable, how plain and intelligible, is the account that is given of the original of this world, and the things contained in it, by resolving all into a Deity, the Author and Maker of them? Whereas the wild, extravagant suppositions of atheists, if they were admitted possible, are the most unlikely that could be devised. So that if there had been any to have laid wagers, when things were taking their beginning, there is nobody that would not have ventured thousands to one, that no such frame of things (no not so much as one single mouse or flea) would ever have hit. And how desperate hazards the atheist runs, upon this mere supposed possibility, it will be more in our way to take notice by and by. But besides, that pretended possibility plainly appears none at all. It is impossible any thing should spring up of itself out of nothing; that any thing that is alterable, should have been necessarily of itself, such as it now is; that what is of itself unactive, should be the maker of other things; that the Author of all the wisdom in the world, should be, himself, unwise. These cannot but be judged most absolute impossibilities, to such as do not violence to their own minds; or with whom reason can be allowed any the least exercise. Wherefore the atheistical spirit is most grossly unreasonable, in withholding assent, where the most ungainsayable reason plainly exacts it.

And are not the atheist's cavils as despicably silly against the Deity, and (consequently) religion? Whosoever shall consider their exceptions against some things in the notion of God, eternity, infinity, &c. which themselves, in the mean time, are forced to place elsewhere, will he not see they talk idly? And as for such other impeachments of his wisdom, justice, and goodness, as they take their ground for, from the state of affairs, in some respects, in this present world, (many

of which may be seen in Lucretius, and answered by Dr. More in his *Dialogues*,) how inconsiderable will they be, to any one that bethinks himself, with how perfect and generous a liberty this world was made, by one that needed it not; who had no design, nor could have inclination to a fond, self-indulgent glorying and vaunting of his own work; who did it with the greatest facility, and by an easy, unexpensive vouchsafement of his good pleasure; not with an operose curiosity, studious to approve itself to the peevish eye of every froward *Momus*, or to the nauseous, squeamish gust of every sensual *Epicure*. And to such as shall not confine their mean thoughts to that very clod or ball of earth on which they live; which, as it is a very small part, may, for aught we know, but be the worst or most abject part of God's creation, which yet is full of his goodness, and hath most manifest prints of his other excellencies besides, as hath been observed; or that shall not look upon the present state of things as the eternal state, but upon *this world* only as an antichamber to *another*, which shall abide in most unexceptionable perfection for ever:—how fond and idle, I say, will all such cavils appear to one that shall but thus use his thoughts, and not think himself bound to measure his conceptions of God, by the uncertain, rash dictates of men born in the dark, and that talk at random; nor shall affix any thing to him, which plain reason doth not dictate, or which he doth not manifestly assume, or challenge to himself. But that because a straw lies in my way, I would attempt to overturn heaven and earth, what raging frenzy is this?

Again, it is, *secondly*, a base, abject temper, speaks a mind sunk and lost in carnality, and that having dethroned and abjured reason, hath abandoned itself to the hurry of vile appetite, and sold its liberty and sovereignty for the insipid, gustless pleasures of sense; an unmanly thing—a degrading of one's self. For if there be no God, what am I? A piece of moving, thinking clay, whose ill-compacted parts will shortly fly asunder, and leave no other remains of me than what shall become the prey and triumph of worms!

It is, *thirdly*, a sad, mopish, disconsolate temper; cuts off and quite banishes all manly, rational joy; all that might spring from the contemplation of the divine excellencies and glory, shining in the works of his hands. Atheism clothes the world in black, draws a dark and duskish cloud over all things; doth more to damp and stifle all relishes of intellectual pleasure, than it would of sensible, to extinguish the sun. What is this world (if we should suppose it still to subsist) without

God? How grateful an entertainment is it to a pious mind to behold his glory stamped on every creature, sparkling in every providence; and by a firm and rational faith to believe (when we cannot see) how all events are conspiring to bring about the most happy and blissful state of things? The atheist may make the most of this world; he knows no pleasure, but what can be drawn out of its dry breasts, or found in its cold embraces; which yields as little satisfaction, as he finds, whose arms, aiming to inclose a dear friend, do only clasp a stiff and clammy carcass. How uncomfortable a thing is it to him, that having neither power nor wit to order things to his own advantage or content, but finds himself liable to continual disappointments, and the rencounter of many an unsuspected, cross accident, hath none to repose on, that is wiser and mightier than himself? But when he finds he cannot command his own affairs, to have the settled apprehension of an Almighty Ruler, that can with the greatest certainty do it for us the best way, and will, if we trust him—how satisfying and peaceful a repose doth this yield? And how much the rather, inasmuch as that filial, unsuspecting confidence and trust, which naturally tends to and begets that calm and quiet rest, is the very condition required on my part; and that the chief thing I have to do, to have my affairs brought to a good pass, is to commit them to his management; and my only care, to be careful in nothing. The atheist hath nothing to mitigate the greatness of this loss, but that he knows not what he loses; which is an allay that will serve but a little while. And when the most unsupportable, pressing miseries befall him, he must in bitter agonies groan out his wretched soul without hope, and sooner die under his burden, than say, Where is God my Maker? At the best, he exchanges all the pleasure and composure of mind which certainly accompany a dutiful, son-like trust, submission, and resignation of ourselves, and all our concerns, to the disposal of fatherly wisdom and love, for a sour and sullen succumbency to an irresistible fate or hard necessity, against which he sees it is vain to contend. So that at the best he only not rages, but tastes nothing of consolation; whereof his spirit is as incapable, as his desperate affairs are of redress. And if he have arrived to that measure of fortitude, as not to be much discomposed with the lighter crosses which he meets with in this short time of life, what a dreadful cross is it that he must die! How dismal a thing is a certain, never to be avoided death! Against which as atheism hath not surely the advantage of religion in giving

protection ; so it hath greatly the disadvantage, in affording no relief. What would the joy be worth in that hour, that arises from the hope of the glory to be revealed ? And is the want of that, the total sum of the atheist's misery at this hour ? What heart can conceive the horror of that one thought, if darted in upon him at that time, (as it is strange, and more sad, if it be not,) What becomes now of me, if there prove to be a God ? Where are my mighty demonstrations, upon which one may venture, and which may cut off all fear and danger of future calamity in this dark, unknown state I am going into ? Shall I be the next hour nothing, or miserable ? Or if I had opportunity, shall I not have sufficient cause to proclaim, (as \* once one of the same fraternity did, by way of warning to a surviving companion)—A great and a terrible God ! A great and a terrible God ! A great and a terrible God !

I only add, it is, *fourthly*, a most strangely mysterious and unaccountable temper ; such as is hardly reducible to its proper causes : so that it would puzzle any man's inquiry to find out or even give but probable conjectures, how so odd and preternatural a disaffection as atheism should ever come to have place in a human mind. It must be concluded a very complicated disease, and yet, when our thoughts have fastened upon several things that have an aspect that way, as none of them alone could infer it, so it is hard to imagine, how all of them together should ever come to deprave reasonable nature to such a degree.

I. It is most astonishingly marvellous (though it is apparent this distemper hath its rise from an ill will) that any should so much as *will* that which the atheist hath obtained of himself to believe ; or affect to be, what he is.

The commonness of this vile disposition of will, doth but sorrily shift off the wonder, and only with those slight and trifling minds that have resigned the office of judging things to their (more active) senses, and have learned the easy way of waving all inquiries about common things, or resolving the account into this only, that they are to be seen every day. But

\* Which story I confidently refer to, being of late date, and having had a certain and circumstantial account of it, by one (a very sober and intelligent person) who had the relation from him to whom that dreadful warning was given, by his then lately deceased associate. But I shall not by a particular relation gratify the scorn of this sort of men, who, taking advantage from the (sometime deceived) credulity of well-meaning people, have but that way of answering all such things, by the one word which served once so learnedly to confute Bellarmine.

if we allowed ourselves to consider this matter soberly, we should soon find, that howsoever it must plainly appear a very common plague upon the spirits of men (and universal till a cure be wrought) to say, by way of *wish*, No God, or I would there were none : yet, by the good leave of them who would thus easily excuse the thing, the commonness of this horrid evil doth so little diminish, that it increases the wonder. Things are more strange, as their causes are more hardly assignable. What should the reason be, that a being of so incomparable excellency, so amiable and alluring glory, purity, love, and goodness, is become undesirable and hateful to his own creatures ! that such creatures, his more immediate, peculiar offspring, stamped with his likeness, the so vivid resemblances of his own spiritual, immortal nature, are become so wickedly unnatural towards their common and most indulgent parent ! what, to wish him dead ! to envy life and being, to him from whom they have received their own ! It is as strange as it is without a cause. But they have offended him, are in a revolt, and sharply conscious of fearful demerits. And who would not wish to live, and to escape so unsupportable revenge ? It is still strange we would ever offend such a one ! Wherein were his laws unequal, his government grievous ? But since we have, this only is pertinent to be said by them that have no hope of forgiveness, that are left to despair of reconciliation—Why do we sort ourselves with devils ? We profess not to be such.

Yea, but we have no hope to be forgiven the sin we do not leave, nor power to leave the sin which now we love. This, instead of lessening, makes the wonder a miracle. O wretched, forlorn creature ! Wouldest thou have God out of being for this ? (I speak to thee who dost not yet profess to believe there is no God, but dost only wish it.) The sustainer of the world ! the common basis of all being ! Dost thou know what thou sayest ? Art thou not wishing thyself and all things into nothing ? This, rather than humble thyself, and beg forgiveness ! This, rather than become again a holy, pure, obedient creature, and again blessed in him, who first made thee so ! It can never cease, I say, to be a wonder, we never ought to cease wondering, that ever this befel the nature of man, to be prone to *wish* such a thing, that there were no God !

But this is, it is true, the too common case ; and if we will only have what is more a rarity go for a wonder, how amazing then is it,

2. That if any man *would*, even never so fain, he ever *can* make himself *believe* there is no God! and shape his horrid course according to that most horrid misbelief! By what fatal train of causes is this ever brought to pass? Into what can we devise to resolve it?

Why such as have arrived to this pitch are much addicted to the pleasing of their senses; and this they make their business; so as that, for a long time, they have given themselves no leisure to mind objects of another nature; especially that should any way tend to disturb them in their easy course; until they are gradually fallen into a forgetful sleep, and the images of things are worn out with them, that had only more slightly touched their minds before. And being much used to go by the suggestions of sense, they believe not what they neither see nor feel.

This is somewhat, but does not reach the mark; for there are many very great sensualists, (as great as they at least,) who never arrive hither, but firmly avow it that they believe a Deity, whatsoever mistaken notion they have of him; whereupon they imagine to themselves impunity in their vicious course.

But these, it may be said, have so disaccustomed themselves to the exercise of their reason, that they have no disposition to use their thoughts about any thing above the sphere of sense; and have contracted so dull and sluggish a temper, that they are no fitter to mind or employ themselves in any speculations that tend to beget in them the knowledge of God, than any man is for discourse or business when he is fast asleep.

So indeed, in reason, one would expect to find it; but the case is so much otherwise, when we consider particular instances, that we are the more perplexed and entangled in this inquiry, by considering how agreeable it is, that the matter should be thus; and observing that it proves, oft-times, not to be so: insomuch that reason and experience seem herein not to agree, and hence we are put again upon new conjectures what the immediate cause of this strange malady should be. For did it proceed purely from a sluggish temper of mind, unapt to reasoning and discourse; the more any were so, the more disposed they should be to atheism: whereas, every one knows that multitudes of persons of dull and slow minds, to any thing of ratiocination, would rather you should burn their houses, than tell them they did not believe in God; and would presently tell you, it were pity he should live, that should but



intimate a doubt whether there were a God or no. Yea, and many, somewhat more intelligent, yet in this matter are shy of using their reason, and think it unsafe, if not profane, to go about to prove that there is a God, lest they should move a doubt, or seem hereby to make a question of it. And in the mean time, while they offer not at reasoning, they more meanly supply that want, after a sorry fashion, from their education, the tradition of their fore-fathers, common example, and the universal profession and practice of some religion round about them; and it may be only take the matter for granted, because they never heard such a thing was ever doubted of or called in question in all their lives.

Whereas, on the other hand, they who incline to atheism are perhaps some of them the greatest pretenders to reason. They rely little upon authority of former times and ages, upon vulgar principles and maxims, but are vogue great masters of reason, diligent searchers into the mysteries of nature, and can philosophize (as sufficiently appears) beyond all imagination. But it is hoped it may be truly said, for the vindication of philosophy and them that profess it, that modern atheists have little of that to glory in; and that their chief endowments are only their skill to please their senses, and a faculty with a pitiful sort of drollery to tincture their cups, and add a grace to their otherwise dull and flat conversation. Yet all this howsoever being considered, there is here but little advance made to the finding out whence atheism should proceed. For, that want of reason should be thought the cause, what hath been already said seems to forbid. That many ignorant persons seem possessed with a great awe of a Deity, from which divers, more knowing, have delivered themselves. And yet neither doth the former signify any thing (in just intrepertation) to the disrepute of religion. For truth is not the less true, for that some hold it they know not how or why. Nor doth the latter make to the reputation of atheism, inasmuch as men, otherwise rational, may sometimes learnedly dote. But it confirms us that atheism is a strange thing, when its extraction and pedigree are so hardly found out, and it seems to be directly of the lineage, neither of knowledge nor ignorance, neither sound reason nor perfect dotage.

Nor doth it at all urge to say, And why may we not as well stand wondering, whence the apprehension of a God, and an addictedness to religion should come, when we find them peculiar neither to the more knowing nor the more ignorant?

For they are apparently and congruously enough to be derived from somewhat common to them both—the impression of a Deity, universally put upon the minds of all men, (which atheists have made a shift to raze out, or obliterate to that degree, as to render it illegible,) and that cultivated by the exercise of reason, in some, and in others, less capable of that help, somewhat confirmed by education, and the other accessories mentioned above.

3. Therefore is this matter still most mysteriously intricate, that there should be *one temper* and *persuasion*, agreeing to *two* so vastly different sorts of persons, while yet we are to seek for a cause (except what is most tremendous to think of) from whence it should proceed, that is common to them both. And here is, in short, the sum of the wonder, that any, not appearing very grossly unreasonable in other matters, (which cannot be denied even of some of the more sensual and lewder sort of atheists,) should, in so plain and important a case, be so, beyond all expression, absurd; that they without scruple are pleased to think like other men in matters that concern and relate to common practice, and wherein they might more colourably, and with less hazard, go out of the common road; and are here only so dangerously and madly extravagant. Their's is therefore the *dementia quoad hoc*, a *particular madness*; so much the stranger thing, because they whom it possesses do only in this one case put off themselves, and are like themselves and other men in all things else. If they reckoned it a glory to be singular, they might (as hath been plainly shewn) more plausibly profess it as a principle, that they are not bound to believe the existence of any secular ruler (and consequently not be subject to any) longer than they see him, and so subvert all policy and government; or pretend an exemption from all obligation to any act of justice, or to forbear the most injurious violence towards any man, because they are not infallibly certain any one they see is a human wight, and so abjure all morality, as they already have so great a part; than offer with so fearful hazard to assault the Deity, (of whose existence, if they would but think a while, they might be most infallibly assured,) or go about to subvert the foundations of religion. Or, if they would get themselves glory by great adventures, or show themselves brave men by expressing a fearless contempt of divine power and justice; this fortitude is not human. These are without the compass of its object; as inundations, earthquakes, &c., are said to be,

unto which, that any one should fearlessly expose himself, can bring no profit to others, nor therefore glory to him.

In all this harangue of discourse, the design hath not been to fix upon any true cause of atheism, but to represent it a strange thing; and an atheist, a prodigy, a monster, amongst mankind; a dreadful spectacle, forsaken of the common aids afforded to other men; hung up in chains to warn others, and let them see what a horrid creature man may make himself by voluntary aversion from God that made him.

In the mean time, they upon whom this dreadful plague is not fallen, may plainly see before them the object of that worship which is imported by a temple—an existing Deity, a God to be worshipped. Unto whom we shall yet see further reason to design and consecrate a temple for that end, and even ourselves to become such, when we have considered what comes next to be spoken of: his *conversableness with men*.

## CHAP. VI.

I. The subject of the second chapter continued; wherein is inquired, **SECONDLY**, What is intended by God's conversableness with men, considered only as fundamental and presupposed to a temple. II. An account of the Epicurean Deity. 1. Its existence impossible any way to be proved, if it did exist. 2. Nor can be affirmed to any good intent. 3. That such a being is not God. 4. That it belongs to the true notion of God, that he is such as can converse with men. III. That the absolute perfection proved of God represents him a fit object of religion. From thence more particularly deduced to this purpose, *First*, His omniscieny. *Secondly*, Omnipotency. *Thirdly*, Unlimited goodness. *Fourthly*, Immensity. IV. Curcellæus's arguments against this last (his immensity) considered,

I. **N**OR is the thing here intended less necessary to a temple and religion than what we have hitherto been discoursing of. For such a sort of Deity as should shut up itself, and be reclused from all converse with men, would leave us as disfurnished of an object of religion, and would render a temple on earth as vain a thing, as if there were none at all. It were a being not to be worshipped, nor with any propriety to be called God, more (in some respect less) than an image

or statue. We might with as rational design worship for a God what were scarce worthy to be called the shadow of a man, as dedicate temples to a wholly unconvertible Deity. That is, to such a one as not only *will not* vouchsafe to converse with men, but that *cannot* admit it; or whose nature were altogether incapable of such converse.

SECONDLY, We are therefore to inquire what is intended by God's conversableness with men? For that measure and latitude of sense must be allowed unto the expression, as that it signifies both capacity and propension to such converse: that God is both by his nature capable of it, and hath a gracious inclination of will thereunto. Yea and we will add, (what is also not without the compass of our present theme nor the import of this word whereby we generally express it,) that he is not only inclined to converse with men, but that he actually doth it. As we call him a conversable person that upon all besitting occasions doth freely converse with such as have any concern with him. It will indeed be necessary to distinguish God's converse with men, into that which he hath in common with *all men*, so as to sustain them in their beings, and some way influence their actions; (in which kind he is also conversant with all his creatures;) and that which he more peculiarly hath with *good men*.

And though the consideration of the latter of these will belong to the discourse concerning his temple itself which he hath with and in them; yet it is the former only we have now to consider as presupposed thereto, and as the ground thereof; together with his gracious propension to the latter also.

As the great Apostle, in his discourse at Athens, lays the same ground for acquaintance with God (which he intimates should be set afoot and continued in another sort of temple than is made with hands) that he hath given to all breath and being and all things, and that he is near and ready, (whence they should therefore seek him, if haply they might feel after him, and find him out,) in order to further converse. And here, our business will have the less in it of labour and difficulty; for that we shall have little else to do, besides only the applying of principles already asserted (or possibly the more express adding of some or other that were implied in what hath been said) to this purpose. From which principles it will appear, that he not only can, but that in the former sense he doth converse with men, and is graciously inclined thereto in the latter. And yet because the former is more deeply fun-

damental, as whereon all depends, and that the act of it is not denied for any other reason than an imagined impossibility ; that is, it is not said he doth not sustain and govern the world upon any other pretence, but that he cannot, as being inconsistent with his nature and felicity. This we shall therefore more directly apply ourselves to evince, That his nature doth not disallow it, but necessarily includes an aptitude thereto.

Nor yet, though it may be a less laborious work than the former that we have dispatched, is it altogether needless to deal somewhat more expressly in this matter ; inasmuch as what opposition hath been made to religion in the world, hath for the most part been more expressly directed against this ground of it. I say more expressly ; for indeed by plain and manifest consequence it impugns that also of God's existence : that is, through this it strikes at the other. For surely (howsoever any may arbitrarily, and with what impropriety and latitude of speech they please, bestow titles and eulogies here or there) that being is not God, that cannot converse with men, supposing them such as what purely and peculiarly belongs to the nature of man would bespeak them. So that they who have imagined such a being, and been pleased to call it God, have at once said and unsaid the same thing. 'That Deity was but a creature, and that only of their own fancy ; and they have by the same breath blown up and blasted their own bubble, made it seem something and signify nothing : have courted it into being, and rioted it again quite out of it. In their conceit, created it a God, in their practice, a mere nullity. And it equally served their turn and as much favoured the design of being wicked, to acknowledge only a God they could imagine and dis-imagine at their own pleasure, as to have acknowledged none at all. It could do no prejudice to their affairs to admit of this fictitious Deity that they could make be what, or where they pleased ; that should affect ease and pleasure, and (lest his pleasures and theirs should interfere) that they could confine to remote territories, and oblige to keep at an obedient and untroublesome distance. Nor, though no imagination could be more madly extravagant than that of a God no way concerned in the forming and governing of the world ; and notwithstanding whom, men might take their liberty to do what they listed ; yet (as hath been observed long ago, that no opinion was ever so monstrously absurd, as not to be owned by some of the philosophers) hath not this wanted patronage, and even among them who have obtained to be esteemed (not to say idolized) under that name, Which

would be seen, if it were worth the while to trouble the reader with an account of the *Epicurean Deity*.

II. This can be done only with this design, that the representation may render it (as it cannot but do) ridiculous to sober men; and discover to the rest, the vanity of their groundless and self-contradicting hope, (still too much fostered in the breasts of not a few,) who promise themselves impunity in the most licentious course of wickedness, upon the security only of this their own idle dream. That is, that if there be a God, (which they reckon it not so plausible flatly to deny,) he is a being of either so dull and phlegmatic a temper that he cannot be concerned in the actions and affairs of men, or so soft and easy that he will not. But because his good will alone was not so safely to be relied on, it was thought the securer way not to let it be in his power to intermeddle with their concerns. And therefore being to frame their own God, to their own turn, the matter was of old contrived thus.

Great care was taken, *First*, That he be set at a distance remote enough; that he be complimented out of this world, as a place too mean for his reception, and unworthy such a presence; they being indeed unconcerned where he had his residence, so it were not too near them. So that a confinement of him somewhere, was thought altogether necessary. \*

And then, *Secondly*, With the same pretence of great observance and respect, it is judged too great a trouble to him, and inconsistent with the felicity of his nature and being, that he should have given himself any diversion or disturbance, by making the world; from the care and labour whereof he is with all ceremony to be excused, it being too painful and laborious an undertaking for an immortal and a happy being. Besides that he was altogether destitute of instruments and utensils requisite to so great a performance. †

\* Ac designare quidem non licet quibus in locis Dii degant. Cum ne noster quidem hic mundus, digna sit illorum sedes—It is unlawful to assign any places as habitations of the gods; since this world itself is unworthy of being their residence. *Phil. Epicur. Syntag.*

† —ἡ θεία φύσις πρὸς ταῦτα μὴδαμὴ περιστρέψω, ἀλλὰ ἀλειτέργηται διατηρέσθω, καὶ ἐν τῇ πάσῃ μακαριότητι.—The divine nature must not be applied to these [inferior] objects, but must be preserved free from all occupation, and in perfect happiness. *Laetius, l. 10.*

Quæ molitæ, quæ ferramenta, qui vectes, quæ machinæ, qui ministri tanti muneris fuerunt—What toil, what immense machinery, what attendants, must such a task have required! *Vell. apud Cic. de natura Deorum.*

Whence also, *Thirdly*, He was with the same reason to be excused of all the care and encumbrance of government; \* as indeed, what right or pretence could he have to the government of a world that chose him not, which is not his inheritance, and which he never made? But all is very plausibly

\* Nihil beatius, nihil omnino bonis omnibus affluentius excogitari potest. Nihil enim agit, nullis occupationibus est implicatus, &c.—Nothing can be imagined more happy, nothing more abundant in all possible kinds of enjoyment: for he does nothing, he is involved in no concerns, &c. *Id.* Ὅταν, τὴν θεῖαν φύσιν μὴ λειπεργιῶν ἀπολύωσιν—They destroy the divine nature, when they fail to represent it as ceasing from every kind of work. *Laert. ibid.* Itaque imposuistis cervicibus nostris sempiternum dominum, quem, dies & noctes, timeremus. Quis enim non timeat omnia providentem, & cogitantem, & animadvertentem, & omnia ad se pertinere putantem, curiosum & plenum negotii Deum—So you have imposed on our necks a perpetual master, whom we should dread day and night! For who would not dread a God of universal foresight, and thought, and judgment, a God who claimed a right to all things, a God of attention and full of concerns? *Vell. ubi supra.* Humana ante oculos fæde cum vita jacere. In terris oppressa gravi sub religione Primæ Graius homo mortalis—

Not thus mankind. Them long the tyrant power  
Of superstition swayed, uplifting proud  
Her head to heaven, and with horrific limbs  
Brooding o'er earth; till he, the man of Greece,  
Auspicious rose. *Good's Transl.*

(meaning Epicurus, the first champion of irreligion.) *Lucret. To which purpose besides what we have in Laert.* τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἀφθαρτον, ἢτε αὐτὸ πράγματα ἔχει, ἢτε ἄλλω παρῖχει ὥστε οὔτε δεγχαῖς, οὔτε χάρισι συνέχεαι ἐν, ἀτρενὶ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον—The blessed and immortal being hath no affairs to mind, nor attends to any thing so as to be affected by passions either painful or agreeable: for every such affection is an attribute of weakness. *l. 10.* Much more is collected in the *Synagm.* Nam & præstans Deorum natura hominum pietate coleretur, cum æterna esset & beatissima. Habet enim venerationem justam quicquid excellit. Et metus omnis, à vi atque ira Deorum pulsus esset. Intelligitur enim à beata immortalique natura, & iram & gratiam segregari. Quibus remotis, nullos à superis impendere metus, &c.—The supreme divine nature should be served by the homage of men, since it is eternal and infinitely happy. For all excellence is entitled to respect. All fear from the power and anger of the gods should be banished; for it is the attribute of the blessed and immortal nature to be infinitely remote from the passions of wrath or kindness; which being excluded from our consideration, no dread need be entertained of the gods, &c. *Sect. 1. cap. 3.* An & mundum fecit, & in mundo homines ut ab hominibus coleretur? At quid Deo cultus hominum confert, beato, & nulla re indigenti—Did he create the world, and yet is he to be served in the world, as men are by their fellow-men? But what advantage could the services of men confer on God, a being happy in himself and incapable of having any need? *Sect. 2. cap. 3.*

shadowed over with a great appearance of reverence and veneration, with magnificent eulogies of his never-interrupted felicity; whence also it is made a very great crime not to free even the divine nature itself from business: though yet the true ground and root of this Epicurean faith doth sometime more apparently discover itself, even an impatience of the divine government, and a regret of that irksome bondage which the acknowledgment of a Deity, that were to be feared by men, would infer upon them.

And therefore, *Fourthly*, He is further expressly asserted to be such as need not be feared, as cares not to be worshipped, as with whom neither anger nor favour hath any place. So that nothing more of duty is owing to him than a certain kind of arbitrary veneration, which we give to any thing or person that we apprehend to excel us, and to be in some respect better than ourselves: an observance merely upon courtesy. But obedience and subjection to his government, fear of his displeasure, expectation of his favour and benefits, have no place left them. We are not obliged to worship him as one with whom we have any concern, and do owe him no more homage than we have to the Great Mogul, or the Cham of Tartary, and indeed are less liable to his severity, or capable of his favours, than theirs; for of theirs, we are in some remote possibility, of his, in none at all. In one word, all converse between him and man, on his part by providence, and on ours by religion, is quite cut off. Which evidently appears (from what hath been already collected out of his own words, and theirs who pretended to speak that so admired author's mind and sense) to be the scope and sum of the Epicurean doctrine, in this matter; and was indeed observed to be so long ago, by one that we may suppose to have had better opportunity and advantages to know it, than we: who, discoursing that a man cannot live pleasantly, according to the principles of Epicurus; and that according to his doctrine beasts are more happy than men; plainly gives this reason \*

\* Καὶ τοι εἰ μὲν ἐν τῇ πολλῇ ψεῖ τῷ θεῷ τὴν πρόνοιαν ἀπέλιπον, ἐφαίνοντο αὐν ἐλπίσι χρηστῶν πλέον ἔχοντες οἱ φρόνιμοι τῶν θηρίων παρὰ τὸ ἡδέως ζῆν; ἐπεὶ δὲ τελὺ ἦν τῷ περὶ θεῶν λόγῳ, τὸ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι θεόν, ἀλλὰ πάυσασθαι πρᾶττομενες, βεβαιότερον οἶμαι τῷτο, &c.—And truly, as they have left out providence from their conception of the deity, do intellectual beings possess any better hopes of happiness than the beasts? Since their object, in their doctrine about the gods, was to exclude God as an object of fear, and to allay the terrors of men's minds, I deem this a very forcible argument against them. *Plut.*



why he says so, namely, that the Epicureans took away providence, and that the design of their discoursing concerning God was, that we might not fear him.

Unto which purpose also much more may be seen in the same author elsewhere, when he more directly pleads (among divers more philosophical subjects) on behalf of religion against the Epicurean doctrine, which he saith \* they leave to us in word and shew, but by their principles take away indeed, as they do nature and the soul, &c.

It is then out of question, that the doctrine of Epicurus utterly takes away all intercourse between God and man. Which yet were little worth our notice or consideration, nor would it answer any valuable end or purpose to revive the mention of such horrid opinions, or tell the world what such a one said or thought two thousand years ago; if their grave had been faithful to its trust, and had retained their filthy poisonous savour within its own unhallowed cell.

But since (against what were so much to have been desired, that their womb might have been their grave) their grave becomes their womb, where they are conceived, and formed anew, and whence by a second birth they spring forth afresh, to the great annoyance of the world, the debauching and endangering of mankind; and that it is necessary some remedy be endeavoured of so mortal an evil, it was also convenient to run it up to its original, and contend against it as in its primitive state and vigour.

Wherefore this being a true (though it be a very short) account of the Epicurean god, resulting all into this shorter sum,

\* *Adversus Colotem.* Πῶς οὖν ἀπολείπῃσι φύσιν καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ ζῶον; ὡς ὄγκον, ὡς εὐχὴν, ὡς θυσίαν, ὡς προσκύνησιν, ῥήματι καὶ λόγῳ, καὶ τῷ φάναι καὶ προσποιεῖσθαι καὶ ὀνομάζειν, ἃ ταῖς ἀρχαῖς καὶ τοῖς δόγμασιν ἀναιρεῖσιν—How do they apparently admit nature and the soul and a living essence? As they admit of oaths, prayers, sacrifices, and acts of worship; in word and pretence, in simulation and profession, while they destroy them by their principles and doctrines. *To which purpose is that also in Tully.* At etiam de sanctitate, de pietate adversus Deos libros scripsit Epicurus. At quomodo in his loquitur? ut Coruncanium aut Scævolam Pontifices maximos te audire dicas non eum, qui subtulerit omnem funditus religionem: Nec manibus ut Xerxes, sed rationibus Tempia Deorum & aras everterit—Yet Epicurus even wrote books on sanctity and on piety to the gods. But how does he speak in them? So that you might suppose you were listening to the *pontifices maximi* Coruncanius or Scævola. He would destroy the temples and altars of the gods, not by violence, like Xerxes, but by arguments. *De natura Deorum.*

That he is altogether unconvertible with men, (and such therefore as cannot inhabit their temple, and for whom they can have no obligation or rational design to provide any,) it will be requisite in reference hereto, and suitable to our present scope and purpose, severally to evince these things:—That the existence of such a being as this were impossible ever to be proved unto men, if it did exist—That being supposed without any good ground, it is equally unimaginable that the supposition of it can intend any valuable or good end—That this supposed being cannot be God, and is most abusively so called; as hereby, the true God, the Cause and Author of all things, is intended to be excluded—That it belongs to, and may be deduced from, the true notion of God which hath been given, (and proved by parts of a really existent Being,) that he is such as can converse with men.

I. That there is no way to prove the existence of such a being, is evident. For what ways of proving it can be thought of, which the supposition itself doth not forbid and reject? Is it to be proved by revelation? But that supposes converse with men, and destroys what it should prove, that such a being, having no converse with men, doth exist. And where is that revelation? Is it written or unwritten; or who are its vouchers? Upon what authority doth it rest? Who was appointed to inform the world in this matter? Was Epicurus himself the common oracle? Why did he never tell men so? Did he ever pretend to have seen any of these his vogue'd gods? No, they are confessed not to be liable to our sense, any more than the inane itself. And what miracles did he ever work to confirm the truth of his doctrine in this matter? Which sure was reasonably to be expected from one who would gain credit to dictates so contrary to the common sentiments of the rest of mankind, and that were not to be proved any other way. And what other way can be devised? Can it admit of rational demonstration? What shall be the medium? Shall it be from the cause? But what cause can (or ever did) he or his followers assign of God? Or from effects? And what shall they be, when the matter of the whole universe is supposed ever to have been of itself, and the particular frame of every thing made thereof, to have resulted only of the casual coalition of the parts of that matter, and no real being is supposed besides? Or shall it be that their idea, which they have of God, includes existence, as so belonging to him that he cannot but exist? But by what right do they affix such an idea to their petite

and fictitious deities? How will they prove their idea true? Or are we bound to take their words for it? Yea it is easily proved false, and repugnant to itself, while they would have that to be necessarily existent (as they must if they will have it existent at all) unto which, in the mean time, they deny the other perfections which necessary existence hath been proved to include. But how vain and idle trifling is it, arbitrarily and by a random fancy to imagine any thing what we please, and attributing of our own special grace and favour necessary existence to it, thence to conclude that it doth exist, only because we have been pleased to make that belong to the notion of it? What so odd and uncouth composition can we form any conception of, which we may not make exist, at this rate?

But the notion of God is not arbitrary, but is natural, proleptical, and common to men, impressed upon the minds of all: whence they say it ought not to be drawn into controversy. What! the Epicurean notion of him? We shall inquire further into that anon. And in the mean time need not doubt to say, any man might with as good pretence imagine the ridiculous sort of gods described in Cicero's ironical supposition,\* and affirm them to exist, as they those they have thought fit to feign, and would impose upon the belief of men. And when they have fancied these to exist, is not that a mighty proof that they indeed do so? But that which for the present we allege, is, that supposing their notion were ever so absolutely universal, and agreeing with the common sentiments of all other men, they have yet precluded themselves of any right to argue, from its commonness, to the existence of the thing itself. Nor can they upon their principles form an argument thence, that shall conclude or signify any thing to this purpose. None can be drawn hence, that will conclude immediately and itself reach the mark, without the addition of some further thing, which so ill sorts with the rest of their doctrine, that it would subvert the whole frame. That is, it follows not, that because men generally hold that there is a God, that therefore there is one; otherwise than as that consequence can be justified by this plain and irrefragable proof—That no reason can be devised of so general an agreement, or of that so common an impression upon the minds of

\* Deos, Strabones, patulos, nævum habentes, silos, flaccos, frontones, capitones—Gods deformed, looking asquint, flat-nosed, flap-eared, beetle-browed, jolt-headed. *De Natura Deorum*, l. 1.

men, but this only ; that it must have proceeded from one common cause, namely, God himself ; who having made man so prime a part of his creation, hath stamped with his own signature this nobler piece of his workmanship, and purposely made and framed him to the acknowledgment and adoration of his Maker.

But how shall they argue so, who, while they acknowledge a God, deny man to be his creature, and will have him and all things to be by chance, or without dependence on any Maker ? What can an impression infer to this purpose, that comes no one can tell whence or how ; but is plainly denied to be from him, whose being they would argue from it ?

The observation of so common an apprehension in the minds of men, might (upon their supposition) beget much wonder, but no knowledge ; and may perplex men much, how such a thing should come to pass, without making them any thing the wiser ; and would infer astonishment, sooner than a good conclusion, or than it would solidly prove any important truth. And do they think they have salved the business, and given us a satisfying account of this matter, by telling us, This impression is from nature, as they speak ? It were to be wished some of them had told us, or could yet tell us, what they meant by nature. Is it any intelligent principle, or was it guided by any such ? If yea, whence came this impression, but from God himself ? For surely an intelligent Being, that could have this universal influence upon the minds of all men, is much more likely to be God than the imaginary entities they talk of, that are bodies, and no bodies ; have blood, and no blood ; members, and no members ; are somewhere, and nowhere ; or if they be any where, are confined to some certain places remote enough from our world ; with the affairs whereof, or any other, they cannot any way concern themselves, without quite undoing and spoiling their felicity. If they say No, and that nature, which puts this stamp upon the minds of men, is an utterly unintelligent thing, nor was ever governed by any thing wiser than itself—strange ! that blind and undesigning nature should, without being prompted, become thus ignorantly officious to these idle, voluptuary godlings ; and should so effectually take course they might be known to the world, who no way ever obliged it, nor were ever like to do ! But to regress a little, fain I would know what is this thing they call nature ? Is it any thing else than the course and inclination of conspiring atoms, which singly are not pretended to bear any such impression ; but as they luckily club and hit together,

in the composition of a human soul, by the merest and strangest chance that ever happened? But would we ever regard what they say whom we believe to speak by chance? Were it to be supposed that characters and words serving to make up some proposition or other, were by some strange agitation of wind and waves impressed and figured on the sand; would we, if we really believed the matter came to pass only by such an odd casualty, think that proposition any whit the truer for being there, or take this for a demonstration of its truth, any more than if we had seen it in a ballad? Because men have casually come to think so, therefore there are such beings, (to be called gods,) between whom and them there never was or shall be any intercourse or mutual concern. It follows as well, as that because the staff stands in the corner, the morrow will be a rainy day. The dictates of nature are indeed most regardable things taken as expressions of his mind, or emanations from him, who is the Author and God of nature: but abstracted from him, they are and signify as much as a beam cut off from the body of the sun; or a person that pretends himself an ambassador, without credentials.

Indeed, (as is imported in the words noted from that grave Pagan (Plutarch) a little before,) the principles of these men destroy quite nature itself, as well as every thing of religion; and leave us the names and shew of them, but take away the things themselves. In sum, though there be no such impression upon the minds of men as that which they talk of, yet if there were, no such thing can be inferred from it, as they would infer; their principles taking away all connexion between the argument, and what they would argue by it.

2. We have also too much reason to add, That as the supposition of such a being, or sort of beings, can have no sufficient ground; so it is equally unconceivable that it can be intended for any good end. Not that we think the last assertion a sufficient sole proof of this; for we easily acknowledge, that it is possible enough men may harmlessly and with innocent intentions attempt the building very weighty and important truths upon weak and insufficient foundations; hoping they have offered that as a support unto truth, which proves only a useless cumber. Nor were it just to impute treachery, where there is ground for the more charitable censure, that the misadventure proceeded only from want of judgment and shortness of discourse. But it is neither needful nor seemly, that the charity which can willingly wink in some cases, should

therefore be quite blind ; or that no difference should be made of well-meant mistakes, and mischief thinly hid and covered over with specious pretences. And let it be soberly considered, what can the design be, after the cashiering of all solid grounds for the proving of a Deity, at length to acknowledge it upon none at all ? As if their acknowledgment must owe itself not to their reason, but their courtesy. And when they have done what they can to make the rest of men believe they have no need to own any God at all, and they can tell how all that concerns the making and governing the world may well enough be dispatched without any, yet at last they will be so generous as to be content there shall be one, however. What, I say, can the design of this be, that they who have contended with all imaginable obstinacy against the most plain and convincing evidences, that do even defy cavil ; have quite fought themselves blind, and lost their eyes in the encounter ; so that they are ready to swear the sun is a clod of dirt, and noon-day light is to them the very blackness of darkness ? They cannot see a Deity encircling them with the brightest beams, and shining upon them with the most conspicuous glory through every thing that occurs, and all things that encompass them on every side. And yet when all is done, and their thunder-struck eyes make them fancy they have put out the sun : they have won the day, have cleared the field, and are absolute victors ; they have vanquished the whole power of their most dreaded enemy, the light that reveals God in his works—after all this, without any inducement at all, and having triumphed over every thing that looked like an argument to prove it, they vouchsafe to say however, of their own accord, There is a God. Surely if this have any design at all, it must be a very bad one. And see whither it tends. They have now a God of their own making ; and all the being he hath, depends upon their grace and favour. They are not his creatures, but he is their's ; a precarious Deity, that shall be as long, and what, and where, they please to have him. And if he displease them, they can think him back into nothing. Here seems the depth of the design. For see with what cautions and limitations they admit him into being. There shall be a God, provided he be not meddlesome, nor concern himself in their affairs to the crossing of any inclinations or humours which they are pleased shall command and govern their lives : being conscious that if they admit of any at all that shall have to do with their concerns, he cannot but be such as the ways they resolve on will displease. Their very

shame will not permit them to call that God, which if he take any cognizance at all of their course will not dislike it. And herein that they may be the more secure, they judge it the most prudent course, not to allow him any part or interest in the affairs of the world at all.

Yet all this while they court him at a great rate, and all religion is taken away under pretence of great piety: worship they believe he cares not for, because he is full and needs nothing. In this world he must not be, for it is a place unworthy of him. He must have had no hand in framing, nor can they think it fit he should have any in the government of it. For it would be a great disturbance to him, and interrupt his pleasures. The same thing as if certain licentious courtiers, impatient of being governed, should address themselves to their prince in such a form of speech, that it is beneath him to receive any homage from them, it would too much debase majesty; that his dominions afford no place fit for his residence, and therefore it would be convenient for him to betake himself into some other country, that hath better air and accommodation for delight; that diadems and sceptres are burthensome things, which therefore if he will quit to them, he may wholly give up himself to ease and pleasure.

Yea and whatsoever would any way tend to evince his necessary existence, is with the same courtship laid aside; (although if he do not exist necessarily and of himself, he cannot have any existence at all; for as they do not allow him to be the cause of any thing, so they assign nothing to be the cause of him;) that is, with pretence there is no need it should be demonstrated, because all men believe it without a reason, nature having impressed this belief upon the minds of all; or (which is all one) they having agreed to believe it because they believe. But though they have no reason to believe a Deity, they have a very good one why they would seem to do so, that they may expiate with the people their irreligion by a collusive pretending against atheism. And because they think it less plausible plainly to deny there is a God, they therefore grant one to please the vulgar, yet take care it shall be one as good as none, lest otherwise they should displease themselves: and so their credit and their liberty are both cared for together. But this covering is too short, and the art by which they would fit it to their design, when it should cheat others, deceives themselves. For it is most evident,

3. That the being with the pretended belief whereof they would mock the world, is no God; and that consequently,

while they would seem to acknowledge a Deity, they really acknowledge none at all. Our contest hath not, all this while, been a strife about words, or concerning the name, but the thing itself. And not whether there be such a thing in being to which that name may, with whatsoever impropriety, be given, but whether there be such a Being as whereto it properly belongs : supposing, and taking for granted as a matter out of question, that (even in their own sense) if such a being as we have described do exist, it is most properly God ; and that they will not go about to call it by another name ; or that they will not pretend this name agrees to any other thing so fitly as to him. And because we have already proved this being doth exist, and that there can be but one such, it plainly follows their's is in propriety of speech (even though he did exist) no God ; and that much less should he appropriate the name, and exclude the only true God. For since the high and dignifying eulogies, which they are wont to bestow upon their feigned deity, do plainly shew they would have it thought they esteem him the most excellent of all existent Beings ; if we have proved a really existent Being to be more excellent than he, it is evident, even upon their own grounds, that this is God. Hither the Deity must be deferred, and their's must yield, and give out : inasmuch as we cannot suppose them so void of common sense, as to say the less excellent being is God, and the more excellent is no God. But if they should be so, (whereas the controversy is not about the name,) we have our main purpose, in having proved there is a Being actually existent, that hath all the real excellencies which they ascribe to their deities; and infinitely more. And as concerning the name, who made them dictators to all the world, and the sole judges of the propriety of words ; or with what right or pretence will they assume so much to themselves, so as, against the rest of the world, to name that *God*, from which they cut off the principal perfections wont to be signified by that name ? And if we speak of such perfections as tend to infer and establish religion and providence, who, but themselves, did ever call that God in the eminent sense, that they supposed could not hear prayers, and thereupon dispense favours, relieve the afflicted, supply the indigent, and receive suitable acknowledgments ? *They indeed* (saith a famed writer \* of Roman history) *that exercise themselves in the atheistical sorts*

\* ὅσοι μὲν ἐν ταῖς ἀθείαις ἀσχέσι, φιλοσοφίας, &c. D. Halicarnass. Ant. Rom. l. 2.



of philosophy, (if we may call that philosophy,) as they are wont to jeer at all appearances of the gods, whether among the Greeks or the Barbarians, will make themselves matter of laughter of our histories, not thinking that any God takes care of any man.—Let the story he there tells, shift for itself, in the mean time it appears they escaped not the infamy of atheists, who (whatever deities they might imagine besides) did deny God's presence, and regard to men. Which sort of persons he elsewhere often animadverts upon. But do we need to insist, that all the rest of the world acknowledged no gods, whom they did not also worship? What meant their temples and altars, their prayers and sacrifices? Or did they take him for God, whom they believed to take no care of them, or from whom they expected no advantage? Even the barbarous Scythians themselves understood it most inseparably to belong to a Deity, to be beneficent; when they upbraidingly tell Alexander, \* That if he were a God, (as they it seems had heard he vowed himself,) he should bestow benefits upon men, and not take from them what was their own.

And by the way, it is observable how contradictions and repugnant the Epicurean sentiments are in this, even to themselves: that speaking of friendship, † (of which they say many generous and brave things,) they gallantly profess (as Plutarch testifies of them) that it is a more pleasant thing to benefit others than to receive benefits one's self. They yet, while they seem so greatly concerned ‡ that their gods be every way most perfectly happy, deny to them this highest and most excellent part of felicity. That a virtuous man may a great deal more benefit the world than they, and consequently have more pure and lively relishes of a genuine and refined pleasure.

Upon the whole, it is manifest they so maim the notion of God, as to make it quite another thing. And if they think to wipe off any thing of the foul and odious blot wherewith their avowed irreligion hath stained their name and memory, by the acknowledgment of such a God; they effect the like thing by it, and gain as much to the reputation of their piety as he should of his loyalty, who being accused of treason against his prince, shall think to vindicate himself by professing solemnly to own the king; provided you only mean by it the

\* See their ambassador's oration, in Q. Curtius.

† Lib. non posse suaviter vivi, &c.

‡ Vid. & lib. maxime cum princip. viris Phil. &c.

king of clubs, or any such painted one the pack affords. But here it may be demanded, Is every misapprehension of God to be understood as a denial of his being? If so, whom can we undertake to assoil of atheism? Or who can certainly acquit himself? For how impossible is it to be sure we have no untrue conception of a Being so infinitely, by our own confession, above all our thoughts? Or how is it to be avoided, in somewhat or other, to think amiss of so unknown and incomprehensibly excellent a Being, either by detracting somewhat that belongs to it, or attributing somewhat that belongs not? And since many, we are sure, have thought and spoken unworthily of God, besides Epicureans, are all these to go into the account of atheists? Or whereas it is commonly wont to be said, Whatsoever is in God, is God: how can they who deny any thing of him, which is really in him, be excused of denying his whole being? Or where will we fix the bounds of our censure?

Many things should be said (if we will speak at all) to so manifold an inquiry: but it belongs not to the design of this discourse to examine and discuss all men's sentiments of God that have been exposed to the view of the world, or arbitrate among the dissenting parties; much less to explain or abet every school-maxim that hath reference to this theme; the authors or lovers whereof will be sufficiently prompted by their own genius to do at least as much as can be requisite herein. But whatever the real sameness is supposed to be, of the things attributed to God, it is acknowledged we cannot but conceive of them as divers; and so that our conception of any one is not adequate to the entire object, which is confessed incomprehensible. Yet any one attribute gives a true notion of the object, so far as it reaches, though not a full. As I may be said truly to see a man, when I only see his face, and view not every part and limb; or to know him, while yet I have not had opportunity to discern every quality in his temper, and what his dispositions and inclinations, in all respects, are. Moreover, it is one thing to deny any divine perfection, another, only not to know it.

And such mere nescience is so far from being guilty of the horrid crime of atheism, that it is not so much as culpable, further than as it is obstinately persisted in, against sufficient evidence: for we are not obliged to know every thing, but what is to us knowable, and what we are concerned to know. Again, (and which is most considerable to our purpose,) we are

not concerned to know what God is in himself, otherwise than as we may thereby know what he is in relation to us, namely, as he is the Author of our beings, the Governor of our lives and actions, and thereupon the Object of our religion; for a religious respect unto him is the very end of that knowledge. Now, if any other than that sort of persons we oppose have taken up apprehensions of him not so suitable to that end, it were to be wished they saw it, and would unthink all those thoughts. But surely, they who most professedly contend against the very notions themselves which directly influence all our practice toward God, so considered, and would suggest such as are wholly inconsistent therewith; who oppose the knowledge of God to the end of that knowledge, and do not merely mistake the way to that end while they are aiming at it, but most avowedly resist and disclaim the end itself; are to be distinguished from them who professedly intend that same end, only see not wherein their misapprehensions are prejudicial and repugnant to it; otherwise are ready to reject them. And the former are therefore most justly to be singled out, and designed the objects of our direct opposition. Nor are they so fitly to be opposed under any other notion, as that of atheists. For since our knowledge of God ought chiefly to respect him in that fore-mentioned relative consideration, and the inquiry, What is God? signifies, as it concerns us, What is the object of religion? they denying any such thing, deny there is a God. Nor do they deny him in that relative consideration only; but (as every relation is founded in somewhat that is absolute) the very reason of their denying him so, is, that they deny in him those absolute and positive perfections that render him such; as certain of those do, that have been proved to belong to him. Which is that we have next to consider, namely,

4. That it may evidently be deduced from what hath been said, tending to prove those things of God which are included in the notion of him, and from that notion itself, that he is such as can converse with men. That is, having proved—That there is an eternal, self-subsisting, independent, necessary Being, of so great activity, life, power, wisdom, and goodness, as to have been the Maker of this world: and by this medium—That we see this world is in being, which otherwise could never have been, much less such as we see it is: it therefore follows, that this great Creator can have influence upon the creatures he hath made, in a way suitable to their natures. It follows, I say, from the same medium, (the present visible

existence of this world, which could not otherwise be now in being,) that he can thus have influence upon his creatures: for it is hence manifest that he hath; they depend on him, and are sustained by him; nor could more subsist by themselves, than they could make themselves, or of themselves have sprung out of nothing. And if it were possible they could, being raised up into being, continue in being of themselves; yet since our present question is not concerning what they need, but what God can do; and our adversaries in the present cause do not (as hath been noted) upon any other pretence deny that he doth concern himself in the affairs of the universe, but that he cannot; (that is, that it consists not with his felicity, and he cannot be happy;) is it not plain that he can with the same facility continue the influence which he at first gave forth, and with as little prejudice to his felicity? For if it be necessary to him to be happy, or impossible not to be so, he must be ever so. His happiness was not capable of being discontinued, so long as while he made the world, settled the several orders and kinds, and formed the first individuals of every kind of creatures. Therefore having done this, and without diminution to his happiness, was it a more toilsome and less tolerable labour to keep things as they were, than to make them so? If it were, (which no man that understands common sense would say,) surely that blind thing which they more blindly call *nature*, (not understanding or being able to tell what they mean by it,) and would have to be the only cause of all things, acting at first to the uttermost, and having no way to recruit its vigour and reinforce itself, its labour and business being so much increased, had jaded and grown weary; had given out, and patiently suffered all things to dissolve and relapse into the old chaos long ago. But if the labour were not greater, to continue things in the state wherein they were made, than to make them; surely a wise, intelligent Deity, which we have proved made them, could as well sustain them, being made, as their brutal (and as unintelligible, as unintelligent) nature do both.

So much then of intercourse God could have with his creatures, as his continual communication of his influence to be received by them amounts to. And then man not being excluded their number, must share in this possible privilege according to the capacity of his nature. And inasmuch as we have also proved more particularly concerning man, that he immediately owes the peculiar excellencies of his intelligent nature, as it is such, to God only; it is apparently consequent,

that having formed this his more excellent creature, according to his own more express likeness, stamped it with the glorious characters of his living image, given it a nature suitable to his own, and thereby made it capable of rational and intelligent converse with him; he hath it ever in his power to maintain a continual converse with this creature, by agreeable communications; by letting in upon it the vital beams and influences of his own light and love, and receiving back the return of its grateful acknowledgments and praises. Wherein it is manifest he should do no greater thing than he hath done: for who sees not, that it is a matter of no greater difficulty to converse with, than to make a reasonable creature? Or who would not be ashamed to deny, that he who hath been the only Author of the soul of man, and of the excellent powers and faculties belonging to it, can more easily sustain what he hath made, and converse with that his creature, suitably to the way wherein he hath made it capable of his converse? Whereto the consideration being added of his gracious nature, (manifested in this creation itself,) it is further evident, that he is (as things are now ordered, whereof more hereafter) not only able, but apt and ready to converse with men, in such a way as shall tend to the improving of their being unto that blessedness whereof he hath made them naturally capable; if their own voluntary alienation and aversion to him (yet not overcome) do not obstruct the way of that intercourse. And even this were sufficient to give foundation to a temple, and both afford encouragement and infer an obligation to religion; although no other perfection had been, or could be, demonstrated of the Divine Being, than what is immediately to be collected from his works, and the things whereof he hath been the sole and most arbitrary Author. For what if no more were possible to be proved, have we not, even by thus much, a representation of an object sufficiently worthy of our homage and adoration? He that could make and sustain such a world as this, how inexpressibly doth he surpass in greatness the most excellent of all mortal creatures! to some or other of whom, upon some (merely accidental) dignifying circumstances, we justly esteem ourselves to owe a dutiful observance and subjection.

If he did not comprehend within his own Being simply all perfection; if there were many gods and worlds besides, and he only the Creator and absolute Lord of our vortex; were not that enough to entitle him to all the obedience and service we

could give him, and to enable him sufficiently to reward it, and render his presence and cherishing influences (which he could every where diffuse within this circle, and limited portion of the universe) even infinitely covetable and desirable to us? Yea, if he were the only entire Author of our own particular being, how much more is that, than the partial, subordinate interest of a human parent, to whom (as even an Epicurean would confess) nature itself urges and exacts a duty, the refusal whereof even barbarian ingenuity would abhor, yea and brutal instinct condemn? How much greater and more absolute is the right which the parentage of our whole being challenges? If every man were created by a several God, whose creative power were confined to only one such creature, and each one were the solitary product and the charge of an appropriate Deity, whose dominion the state of things would allow to be extended so far only, and no further; were there therefore no place left for religion, or no tie unto love, reverence, obedience, and adoration, because the Author of my being comprehended not in himself all perfection, when as yet he comprehended so much as to be the sole cause of all that is in me; and his power over me, and his goodness to me, are hereby supposed the same which the only one God truly hath and exerciseth towards all? If all that I am and have be for him, I cannot surely owe to him less than all.

Such as have either had, or supposed themselves to have, their particular tutelary *genii*, (of whom there will be more occasion to take notice hereafter,) though they reckoned them but a sort of deputed or vicarious deities, underling gods, whom they never accounted the causes of their being; yet how have they coveted and gloried to open their breasts to become their temples, and entertain the converse of those supposed divine inhabitants? If they had taken one of these to be their alone creator, how much greater had their veneration and their homage been? This, it may be hoped, will be thought sufficiently proved in this discourse, (at least to have been so by some or other,) that we are not of ourselves; and that our extraction is to be fetched higher than from matter, or from only human progenitors. Nothing that is terrene and mortal could be the author of such powers as we find in ourselves; we are most certainly the offspring of some or other Deity. And he that made us, knows us thoroughly, can apply himself inwardly to us, receive our addresses and applications, our acknowledgments and adoration; whercunto we should have,

even upon these terms, great and manifest obligation, although nothing more of the excellency and perfection of our Creator were certainly known to us.

III. But it hath been further shewn, That the necessary Being from whence we sprang, is also an absolutely and infinitely perfect Being :—That necessary Being cannot be less perfect, than to include the entire and inexhaustible fulness of all being and perfection :—That therefore the God to whom this notion belongs, must consequently be every way sufficient to all, and be himself but one ; the only Source and Fountain of all life and being ; the common Basis and Support of the universe ; the absolute Lord of this great creation, and the central Object of the common concurrent trust, fear, love, and other worship of his intelligent and reasonable creatures. And therefore there remains no greater or other difficulty, in apprehending how he can, without disturbance to himself or interruption of his own felicity, intend all the concerns of his creatures, apply himself to them according to their several exigencies, satisfy their desires and cravings, inspect and govern their actions and affairs ; than we have to apprehend a Being absolutely and every way perfect. Whereof if we cannot have a distinct apprehension all at once, that is, though we cannot comprehend every particular perfection of God in the same thought, (as our eye cannot behold, at one view, every part of an over-large object, unto which, however, part by part, it may be successively applied,) we can yet in the general apprehend him absolutely perfect ; or such to whom, we are sure, no perfection is wanting : and can successively contemplate this or that, as we are occasionally led to consider them : and can answer to ourselves difficulties that occur to us, with this easy, sure, and ever ready solution ; That he can do all things ; that nothing is too hard for him ; that he is full, all-sufficient, and every way perfect. Whereof we are the more confirmed, that we find we cannot, by the utmost range of our most enlarged thoughts, ever reach any bound or end of that perfection, which yet we must conclude is necessarily to be attributed to an absolutely perfect Being. And this we have reason to take for a very sufficient answer to any doubt that can arise, concerning the possibility of his converse with us ; unless we will be so unreasonable as to pretend, that what is brought for *solution* hath greater difficulty in it than the *doubt* ; or that because we cannot apprehend at once infinite perfection, therefore it cannot be ; which were as much as to say, that it cannot be because it is infinite ; for it were not in-

finite, if we could distinctly apprehend it. And so were to make it a reason against itself, which is most injuriously and with no pretence attempted, except we could shew an inconsistency in the terms; which it is plain we can never do, and should most idly attempt. And it were to make our present apprehension the measure of all reality, against our experience; which (if our indulgence to that self-magnifying conceit do not suspend our farther inquiries and researches) would daily bring to our notice things we had no apprehension of before. It were (instead of that just and laudable ambition of becoming ourselves like God, in his imitable perfections) to make him like ourselves; the true model of the Epicurean deity.

Nor can any thing be more easy, than that wherein we pretend so great a difficulty; that is, to apprehend somewhat may be more perfect than we can apprehend. What else but proud ignorance can hinder us from seeing, that the more we know, the more there is that we know not? How often are we out-done by creatures of our own order in the creation! How many men are there whom we are daily constrained to admire, as unspeakably excelling us, and whom we cannot but acknowledge to be far more knowing, discerning, apprehensive of things, of more composed minds, of more penetrating judgments, of more quick and nimble wits, easily turning themselves to a great variety of objects and affairs without distraction and confusion, of more equal and dispassionate tempers, less liable to commotion and disturbance than ourselves.

How absurd and senseless a pretence is it against the thing itself, that we cannot apprehend an infinite perfection in one common fountain of all perfection; or because we cannot go through a multitude of businesses without distraction, that therefore he that made us and all things cannot. If we would make ourselves the measure, it is likely we should confess we were out-stripped, when we are told that Julius Cæsar could dictate letters, when he was intent upon the greatest affairs, to four (and if he had nothing else to divert him, to seven) secretaries at once; that Cyrus\* could call by name all the

\* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. 7. c. 25. Id. l. 7. c. 24. vid. & Xenoph. de Cyr. Pæd. l. 5. Who, though he expressly says not he knew all the soldiers names, but seems rather to mean it of their officers, (for, saith he, he reckoned it an absurd thing a mechanic should know the names of all his tools, &c. and a general not know the names of his captains under him, &c.) yet he saith the soldiers wondered πῶς ὀνομάζων ἐνετέλλετο—that he should be able to call them by their names when he gave the word of command.



soldiers in his numerous army : with divers other strange instances of like nature. And since the perfections of *some* so far exceed the measure of the *most*, Why is it then unconceivable that divine perfection should so far surpass *all*, as that God may intend the affairs of the world, according to the several exigencies of his creatures, without any ungrateful diversion to himself, or diminution to his felicity ? And since they who partake of some, and but a small portion of perfection only, can be concerned in many affairs, with little trouble ; why cannot he that comprehends all perfection, be concerned in all, without any ? For though we have, in what hath been last said, endeavoured to represent it as not so unapprehensible as is pretended, that it may be also ; we take it, in the mean time, as formerly sufficiently proved, that so it is ; that God is a being absolutely perfect, or that includes eminently all perfection in himself.

III. Which general perfection of his being, as it modifies all his attributes, so we shall particularly take notice that it doth so as to those that have a more direct influence upon, and tend more fully to evince his conversableness with men. As, *First*, his wisdom and knowledge (for we need not to be so curious as at present to distinguish them) must be omniscient. About which, if any place were left for rational doubt, it would be obvious to them to allege it who are of slower inclinations towards religion ; and object, (against all applications to, or expectations from him,) that if we be not sure he knows simply all things, so as wisely to consider them and resolve fitly about them, it will be no little difficulty to determine which he doth, and which not ; or to be at a certainty, that this or that concernment of theirs, about which they might address themselves to him, be not among the unknown things. At least, we shall the less need to be curious in distinguishing, or to consider what things may be supposed rather than other, to be without the compass of his knowledge ; if it appear that it universally encompasses all things, or that nothing can be without its reach. And because we suppose it already out of doubt, that the true notion of God imports a Being absolutely or every way perfect ; nothing else can be doubted in this matter, but whether the knowledge of all things be a perfection.

The greatest difficulty that hath troubled some in this matter, hath been, How it is possible there should be any certain knowledge of events yet to come, that depend upon a free and self-determining cause. But methinks we should not make a

difficulty to acknowledge, that to know these things, imports greater perfection than not to know them; and then it would be very unreasonable, because we cannot shew how this or that thing was performed which manifestly is done, therefore to deny that it is done at all. It would be so highly unreasonable to conclude against any act of God, from our ignorance of the manner of it, that we should reckon it very absurd to conclude so, concerning any act of our own, or our ability thereto. What if it were hitherto an unknown thing, and impossible to be determined, how the act of vision is performed by us; were it a wise conclusion, that therefore we neither do nor can see? How much more rash and presuming a confidence were it to reason thus concerning the Divine acts and perfections! Would we not in any such case be determined rather by that which is more evident, than by what is more obscure? As in the assigned instance, we should have but these two propositions to compare—That I do (or have such a perfection belonging to me that I can) see, and,—That whatsoever act I do or can do, I am able to understand the course and method of nature's operations therein—and thereupon to judge which of these two is more evident. Wherein it may be supposed there is no man in his wits, to whom the determination would not be easy. Accordingly, in the present case we have only these two assertions that can be in competition, in point of evidence, between which we are to make a comparison, and a consequent judgment; namely—Whatsoever perfection belongs to a Being absolutely perfect, enabling it to do this or that, the wit of man can comprehend the distinct way and manner of doing it; and,—It imports greater perfection to know all things, than to be ignorant of some—and here surely whosoever shall think the determination difficult, accounts the wit of man so exceeding great, that he discovers his own to be very little. For what can the pretence of evidence be in the former assertion? Was it necessary that he, in whose choice it was whether we should ever know any thing or no, should make us capable of knowing every thing belonging to his own being? Or will we adventure to be so assuming, as while we deny it to God that he knows all things, to attribute to ourselves that we do? But if we will think it not altogether unworthy of us to be ignorant of something, what is there of which we may with more probability, or with less disparagement be thought so, than the manner of God's knowing things? And what place is there for complaint of inevidence in the latter? Is not that knowledge more perfect, which so fully already comprehends

all things, as upon that account to admit of no increase ; than that which shall be every day growing, and have a continual succession of new objects emerging and coming into view before altogether unknown ? And will not that be the case, if we suppose future contingencies to lie concealed from the penetrating eye of God ? For whatsoever is future, will some time be present, and then we will allow such contingencies to be known to him. That is, that God may know them, when we ourselves can ; and that nothing of that kind is known to him, which is not knowable some way or other to ourselves, at least successively, and one thing after another. We will perhaps allow *that* prerogative to God, in point of this knowledge, that *he* can know these things now fallen out, all at once ; *we*, but by degrees ; while yet there is not any one that is absolutely unknowable to us. But why should it be thought unreasonable, to attribute an excellency to the knowledge of God above ours ; as well in respect of the manner of knowing, as the multitude of objects at once known ? We will readily confess, in some creatures, an excellency of their visive faculty above our own ; that they can see things in that darkness, wherein they are to us invisible. And will we not allow that to the eye of God, which is *as a flame of fire*, to be able to penetrate into the abstrusest darkness of futurity, though we know not the way how it is done ; when yet we know that whatsoever belongs to the most perfect being, must belong to his ? And that knowledge of all things imports more perfection, than if it were lessened by the ignorance of any thing.

Some, who have thought the certain foreknowledge of future contingencies not attributable to God, have reckoned the matter sufficiently excused by *this*, That it no more detracts from the divine omniscience, to state without the object of it things not possible, or that imply a contradiction (as they suppose these do) to be known ; than it doth from his omnipotency, that it cannot do what is impossible, or that implies a contradiction to be done. But against this there seems to lie this reasonable exception, that the two cases appear not sufficiently alike ; inasmuch as the supposition of the former will be found not to leave the blessed God equally entitled to omniscience, as the latter to omnipotency. For all things should not be alike the object of both ; and why should not *that* be understood to signify the *knowledge* of simply all things, as well as *this* the *power of doing* simply all things ? Or why should *all things*, included in these two words, signify so very diversely ;

that is, *there* properly all things, *here* some things only? And why must we so difference the object of omniscieny and omnipotency, as to make that so much narrower than this? And then how is it all things, when so great a number of things will be left excluded? Whereas from the object of omnipotency (that we may prevent what would be replied) there will be no exclusion of any thing: not of the things which are actually already made; for they are still momentarily reproduced by the same power: not of the actions and effects of free causes yet future; for, when they become actual, God doth certainly perform the part of the first cause, (even by common consent,) in order to their becoming so; which is certainly doing somewhat, though all be not agreed what that part is. Therefore they are, in the mean time, to be esteemed within the object of omnipotency, or to be of the things which God can do; namely, as the first cause virtually including the power of the second. But more strictly; all impossibility is either natural and absolute, or moral and conditional. What is absolutely or naturally impossible, or repugnant in itself, is not properly any thing. Whatsoever simple being, not yet existent, we can form any conception of, is producible, and so within the compass of omnipotency; for there is no repugnancy in simplicity. That wherein therefore we place natural impossibility, is the inconsistency of being this thing, whose notion is such; and another, wholly and entirely, whose notion is diverse, at the same time, that which (more barbarously than insignificantly) hath been wont to be called *impossibility*. But surely all things are properly enough said to be naturally possible to God, while all simple beings are producible by him, of which any notion can be formed; yea and compounded, so as by their composition to result into a third thing. So that it is not an exception, to say that it is naturally impossible this thing should be another thing, and yet be wholly itself still at once; that it should be and not be, or be without itself. There is not within the compass of actual or conceivable being, such a thing. Nor is it reasonable to except such actions as are naturally possible to other agents, but not to him; as to walk, for instance, or the like. Inasmuch as, though the excellency of his nature permits not they should be done by him, yet since their power of doing them proceeds wholly from him, he hath it virtually and eminently in himself: as was formerly said of the infiniteness of his being. And for moral impossibility, as to lie, to do an unjust act; that God never does them, proceeds not from want of power, but an eternal aver-

sion of will. It cannot be said he is not able to do such a thing, if he would; but so is his will qualified and conditioned, by its own unchangeable rectitude, that he most certainly never will; or such things as are in themselves evil are never done by him, not through the defect of natural power, but from the permanent stability and fulness of all moral perfection. And it is not without the compass of absolute omnipotency to do what is but conditionally impossible, that absence of which restrictive condition would rather bespeak impotency and imperfection, than omnipotency. Therefore the object of omnipotence is simply all things; why not of omniscience as well? It may be said, all things, as it signifies the object of omniscience, is only restrained by the act or faculty, signified therewith in the same word, so as to denote the formal object of that faculty or act, namely, all knowable things. But surely that act must suppose some agent, whereto that knowable hath reference. Knowable! To whom? To others or to God himself? If we say the former, it is indeed a great honour we put upon God, to say he can know as much as others; if the latter, we speak absurdly, and only say he can know all that he can know. It were fairer to deny omniscience than so interpret it. But if it be denied, what shall the pretence be? Why, that it implies a contradiction future contingents should be certainly known; for they are uncertain, and nothing can be otherwise truly known than as it is. \*

And it must be acknowledged, that to whom any thing is uncertain, it is a contradiction that to him it should be certainly known. But that such things are uncertain to God, needs other proof than I have met with, in what follows in that cited author, or elsewhere: all which will amount to no more than this, that such things as we cannot tell how God knows them, must needs be unknown to him. But since we are sure many such things have been certainly foretold by God, (and of them such as we may be also sure he never intended to effect,) we have reason enough to be confident that such things are not

\* *Qualis res est talis est rei cognitio. Si itaque res sit incerta (puta incertum est hoc ne sit futurum, an non) non datur ulla certa ejus notitia. Quomodo enim fieri potest ut certo sciatur adfore, quod certo futurum non est, &c.*—As a thing is, such is the knowledge of that thing; if a thing be uncertain, (uncertain whether it will come to pass or not,) there is no certain knowledge of that thing: for how can it be certainly known that a thing will be, which, whether it will be or not, is uncertain? *Strangius de voluntate & Actionibus Dei, &c. l. 3. c. 6. as he there objects to himself.*

unknowable to him. And for the manner of his knowing them, it is better to profess ignorance about it, than attempt the explication thereof, either unintelligibly, as some have to *no purpose*, or dangerously and impiously, as others have adventured to do to very *bad purpose*. And it well becomes us to suppose an infinite understanding may have ways of knowing things which we know nothing of. To my apprehension, that last-mentioned author doth with ill success attempt an explication of God's manner of knowing this sort of things, by the far less intelligible notion of the indivisibility of eternity, comprehending (as he says) all the parts of time, not successively, but together. And though he truly says that the Scotists' way of expressing how future contingents are present to God, that is, according to their objective and intentional being only, affords us no account why God knows them, (for which cause he rejects it, and follows that of the Thomists, who will have them to be present according to their real and actual existence, I should yet prefer the deficiency of the former way, before the contradictionsness and repugnancy of the latter; and conceive these words in the *Divine Dialogues*, (Dr. More,) as good an explication of the manner of his knowledge, as the case can admit, (which yet is but the Scotists' sense,) "That the whole evolution of times and ages is so collectedly and presentifically represented to God at once, as if all things and actions which ever were, are, or shall be, were at this very instant, and so always really present and existent before him." Which is no wonder, the animadversion and intellectual comprehension of God being absolutely infinite, according to the truth of his idea. I do therefore think *that* a sober resolution in this matter, (of Bathymus, in the same *Dialogues*,) "That it seems more safe to allow this privilege to the infinite understanding of God, than to venture at all to circumscribe his omniscience: for though it may safely be said that he knows not any thing that really implies a contradiction to be known, yet we are not assured but that may seem a contradiction to us, that is not so really in itself." And when we have only human wit to contest with in the case, reverence of this or that man, though both in great vogue in that kind, needs not restrain us from distinguishing between a mere seeming latent contradiction, and a flat, downright, open one. Only as to that instance of the commensurableness of the diagonal line of a quadrate to one of the sides; whereas though there are great difficulties on both sides, namely, that these are commensurable, and that they are not; yet any man's judgment would rather incline to

the latter, as the easier part : I should therefore also think it more safe to make choice of that, as the parallel of the present difficulty. Upon the whole, we may conclude that the knowledge of God is every way perfect ; and being so, extends to all our concerns : and that nothing remains, upon that account, to make us decline applying ourselves to religious converse with him, or to deny him the honour and entertainment of a temple : for which we shall yet see further cause, when we consider,

*Secondly*, That his power is also omnipotent. Which (though the discourse of it have been occasionally somewhat mingled with that of the last) might be directly spoken of for the fuller evi- cation of that his conversableness with men, which religion and a temple do suppose. Nor indeed is it enough that he knows our concerns, except he can also provide effectually about them, and dispose of them to our advantage. And we cannot doubt but he, who could create us and such a world as this, can do so, even though he were supposed not omnipotent. But even that itself seems a very unreasonable supposition, that less than infinite power should suffice to the creation of any thing. For however liable it may be to controversy, what a second cause might do herein, being assisted by the infinite power of the first ; it seems altogether unimaginable to us, how, though the power of all men were met in one, (which we can easily suppose to be a very vast power,) it could, alone, be sufficient to make the minutest atom arise into being out of nothing. And that all the matter of the universe hath been so produced, namely, out of nothing, it will be no great presumption to suppose already fully proved ; in that though any such thing as necessary matter were admitted, yet its essential unalterableness would render it impossible it should be the matter of the universe. Therefore when we cannot devise what finite power can ever suffice (suppose we it ever so much increased, but still finite) to the doing of that which we are sure is done, what is left us to suppose, but that the power which did it is simply infinite : much more when we consider, not only that something is actually produced out of nothing, but do also seriously contemplate the nature of the production ! Which carries so much of amazing wonder in it, every where, that even the least and most minute things might serve for sufficient instances of the unlimited greatness of that power which made them ; as would be seen, if we did industriously set ourselves to compare the effects of *divine power* with those of *human art* and skill. As is the ingenious and pious observation,

of the most worthy Mr. Hook, (in his *Micrographia*,) who upon his viewing with his microscope the point of a small and very sharp needle, (than which we cannot conceive a smaller thing laboured by the hand of man,) takes notice of sundry sorts of natural things, “that have points many thousand times sharper: those of the hairs of insects, &c. *that* appearing broad, irregular, and uneven, having marks upon it, of the rudeness and bungling of art. So unaccurate (saith he) it is in all its productions, even in those that seem most neat, that if examined truly with an organ more acute than that by which they were made, the more we see of their shape the less appearance will there be of their beauty. Whereas in the works of nature the deepest discoveries shew us the greatest excellencies: an evident argument that he that was the Author of these things, was no other than omnipotent, being able to include as great a variety of parts, in the yet smallest discernable point, as in the vaster bodies, (which comparatively are called also points,) such as the earth, sun, or planets.” And I may add, when those appear but points, in comparison of his so much vaster work, how plainly doth that also argue to us the same thing? And let us strictly consider the matter. Omnipotency, as hath been said, imports a power of doing all things possible to be done, or indeed, simply all things; unto which passive power, an active one must necessarily correspond. That is, there is nothing in itself possible to be done, but it is also possible to some one or other to do it. If we should therefore suppose God not omnipotent, it would follow some one or other were able to do more than God. For though possibility do import a non-repugnancy in the thing to be done; yet it also connotes an ability in some agent to do it. Wherefore there is nothing possible which some agent cannot do. And if so, that agent must either be God, or some other. To say it is God, is what we intend. That is, there is nothing possible which God cannot do; or he can do all things. But to say it is some other, and not God, were to open the door to the above-mentioned horrid consequence; which no one that acknowledges a God (and we are not now discoursing with them who simply deny his being) would not both blush and tremble to avow.

Some indeed have so over-done the business here as to deny any intrinsical possibility of any thing, and say that things are only said to be possible, because God can do them; which is the same thing as thus to explain God’s omnipotency; that is, that he can do all things which he can do: and makes a *chimæra* no more impossible in itself to be produced, than a



not yet existent man. And the reason of the denial is, that what is only possible is nothing, and therefore can have nothing intrinsic to it ; s if it were not sufficient to the intrinsic possibility of a thing, that its idea have no repugnancy in it. Yet entire and full possibility connotes a reference to the productive power of an agent ; so that it is equally absurd to say that things are only possible, because there is no repugnancy in their ideas, as it is to say they are only possible, because some agent can do them ; inasmuch as the entire possibility of their existence imports both that there is no repugnancy in their ideas, which if there be, they are every way nothing, (as hath been said before,) and also that there is a sufficient power to produce them. Therefore, whereas we might believe him sufficient every way for us, though we did not believe him simply omnipotent ; how much more fully are we assured, when we consider that he is ? Whereof also no place of doubt can remain, this being a most unquestionable perfection, necessarily included in the notion of an absolutely perfect Being. But here we need not further insist, having no peculiar adversary (in this matter singly) to contend with, as indeed he would have had a hard province, who should have undertaken to contend against omnipotency. And now join herewith again,

*Thirdly,* The boundlessness of his goodness, which upon the same ground of his absolute perfection, must be infinite also, and which it is of equal concernment to us to consider, that we may understand he not only can effectually provide about our concerns, but is most graciously inclined so to do. And then, what rational inducement is wanting to religion, and the dedication of a temple ; if we consider the joint encouragement that arises from so unlimited power and goodness ? Or what man would not become entirely devoted to him, who, by the one of these, we are assured, *Δυναμὲν μὲν πάντα θελομένη δὲ τὰ ἀριστα*. Phil. Jud. de Abr. *can do all things*, and by the other, *will do what is best*. Nor therefore is there any thing immediately needful to our present purpose, the eviction of *God's conversableness with men*, more than hath been already said. That is, there is nothing else to be thought on, that hath any nearer influence thereon ; the things that can be supposed to have such influence, being none else than his power, knowledge, and goodness, which have been particularly evinced from the creation of the world, both to have been in some former subject, and to have all originally met in a necessary being, that alone could be the Creator of it. Which

necessary Being, as it is such, appearing also to be infinite, and absolutely perfect ; the influence of these cannot but the more abundantly appear to be such as can and may most sufficiently and fully correspond, both in general to the several exigencies of all creatures, and more especially to all the real necessities and reasonable desires of man : so that our main purpose seems already gained. Yet because it may be grateful when we are persuaded that things are so, to fortify (as much as we can) that persuasion, and because our persuasion concerning these attributes of God will be still liable to assault unless we acknowledge him every where present ; (nor can it well be conceivable otherwise, how the influence of his knowledge, power, and goodness, can be so universal, as will be thought necessary to infer a universal obligation to religion ;) it will be therefore requisite to add,

*Fourthly*, Somewhat concerning his omnipresence, or because some, that love to be very strictly critical, will be apt to think that term restrictive of his presence to the universe, (as supposing to be present is relative to somewhat one may be said present unto, whereas they will say without the universe, is nothing,) we will rather choose to call it *immensity*. For though it would sufficiently answer our purpose, that his presence be universal to all his creatures ; yet even this is to be proved by such arguments as will conclude him simply immense ; which therefore will with the greater advantage infer the thing we intend. This part of divine perfection we will acknowledge to have been impugned, by some that have professed much devotedness to a Deity and religion : we will therefore charitably suppose that opposition to have joined with inadvertency of the ill tendency of it ; that is, how unwarrantably it would maim the notion of the former, and shake the foundations of the latter. Nor therefore ought that charity to be any allay to a just zeal for so great concerns.

It seems then manifestly repugnant to the notion of an infinitely perfect Being, to suppose it less than simply immense. For, upon that supposition it must either be limited to some certain place, or excluded out of all. The latter of these would be most openly to deny it ; as hath with irrefragable evidence been abundantly manifested by the most learned Dr. More, (both in his *Dialogues* and *Enchiridion Metaphys.*) whereto it would be needless and vain to attempt to add any thing. Nor is that the thing pretended to by the sort of persons I now chiefly intend.

And for the *former*, I would inquire, Is amplitude of es-

sence no perfection? Or were the confining of this Being to the very minutest space we can imagine, no detraction from the perfection of it? What if the amplitude of that glorious and ever-blessed Essence were said to be only of that extent (may it be spoken with all reverence, and resentment of the unhappy necessity we have of making so mean a supposition) as to have been confined unto that one temple to which of old he chose to confine his more solemn worship; that he could be essentially present, only here at once, and nowhere else; were this no detraction? They that think him only to replenish and be present by his essence in the highest heaven, (as some are wont to speak,) would they not confess it were a meaner and much lower thought to suppose that presence circumscribed within the so unconceivably narrower limits as the walls of a house? If they should pretend to ascribe to him some perfection beyond this, by supposing his essential presence commensurable to the vaster territory of the highest heavens; even by the same supposition, they should deny to him greater perfection than they ascribe. For the perfection which in this kind they would *ascribe*, were *finite* only; but that which they would *deny*, were *infinite*.

Again, they will however acknowledge omnipotency a perfection included in the notion of an absolutely perfect Being; therefore they will grant, he can create another world (for they do not pretend to believe this infinite; and if they did, by their supposition, they would give away their cause) at any the greatest distance we can conceive from this; therefore so far his power can extend itself. But what, his power without his being? What then is his power? Something, or nothing? Nothing can do nothing; therefore not make a world. It is then some being, and whose being is it but his own? Is it a created being? That is to suppose him first, impotent, and then to have created omnipotency, when he could do nothing. Whence by the way we may see to how little purpose that distinction can be applied in the present case of essential and virtual contact, where the essence and virtue cannot but be the same. But shall it be said, he must, in order to the creating such another world, locally move thither where he designs it? I ask then, But can he not at the same time create thousands of worlds at any distance from this round about it? No man can imagine this to be impossible to him that can do all things. Wherefore of such extent is his power, and consequently his being. Will they therefore say he can immensely, if he please, diffuse his being, but he voluntarily

contracts it? It is answered, that is altogether impossible to a being, that is whatsoever it is by a simple and absolute necessity, for whatsoever it is necessarily, it is unalterably and eternally, or is pure act, and in a possibility to be nothing which it already is not. Therefore since God can every way exert his power, he is necessarily, already, every where : and hence, God's immensity is the true reason of his immobility ; there being no imaginable space, which he doth not necessarily replenish. Whence also, the supposition of his being so confined (as was said) is immediately repugnant to the notion of a necessary Being, as well as of an absolutely perfect, which hath been argued from it. We might moreover add, that upon the same supposition God might truly be said to have made a creature greater than himself, (for such this universe apparently were,) and that he can make one (as they must confess who deny him not to be omnipotent) most unconceivably greater than this universe now is. Nothing therefore seems more manifest than that God is immense, or (as we may express it) *extrinsically* infinite, with respect to place ; as well as *intrinsically*, in respect to the plenitude of his being and perfection. Only it may be requisite to consider briefly what is said against it by the otherwise minded, that pretend not to deny his infinity in that other sense. Wherein that this discourse swell not beyond just bounds, their strength, namely, of argument, (for it will not be so seasonable here to discuss with them the texts of scripture wont to be insisted on in this matter,) shall be viewed as it is collected and gathered up in one of them.

IV. And that shall be, Curcellæus, \* who gives it as succinctly and fully as any I have met with of that sort of men. The *doctrine* itself we may take from him thus. On the negative part, by way of denial of what we have been hitherto asserting, he says, "The foundation," (that is, of a distinction of Marcius's to which he is relying, for so occasionally comes in the discourse,) "namely, the infinity of the divine essence, is not so firm as is commonly thought." And that therefore it may be thought less firm, he thinks fit to cast a slur upon it, by making it the doctrine of the Stoics, exprest by Virgil, *Jovis omnia plena*—*all things are full of Jupiter*; (as if it must needs be false, because Virgil said it, though I could tell, if it were worth the while, where Virgil speaks more agreeably to his sense than ours, according to which he might as well have interpreted this passage, as divers texts of

\* De Vocibus Trinit. &c.

scripture; and then his authority might have been of some value;) and by Lucan, who helps, it seems, to disgrace and spoil it; *Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris*—*Jupiter is, whatever you see and wherever you go.* He might, if he had a mind to make it thought Paganish, have quoted a good many more, but then there might have been some danger it should pass for a common notion. Next, he quotes some passages of the Fathers that import dislike of it, about which we need not concern ourselves; for the question is not what this or that man thought. And then, for the positive account of his own judgment in the case, having cited divers texts out of the Bible that seemed as he apprehended to make against him, he would have us believe, that these all speak rather of God's providence and power by which he concerns himself in all our works, words, and thoughts, wheresoever we live, than of the absolute infinity of his essence. And afterwards, \* That God is by his essence in the supreme heaven, where he inhabits the inaccessible light, but thence he sends out for himself a spirit, or a certain force, whither he pleases, by which he is truly present, and works there.

But we proceed to his *reasons*, which he saith are not to be contemned. We shall therefore not condemn them so far, as not to take notice of them; which trouble also the reader may please to be at, and afterward do as he think fit.

*First*, That no difference can be conceived between God and creatures, if God, as they commonly speak, be wholly, in every point, or do fill all the points of the universe with his whole essence: for so whatsoever at all is, will be God himself.

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* And that is most marvellous, that the in-being of one thing in another must needs take away all their difference, and confound them each with other; which sure would much rather argue them distinct. For certainly it cannot, without

\* *Unto which purpose speaks at large Volkeli<sup>us</sup> de vera Relig.* Quia enim Dei & potentia & sapientia ad res omnes extenditur, uti & potestas sive imperium; ideo ubique præsens, omniaque numine suo complere dicitur, &c.—Because the power and wisdom of God extend to all things, as also his authority or dominion; therefore he is said to be everywhere present, and to fill all things with his divinity. *l. 1. c. 27. Sl<sup>ichting</sup>ius Artic. de filio Dei.* Ad Ps. 139. 6, 7. Nec loquitur David de spiritu sancto, qui peculiaris quidem Dei spiritus est, sed de spiritu Dei simpliciter. Nec dicit spiritum istum ubique *re esse* sed tantum docet nullum esse locum, ad quem is nequeat pertingere, &c.—Nor does David speak of the Holy Spirit, but of the Spirit of God simply. Nor does he say that that Spirit is really everywhere, but only informs us there is no place to which it cannot extend. *So also F. Socin. Smalc<sup>ius</sup>.* And (though not altogether so expressly as the rest) *Vorstius, Crellius, &c.*

great impropriety, be said that any thing is in itself; and is both the container and contained. How were these thoughts in his mind? And these very notions which he opposes to each other, so as not to be confounded with his mind, and consequently with one another? So that it is a great wonder he was not of both opinions at once. And how did he think his soul to be in his body, which, though substantially united with it, (and that is somewhat more, as we will suppose he knew was commonly held, that to be intimately present,) was not yet the same thing? However, himself acknowledges the power and providence of God to be every where: and then at least every thing must, it seems, be the very power and providence of God. But he thought, it may be, only of confuting the words of Lucan, and chastising his poetic liberty. And if he would have been at the pains to turn all their strains and raptures into propositions, and so have gravely fallen to confuting them, he might perhaps have found as proper an exercise for his logic as this. As for his talk of *a whole*, whereof we acknowledge *no parts*, (as if he imagined the divine essence to be compounded of such, he should have said so, and have proved it,) it is an absurd scheme of speech, which may be left to him, and them that use it, to make their best of.

*Secondly*, No Idolatry can be committed, if there be not the least point to be found, that is not wholly full of whole God: for whithersoever worship shall be directed, it shall be directed to God himself, who will be no less there than in heaven.

*Ans.* This proceeds upon the supposition that the former would be granted as soon as it should be heard, as a self-evident principle, that whatsoever is in another, is that in which it is; and so his consequence were most undeniable. But though we acknowledge God to be in every thing, yet so to worship him in any thing, as if his essential presence were confined thereto, while it ought to be conceived of as immense, this is idolatry: and therefore they who so conceive of it, as confined, (or tied in any respect, wherein he hath not so tied it himself,) are concerned to beware of running upon this rock.

*Thirdly*, Nor can the opinion of fanatics be solidly refuted, who call themselves spiritual, when they determine God to be all in all; to do not only good but evil things, because he is to be accounted to be essentially in all the atoms of the world, in whole: and as a common soul, by which all the parts of the universe do act.

*Ans.* We may in time make trial whether they can be refuted or no, or whether any solid ground will be left for it; at this time it will suffice to say, that though he be present every

where as a necessary Being, yet he acts as a free cause, and according as his wisdom, his good pleasure, his holiness and justice do guide his action.

*Fourthly*, So God will be equally present with the wicked, and with the holy and godly, with the damned in hell, and devils, as with the blessed in heaven, or Christ himself.

*Ans.* So he will, in respect of his essential presence. How he is otherwise (distinguishingly enough) present in his temple, we shall have occasion hereafter to shew.

*Fifthly*, That I say not how shameful it is to think, that the most pure and holy God should be as much in the most nasty places as in heaven, &c. (I forbear to recite the rest of this uncleanly argument, which is strong in nothing but ill savour.) But for

*Ans.* How strange a notion was this of holiness, by which it is set in opposition to corporeal filthiness! As if a holy man should lose or very much blemish his sanctity, by a casual fall into a puddle. Indeed, if *sense* must give us measures of God, and every thing must be reckoned an offence to him that is so to it, we shall soon frame to ourselves a God altogether such a one as ourselves. The Epicureans themselves would have been ashamed to reason or conceive thus of God, who tell us the Divine Being is as little capable of receiving a stroke, as the inane; and surely (in proportion) of any sensible offence. We might as well suppose him in danger, as Dr. More (in his *Dialogues*) fitly expresses it, to be hurt with a thorn, as offended with an ill smell.

We have then enough to assure us of God's absolute immensity and omnipresence, and nothing of that value against it as ought to shake our belief herein.. And surely the consideration of this, added to the other of his perfections, (and which tends so directly to facilitate and strengthen our persuasion concerning the rest,) may render us assuredly certain, that we shall find him a conversable Being; if we seriously apply ourselves to converse with him, and will but allow him the liberty of that temple within us, whereof we are hereafter (with his leave and help) to treat more distinctly and at large.