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THE
Atheistical Objections,
AGAINST THE
BEING of a GOD,
And His ATTRIBUTES,
Fairly Considered, and Fully Refuted.

IN
Eight Sermons,
Preach'd in the
CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of *St. Paul,*
London, 1698. Being the Seventh Year
of the LECTURE Founded by the Honourable
ROBERT BOYLE, Esq;

By *JOHN HARRIS,* M. A.
and Fellow of the ROYAL-SOCIETY.

L O N D O N,
Printed by *J. L.* for *Richard Wilkin,* at the
King's-Head in *St. Paul's Church-Yard,* 1698.

1874

THE
FIRST

OF THE

1874

Immorality *and* Pride,
The Great Causes of
ATHEISM.

A
SERMON

Preach'd at the
CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of *St. Paul,*
January the 3^d. 169⁷.

BEING
The First of the LECTURE for that Year,
Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle, Esq;*

By *JOHN HARRIS, M. A.*
and Fellow of the ROYAL-SOCIETY.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

ATHEISM

BY

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DAWSON

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DAWSON

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60637
STEPHEN DAWSON, 530 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL 60610

TO THE
Most Reverend Father in God
T H O M A S
Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*;

Sir HENRY ASHURST Baronet;

Sir JOHN ROTHERAM Serjeant at
Law;

JOHN EVELYN Senior Esquire;

Trustees appointed by the Will of the Hono-
rable ROBERT BOYLE Esquire.

Most Reverend and Honoured,

A *S I had the Honour to Preach this Ser-
mon by your Kind and Generous Ap-
pointment, so I now Publish it in
Obedience to your Commands, and humbly offer
it, as also my ensuing Discourses, to your Candid
Patronage and Acceptance. I have (in pur-
suance of Your Grace's direction) studied to be
as Plain and Intelligible as possibly I could,*

and shall, by the Divine Assistance, prosecute my whole Design after the same manner; which Method of Treating this Subject, appears very Suitable to the Pious and Excellent Design of Our Noble and Honourable Founder.

I humbly desire your Prayers to Almighty God, that He will vouchsafe to render my weak Endeavours effectual to shew the Groundlessness and Inconclusiveness of those Objections which Atheistical Men usually bring against the great and Important Truths of Religion; which is the End they are sincerely directed to, by

Most Reverend and Honoured,

Your most obliged

humble Servant,

J. HARRIS.

PSALM X. 4.

The Wicked through the Pride of his Countenance, will not seek after God : Neither is God in all his Thoughts.

IN this Psalm is Contained a very lively Description of the Insolence of Atheistical and Wicked Men, when once they grow Powerful and Numerous; for then, as we read at the Third Verse, they will proceed so far, as openly *to boast of and glory in* their Impiety : They will boldly *despise and contemn the great God* of Heaven and Earth, v. 13. They will *deny his Providence*, v. 11. *and despise his Vengeance* : And, as we are told in these words of my Text, They will grow so Proud and high, as to scorn to pay him any Honour or Worship, to Pray to him or *Call upon him*; but will endeavour to banish the very Thoughts of his Being out of their Minds. *The Wicked through the Pride of his, &c.*

In which words; we have an Account more particularly, by what *Methods* and *Steps* Men advance to such an Exorbitant height of Wickedness, as to set up for Atheism, and to deny the Existence of a God; for there are in them these Three Particulars; which I shall consider in their Order.

- I. Here is the general Character or Qualifications of the Person the Psalmist speaks of; which is, *That he is a Wicked Man. The Wicked through the Pride, &c.*
- II. The

II. The *particular kind of Wickedness*, or the *Origin* from whence the Spirit of Atheism and Irreligion doth chiefly proceed; And *That is Pride. The Wicked through the Pride of his Countenance, &c.* And,

III. Here is the *great Charge* that is brought against this Wicked and Proud Man; viz. *Wilful Atheism and Infidelity: He will not seek after God: Neither is God in all his Thoughts: Or*, as it is in the Margin of our Bibles, with good Warrant from the Hebr. *All his Thoughts are there is no God.*

In discoursing on the two First of these Heads, I shall endeavour to shew, that *Immorality and Pride* are the great Causes of the Growth of Atheism amongst us: And on the Third, I shall consider the Objections that Atheistical Men usually bring against the being of a Deity, and shew how very weak and invalid they are.

And first I think it very Necessary to say something of *the Causes* of Infidelity and Atheism, and to shew how it comes to pass that Men can possibly arrive to so great a height of Impiety. This my Text naturally leads me to, before I can come to the great Subject I design to Discourse upon; and I hope it may be of very good use to discover *the Grounds* of this heinous Sin, and the *Methods and Steps* by which Men advance to it; that so those who are not yet hardened in it, nor quite given up to a Reprobate Mind, may, by the Blessing of God, take heed, and avoid being engaged in such Courses as do naturally lead into it.

I. Therefore

I. Therefore let us consider the general Character or Qualifications of the Person here spoken of in my Text; And that is, that he is a *Wicked Man*. *The wicked through the Pride, &c.*

And this is every where the Language of the Sacred Scripture, when it speaks of Atheistical Men. *David* tells us (*Psal.* 14. 1. and 51. 1.) that 'tis the *Fool* (i. e. the *Wicked Man*, for so the word *Nabal* often signifies, and is so here to be understood) 'Tis he that hath said *in his heart there is no God*. 'Tis such an one as is a *Fool* by his own fault; one stupified and dull'd by Vice and Lust, as he sufficiently explains it afterwards; *one that is corrupt and become filthy, and that hath done abominable works*. So the Apostle *St. Paul* supposes, that those Men *will have in them an evil heart of unbelief, who do depart from the living God, and live without him in the world*. And indeed, it is very Natural to conclude, That those which are once debauched in their *Practices*, may easily grow so in their *Principles*: For when once 'tis a Man's Interest that there should be no God, he will readily enough disbelieve his Existence: We always give our assent very precipitantly to what we wish for, and would have to be true. A Man oppressed with a Load of Guilt, and conscious to himself, that he is daily obnoxious to the Divine Vengeance, will be often very uneasy, restless, and dissatisfied with himself, and his Mind must be filled with Dismal and Ill-boding Thoughts. He is unwilling to leave his Sins, and to forego the present Advantage of Sensual Pleasure; and yet

he cannot but be fearful too, of the Punishments of a Future State, and vehemently disturbed now and then, *about the account that he must one day give of his Actions.*

Now, 'tis very Natural for a Man under such Circumstances, to catch at any thing that doth but *seem* to offer him a little Ease and Quiet, and that can help him to shake off his melancholy Apprehension of impending Punishment and Misery. Some therefore bear down all Thought and Consideration of their Condition, in an uninterrupted enjoyment of Sensual Delights, and quite stupifie and drown their Conscience and Reason in continual Excesses and Debauchery; and thus very many commence Atheists, out of downright Sottishness and Stupidity, and come at last to *believe* nothing of the Truths of Religion, because they never *think* any thing about it, nor *understand* any thing of it. Others, who have been a little enured to thinking, and have gotten some small smattering in the superficial Parts of Learning, will endeavour to defend their wicked Practices by some pretence to Reason and Argument. These will one while justify their Actions, by forced and wrested Citations and Explications of some particular Texts of Scripture; at another time they will shroud themselves under the Examples of the Prevarications of some great Men in Sacred Scripture, as a Licence to them, to be guilty of the same or the like wicked Acts; without considering at all, of their great Penitence afterwards. Sometimes they will dispute the Eternity of Hell Torments, deny that their Soul shall survive

survive the Body, and please themselves with the glorious hopes of being utterly annihilated: Now they will argue against the Freedom of their *own Wills*; and by and by, against that of the *Divine Nature*: and from *both* conclude, that there can be no harm nor evil in what they do, because they are absolutely necessitated to every thing they commit. But against all this precarious stuff, the Sacred Scriptures do yet appear and afford a sufficient Refutation. The next Step therefore must be to *quarrel* at, and *expose* them; to pretend that there are *Absurdities*, *Contradictions* and *Inconsistencies* in them: To assert that the Religion they contain, is nothing but a meer Human and Political Institution, and the Invention of a Crafty and designing Order of Men, to promote their own Interest and Advantage; but that they are of no manner of Divine Authority, nor Universal Obligation. And when once they get thus far, they begin to be at Liberty; now they can pursue their vicious Inclinations without controul of their Consciences, or the Conviction of God's holy Word, and are got above the Childish Fears of Eternal Misery. By this time, the true and through *Calenture* of Mind begins; they grow now deliriously enamoured with the feign'd Products of their own Fancies; and these Notions appear to them now, adorned with such bright and radiant Colours, and so beautiful and glorious, that they will rush headlong into this *Fools Paradise*, though Eternal Destruction be at the bottom; for now they stick at nothing; They Retrench the Deity of all his Attributes, absolutely deny his Presidence over the Affairs of the World,

and make him nothing but a kind of *necessary and blind Cause of things, Nature, the Soul of the World*, or some such word, which they have happened to meet with in the Ancient Heathen Writers. But they Profess that 'tis impossible to have any *Idæa* of him at all ; and what they cannot conceive or have an *Idæa* of, they say is *nothing*, and by Consequence there can be no such thing as a God: This, or such like, I'm perswaded is the usual Method, by which these kind of Men advance to absolute Infidelity and Atheism : And in this, they are every step confirmed and established by the seeming Wit, and real Boldness, with which Atheistical Men dress up their Arguments and Discourses ; and of which, if they were stripped and divested, their weakness and inconclusiveness must needs appear to every one. But the Mirth and Humour, and that Surprising and Extravagant Vein of talking which always abounds in the Company of such Men, so suits and agrees with his own vicious Inclinations, that he becomes easily prejudiced against the Truth of Religion, and any Obligation to its Precepts and Injunctions : And so he will soon resolve to *seek no more after God*, but will employ all his Thoughts to prove that there is no such Being in the World.

But on the other hand, it appears wholly impossible for a Man to arrive at such a pitch as absolute Infidelity and Atheism, if he hath been virtuously Educated, and be enclined to live a Sober and a Moral Life. For there is certainly nothing that Religion enjoins, but what is exactly agreeable
to

to the Rules of Morality and Virtue ; nothing but what is conformable to right Reason and Truth ; nothing but what is substantially good and pleasant, and nothing but what will approve it self to a thinking Mind, as certainly conducing to the good of Human Society, and to every one's Quiet, Ease, and Happiness here in this Life : And over and above this, it gives us an assurance of a glorious Immortality in the World to come.

Now, Can it be imagined, that any sober and virtuous Man, and one that is not prejudiced by the Inducements of Sensual Pleasure, if he seriously considers things, will not be induced to take upon him the Profession of our holy Religion : and with all due Gratitude to our Gracious God, accept of so vast a Reward as this of Eternal Happiness ? Especially too when it is for doing that only out of a *true Principle of Religion*, which it is supposed he was inclined to perform without it, by the *Principles of Reason and Honour*. A Man that is enclined to live virtuously, justly, temperately, and peaceably in this present World, will soon be satisfied, if he read the Holy Scriptures, that it is *this* which lies at the Bottom of all Revealed Religion, and for whose Advancement and Propagation among Mankind, all that gracious Dispensation was contrived and delivered to us. What reason can therefore be possibly assigned, why such a Person should disbelieve the *Truths* of Religion ? Is not a desire of Happiness so Natural to us, that 'tis the great Inducement of all our Actions ? and will not every Man aim to get as much of this as he can, according to the Notion
he

he hath of it? what is there then that can prejudice such a Man's Mind against the Belief and Expectation of a future Reward at the hand of God? Is it not Natural to embrace any offer that proposes to us a great Advantage? and are not we very ready to believe the Truth of any thing that is advanced of that Nature? The Great Truths therefore of Religion, containing nothing impossible, absurd or improbable in them, and exhibiting to him Infinite Advantages on such easie Conditions, must needs be the delightful Objects of a *Good and Virtuous* Man's Faith. He, indeed, that hath just Grounds to fear that his Irregular Life will incapacitate him for the Favour of God, and the Joys of another World, may be willing, and at last infatuated so far, as really to disbelieve what he knows he cannot obtain. But one that is of a Moral, Sober and Virtuous Disposition, can never be supposed to be so unaccountably absurd, as to commence Atheist contrary to his *Interest*, his *Inclination*, and his *Reason*.

And as 'tis hardly possible to conceive a Person can be an Atheist, without being first *Wicked*; so it appears as difficult to imagine, that if he be an Atheist, he should not continue to be so. I know the Contrary is often pretended; *viz.* That one that believes nothing of a God or Religion, may yet be, and often is guided by a Principle of *Reason and Honour*, and will do to others as he would be done unto himself: Such an one (*it is said*) will be satisfied of the Necessity of Humane Laws, and of the Advantages that do thence arise to Mankind: He will think himself obliged to submit to the Laws of his

his Country, and consequently will keep up to the Rules of common Justice and Honesty ; and this (say they) is enough, and all that Religion can pretend to enjoin. (a) There is a late French Author, that endeavours to maintain by Arguments and Examples, that the Principles of Atheism do not necessarily lead to Vice and Immorality. But in the Proof of this, he comes very short of his Design. He alledges, That *some* Professing Christianity have always, and do still, live as bad Lives and as wickedly as any Atheists whatsoever can do : And that some Atheists have lived very Regularly and Morally. But what then? Allowing and granting all this ; it doth not in the least follow that Atheism doth not lead to Immorality and a Corruption of Manners. For it is neither asserted that Atheism is the *only way* of becoming Wicked ; nor that an Atheist must necessarily be guilty of *all manner of Vice*. No doubt very many Men betake themselves to a sinful Course, without having any Principles to justify themselves by, as the Atheist pretends to : But are drawn into Wickedness purely by Incogitancy and want of Consideration. And such kind of Persons, though they make an outward Profession of Christianity, yet they may be, and doubtless often are, as Vicious and Immoral as any other Men, without ever arriving at the Point of *Speculative Atheism*, or perhaps without ever so much as doubting of the Being of a God, of the Truth of Religion, or of a Future State of Rewards and Punishments. No one saith also that an Atheist must necessarily be guilty of *all manner of Vice and Immorality* : But 'tis plain enough, that his Principles lead him to prosecute *any vicious Inclination* that is suitable

(a) *Pensees diverses Ecrites à un Docteur de Sorbonne à l'Occasion de la Comète qui parut au Mois de Decembre, 1680.* Rotterdam. 8vo.

to him, and to do *any thing* that he can safely, to procure to himself that kind of Happiness or Satisfaction he proposes to enjoy. Many Sins are disagreeable to some particular Periods and Circumstances of a Man's Life, to his Constitution, Genius and Humour. Now 'tis easie to suppose a Man may abstain from *such*, for his own Ease, Health and Quiet's sake. *Self-Love* will preserve the Atheist from such open and notorious Acts of Wickedness, as will expose him to the Capital Punishment of Human Laws; and which will endanger depriving him of his Being here, where he only proposes to be happy. This Principle also of *Self-Love*, will hinder him from exposing himself to Ignominy and Scandal; and will make him endeavour to keep fair in the Opinions of those whose disesteem would give him a great degree of Unhappiness. But it doth not in the least follow from hence, that because he is not guilty of *all manner*, or of *this* or *that* particular Vice, that therefore he is a good Moral Man, and guilty of *none at all*: It cannot be concluded from hence, that such a Person will avoid committing any Fact, be it never so Wicked, when it is stript of all these Inconveniences, and can be done secretly, safely and securely: when 'tis agreeable to his Constitution and Humour, fashionable and genteel, and contributes very much to that kind of Satisfaction he is inclin'd to; for as one that had consider'd this Point well, observes, *Self-Love, which like Fire covets to resolve all things into it self, makes Men they care not what Villany or what Impiety they Act, so it may but conduce to their own Advantage.* (Preface to *Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*) And indeed, if he be not absolutely

lutely Stupid, and one that proposes to himself no manner of End at all, he will certainly do this very thing : He will pursue and practise Indifferently such kind of Designs and Actions, be they good or bad, as will give him as much Pleasure and Happiness as he can have here in this short Life, where, Miserable Wretch as he is, *he only hath any hope.* And nothing can nor will hinder such a Person from endeavouring to do or obtain any thing he hath a Mind to, but the fear of being exposed to Punishment and Misery *here*, from those among whom he lives. Now, this Consideration can have no place in *secret* Actions, and consequently nothing will hinder a Man of these abominable Principles from committing the most barbarous Villany that is consistent with his Safety, and subservient to his Desires; that can be either concealed in Secresie, or supported by Power. For, as to the *Principle of Honour*, that such Men will pretend to be governed and guided by, and which they would set up to supply the Room of Conscience and Religion; 'tis plain, that 'tis the veriest Cheat in Nature : 'tis nothing but a meer abusive Name, to gull the World into a Belief that they have some kind of Principle to act and proceed by, and which keeps them from doing *an Ill Thing* : Whereas the Atheist can have no Principle at all, but that sordid one of *Self Love*; which will still carry him to the perpetrating of any thing indifferently, according as it best conduces to his present Interest and Advantage. They deny that there are any Actions truly Good or Honourable, or Wicked and Base in themselves; but that this is all owing to the peculiar Customs, Laws, and Constitutions

of Places and Countries : And that as *all Men* are, so *Actions* also, are naturally equal and alike : And how far such Notions as these will carry Men, 'tis very easie both to *Imagine* and to *Observe*. One would think nothing could be more Noble, Honourable and Comely, than for a Man to stick firm and constant to those Principles that he pretends to, and by no means whatever to be brought to abjure and deny them. *Sincerity* is so lovely and desirable a Vertue, that it doth approve it self, as it were naturally, to the reason of all Mankind : and 'tis equally Useful, nay, indeed Necessary, to the due Government of the World. But this Noble Vertue, so peculiar to a Man of True honour and greatness of Mind, the Atheist will practise no longer than it is for his *Interest* and *Advantage*, and while it is consistent with his Safety. That Men may profess or deny any thing to save their Lives, is the avowed Principle of one of their great Writers. And the same is expressly asserted in other words, even in lesser Cases than that of Danger of Death, by the Translator of *Philostratus's* Life of *Apollonius Tyanæus*, with a great Pretence to Wit and Humour. But if Men may Lye and Prevaricate from so base and abject a Principle as *Fear*, no doubt they may do so for *Interest* and *Advantage*, for that is certainly as good a ground, as Cowardliness and Baseness; and then what becomes of this boasted *Honour* that is so much talk'd of; this *greatness of Mind*, that will keep a Man from *doing an ill thing*. In reality, 'twill at last amount to no more than this, that he will forbear doing *an Ill Thing*, when
 he

he thinks it will *prove ill to him* : he will be Just, Honest and Sincere when he *don't dare* be otherwise, for fear of the Law, Shame, and Ignominy : For all Men of Atheistical Principles would be Knaves and Villains *if they durst*, if they could do it safely and securely : such a Man ('tis like) shall return you a Bag of Money, or a rich Jewel you happen to depose in his Hands ; but why is it ? 'tis because he *dares* not keep it and deny it ; 'tis great odds but he is *discovered* and *exposed* by this means ; and besides, 'tis Unfashionable and Ungenteel to be a Cheat in such Cases. But to impoverish a Family by Extravagance and Debauchery, to defraud Creditors of their just Debts, or Servants of their Wages, *to Cheat at Play*, to violate one's Neighbour's Bed to gratifie one's own Lust, are things, which though to the full as Wicked and Unreasonable in themselves, are yet swallowed down as allowable enough, because common and usual, and which are not, the more is the pity, attended with that Scandal and Infamy that other Vices are. Thus 'tis very plain, that this pretended Principle of Honour in an Atheist or a Wicked Man, and this Obedience and Deference that he pretends to pay to the Laws of his Country, is a most *Partial* and *Changeable* thing, and vastly different from that true Honour and Bravery that is founded on the Eternal Basis of Conscience and Religion ; 'tis an Airy Name that serves only to amuse unthinking and short-sighted Persons into a Belief, that he hath some kind of Principles that he will stick to ; that so he may be thought fit to be *trusted*, *dealt* and *conversed withall* in the World.

And thus, I think, it is very clear and apparent that Wickedness naturally leads to Infidelity and Atheism, and Infidelity and Atheism to the Support and Maintenance of That : And that *it is the Wicked that will not seek after God, and whose thoughts are that there is no God.* Which was my First Particular.

I come next to Consider,

II. That Peculiar Kind of Wickedness which the Psalmist here takes notice of, as the chief Ground from whence Infidelity and Atheism proceed : And that is *Pride.* *The Wicked, through the Pride of his Countenance will not seek after God, neither is God in all his Thoughts.*

And I question not but this Vice of *Pride*, is generally the Concomitant of Infidelity, and the chief Ground from whence the Spirit of *Speculative Atheism* proceeds. When Men of proud and haughty Spirits lead ill Lives, as they very often do, they always endeavour to justify themselves in their Proceeding, be it never so Irregular and Absurd, and never so contrary to the considerate Sentiments of all the rest of the World. A Proud Man hates to acknowledge himself in an Errour, and to own that he hath committed a Fault : He would have the World believe that there is a kind of *Indefectibility* in his Understanding and Judgment, which secures him from being deceived and mistaken like other Mortals. Whatever Actions therefore such a Person commits, he would fain have appear reasonable and justifiable. But he sees plainly that he cannot make
Wicked.

Wickedness and Immorality do so, as long as Religion stands its Ground in the World. The Sacred Scriptures are so plain and express against such a course of Life, that there is no avoiding being convicted and condemned while their Authority remains good: 'Tis impossible any way to reconcile a vicious Life to the Doctrine *there* delivered: And therefore he sees plainly, That one that Professes to believe the great Truths of Religion, and the Divine Authority of those Sacred Books, and yet by his Practices gives the Lye to his Profession, and while he acknowledges Jesus Christ *in his Words, doth in his Works deny him*; he sees, I say, that such an one stands *αποκατάξει*, Self-condemned, and can never acquit himself either to his own Conscience, or to the Reason of Mankind. Now this is perfectly disagreeable to the Genius and Humour of a Proud Man; he cannot bear to be thought in any respect Incoherent or Inconsistent with himself: And therefore having vainly tried to justify himself in his Wickedness, by alledging the Examples of some good Men in Sacred Scripture, that have been guilty of great Sins, but whose Repentance he can by no means digest: And having also fruitlessly endeavoured to rely on the *perverted Sense* of some particular Texts of Scripture, which he knows are sufficiently refuted by the *Analogy* of the whole; he finds at last that 'tis the best way to deny the Divine Authority of the Bible, and the Truth of all Revelation, and so boldly shake off at once all Obligation to the Rules of Piety and Virtue; and since Religion can't be wrested so as to give an allowance to his way of living, he will take
it

it quite away, Banish that and God Almighty out of the World, and *set up Iniquity by a Law*. And nothing can be more pleasing and agreeable to the Arrogance of such Men than this way of Proceeding: It gratifies an insolent and haughty Spirit prodigiously, to do things out of the common Road; to pretend to be *Adept* in a Philosophy that is as much *above* the rest of Mankind's Notions, as 'tis *Contradictory* to it: to assume to himself a Power of seeing much farther into things than other Folk, and to penetrate into the deepest recesses of Nature. (a) He would pass for one of Nature's Cabinet Councillors, a Bosome Favourite that knows all the secret Springs of Action, and the first remote Causes of all Things. He pleases himself mightily to have discovered with what Ridiculous Bugbears the Generality of Mankind are awed and frighted;

(a) Vid. Jul. Cæf. Vanini Amphitheatr. in Titulo & Epist. Dedicator.

(b) *Despicere unde queas alios, passimq; videre*
Errare, atq; viam palantes querere vitæ. Lucr. lib. 2.

he can now look down (b) with a Scornful Pity on the poor groveling Vulgar, the Unthinking Mobb below, that are poorly enslaved and terrified by the Fear of a God, and of *Ills to come they know not when nor where*: He despises such dull Biggots as will be imposed upon by Priests, and that will superstitiously abstain from the Enjoyment of present Pleasure, on account of such idle Tales as the Comminations of Religion. And as he despises those that are *not Wicked*, so he upbraids those *that are so*, with inconsistency with their Principles and Profession, and for doing the *same things that he doth*, when they have nothing to bear them out: And thus he doubly gratifies his Pride, by justifying himself, and condemning and

and triumphing over others. Nay, the very Mistakes and Errours of such a Man, we are told, appear laudable and great to him, and he can please himself at last, with saying, *That he hath not Erred like a Fool, but Secundum Verbum.* Vid. Oracles of Reason, p. 92. When Men have a while enured themselves to talk at this rate, and to blow themselves up with such lofty Conceits and Fancies, they grow by degrees more and more opinionated, and do dote more and more on their own dear Notions; and finding by this means quiet and ease in the Practice of their Sins, they at last degenerate so far as firmly to believe the Truth of what they perhaps at first advanced and talk'd only from a Spirit of Contradiction; and become so stupid and blind, as, like great Liars, to believe their own Figments and Inventions (a). To such any Extravagant and Inconsistent Hypothesis, so it do but clash with Sacred Scripture, shall be no less than a real Demonstration; a Bold and daring Falsity shall pass for undoubted Truth; and a Prophane Jest, or a Scurrilous Reflection on the Character or Person of one in Holy Orders, shall be a sufficient Refutation of the plainest Demonstration he can bring against their Principles and Practices. For it is most certain, that though a Proud Man always think himself in the right, and arrogate to himself an Exemption from the common Frailties and Errours of Mankind; yet there is no body so frequently deceived and mistaken, as he; for he doth so overestimate all his Faculties and Endowments, and is so much enamoured of, and Trusts so much to his own Quickness and Penetration, that he usually
Imagines.

(a) Vid. *Great*
is Diana of the
Ephesians.

Imagines his Great Genius able to Master any thing without the servile fatigue of Pains and Study : and therefore he will never give himself Time seriously to examine into things, he scorns and hates the Drudgery of deeply revolving and comparing the *Ideas* of things in his Mind, but rashly proceeds to Judgment and Determination on a very Transient and Superficial View : And there will he stick, be the Resolution he is come to never so absurd and Unaccountable ; for he is as much above confessing an Error in Judgment, as he is of Repenting of a Fault in Practice. And indeed, as the absurd and ridiculous Paradoxes which Atheistical Writers maintain, shew their shallow insight into things, and their Precipitancy in forming a Determination about them ; so the Pride and Haughtiness with which they deliver them, abundantly demonstrates the True Spirit of such Authors, and the Real Ground both of their Embracing and Maintaining their Opinions. *Plato* describes the Atheists of his Age, to be a Proud, Insolent, and Haughty sort of Men, the Ground of whose Opinion was, he saith, ἀμάθεια μάλα χαλεπή, in reality, a very mischievous Ignorance ; though to the conceited Venders and Embracers of it Δοκῶσα εἶναι μέγιστη φρόνησις, ἢ σοφιστάτη πάντων λόγων. It appeared to be the greatest Wisdom, and the Wisest of all Opinions. *Lactantius* tells us in his Discourse, *De Ira Dei*, p. 729. Oxon. that the true Reason why *Diagoras Melius* and *Theodoros*, two of the Ancient Atheists denied a Deity was, That they might gain the Glory of being the Authors of some new Opinion, contradictory to the common Notions of Mankind. And of the former of these,

these, *Diagoras*, *Sextus Empiricus* acquaints us, That because a certain perjured Person, who had wrong'd him, lived unpunished by the Gods, he was so enraged at it, that he undertook to maintain there were no Gods at all. Lib. Adr. Mathem. Edit. Genev. 1621.

The like Pride and Arrogance *Lactantius* tells us he found in the two great Writers that appeared against Christianity, in his time, in *Bithynia*. The former of these, who, 'tis probable, was the famous *Porphyry*, called himself *Antistes Philosophiæ*, the Chief or Prince of Philosophers; and saith *Lactantius*, *Nescio utrum Superbius an Importunius, pretended to correct the blind Errors of Mankind, and to guide Men into the True Way; He could not bear, that Unskilful and Innocent Persons should be enslaved by the Cheats of, and become a Prey to, Crafty and Designing Men.* Lib. de Justit. p. 420, 421. Oxon.

With the like Assurance do the Modern Writers of this kind express themselves: And though they have in reality very little or nothing New, but only the Arguments of the Ancients a little varied and embelished, (as I shall have occasion to observe hereafter more at large,) yet they all set up for new Lights, and mighty Discoverers of the Secrets of Nature and Philosophy; and all of them assume the Glory of first leading Men into the way of Truth, and delivering them out of the dark mazes of Vulgar Errors. This was the pretence of *Vanini*, who was burnt for Atheism at *Tholouse*, A. D. 1619. whose Mind, he says, grew more and more strong,

D

healthful

Animus tamen in Suprema & vulgo Philosophantibus incognita Philosophia Arcanis investigandi's validior factus & robustior ; ut Physico-Magicum nostrum, quod mox ex umbrâ in lucem prodibit pellegens, aqua posteritas facile est Judicatura.

healthful and robust, as he exercised it in searching out the Secrets of that Supreme Philosophy, which is wholly unknown to the common and ordinary Rank of Philosophers : And this, he saith, will soon be discovered, by the perusal of his Physico-Magicum, which was now to see the Light. Vid. Vanini Amphitheatr. in Epist. Dedicat.

After the same manner do *Machiavel, Spinoza, Hobbs, Blount*, and all the late Atheistical Writers, deliver themselves ; Instances of which, I think, I need not stay to give, since 'tis conspicuous through the whole course of their Writings, and, no doubt, taken notice of by every Reader ; only of the first of these, *viz. Machiavel*, I cannot but take notice ; that *Vanini* himself saith, that 'twas his *Pride* and *Covetousness* that made him deny the Truth of the Miracles recorded in Sacred Scripture. *Amphitheatr. p. 51. Edit. Lugduni. 1615.*

And as the *Writings*, so the *Discourses* of these Gentlemen do equally discover this *Pride* and *Vanity* : for they do usually deliver themselves with such a scornful and contemptuous Air, when they either endeavour to establish their *own*, or to overthrow their *Adversaries* Arguments, as sufficiently shews the Propriety and Truth of the Psalmist's Observation here ; that 'tis *through the pride of his countenance, that the wicked will not seek after God.* The LXXII. indeed render it, *κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος ἔδρανος αὐτῆς* : *Through the*

the abundance of his wrath: and therein they are followed by the vulgar Latin. As if the Wicked were angry against God, and enraged at his Presidency over Humane Affairs: as if they fretted under, and quarrell'd at the Severity of his Laws and Government, and scorn'd to apply themselves to him by Prayer, and to submit to him by Obedience. But though this may be a good fence of the words; and though, I doubt not, a stubborn Frowardness and Perverseness of our Wills against the Will of God, may be a frequent cause and ground of Infidelity: yet our *English* Translation appears to me to be much better warranted from the *Hebrew*; for there it is properly, *through the Elevation of his Nose or Face*. Which, truly, is very emphatical, and expresses such a proud and scornful gesture of Face, as is the natural Indication of the Internal Haughtiness of a Man's Mind; or as the *Targum*, on this place, render it, *of the arrogance of his Spirit*. Such a Turn and Air of Countenance as argues a proud contempt of all the rest of Mankind, who trot on in the common road, believe and worship a God, and poorly submit to be governed by his Laws and Precepts.

And thus having dispatched my Two first Particulars, and shewed, That *Wickedness* and *Pride* are two great Causes of Infidelity and Atheism; I should now proceed to speak to the Third thing observable in my Text, *viz.*

III. The great Charge which the Psalmist brings against the wicked Person here mentioned, *That he will not seek after God; neither is God in all his Thoughts.*

But this I must leave for my next Discourse, and shall now Conclude with a word or two by way of Application.

Since the Case stands thus, That *Wickedness* in general, and *Pride* in particular, do so naturally lead to *Infidelity* and *Atheism*; and that 'tis hardly possible to imagine a Man can entertain such an Opinion without them: Let every one then, that hath any Inclination or Temptation that way, seriously examine his own Mind, whether he be not prejudiced towards it by some *vitious Desires* and *Affections*; whether he doth not heartily *wish* that there were no God nor Religion; whether he hath not, by his past Actions, really loaded himself with *guilt*, and therefore is disturbed in his Mind with the apprehension, that the Divine Punishment will overtake him, and light upon him, for his Sins: Let him search diligently whether he hath not recourse to Infidelity, as to an *Opiate* in this case, to *allay* the Pains of his Conscience, and to *compose* the Disorder of his guilty Mind, and to gain, as it were, an *Insensibility* in Sinning. For if the case be thus, 'tis plain, he is not free, and at liberty, to make a just Judgment of the Truth of Things; he is already a Party, and much more enclined to one side of the Question than to the other; and consequently, he will pitch on that as Truth, which he would have to be so. But this is certainly a very partial way of proceeding, and such as no wise Man would use in a matter of so very great moment, to engage one's self rashly in a Determination, before a thorough and careful Examination of the Evidence on both sides: This is to look on things

in a false Light, through coloured Glasses, through Diseas'd and Icteric Eyes; and then to believe them to be *in reality*, what our deprav'd and prejudicate Apprehensions make them.

The Enemies to Religion say, That the Preachers of it are not to be minded; the Arguments they bring are all *forced* and *strained*, because 'tis their Trade, and they get Money by it; and their Craft obliges them to cry out, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians!* I hope therefore this being so *Precarious* and *Partial* a way of Proceeding, to subscribe to Religion by Implicit Faith, and to take it up upon trust from those, whose Interest (they say) it is to propagate it in the World: I hope, I say, that Men will not act so on the other hand, and embrace Atheism and Infidelity on the same *Precarious Grounds*. I hope all such Persons can clearly approve themselves to be *truly Virtuous and Moral* in their Inclinations and Practices; and are sure that they have no strong Inclinations to such Actions as the World calls *Vicious*. For if they have, and do take real Pleasure in the Practice of Wickedness, 'tis plain that they must be Prejudic'd and Bigotted to their Lusts and Humours; they cannot be *Free-thinkers* in the Case; the Cloggs of ill *Custom*, and a loose Education bear them down, and they cannot shake them off. Their present Interest influences and governs their Belief, and enslaves and Tyrannizes over their Reason.

Let them consider impartially the Arguments for Infidelity, and they will find *them* all *forced* and *strained Paradoxes*, Invented by *Sceptical* and *Canting* Philo-

Philosophers, a *Crafty* and *Designing* sort of Men, who set up Atheism *because they Get by it*, and whose *Interest* it is that there should be no God and Religion.

Let not therefore Men be so stupid and blind as to talk of Prejudices on the side of Religion, and never perceive that there are any at all on that of Infidelity. If they scorn to take up Religion on trust, without examining into its Grounds and Reasons; for their Own sakes let them be as Cautious and Inquisitive on the other hand, and not run Hood-winked into Eternal Destruction, by subscribing to Atheism in haste, and without that previous Consideration and Regard, which so great and important an Affair requires: For if they will but strip themselves of those Prejudices which arise from their Vices, and avoid being impetuously born down by their depraved Inclination; they will soon perceive that the Grounds and Principles of Infidelity are abundantly too precarious to afford them any thing like a *Demonstrative assurance* of the Falsity of Religion: *Without which*, surely no Man of Sense, and that can think at all, will ever run the hazard of Damnation.

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The A T H E I S T's Objection,
That we can have no Idea of G O D,
R E F U T E D.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the
CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of *St. Paul,*
February the 7th. 1698.

B E I N G
The Second of the L E C T U R E for that Year,
Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle, Esq;*

By *JOHN HARRIS, M. A.*
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DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

REPORT

OF THE
COMMISSIONERS OF THE
LAND OFFICE
IN RESPONSE TO
A RESOLUTION OF THE
LEGISLATURE PASSED
MAY 15, 1890

BY
JOHN W. ALLEN, CHIEF
AND A BOARD OF THE HISTORY OFFICE

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P S A L. x. 4.

The Wicked, through the Pride of his Countenance, will not seek after God ; neither is God in all his Thoughts.

IN these words, I have, in a former Discourse, taken notice of these Three Particulars :

- I. The General Character or Qualifications of the Person here mentioned, which is, *That he is a Wicked Man.*
- II. The Particular Kind of Wickedness, or Origin from whence the Spirit of Atheism and Irreligion doth chiefly proceed, and that is Pride ; *The Wicked, through the Pride of his Countenance, &c.*
- III. The great Charge which the Psalmist brings against the Person here spoken of in my Text, *viz. Wilful Atheism and Infidelity ; He will not seek after God, neither is God in all his Thoughts.*

The Two first of these I have already dispatch'd, and therefore shall now proceed to discourse on my Third Head, *viz.*

The great Charge here brought against this Wicked Person, *That he will not seek after God ; neither is God in all his Thoughts :* or, as it is in the Margin, with good grounds (as I have before observed) from the Hebrew, *All his Thoughts are, There is no God.*

Which appears to me to imply a wilful and malicious slighting and contemning of God, and his Laws, and an endeavour to banish the very Thoughts of his Existence out of their Minds. And under this Head, I shall make it my business to enumerate all the pretended Arguments and Objections which I have met with, and are of any weight, against the Being of a God, in general; and then endeavour to shew how Weak and Inconclusive they are, and how miserable a Support they will prove for Atheism and Infidelity.

But first it will be necessary, briefly to clear up one Point, and to obviate one Objection that may be made against this very Attempt of mine, of Refuting and Answering the Atheists Arguments and Objections.

It will, I doubt not, be said, That there is not now, nor ever perhaps was in the World, any such Person as a *Speculative Atheist*, or one that believes, there is no God. It is said, with great assurance, by some, That the Ancient Atheists were only such as declared against the Plurality of Gods, and the Idolatry and Superstition of the Heathen Worship. And we are told by one, very lately, (a) *That he hath travelled many Countries, and could never meet with any Atheists, (which are few, if any;) and all the Noise and Clamour, saith he, is against Castles in the Air.*

To which I Answer, That nothing can be more plain and clear, than that both Ancient and Modern Writers do give us an account of such Persons as were known and reputed Atheists, by those that were Contemporary with them, and did well understand their Principles and Tenets. I need not insist on Proofs
from

(a) Two Essays from Oxford, in the Apology

from any of the Ancient Christian Writers ; for 'tis sufficient, that *Plato, Diogenes Laertius, Plutarch, Cicero,* and many others, do acquaint us, that such kind of Men there have been in the World. Tho' I shall particularly produce the Testimony of two Authors, one ancient, and the other, 'tis probable, now living, to prove this Point ; and these are, *Sextus Empiricus,* and he that wrote the *Thoughts on the Comet that appeared in the Year 1680.* *Sextus* is express, (a) That *Diagoras Melius, Prodicus Chius, Euemerus, Critias Atheniensis, Theodorus,* and many others, were absolute Atheists, and denied that there were any Gods at all. And the *French Gentleman* (b) saith the same of most of those mentioned by *Sextus,* and other Ancient Writers ; and to the number, adds some others of a Modern date : And *Mr. Blount* saith, (c) that the *Epicureans* constantly affirmed, there were no Gods. Now the Evidence of these Authors will, I hope, be allowed, because they seem Well-wishers to the Cause of Infidelity themselves. To these I might add, were it necessary, That *Vanninus* himself tells us frequently of Atheists that he met with, (and no one will doubt but that he knew where to find one at any time,) and he calls *Machiavel,* expressly, *Atheorum facile Princeps* (d.) But indeed, this Assertion of these Gentlemen, That there is no such thing as an *Atheist* in the World, is like most other things that they advance, Uncertain and Precarious, and often contradicted by what at other times they deliver : for though they are sometimes, and in some Companies, for Reasons that are very obvious, unwilling to take the Title of *Atheist* on themselves or their Party ; yet they are often ready

(a) Adv. Mathematicorum. p. 317, 318, &c. Geneva, 1621.

(b) Pensées diverses à l'Occasion de la Comète, Tom. 2. §. clxxiv. p. 531.

(c) Anim. Mundi. p. 96.

(d) Amphitheatr. D. Providentia, p. 35.

ready enough to bestow it on others ; and when it is
 (a) Vid. *Blount's* subservient to their purpose, will insinuate, (a) That the
 Translation of greatest Lights and Teachers of the Church believe
 the *Life of Apol-* as little of Religion as themselves. But I say also,
lonius, p. 84.

2. That 'tis one thing to disbelieve the Existence
 of a God, and another to declare so to the World.
 And it doth not at all follow, that a Man is not an
 Atheist, because he doth not openly profess himself
 to be so, at all times, and in all Companies. There
 are no Writers so insincere as these kind of Gentlemen ;
 they are very cautious and tender how they expose
 themselves to the just Punishment of the Law. *Vaninus*
 himself, though he did at last suffer Death madly, for
 his Infidelity, (as one (b) saith of him, that died as
 madly himself,) yet is he very cautious and careful,
 in his Writings, how he renders himself obnoxious
 to the Censure of the *Inquisition* ; and he declares,

(b) *Anima*
Mundi, in the
Oracles of Rea-
son, p. 54.

(c) *Amphi-*
theatr. p. 151,
 334. *Lugdun.*
 1615.

(c) That he will submit all things to the Judgment
 of the *Roman Church*. So a Gentleman of our own
 Nation, though he endeavours, as effectually as 'tis
 possible, under-hand, to ridicule and undermine Re-
 ligion ; yet he would fain appear to the World to be
 a good Christian, and one that hath a mighty Vene-
 ration for God and his Laws : but, in the mean time,
 'tis very easie to discover his true Principles and De-
 sign ; for he declares, (d) That he thinks it much
 safer to believe as the Church believes, and to pin his
 Faith always on my Lord of Canterbury's Sleeve, as he
 saith he will do, and subscribe to any ridiculous Le-
 gend, rather than incur the Censure of the *Popish*
Clergy ; as he basely calls the Ministers of this most
 Excellent *Protestant Church* : for the same laudable
 Reasons also, he forbears communicating, what he

(d) *Blount's*
 Translation of
Philostratus's
Life of Apol-
lonius, in the
 Preface.

doth

doth, or ought to think Truth, to Mankind, (as he tells us in many places.) Now if this be the case with these *Men of Honour*, that they dare not speak their Minds, nor discover their true Sentiments plainly to the World; we must by no means conclude over-hastily of their *Orthodoxy*, by what they say in Discourse at *some times*, or publish in Print at *others*: but, in short, if they set up such a Notion of a God, as is essentially inconsistent with the *Idea* that all Mankind have of such a Being; if they make him either a Necessary Agent, or a Blind, Idle and Unactive One; if they divest him of his Providence, or cramp him in his Attributes, as those that call themselves *Deists* generally do: in a word, if they make him such an Impotent and Careless Being, as either cannot or will not govern the World, give Laws to his People, vindicate his own Honour, and punish and reward Men according to their Actions: 'Tis plain, I say, that though in *words* they may profess to believe and honour a God, yet in *reality* they deny him, and have no manner of Notion of his true Nature and Perfections. But 'tis not the *Name* only, nor the empty Sound of the word *Deity*, but the *Thing*, that is wanting in the World; 'tis the true Knowledge and Belief of *this* only, that can clear a Man from the imputation of Atheism: If he be not right in this Point, *i. e.* if he have not such a belief of God, as implies in it a knowledge of the Perfections of his Nature, he may call himself by as *fine* and *fashionable* Names as he pleases, and pretend to *Deism* and *Natural Religion*; but in reality he is an *Atheist*, and so ought to be esteemed by all Mankind; for as one saith, (a) that knew very well what an Atheist was, *Such are Atheists,*

(a) Blount's
Anima Mundi;
in Oracles of
Reason, Pref.

Atheists, as deny God's Providence ; or who restrain it in some particulars, and exclude it in reference to others, as well as those who directly deny the Existence of a Deity : And Vaninus (b) calls Tully Atheist; on this very account ; and in another place, he saith, (c) That to deny a Providence, is the same thing as to deny a God.

(b) *Amphitheatr.* p. 124.

(c) *Pag.* 152.

This therefore being returned in Answer to the Objection, That there is no such thing as an Atheist: Let us now go about to examine and consider the Arguments and Objections that are usually brought by Atheistical Men, against the Being of a God. And these, one would think, should be exceeding weighty ones, and no less than *direct Demonstrations* ; for if they are not such strenuous Proofs as are impossible to be refuted, I'm sure the Atheist ought to pass for the most senseless and stupid of all Mankind. He slightes and despises that inestimable Offer of being Happy for ever ; he runs the risque of being eternally Miserable ; he bids open defiance to the Laws of God and Man ; and he opposes his own Opinion and Judgment, to the sober and considerate Sentiments of the judicious part of Mankind, in all Ages of the World. Now surely, in such a case, he ought to be very sure that he cannot be mistaken ; and to be as demonstratively certain, as of the truth of any *Theorem* in *Euclid*, that there is no God, no Moral Good nor Evil, no Revealed Religion, nor any Future State of Rewards and Punishments. But can any Man have the face to pretend to this? Will not the common sense of all Mankind pronounce this impossible? and that a Demonstration of the *Non-Existence* of these things, is not to be obtained? Can any one be directly assured, that there

there is not so much as a *Possibility* that these things should be true? And if so, then 'tis plain, that for any thing he can directly prove to the contrary, the Atheist may be in the wrong, and consequently be Eternally damned and miserable. Now would any one, that can think at all, run this Dreadful Hazard? much less sure, one that pretends to be a Man of *Penetration* and *Judgment*, and to Philosophize above the Vulgar: And yet this every Atheist doth; and that too on no other Grounds but the Strength of some trifling Objections against, and seeming Absurdities in, the Notion of a God, and Religion, which the Extravagant Wit of wicked Men hath invented and coined to stop the Mouths of those that reprove them, to stifle and bear down the Stings of Conscience, and to gain some pretence to Reason and Principles in their Impious Proceedings. But surely these Persons must know well enough, that 'tis a very easie thing to start Objections against the most plain and obvious Truths; They know also, that in other Cases, themselves think it very unreasonable to disbelieve the truth of a Thing, *only* because they can't readily answer all the Objections a witty Man may bring against it, and because they cannot solve all the *Phænomena* of it. Now, why should not they proceed so in Matters of Religion? They know that all the great Truths of it, have been demonstrated over and over, by those Learned and Excellent Persons which have written in the Defence of it; Nay, they know too, that most of their Objections have been already refuted and answered, and that they adhere to a Cause that hath been frequently baffled. They know the weight and importance of

the Subject, and that if Religion should at last prove to be true, they must be for ever Miserable : All this, I say, they very well know ; and therefore it looks strangely like an Infatuation upon them , that they will run this Dreadful Hazard only on the Strength of a few *Objections* , and a bare surmise only that there is no such thing as a God or Religion. These *Objections* are their only Hold and Pretence that they can stick to and abide by, and *what* and how Great they are, I shall now proceed to Examine. These I shall take in their Natural Order : And,

1. Consider such Objections as are brought against the Being of a God in General.

2. Such as are alledged against his Attributes and Perfections.

3. Such as are advanced against the Truth and Authority of revealed Religion. The Groundlessness and Inconclusiveness of all which I shall endeavour as clearly as I can to Demonstrate.

And First , I shall consider and refute the Objections and Arguments that are brought against the Being of God in General ; and these are (as far as I can find) all reducible to these two Heads. It is said,

1. That we can have no Idea of God.

2. That the Notion of a Deity owes its Original, either to the foolish Fears of some Men, or the Crafty Designs of others.

I shall at this Time handle the *former* of these, and Refute the Objections that are brought against the Existence of a Deity, from our not being able (as they say) to have any *Idea* or *Notion* of him. The Atheist alledges, That whatsoever is Unconceiveable

ceiveable is really nothing at all : that we can have no Idea, or possible Notion of any thing that is not some how or other an Object of our Senses ; for *all Knowledge is Sense* : and we can only judge of the Existence of things by its Evidence and Testimony. Now God is by Divines said to be *Incomprehensible, Infinite, and Invisible* ; *i. e.* Something that 'tis impossible to know any thing about ; that is every where, and yet no where ; that sees every thing, and yet nobody can see him ; nor can we perceive any thing of him by any other of our Senses : We cannot tell what to make of such an Account as this of a God ; we can have no Phantasm, Idea or Conception of any such Thing ; and therefore we justly conclude, There is no such Being in Nature. And as for that precarious Notion of a God, that is so much talk'd of in the World, 'tis nothing but a meer *Phantome* or *Mormo* devised and set up by Politick and Designing Men to keep the Rabble in awe, and to scare such Fools as are afraid of their own Shadows. The several Points of this Objection, I shall singly consider ; and,

Leviathan,
p. 208.

As to the First Part of it, That what we cannot attain any *Idea* of ; or, That what is *absolutely Unconceiveable*, is really *nothing* at all ; perhaps it may be true, taking it in the most strict and proper sense of the words ; for though I am not of *Protagoras's* Mind, that Man is *πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον* yet as I think, that That which is *absolutely Unconceiveable in its own Nature*, is not possible to be Existent ; so *what is absolutely so to us*, we can know nothing at all of, nor reason, nor argue about it ; since there is no doing of this but from our Ideas. But I cannot

see how this will be advantageous at all to the Cause of Infidelity : For there is neither any one that asserts, nor is the Atheist able to prove, that That Being which we call God, is *absolutely Unconceivable*. There is a vast difference between a thing's being *Unconceivable*, and *Incomprehensible* ; between our having *no Idea at all* of a thing, and our having an *Imperfect* one ; and between our knowing *Nothing at all* of a Being, and our comprehending all the *Possible Perfections* and Excellencies of such a Being. We readily grant that the Immense Nature of God is incomprehensible to our finite Understandings ; but we don't say 'tis absolutely *Unconceivable*, and that we can know nothing at all about it. The common Notion (c) which all Mankind have of a God, is a sufficient Refutation of this Part of the Objection, as it is also a very good Proof of the real Existence of a Deity ; for if there were no such Being, 'tis impossible to conceive how any Idea of him could ever have come into any one's Mind, as I shall hereafter more largely prove.

(c) *Sextus Empiricus* allows, that there is *κοινή ἔννοια*, a common Notion or Idea of a God, even when he disputes against him. *Adv. Math.* p. 333.

2. There is implied in this Objection, That we can have no possible *Idea, nor Notion of the Existence of any thing that is not the Object of our Senses* : And from hence these Sublime Thinkers argue against the Existence of a Deity, and conclude there is no God, because they cannot see him, and because he is not perceivable by any of our Bodily Senses. Thus one of our Modern Atheistical Writers asserts, *That the only Evidence we can have of the Existence of any thing, is from Sense.* And in another place, (a) *Whatsoever we can conceive.* (saith he) *hath been perceived first by Sense, either at once or in Parts, and a Man can have*

(a) *Hob's* *Leviath.* p. 11.

no Thought representing any thing not subject to Sense. And he defines *Sense* to be *Original Knowledge*. Which is but the Reverse of what *Protagoras*, long ago determin'd: for *Plato*, in his *Theætetus*, tells us, That he defined all *Knowledge* to be *Sense*. Now, is not this admirable Philosophy? and worthy of those that pretend to a sublimer pitch of Knowledge than the Vulgar? There is no *Knowledge*, say they, but *Sense*. If so, then, as *Protagoras* saith, *all Sense must be Knowledge*; and consequently, he that sees, hears, smells or feels any thing, must immediately know all that is to be known about it: By seeing the Letters of any Language, or hearing the Words pronounced, a Man or a Beast must needs understand all the Sense and Meaning of it; and the Philosophick Nature of all Bodies will be perfectly comprehended, as soon as ever they once come within the reach of our Senses. This is, indeed, a good easie method of attaining Learning; and perhaps very suitable to the Genius of these Gentlemen! But I cannot account from this Notion, how *they* come to have so much more Penetration and Knowledge than their Neighbours. Are their Eyes and Ears, Noses and Feeling, so much more accurate than those of the Vulgar? Yes, doubtless, these are truly *Men of Sense*! their Lyncean Eyes can penetrate Mill-stones, and the least silent whisper of Nature moves the Intelligent Drum of their tender Ears; nothing escapes their Knowledge, but what is undiscoverable by the nicest Sense, and can only be comprehended by Reason. Reason! an *Ignis Fatuus of the Mind*, whose uncertain Direction they scorn to follow, while this *Light of Nature, Sense*, can be their Guide. Nor will it avail them to alledge here, that

that when they say, we have no Knowledge but what we have from our Senses ; they mean only, that all our Knowledge comes in that way, and not by *Innate Idea's* : for the Author I have mentioned above, is exprefs, that *we can have no thought of any thing not Subject to Sense* ; that *the only Knowledge we have of the Existence of all things, is from Sense* ; and that *Sense is Original Knowledge*. And if so, there can be no such thing as comparing or distinguishing of *Idea's* in our Mind ; but the simple *Idea's* of Sensible Objects being impressed upon our Brain, must needs convey to us, by that means, all the Knowledge that we can ever obtain about them, and that as soon too as ever the Objects are perceived. But than this, nothing can be more false and absurd : for 'tis plain, that by our bare Sensations of Objects, we know nothing at all of their Natures. Our Mind, indeed, by these Sensations, is vigorously excited to enquire further about them : but this we could by no means do, if *Sense* were the *highest Faculty* and Power in our Natures, and we were quite devoid of a *Reasoning and Thinking Mind*. This, *Democritus* of old was very well aware of, (however he comes now to be deserted

(a) Γνώμης δ'
δύο εἰσὶν ἰδέαι·
ἡ μὲν γνήσιον,
ἡ δ' σκοπιήν, &c.
Vid. Sext. Empiric. adv. Mathematic. p. 164.

by the Modern Atheistick Writers,) for saith he, (a) *There is in us two kinds of Knowledges ; one Dark and Obscure, which is by the Senses ; the other Genuine and Proper, which is by the Mind.*

And nothing can be more plain, than that we have certain Knowledge of the Existence of many things, which never were, nor perhaps can possibly be the Objects of our Bodily Senses. *Protagoras* himself saith,

(b) *Ἀθεοὶ περὶ σκοπιῶν μήτις τῶν ἀμυήτων ἐπακέρη ἐστὶν ἔτοι, ἐὶ ἔθεν ἄλλο οἴόμενοι, εἶ, ἢ ἔαν δύνωνται ἀπαρτῆσαι τῶν*

ταῖν χειρῶν λαβέειν, πᾶν τὸ ἀόρατον ἐκ ἀποδεχόμεναι, ὡς ἐν ἑσίας μέρει: *Take heed that none of the Uninitiated hear you, who are such as think nothing to Exist, but what they can lay hold of with their Hands; and who will not allow any thing that is Invisible, to have a place among Beings.*

The Epicurean Atheist must needs grant the Existence of his *Atoms*, and his *Empty Space*; when yet they must be *both* acknowledged to be no way sensible. Those that hold a Soul or Life in Matter, Plastically diffused through all Parts of the Universe, by which all things are actuated and regulated, cannot deny but this Power is Invisible, and no way the Object of Bodily Sense. Nay, those that assert a Corporeal Deity, and say, that nothing can possibly exist but Body; must needs own, that something of this Deity, as his *Wisdom*, *Power* and *Understanding*, which is certainly the Chief and most Noble of all his Essence, can no ways fall under our Bodily Senses. Let him that asserts, That what is not the Object of Sense, is really nothing at all; let him tell me, if he ever saw that *Power*, *Faculty*, *Understanding* or *Mind*, by which he is enabled to make such a Determination? That there is such a Power or Mind in him, 'tis impossible for him to doubt or deny: for that very *doubting* and *denying*, will *refute* him; and must convince him, that there must be something in him of a *Real Nature*, that can thus Think and Consider, Doubt and Deny; and at last conclude, That there is *nothing Actually Existent*, but what is *Sensible*: For what is really and *absolutely* Nothing, can never Think, Consider, Doubt or Determine.

Now let him call this Mind or Soul of his what he

he pleases; I do not here consider its Nature; let it be a Substance distinct from Matter, be it a happy Combination of Animal Spirits; or the brisk Agitation of any fine and subtile Parts of Matter, 'tis all one to our present purpose, it certainly *Exists*, or *is*; and yet is it by no means an Object of Sense. For Animal Spirits, Motion, and the finest and subtilest Parts of Matter are no more sensible to us *now*, than an Incorporeal Substance is. And as he is thus assured that there is something real in himself, which yet is the Object of none of his Senses; so he cannot but conclude the same of other Men that are round about him, that they also have a Soul or Mind of the same Nature: for he must know and be satisfied, that *they can think, reason, doubt, affirm, deny and determine*, as well as himself. Now, if he must grant that there are on this Account many things existent in the World, which do no way fall under the cognifance of our Senses, it will be strangely senseless and ridiculous to argue against the Being of a God from *His* not being so; and to deny that there is *any such thing*, because he cannot see *Him* with his Bodily Eyes, because he cannot feel *Him* with his Hands, and hear the Sound of his Voice actually speaking from Heaven. For the Existence of that Divine Being *whom no Eye hath seen nor can see*, is as plainly demonstrable from Reason and Nature, from his visible Works in the World, and from the inward Sentiments of our unprejudiced Minds, as the Being of our *Own and Others Minds* is from the power of thinking and reasoning that we find in our selves and them.

3. But *Thirdly*, 'tis objected further, (a) *That we cannot have any Idea of God, and consequently may conclude, There is no such Being; because he is, by Divines, said to be Incomprehensible and Infinite: (That is, say they) something which we can know nothing at all about; for we cannot have any Phantasm or Conception of any such thing. Thus saith that famous Atheistical Writer, Whatever we know, we learn from our Phantasms; but there is no Phantasm of Infinite, and therefore no Knowledge or Conception of it. No Man, saith he, can have in his mind an Image of Infinite Power or Time: And there is no Conception or Idea of that which we call Infinite. In another place, he asserts, (c) That the Attributes of God signifie Nothing true nor false, nor any Opinion of our Brain; and are not sufficient Premises to infer Truth, or convince Falshood. And the Name of God (he saith) is used, not to make us Conceive him, but that we may Honour him. And he elsewhere saith, (d) That those that venture to discourse Philosophically of the Nature of God, or to reason of his Nature from his Attributes, losing their Understanding in the very first attempt, fall from one Inconvenience to another, without end or number, and do only discover their Astonishment and Rusticity. This Bold Writer doth in another place tell us, (e) That God must not be said to be Finite; and so being neither Finite nor Infinite, he must be nothing at all: Which is the very same Dilemma that the Sceptick, Sextus Empiricus, (f) makes use of against a Deity. Another Modern Author of the same stamp, tells us, That he that calls any thing Infinite,*

(a) *Hobb's Leviathan, p. 51.*

Προεισῶσιν ἢ ἀπειρίαν ἢ τι γὰρ ἢ μεταβάλλουσιν ἀμύχανόν ἐστι γινώσκον ἀνθρώπινον εὑρεῖν. *Sext. Empir. adv. Mat. p. 17.* And a little after, he asserts, that Ἀπειρίων ἐκ ἔστῃ ἐλθῶσι.

(c) *Leviath. p. 11, 19c.*

(d) *Leviath. Par. iv. c. 46. p. 374.*

(e) *Pag. 150.*

(f) *Adv. Mat. them. p. 333.*

doth but, *Rei quam non capit attribuere nomen quod non Intelligit*; "Give an unintelligible Name to a thing which he doth not understand." All which agrees exactly with what *Sextus* also saith, in many places of his Book; and whom these Gentlemen follow pretty closely in most things, without taking any notice at all of him.

Now to this, I return; That as 'tis very foolish and precarious, to deny the Existence of a God, because He is not an Object of our Bodily Senses; so, to conclude, that there is no such Being, from our not being able perfectly to comprehend Him, and to have a true and adequate Idea, of him, is equally absurd and unaccountable. For at this rate, we may soon come to deny the Existence of most things in Nature, since there are very many of which we do not adequately comprehend the Nature of, and know all that is to be known about them. There is ἀκατάληπτόν τι, something *Incomprehensible* in the Nature of all things. Are there not a thousand Beings, which we are sure are truly and actually existent in Nature, the manner of whose Operation and Action we cannot comprehend, and whose *Phænomena* we cannot Philosophically explain? Let any of these Penetrating Gentlemen try their Skill at *Gravity, Light, Sound, Magnetism* and *Electricity*, and oblige the World with such an adequate Account of any one of them, as shall make all impartial and curious Men acquiesce in it as satisfactory. Let him clearly shew us how his own *Sensations* are made; how the *Circulation of the Blood first begins, and continues its Vital Tour* round his Body; how *Pestilential and Contagious Diseases first invade and are propagated*; how several

several Medicines, that may be properly enough call'd *Specificks*, operate; and particularly, how the *Cortex Peruvianus* cures an Intermitting Fever: In a word, let him tell us how his *own Body* (setting aside Accidents) *decays, grows old, and dies*, when the same *Digestions* and *Assimulations* are made to Day, as were Yesterday, and there is no apparent defect in the Nutriment of any one part of it. He that can account for these, and many other such like things, which are obvious to every one's daily Observation, will certainly approve himself to be a Man of very curious and acute Thought, and of very deep Insight into Nature: and when he hath fully convinced me, that he thoroughly *comprehends* the Nature of but these few things, I will allow that he hath some ground to disbelieve the Existence of whatever appears to him Incomprehensible. But if a Person will candidly own, as he that hath any *Knowledge* and *Modesty* must do, That there are many things in the History of Nature, of which he cannot meet with a satisfactory Solution and Explication; he hath certainly no manner of reason to disbelieve the Existence of a God, on the same account; and to say, There is no such Thing, because his Nature is Incomprehensible to our finite and imperfect Capacities. *We cannot, by searching, find out God, nor discover the Almighty unto perfection,* Job xi. 7.

But again; There is a vast difference between *Apprehending* and *Comprehending* of a thing; between knowing a thing really to be, and knowing all that is possible to be known about that thing. We cannot indeed perfectly comprehend the Nature of God, because we have shallow, limited, finite and imper-

fect Capacities and Faculties ; and the Deity contains in himself all possible Perfection. Every one must grant, that 'tis impossible the *lesser* should contain and comprehend the *greater*, especially too when the Extent and Fulness of one, Infinitely exceeds the Capacity of the other. From hence therefore to infer that we can have no *Idea* nor *Knowledge at all* of God, is very absurd and incongruous. 'Tis a strange Method of Arguing, that I can know nothing at all of a thing, because I can't know every particular that belongs to it ; and he would deservedly be esteemed a Madman, that should deny that there is any such thing as the Sun, because he cannot tell how many Miles he is in Diameter, how far he is from us, and which way he comes by a supply of Matter to continue his enlivening Fire and Heat. When some great and advantageous Revolution is brought about in any Nation ; when the Publick Good is secured, the Laws and Liberties preserved, and Confusion, Bloodshed, and Misery of all Kinds, prevented, by the wise and deep Council and Conduct of Him, or Those that are at the Helm of Affairs : Would it not be gross Stupidity, for a Man to assert, That all this came about by Chance, and that there was no Wisdom nor Conduct, that so opportunely managed all things ; only because he cannot penetrate into all the secret Steps and Methods of it, and see all the hidden Springs, by which it was moved regularly on to its intended Perfection ? There are many things whose Existence 'twould be ridiculous to doubt of, whose Nature and Qualities we are very far from being able perfectly to Comprehend and Explain. And amongst the rest, there is nothing but our

our own Existence, that we can be more assured of, than that there is a God. For as to all Objects of Sense, we may, as Monsieur *Des Cartes* shews, have some reason to doubt of their actual Existence without us, till we are first satisfied that our Senses do not deceive us: Till we know this, for any thing we can demonstratively prove to the contrary, all sensible Objects may be meer Phantasms and Delusions, and nothing but the internal Configurations of our own Brains, and the result of Imagination and Fancy. But when once we are assured that there is a God, who is perfectly Knowing, Wise, and Good, we shall discover that He can be no Deceiver; we shall find that 'tis not suitable to the Idea we have of Him, that He should delude and cheat us with false Appearances; and consequently we may well conclude, that he hath appointed our Senses to be proper Judges of their own Objects, and that those Things are actually existing without us, whose Idea's we so plainly perceive in our selves, and which we truly judge to be so.

And if we will impartially consult our own Thoughts, and reason clearly from those Idea's that we have within us; I think, we may most demonstratively be assured of the Existence of a God, and that He is such a most Perfect or Infinite Being, as the Sacred Scriptures and Divines describe Him to be. I will allow that the greatest Certainty that we can have of the Existence of any thing, is of our own Being; of which, as I have already said, no one can possibly doubt: for whatsoever can *Think*, *reason*, *doubt*, *will*, and *determine*, must needs be *Something*, and have a *true and real Being*. And because we find by this means, that there is certainly
something

something actually existing ; it will plainly follow, that something or other must always have been *so* : for if ever there was a time when there was *No-thing*, there never could have been any thing at all : for absolute *Nothing* could never have *done*, or *produced any thing*. Something therefore 'tis plain) must have been always, or eternally existing, and which never could have had any beginning. For if it ever had any beginning, tho' never so many Thousands of Millions of Ages ago, it must have then began from meer Nothing, which 'tis impossible for any Man to conceive. Now, if we consider our selves, or any things else that are round about us in the world ; we shall plainly find, that neither *we* nor *they*, can be this thing that always was existent, and which we have discovered must have been without beginning ; for we know well enough, that it was but a little while ago when we began to be, and that 'tis but a short space before we shall die, and cease to be in this World any more. Besides, we find in our selves, and discover in things without us, such Defects, Limitations and Imperfections, as sufficiently must convince us, that neither we nor they can be Independent Beings, nor indeed the Cause of one another's Existence. We must therefore in our Thoughts have recourse to some *first Cause* or *Origin*, from whence all things do proceed : And that there must be some *first Cause*, or some *Being*, which produced both our selves and the things that are round about us in the World, we cannot but be assured of, for we know, nothing can cause, or make it self to be ; and we see that we cannot make or produce each other ; and we perceive that none of our Forms or Modes

Modes of Existence are Indestructible and Eternal; but that all things are continually fitting and changing: some improving and increasing, while others are decreasing and dying. The *common Matter*, indeed, of all Bodies will remain, and we do not find it to be perishable, as their forms are; But then, *this* we may easily know cannot be the first Cause of all other Things; since we have no Idea of its being an *Active, Intelligent, Wise, and Powerful Being*, as that must be; but the Notion we have of it is, that it is ἄληθινος ἕχουσα, *purely Passive, and obsequiously Capable of all variety of Forms and Motions*; as I shall hereafter more largely shew. If we farther carefully consider of this Being, that we have thus found must have eternally been or existed; we shall find also, that it must for ever continue *to be for the time to come*; for we cannot imagine, how a Being that hath Eternally existed for the time past, should ever terminate or cease to be for the time to come; since there is nothing in its *self*, or in any thing *without it*, that can possibly be the Cause of its Destruction. Such a Being therefore will be properly Eternal, and necessarily Self-existent, without Beginning or End, or any Possibility of Dying or Ceasing to be. Such a Being also, must on this Account, be the *Creator, Author, and Cause* of all things: because, nothing can be the Cause of it self; and therefore they must either be Eternal and Necessarily Self-existent, as we are assured they are not; or else derived from, and produced by this Eternal and Infinite Being. And as the Beings themselves are derived from, and produced by this Eternal and Self-existent Being, so must all their *Perfections and Qualifications* too: for they

they are indeed the most Noble Things in their Natures. *Knowledge* therefore, and *Wisdom*, *Thought* and *Reasoning*, and all the excellent Powers and Faculties that are found in any Creatures, must come from the same Power that produced those Beings and Natures in which they are inherent. And if these Excellencies and Perfections are derived from this Necessarily existent Being, they must certainly be in Him in the greatest Perfection: for if they were not in Him, they could not be derived from him; since 'tis unconceivable that any thing can give or communicate to another, either what it hath not it self, or a greater degree of any thing than it is Master of. This Eternal and Self-existent Being therefore must have in it, and that in the utmost Perfection, all the Excellencies that we admire and value in any other things. It must have the Power of doing all things that are possible to be done, and therefore be *Almighty*; it must *know* all things that are possible to be known, and therefore be *Omniscient*: In a word, it must be *All-Wise* and *Good*, *Just* and *True*, *Merciful* and *Gracious*, and contain in it all possible Excellencies and Perfections. Now this may very well pass for a Description of the Deity; and 'tis such an One as is very Intelligible and Plain to the meanest Capacity that can but think at all. And it gives us such an Idea of God, as we see is easily attainable by an obvious and familiar Chain of Consequences, and which puts our Minds not at all on the wrack to conceive. As for the word *Infinite*, which is often applied to God, and which these Gentlemen quarrel so much at, and of which they affirm, that it is *impossible to have any Conception*

Conception or Idea ; I say, that it is groundlessly and precariously asserted : and that nothing but the wilful Darkness and Confusion which they have brought upon their own Minds can make it appear Unintelligible. For as the Excellent Dr. *Cudworth* hath proved the *Idea* that we have of *Infinite* , is the same with that which we have of *Perfection*. And therefore when we say, that God is Infinite in Power, Wisdom or Goodness, we mean by it, that He is most perfectly or compleatly so ; and that he wants nothing which is necessary to render Him most Perfect, and Excellent in that Respect of which we speak of Him. Now a Being that any way is Deficient or Imperfect, and that hath not all the possible Excellencies that are to be had, is Finite, and that in the same proportion as it is defective. Thus, for Instance, those Beings which endure but for a time, which had a Beginning, and will have an end, are finite or imperfect, as to their existence : But GOD, who *is, was, and is to come*, who is and will be from *Everlasting to Everlasting*, He is properly said to be *Infinite* (a) or *Perfect*, as to Existence or Duration. For there is no Restriction, Limitation or Imperfection in His Nature, in this respect, as there is in that of all Creatures whatever. A Being whose Power extends to but a few things, is very imperfect or finite in Power ; and if there be any Possible thing that it cannot do, 'tis still so far imperfect in Power. But a Being that can do all things that are not contradictory to his Nature, or all possible things, is properly said to be *Infinite* or *Perfect* in Power; or *Almighty* ; so a Being that knows

(a) Τὸ ὃ αἰδιον ἀφῆκτον
 ἰσχυρῶς, ἐκ ἀνεπαρχίας ; ἡ
 ἔργον ὃ ἀρχῆς, ἀμετρίῳ ἔστι.
 Sect. Empir. adv. Math. pag.
 150.

all things possible to be known, is Infinite or Perfect in Knowledge: and the like of any other Attributes or Perfections: In all, the Comparison or Proportion is the same. A Being that wants no degree of Excellency or Perfection is God; *Infinite in Power, Wisdom, Justice, Goodness and Truth.* But if a Being want any one, or any degree or proportion of These Things, it is Finite and Imperfect, and that in the same degree or Proportion. Now, where is the *Inconceivableness, Confusion, Absurdity, and Nonsense* of all This? is it not as easie to conceive or apprehend that a Being may have in his Nature all possible Perfection, as it is to have an Idea of one that is Imperfect and Deficient? for how comes the Idea of Imperfection into our Mind? how come we to know that a Thing is Finite, Defective and Limited, unless we have also an Idea or Notion of Infinity or Perfection? how can we know what is wanting in any Being, unless we have an Idea of it, that it is in some other Being? Most certain therefore it is, that we may have as true and clear an Idea of the Existence of a God, as of any thing in Nature: (b) and in Fact it is most notoriously true, that a clear and distinct Notion that there is such a Being, hath and doth still appear in the Minds of all Mankind; and it is impressed there, I doubt not, by the *peculiar Care* of that Divine and Merciful Being Himself.

(b) *Vid.*
Mr. Lock's Essay of Understanding. P. IV.
 Ch. X.

And therefore those that assert, that we have not, nor can have any Notion or Idea of a God, nor of his Attributes and Perfections, and that on *that* Account deny his Existence; discover such wretched Ignorance as well as Obstinacy, that they are really a
 Disgrace

Disgrace to Humane Nature. For pretending to be *over-Wise*, they *become Fools*, they are *vain in their Imaginations*, and *their foolish heart is darkened*; Their vicious Inclinations have debauched their Reason and Understanding: And *though God be not far from every one of us, since in Him we live, move, and have our being*; yet their Wickedness and Pride is such, That *they will not seek after God, neither is God in all their Thoughts*. From which wilful Blindness and Stupidity, may the God of Truth deliver them, by the gracious Illuminations of his Blessed Spirit; To whom, with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, be all Honour and Glory, &c.

F I N I S.

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The Notion of a GOD.

BEAR FOR POLICY

SERMON

Preach'd at the
CATHEDRAL CHURCH of St. Paul,
Upon the 7th of 1688.
BEING
The Third of the Lectures for that Year
Founded by the Honourable Henry Boyle, Esq;

JOHN HARRIS, M.A.

Fellow of the Royal Society.

LONDON.

Printed by F. L. for Richard Widdowes, at the
Church in St. Pauls Church-yard, 1688.

P S A L M x. 4.

The Wicked, through the Pride of his Countenance, will not seek after God: neither is God in all his Thoughts.

IN my last Discourse on these words, I came to consider the *Third* Particular I had before observed in them; which was, The great Charge the Psalmist brings against the Wicked and Proud Person here spoken of, *viz. Wilful Atheism and Infidelity. He will not seek after God: and all his thoughts are, There is no God.* Under which I proposed to Consider and Refute the Atheist's Objections, against the Being of a God in general. And these I found might be reduced to these Two Heads:

- I. That we can have no Idea of God.
- II. That the Notion of Him, which is about in the World, owes its Original to the foolish Fears and Ignorance of some Men, and to the crafty Designs of others.

The former of these I have already refuted, and shewed that it is Groundless and Precarious in all its Parts.

I shall now therefore consider the Second Objection against the Being of a God in general, *viz. That the Notion of a Deity, which is so generally found among Mankind, owes its Original to the*

foolish Fears and Ignorance of some Men, and to the designing and crafty Figments of others.

And here I shall first give you the Sense of these kind of Writers on this Point: And then endeavour to shew you, how very weak and trivial their Arguments are, and how very far short they come of Disproving the Existence of a Deity.

And first I shall give you the full sense of this Objection, from the words of those that bring it; beginning with the Modern Writers, who, as you will find by and by, have little or nothing new, *but like Carriers Horses, follow one another in a Track, and because the first went wrong, all the rest will succeed him in the same Errour; not considering, that he who comes behind, may take an advantage to avoid that Pit, which those that went before, are fallen into.* (as it is in the words of the Translator of (a) *Philostratus*.)

(a) Blount's
Life of Apol-
lon. p. 19.

But here it must be premised, That since these kind of Men do frequently disguise their true meaning; *It is not the bare Words only, but the Scope of a Writer, that giveth the true Light by which any Writing is to be interpreted,* (as Mr. *Hobbs* (b) very well observes:) yet this must be said for both him and the other Modern Atheistick Writers, That their Disguise is so very thin and superficial, that any one may easily see through it, and discover their true Meaning and Design. Nothing can be clearer, than that 'tis the great scope of the Author of *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, to persuade the World, That the first Original of all Religion, was from Craft and Imposture, and that it was cultivated and carried on by the Cunning and Avarice of the Priests. And in his *Anima Mundi*, pag. 13, 14. he tells us, That

Super-

(b) *Leviath.*
p. 338.

Superstition (by which these kind of Writers always mean *Religion* in general) *did certainly proceed from some Crafty and Designing Person*, who observed what were the Inclinations of Mankind, and so adapted his Fictions accordingly: *He pretended to have some extraordinary way revealed to him, from an Invisible Power, whereby he was able to instruct the People; and to put them into a way of being happy in a Future State.* And in another place, he saith, (a) *That (a) Life of Mankind being ill-natured, and unapt to oblige others* Apollon. p. 3. *without Reward, as also judging of God Almighty by themselves, did at first conceive the Gods to be like their Eastern Princes, before whom no Man might come empty-handed; and thus came the Original of Sacrifices: And this Institution, he saith, was improved by the crafty Sacerdotal Order, into all that costly and extravagant Superstition that did afterwards so abound in the World.* Now in this passage, 'tis plain, that he makes all the Jewish Religion to be nothing but Priest-craft and Imposture; tho' on wretched poor grounds, as I shall hereafter sufficiently make appear. And his Opinion of the Christian Religion, may easily be guessed, by what he delivers, *Anim. Mund.* pag. 124. viz. *That most Christian Churches, like the Musk-melon from the Dung-hill, were raised from the filthy Corruption and Superstition of Paganism.* And in another place, he saith, (b) *That he will engage to make appear, That a Temporal Interest was the great Machine on which all Humane Actions ever moved;* (b) Oracles of Reason, p. 158. *(he means, in the Establishing of the Jewish and Christian Religions;)* *and that the common Pretence of Piety and Religion, was but like Grace before a Meal: i. e. according to him, nothing but a meer customary* (b) *piece*

piece of Folly that signifies nothing at all, and which he frequently ridicules and exposes (c).

(c) *Blount's*
Life of Apollon.
in the Preface,
and p. 24.

Now all this, though not in plain and express words, yet in the most obvious sense and meaning, is equally applicable to the Notion of a God; and no doubt was so intended by the Author. And, indeed, take away Religion and the Notion of a God must of course follow: For 'tis impossible to think that if there be a God, he should not expect Veneration and Worship from those Creatures of his, that he hath rendred capable of doing it; which therefore *is their reasonable Service*, Rom. 12. 1.

(a) *Causa, à*
qua Superstitio
oritur, conser-
vatur & fove-
tur, metus est.
Tract. Theoi.
Polit. in Praef.

After the same manner doth *Spinoza* declare himself as to the Origin of Religion; which he also calls by the Name of Superstition. (a) He tells us,

That *the true Cause from whence Superstition took its*

rise, is preserved and maintained, is

Fear. (b) That if all things would but

succeed according to Mens Minds, they

would never be enslaved by Superstition:

But because they are often in great

streights, and so put to it, that no Coun-

(b) Si Homines res omnes suas certo consilio regere possent, vel si fortuna ipsis prospera semper foret; nulla superstitione tenerentur: sed quoniam eò sapè angustiarum rediguntur ut consilium nullum adferre queant, inter spem metumq; misere fluctuant, ideo animum ut plurimum, ad quidvis credendum pronissimum habent. *Ibid.*

(c) Ea omnia quæ Homines unquam vanâ Religione coluerunt, nihil præter Phantasmatâ, animiq; tristis & timidi fuisse deliria. *Ibid.*

(d) Ex hac itaq; Superstitio- nis Causâ (sc. metu) clarè sequitur omnes homines naturâ superstitioni esse obnoxios: quicquid dicant alii, qui putant hoc inde oriri, quod omnes mortales confusam quandam Numinis Idæam habent. *Ibid.*

reason

reason (he saith) why all Men are thus subject by Nature to Superstition, is only from Fear; and not as some have fancied, from any confused Idea of a God, which they will have to be impressed on all Mankind.

The Author of the *Leviathan*, speaks yet a little plainer as to this Point; (e) Ignorant Men (saith he) (e) *Leviath.* feign to themselves several kinds of Invisible Powers, P. 51. stand in awe of their own Imaginations, in time of Distress invoke them, in time of Success give them thanks, making the Creatures of their own fancy Gods. This is the Natural Seed of Religion; which Men taking notice of, have formed into Laws, &c.

And he tells us in another place, (f) That Fear (f) *Leviath.* of Power invisible feigned by the Mind, or imagined P. 26. 51. from Tales publickly allowed is Religion, not allowed, is Superstition. So that according to Mr. Hobbs, Religion and Superstition differ only in this, that the latter is a Lye and a Cheat standing only on the Authority of Private Men, whereas the former is supported by the Power of the Government. In these Four Things, saith he, elsewhere, (a) consists (a) *Leviath.* the Natural Seed of Religion, viz. Ignorance of Second P. 54. Causes, Opinion of Ghosts, Devotion toward what Men Fear, and taking things casual for Prognosticks. These are the Accounts which our Modern Atheistical Writers give of the Origin of Religion, and the Notion of a God among Men. And this they, with great assurance, put off as their own new Invention; without being so just as to mention any of the Ancients, from whom they have borrowed every Article of it. That trite Passage every Body knows *Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor*; and *Lucretius* mentions *Fear* and the *Ignorance of Second Causes*, as that

that which gave the first rise to the Notion of a God: For, saith he,

(b) *Cætera, qua fieri in Terris Cæloq; tuentur Mortales, pavidis cum pendent mentibus sepe Efficiunt Animos humiles formidine Divum, Depressosque premunt ad Terram, propterea quid Ignorantia Causarum conferre Deorum Cogit ad Imperium Res, & concedere Regnum: Et Quorum operum causas nullâ ratione videre Possunt, hæc fieri Divino numine rentur.*

Lib. 6. v. 49.

in the World: for when Men cannot see any natural Reason for any Effect, they strait fancies 'tis the Product of some Divine Power. The very same thing

(c) Lib. 5. v. 1160. *Nunc qua causa Deum, &c.*

he saith also in another place, (c) where he attributes likewise the Notion of Ghosts, and consequently of the Gods interfering with the Affairs of the World, to Mens not being able to distinguish Dreams from Real Appearances. Tully tells us, That there were some in his time, and no doubt long before, who attributed the Opinion and Belief of the

(d) *Si qui dixerunt totam de Diis immortalibus opinionem fictam esse ab hominibus sapientibus Republicæ causâ.*

(e) *Θεὸς ἢ πρῶτον ἔποι τέχνην, ἢ φύσει ἀλλὰ ποὶ νόμοις ἢ τέτοις ἄλλοις ἄλλοις ὅπῃ ἕκαστος συνολόγησαν νομοθετήμενοι.* Plato de Legib. lib. 10.

Gods to have been feigned by Wise Men for the good of the Commonwealth. (d)

And Plato acquaints us, (e) *That the ancient Atheists did affirm, that the Gods were not by Nature, but by Art and Laws only, and so were different in different places, according as the different humour of the Law givers chanced to determine the Matter.* Sextus Empiricus saith, That there were

(f) *— πρῶτος ἢ ἀνθρώπων προστάτας ἢ τὸ συμφέρον τῶν βίω σκεψαμένους πάνυ σωφίης ὄντας ἀναπλάσει τ' αἰετ' ἢ Θεῶν ἰσχυροῦν, ἢ τ' αἰετ' ἢ ἐν αἰδ' ἢ μὴ ἀμελέων δόξαν.* Sext. Emp. adv. Math. p. 310.

at first some Intelligent and Prudent Men (f) who consider'd what would

be

be beneficial to Humane Life ; and these first feigned the fabulous Notion of Gods, and caused that Suspicion that there is in Mens Minds about them. Afterwards he saith, That heretofore Men lived wild and savage, and preyed upon one another like wild Beasts ; till some Men being willing to prevent and repress Injuries and Rapine, invented Laws to punish those that did amiss : And then they feigned, that there were Gods also, who took cognizance of all Mens Actions, whether good or bad ; that so no one might dare to commit any secret Wickedness, when he was by this means persuaded,

Ἦεα ἐσθλῶν, πάντι φοιτῶσιν ἐπ' αἶαν

Ἀνθρώπων, ὕβρεις τε καὶ εὐνομίας ἐφορῶντες,

That the Gods, tho' unseen by Men, did yet inspect into all Humane Actions, and take notice who did well, and who the contrary. Sextus also attributes the Rise of Mens Belief of a God, to their ignorance of Second Causes, (as I shewed you before that Lucretius doth :) for he

makes Democritus speak thus, (a) When Men of old saw strange and frightful things in the Air or Heavens, such as Thunder, Lightning, Thunderbolts, Eclipses of the Sun and Moon, &c. not knowing the Natural Causes of them, but being ter-

(a) Ὅρῶντες τὰ ἐν τοῖς με-
τέωσις παθήματα οἱ παλαιοὶ
ἢ ἀνθρώπων, καὶ δάπερ βροντὰς
καὶ ἀστραπὰς, καὶ κεραυνούς, ἢ λίμ-
νην καὶ σελήνην ἐκλείψεις ἔδει-
ματόντο θεῶς οὐρόμφοι τέτων
αἰτίης.

rified by them, they strait imagined the Gods to be the Authors of them. This therefore being proved to be the true fence of the Ancient Atheistical Writers, and from them copied by the Moderns, viz. That Fear, Ignorance and Cunning were the first Originals or Causes of the Notion and Belief of a God. Let us now fairly examine the Case, and see what ground there is for such an Assertion ; and whether this can account for that Universal Notion of a Divine

and Omnipotent Being, which we find every where in the World. And,

i. I say, That the *Notion* of a GOD, could not come from *Fear*; for if it did, either this *Fear* must be universally inherent in all Mankind, or else peculiar only to some Dastardly and Low-spirited Mortals. If the former be asserted, 'tis a very convincing Argument, that there is a just ground for such a *Fear*; and that it hath something that is Real for its Object, that can thus affect all Men, after the same manner. And if it be so, that all Men are naturally subject to this *Fear* of a Deity; how could any one ever discover, that there was no real ground for this, in the nature of the thing? how came he himself exempted from this poorness of Spirit? And if he were not exempted from this terrible Passion, how came he to discover, that the Object of this *Fear* is all a Cheat, and nothing but a meer *Mormo* and Bugbear? 'Twas very lucky for him, that the rambling Atoms of his Constitution jump't by chance into such a couragious and noble Frame and Temper! But pray who was this mighty Man? when and where did he live? what Ancient History gives us any Account of this happy Person, that laughed at *that* which all the World besides were afraid of? Let the Atheists give us but any Relation of him, that is Authentick, and it shall be allowed as the greatest thing they have ever yet advanced. But I suppose they will not say that this *Fear* is Universal; but that it only possesseth mean and abject Spirits, and never invades the *Great* and *Brave Soul*. Let us see whether this will do them any service. Now by *Brave* and *Great Souls*, who do they mean? Do they intend

tend by them, such as have Power, Command and Empire over others? Nothing is more certain, than that Kings and Princes have been equally subject to these Fears of a God, and of Divine Punishment, with the meanest and most contemptible of their Subjects.

And this (a) *Lucretius* himself owns, (as also that this Fear of a Deity is Universal) and we have Examples of it in the Histories of all Ages and Parts of the World. But they

(a) *Præterea, cui non animus formidine Divum
Contrahitur? cui non conrepunt membra pavore
Fulminis horribili cum plagâ torrida tellus
Contremittit, & magnum percurrunt murmura Cælum?
Non Populi Gentisque tremunt? Regesque superbi
Conripunt Divam percussâ membra timore
Ne quod ob admissum sædè, dictumque superbè
Pœnarum grave sit solvendi tempus adactum?*

Lucret. l. 5. v. 1217.

will say, 'tis like, that by *Brave* and *Great Souls*, they don't mean Kings and Princes, but the Wise, Knowing, and Learned part of Mankind: These were they that first discovered this Cheat, and who, finding its Advantage to Mankind, have ever since continued it and carried it on for the Publick Good. These *Cunning Men* finding the *Vulgar* generally subject to dismal Apprehensions and Fears of they knew not what kind of Invisible Powers, took advantage from thence to tell them of a God, and to form the product of their Fears into the Notion of a Deity. Now to this I say, That if these cunning Politicians found that there was a Fear, Dread and Apprehension of some Divine and Almighty Being, Universally impressed upon the Minds of Men, as no doubt but there is; this, I say, is a very convincing Argument that such a Belief hath a good Foundation in the Nature of the thing, and consequently hath Truth at the bottom. And therefore 'tis plain, that these

Men did not *Invent*, but *find* this Notion and Belief actually Existing, by a kind of *Anticipation* in the Hearts of all Mankind. And that they could not possibly invent it, had there been no Ground nor Reason for such a Belief, I shall plainly prove by and by.

But again; That the Notion of a *God*, did not arise only from *Fear*, is plain from hence; That Mankind hath gotten an Idea of Him, that could never proceed only from *that Passion*. If *Fear* only were to make a *God*, it would compose him of nothing but black and terrible Idea's: it would represent Him to be *πᾶν φθονερόν ἢ ταρταχῶδες*, *all envious and spiteful*; a grim, angry and vindictive Being; one that delights in nothing but to exercise his Tyrannical Power and Cruelty upon Mankind: we should then believe him to be such a Power as the *Indians* do their *Evil God*, and we do the Devil; a mischievous and bloody Deity, that is the Author of nothing but Evil and Misery in the World: for these must be the dreadful Attributes of a Being which *Fear* only would create and set up in our Hearts.

But now, instead of this, we find a quite different Notion of God in the World. We justly believe Him to be a most Kind, Loving and Gracious Being, and *whose mercies are over all his works*. We are taught by the Scriptures, those Sacred Volumes of his Will, to believe that He at first Created the World, and all things that are therein, to display his Goodness and Kindness to his Creatures: That *he wills not, nor delights in the death of a sinner*, nor in the evil and misery of any thing; but that He hath by most admirable methods of Divine Love, provided for our
) Happi-

Happiness both here and hereafter. Now such an Account as this of the Deity, could never take its Rise from *Fear* only : And therefore since it cannot be denied but that we have such a Notion of God, it must have some more Noble and Generous an Original. We find, indeed, in our selves a just Fear and Dread of Offending so Good and Gracious a God ; and we believe it suitable to his Justice, to punish those that will pertinaciously continue in a state of Rebellion against Him, after having refused and slighted the repeated Overtures of his Mercy. But then we know very well, That the Notion we have of a Deity, is not occasioned by, and derived from this *Fear* ; but, on the contrary, this *Fear* from it: 'Tis the Natural Consequence and Effect of the Belief and Knowledge of a God, but it cannot be the Cause and Original of it. For Fear alone can never dispose the Mind of Man to imagine a Being that is infinitely Kind, Merciful and Gracious. The Atheist therefore must here take in *Hope* too, as well as *Fear*; as a joint Cause of his pretended Origin of the Belief of a God ; and say, That Mankind came to imagine that there was some Powerful and Invisible Being, which they *hoped* would do them as much good, as they were afraid it would do them hurt (a). But these two contrary Idea's, like Equal Quantities in an Equation with contrary Signs, will destroy one another; and consequently the Remainder will be nothing. And therefore the Mind of Man must lay aside such an Idea of God, as soon as he hath well considered it, for it will signify just nothing at all.

Another very good Argument, That the *Notion* of a God, did not take its first Original from *Fear* only, may be

(a) Vid. Archbishop Tillotson's First Sermon, p. 47.

be drawn from hence, That those that do believe and know most of God, are the least Subject to that servile Passion. If Fear only occasioned Mens Notion and Belief of a God, the consequence must be, that where the Notion of a Deity is most strong and vivid, there Men must be most timorous and apprehensive of Danger; there the greatest distrust, suspicion, and anxious sollicitousness about the Events of Futurity would be always found. But this is so far from being true in Fact, that no one is so free from those Melancholy and Dreadful Thoughts and Apprehensions, as he that truly believes in, and Fears God. For he can find always in Him Almighty Defence and Protection; *he can cast all his care on God who he knows careth for him*: When all the treacherous Comforts of this World leave him, and when nothing but a gloomy Scene of Affliction, Distress and Misery presents its self here; yea, even when Heart it self and Strength begin to fail, *God will be (he knows) the Strength of his Heart and his Portion for ever*; and even in the *vast Multitude of his Afflictions, God's Comforts will refresh his Soul*.

But 'tis far otherwise with the miserable Wretch that hath no Belief of, nor any Knowledge of God; if he fall into Affliction, Trouble, or Misery, he hath nothing to support him: He is the most abject and dispirited of all Mankind, *his whole head is sick, and his heart is faint, and his Spirit cannot sustain his Infirmity*; for he hath not only no Power and Ability to bear the *present* load of Misery, but he expects yet much worse to *come*; and notwithstanding all his former Incredulity and Bravery, he now, as the Devil himself doth, *believes and trembles*. And there-

therefore, though as *Plutarch* observes, Τέλαρ ἢ μὴ νομίσει Θεός, μὴ φοβείσθαι, it be the chief Design of *Atheism* to give Men an Exemption from Fear; yet 'tis a very foolish one, and falls very far short of answering its End: for it deserts and fails its Votaries in their greatest Extremities and Necessities, and by depriving them of all just Grounds for hope, must needs expose them to the most dismal Invasions of Fear. And thus, I think, it is very plain, That the Notion of a God could not take its first Original from Fear. As to the Ignorance of Second Causes, which is sometimes alledged as another Occasion of the Notion of a Deity; the Modern Atheists do not much insist upon it, and therefore I need not do so in its Refutation. I have shewed already whence they had it; and I think it sufficient to observe here, that there are no Men so Ignorant of Second Causes, nor any that give so poor and trifling Accounts of the *Phænomena* of Nature as these Atheistical Philosophers do. And therefore Ignorance ought rather to be reckoned among the Causes of *Atheism* and *Infidelity*, than of the Idea of God and Religion; for I am very well assured that a through insight into the Works of Nature, and a serious Contemplation of that admirable Wisdom, excellent Order, and that useful Aptitude and Relation that the several Parts of the World have to each other, must needs convince any one, that they are the Products of a Divine and Almighty Power. *The Invisible things of God may be understood by the things that are made, and his Eternal Power and Godhead discovered by this means* (a); as hath been excellently demonstrated by the learned Dr. *Cudworth*, Dr. *Bentley*, Mr. *Ray*, and many others.

And

(a) Rom. I. 20.

And these kind of Gentlemen have betrayed their shallow and superficial Knowledge of things, by nothing more, than by pretending to give an Account of the Original of the World, the Motion of the Heavenly Bodies, of Gravity, and several other *Phænomena* of Nature, without having recourse to a Deity; as I shall hereafter more particularly observe. But I now hasten to Refute that which they make their Great and most Common Objection against the Being of a God; And to shew,

2. That the Notion of a God did not, nor could not, arise from Cunning and Contrivance; and that it was not invented by any Crafty and Politick Person.

Though that it did do so, is the constant Assertion of these Gentlemen; and they do it with as much assurance, as if it were a Self-evident Proposition. In all Companies they will nauseously tire you with this Battology, over and over again, That *All Religion is a Cheat, and the greatest Cheat of all is Religion*. But this themselves have happily discovered; and therefore they Scorn to be imposed upon by Priest-craft; they will neither be *ridden* by Priests, nor *lead* by them; *they can go without Leading-strings; and won't be put to the Temporal Charge of a Spiritual Guide: and they have quitted the Thoughts of going to Heaven by the same means as they go to the Play-house, (i.e.) by giving Money to the Door-keepers*. As the Translator of *Philostratus* insolently expresses it. (a) Now after all this bold and repeated Exclamation against *Priest-Craft* and *Holy Shams*, &c. Would not one think that they had some *demonstrative* Ground, to prove that the Notion of God,

and

(a) Blount's
Life of Apollon.
in the Preface.

and Religion is all a Cheat and Imposture? Would not one suppose that they could name the very Person that first Invented this *Fourbe*; tell us when, and where he lived, and plainly prove by what means he came to impose so grossly on Mankind, and how they came to be such Fools as to take it, and dully to submit to it ever since? Nothing sure, that is less than a *direct Demonstration*, ought to protect a Man under so rude a Liberty as these Gentlemen take, of ridiculing all the Sacred Laws of God and Men. But have they any such Proof ready? or have they ever yet produced it? No, nor is it possible they ever should; as appears plainly from the Ancient Histories of all Nations in the World. In no one of these do we ever find the least mention made of any one that Invented the Notion of a God. 'Twas a Thing taken for Granted by all the Ancient Law-givers, that there was a God: This they never went about to prove; nor had they any need so to do, or to feign it; for they found it universally and naturally stamp'd upon the Minds of Mankind. This *Moses* himself doth not so much as attempt to teach the *Jews*, as knowing very well that it was what they had a general Notion and Idea of before. And *Homer* speaks every where of the Gods, as of Beings universally known and believed, and never goes about to prove their Existence. The same thing appears in *Hesiod*, and in the Fragments that we have of all the Ancient Greek Poets. And though it be not true in Fact, yet 'tis a good Argument *ad Hominem* against the Atheists; that *Lucretius* pretends to tell you when Atheism began, and who was the first Bold Man that disputed and denied the Being of a

(a) *Primum Graius homo mortales tollere contra Est oculos ausus, primusq; obfistere contra: Quom nec fama Deum, nec fulmina nec minitanti Marmure compressit Coelum.*—Lib. 1. v. 67.

God. This, he saith, was *Epicurus*. (a) But he cannot deny but that in so doing, *Epicurus*

contradicted the common Sentiments of all Mankind, and broke through those Fears and Obligations that the generality of Men were under to a Divine Power. But to Refute a little more Methodically this trite Objection. I say, that the Notion of a God could not derive its Original from the cunning Invention of any Politick Person, for these Reasons:

1. Because the pretended Inventor himself could never possibly have come by such a Notion, had there been no such Being as a God. *Sextus Em-*

(b) — φασιν ὅτι νομοθεταὶ πρὸς ἐνεπινοῦσαν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἢ καὶ Θεῶν δόξαν, μὴ εἰσβτες ὅτι τὸ ἀσχίτην ἀποποιῶν αὐτοῖς ἀειμένους (σητήσαν) ἢ ἀν πνθ- ποθεν δὲ οἱ νομοθεταί, μὴ δένθ πρὸς ἑσόν παρὰ δὲνθ αὐτοῖς Θεός, ἢ ἄλλον εἰς ὁμηνοῖαν Θεῶν; ἔτα πάντες μὲν ἀνθρώποι τῶτων ἔχουσιν ἔνοιαν, ἔχ ὡσαύτως δέ.

Adv. Math. p. 314.

piricus observes very well, That though (b) 'tis pretended that Lawgivers and Politicians invented the Notion of a God; yet the Asserters of it are not aware

of an Absurdity that arises thence: for if it should be asked, how they themselves came by such a Notion? they must be at a loss; they will not say they had it from others, nor can they account how they came by it; and therefore it must have been from the beginning; and so all Men must have a Notion of God, though not all after the same way. And, indeed, 'tis not possible to imagine that such a Notion could ever have come into any one's Head, had there been no such Being as a Deity. Were he an absolute Non-entity, and really Nothing at all, 'tis unconceivable how any one could ever attain an Idea of God, or have coined

coined any word that should so have expressed that Idea, as to render it intelligible to any one else. The Mind of Man cannot invent, or make any new simple Idea or Cogitation; it cannot possibly make a Positive Conception of that which is really nothing at all. Which way soever we come by our Ideas, we cannot have one of what is absolutely a Non-entity; for what is absolutely Nothing, can neither come into us by *our Senses*, nor be *innate* in our Minds. And therefore if there were no God, we could never have had any Idea of Him; nor could any one ever possibly invent, or frame such a Notion in his Mind. I know the *compounding*, *ampliating* and *feigning Power* of the Mind will here be alledged; and it will be said that we may by that means frame Notions of things which perhaps did never, nor ever will Exist: Thus we may gain the Notion of a Flying Horse, of a Creature, half a Man and half a Horse, a Man of a Thousand Foot high, &c. and therefore say they, (a) why might not the Mind of Man, by this compounding and ampliating Power, feign as well the Notion of a Deity? To which I answer, That this Power in our Minds doth not, nor cannot extend so far. All that we can do by it, is to connect together two or more possible and consistent Ideas, or to Ampliate or Enlarge any one or more of them, in point of *Time*, *Extent*, &c. Thus, as was before said, by connecting the Ideas of Wings and a Horse, or of a Horse and a Man, we may feign a *Pegasus* or a *Centaure*; and I can imagine either of these Creatures, or any other, to live Five Thousand times as long, or to be Fifty

(a) *Sext. Empiric. Adv. Mathem. p. 316, 317.*

thousand times as big, as is usual. But all this is still short of what 'tis brought for, and will give no account at all of the Invention of the Idea of a God. For suppose the Mind would endeavour to amplify the Idea of a Man into that of God, which is the Way *Sextus Empiricus* says Men might and did come by the Notion of a Deity. (b) First, he saith, the Mind can give him Eternity of Duration : But how came it by that Idea of Eternity ? was that Idea previous to the Invention of a Deity ? and had Mankind a clear Conception of it ? if they had, the Notion of God could not be then invented, for *one* of his chiefest Attributes was known before. But I suppose they will say that the Notion of Eternity was gained by *Ampliating* the Idea of Duration or Time beyond the common and ordinary Term : And thus by imagining a Man to live a Thousand or Ten Thousand Years, I may come to frame the Notion of a Being that should always exist. But that is a gross Mistake ; for a Being that should endure Ten Thousand, or Ten Millions of Years, is not therefore exempt from dying at last, any more than one that endures but Ten Minutes. Had I not in my Mind *before* a clear Idea of Eternity, I could no more by this Ampliating Power gain a Notion of an Eternal Being, than I could believe myself to be Eternal ; for every thing about me would contradict that Notion ; and 'tis very strange that I should come to believe any Being could have an Eternal Duration from considering of things that are all perishable and mortal.

That

That which leads Men into this mistake, is, I suppose this: We have all of us a Notion of a Being, Perfect or Eternal, as to his Duration, because there is such a Being in Reality: And therefore, whenever we go about to consider of Time, or of the Period or Term of the Duration of a Being, we can amplify it so, as to suppose it shall never cease to be, but have its Being still continued on without end: That is, we can connect the Idea that we have of Eternity with a Being, and so render it Eternal. But this could never be done, if there were *no Idea* of Eternity at all, if there were nothing Eternal, if there were no God. The case is the same as to all the other *Perfections* of the Divine Nature. We have clear *Idea's* and *Notions* of them in our Minds; and therefore we can talk about them, and be understood: because there are real *Idea's* that answer to those words that we use; and something really existing, that answers to those *Idea's*. But were there no such Being, nor any thing Real in Nature, to deduce our *Idea's* from, were there no God, 'tis impossible there could be any such *Idea's* at all.

But however, this Assertion, That the Mind of Man was able to Invent the Notion of a Deity, and communicate it to the World, is a most flat and palpable Contradiction to what the Atheist at other times urges, and that too, as founded on Principles that he is very fond of. In my last Discourse, I shewed you, That he objected against the Being of a God, from our not being able to have any *Idea* of Him; and this he endeavours to support, by asserting also, That we have *no Knowledge but Sense*, and that all our *Conceptions are Passive*,

Passive. Now both these are absolutely inconsistent with the Original that he is now attributing to the Notion of a God. For if it be true, as he saith it is, That we can have no Idea of God; 'tis very strange to suppose, that a Politick Man should Invent, and the World Receive the Idea or Notion of That which 'tis impossible for any one to invent, or receive. 'Tis a little odd, that a Man should first cunningly devise; he knew not what, and then the affrighted World believe they knew not what; and that we should prove and assert, and the Atheist ridicule and deny the Existence of That which we do none of us all know any thing about! But so it must be, according to the Atheist's Uniform Scheme of Things.

Again, If, as he asserts, *all our Conceptions be Passive, and all our Knowledge, Sense:* which way could this Cunning Invenor of a God, come by his Notion or Idea of Him? how could his Mind attain any such *feigning* and *ampliating* Power? For according to the Atheist's Principles, the Mind could have no Active, much less Spontaneous Power at all; but all our Idea's and Conceptions would be meer necessary Motions, mechanically occasioned by the Impressions of External Objects. So that as *Protagoras* tells us (in *Plato's Theætet.*) Οὐτε γὰρ τὰ μὴ ὄντα δυνατὸν δοξάζειν, ἔτε ἄλλα παρ' ἃ ἂν πάσχη: *'Tis neither possible to conceive that which is not, nor indeed any thing else, but only just as our Mind suffers it by Impressions from without.* And therefore no Man could ever possibly Invent any thing at all, nor have any Power within him of putting or joining together two or more simple idea's, or of ampliating or enlarging any Idea or Notion at all; much less could he grow to

very

very subtle as to Invent the Notion of a Deity. And as no Law-giver nor Politician could, we see, have Invented the Notion of a Deity, if he had had a mind so to do; so it appears very weak and foolish in him to do it, if he could. For while there was no Belief among Men, of any Divine and Almighty Power, he would have been a *mortal God himself*, (a) ^{(a) *Leviathan*, p. 87.} as *Hobbs* calls the Commonwealth: His Will would have been his Law; and Men's Obedience to Him, would have been founded in the Fear they were under of his great Power. And this, according to the Atheistical Principles, would have been a much better Stay and Support to his Authority, than the idle Obligations of Conscience and Religion. For the aforesaid Author tells us, (b) *That if the Fear of Spi-* (b) *Ib. p. 7.*
rits (i. e. of a God) were taken away, Men would be much better fitted for Civil Obedience. And in another place he goes a little further yet, and saith; (c) *That 'tis impossible any Government can stand, where* (c) *Ib. p. 233.*
any other than the Sovereign hath a Power of giving greater Rewards than Life, and greater Punishments than Death. That is, where there is any Obligation on Mens Minds to a Divine and Almighty Power: which they will chuse to obey, rather than the Unlawful Commands of an Arbitrary Prince, *that can only kill the Body.* Now there is no doubt but that this is true of such a Power or Government, as that he calculated his *Leviathan* for; *i. e. One absolutely Arbitrary and Tyrannical.* And all Power must be so, if there be no God, and no Antecedent Good and Evil; but what the Will of the Sovereign shall make so, as Mr. *Hobbs* positively asserts there is not. Therefore that Man must act very unwisely, who when he
was

was possessed of Power enough to give Laws to, and govern others by his sole Will and Pleasure, would ever invent the Notion of a God and Religion. For this was the direct way to cramp himself in his Power, to tie up his own Hands, and to let the People see that he himself is accountable to God, as well as they; 'tis to teach them, that the Power he hath, is but a Trust committed to him by God, which he is to discharge for his Subjects Good and Advantage, and not only to gratifie his own Will and Humour. And this Notion might induce the Subjects of an Arbitrary and Tyrannical Prince, to ease him of the Trouble of a Government, that they perceived involved him in a great deal of *Guilt*, and would proportionably encrease the Account that he must one day give of his Stewardship. But,

2. As the Idea and Notion of a God, cannot possibly have been invented by any one; so neither could it have been understood or believed by Mankind, if it had been so. Had there been only one Person that had coined the Idea of a God, and no manner of Notion at all of any of his Attributes or Perfections previous to this, in the Minds of Men; what would it have signified, to tell them, that there was a God? how could they understand the meaning of a meer Arbitrary word, that had no manner of foundation in Nature, nor any Idea or Notion answering to it? *Words are but Marks of Things*, or *Signs* to know them or distinguish them by; and therefore a Word that is the Sign of what is absolutely Nothing, or a Non-Entity, must needs be nonsense and unintelligible. And consequently, he that should attempt to awe Mankind with an empty Sound, that had no

Signi-

Signification, would certainly be exposed to contempt; and instead of affrighting others, would only be laughed at himself. The Author of *Anima Mundi*, saith, (a) *That to tell a Prophanè Rabble of an* (a) Pag. 36. *Invisible Deity, and of a Future State of Rewards and Punishments, will signifie nothing at all: and, That Men will not for such Metaphysicks, forbear any manner of Pleasure or Profit, how base soever.* How then could the Figment of a Deity gain admittance into the Minds of Men; at first? What would it signifie to tell Men of an Invisible Power, that presides over, and governs the World; when (according to the Atheist's Supposition) they had no manner of Notion of any such Being *before*, and consequently could not know what was meant by such Words and Expressions. Should you tell them, indeed, of a potent Neighbour; that was coming strongly armed, to take away their Life or Goods, they would look about them, and endeavour, by flight or force, to secure themselves. But to tell them of a Power that they never saw nor heard any thing of before, and which they are told withal, is *impossible* to be seen or heard; or any way rendred an Object of their Senses, could make no impression at all on Mankind: or suppose that it could make some impression, and frighten some Men at its first proposal, how long would this last? No longer, at farthest, than till they were by Experience convinced that it was false and precarious, and that there was no Ground nor Reason to believe any such thing. And this they must arrive at in a small time, if the Thing were false. 'Tis impossible such a Cheat as this, which it would have concerned every one to have examined,

could long have maintained its Ground. Time discovers, and certainly lays open all impostures; and that the sooner, the more are concerned to enquire into it. And therefore had this Notion and Belief of a Deity had no other Original and Foundation than what the Atheists pretend, 'tis impossible it could have continued so long in the World; and much more so, that it should have gained ground as we know it hath continually done, and be established on better Principles, the more it hath been considered and understood. *Opinionum commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat*, saith Cicero. Besides, It cannot well be imagined that any Man should have the vanity to believe, that a thing which he knew he had invented himself, and which had no manner of ground nor foundation to support it from the Nature of the thing, could ever impose upon and delude Mankind, or indeed find any admittance in their Belief. He must needs think that others would be as sagacious to discover the Cheat, as he could be to contrive it; and that among so many Heads, some one would soon detect the Forgery of what must necessarily appear false and precarious to the common Sense and Reason of all Men. But,

3dly, and lastly, The Universality of the Notion and Belief of a God, is also a most demonstrative Argument, that it could not arise from the Invention of any Cunning and Designing Person. That there is such an Universal Notion of a Deity, cannot, I think, be denied by any one; and I doubt not but farther Discoveries will satisfy us, that there is a Notion of God even among those Barbarous and Savage People that are said to have no manner of Idea of Him, by
a late

a late Ingenious Author. But supposing that it were so, that the Knowledge of a God were quite lost, in three or four dark and uncultivated parts of the Earth, whose Inhabitants are so brutish, as scarce to think at all: this is no more an Argument against the Belief of God's being Universally diffused throughout the World, than *Monsters* and *Fools* are, that Men have not generally a *Humane Shape* and *Reason*. There are some Anomalies, Irregularities and Exceptions in all Things and Cases, which yet are not by any accounted of force enough to over-turn a general Rule. I shall not say much to this Point, it having been so largely and frequently handled already; only I cannot omit the Testimony of some of the Ancient Writers, who are very express, that there is an Universal Notion of a God among Mankind, and which they looked upon to be Natural, or by way of Anticipation.

There is, saith Cicero, (a) a Notion of a God impressed on the Minds of all Men. And in another place, saith he, (b) What kind of Nation or People is there any where to be found, who have not, without learning it from others, a Prolepsis or Anticipation of a

Deity. And in two other places, he tells us, (c) That there is no Nation so barbarous and wild, who do not acknowledge the Being of a God, and some how or other revere and worship him. Seneca, in his Epistles, (d) frequently saith the same thing. Sextus Empiricus owns also, (e) That all Men have a common Notion of

(a) *In omnium Animis Deorum Notionem natura ipsa impressit. - De Nat. Deorum, lib. 1.*

(b) *Quæ Gens est, aut quod Genus Hominum, quod non habeat sine Doctrinâ, anticipationem quandam Deorum, quam appellat ὁ Ἑλληνιστὶν Epicurus. Ib. c. 32.*

(c) *Tuscul. Quæst. l. 1. De Legib. l. 1.*

(d) *Vid. Epist. 117, 118. De Benefic. 4. 4.*

(e) *Κοινὴν γὰρ πάλιν ὁ Ἑλλη- στίνοισι θεοῦ ἀναγνώσκοντες.*

ἔχει πάντες ἄνθρωποι ἀεὶ θεῶν, καὶ οὐ μανθάνοντες ἢ ἔτι ζῶον, καὶ ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτῶν ἢ τέλειον ἐκ εὐδαιμονίας, καὶ πάντες γὰρ ἀναγινώσκοντες.

God, by way of Prolepsis ; and believe Him to be a most Blessed and Happy Being, Incorruptible, Immortal, and incapable of any kind of Evil. And he concludes, *That 'tis unreasonable to assert, that all Men should come to attribute the same*

Τελέως ἢ ἔστιν ἀλογον, τὸ καὶ τυχλῶ παύσει τοῖς αὐτοῖς ὀπιβάλλειν ἰδιώμασιν, ἀλλὰ μὴ φυσικῶς ἔτιος ἐκκλιείδης. Adv. Mathem. p. 314.

Properties to God by Chance, and not rather be induced thereunto by the Dictates of Nature. Maximus Tyrius hath a very plain Passage, to prove this common Notion of a God, (f) Though, saith

(f) Ἐν πόστο ἢ πολέμῳ καὶ εἰσεῖ καὶ διαφωνία, ἕνα ἴδιον ἀν ἐν πάσῃ γῆ ὁμοφώνον λόγον καὶ νόμον, ὅπ Θεὸς εἰς πάντων βασιλεὺς καὶ πατὴρ — τὸτο ἢ ὁ Ἕλλην λέγει καὶ ὁ ΒάρβαρⓄ λέγει, καὶ ὁ ἡπερώτης καὶ ὁ θαλάσσιⓄ, ὁ σφόδρος, καὶ ὁ ἀστροφος. Dif. I. p. 5.

he, *there be so much quarrelling, difference and jangling in the World, yet you may see this agreed in all over the Earth, that there is One God, the King and Father of all. This the Greek and the Barbarian both*

say, the Islander and the Inhabitant of the Continent, the Wise and the Unwise alike. Aristotle saith,

(g) Πάντες γὰρ ἄνθρωποι περὶ Θεῶν ἔχουσιν πρῆληψιν — Βάρβαροι καὶ Ἕλληνας. De Caelo, l. 1. c. 3.

(g) That all Men have a Pre-notion concerning the Gods, even both Greeks and Barbarians. And in another place, he hath a very re-

markable passage to this sence, That there is a very Ancient Tradition (which our Fore-fathers have handed down to Posterity, in a Mythological Dress) That there are Gods ; and that the Divine Nature sustains or encom-

(h) Παρεδή-
δῃ ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν
ἀρχαίων ἢ πα-
λαιῶν, ἐν μύθοις
χίμαιρα καὶ τα-
λελείμωγα τοῖς
ὑστερον, ὅπ Θεοὶ
τε εἰσιν ἔτοι, καὶ
σελέχει τὸ Θε-

passeth all things. But this Tradition, he saith, had, in process of time, some Figments connected with it ; as, that the Gods had Humane Shapes, or those of other Creatures, &c. which if we separate from it, we may suppose it at first divinely spoken and delivered, That the Gods were the First Beings. (h)

ον τῶ ὄλλω φυσίαν, &c. Aristot. Metaph. l. 1. c. 8. p. 483. Paris. 1654.

Many

Many more Testimonies might be produced to prove this Point, that it was the concurrent Opinion, of all the Ancient Heathen Writers, that there was a common Notion or Belief of a Deity in the Minds of Men; But these, I think, are sufficient. And now what can the Atheist say to such a Proof as this? What greater Evidence can be desired of the Truth of any thing, than that it hath been believed by all Men in all Ages and Places of the World? 'Tis a very good way of Arguing from Authority, that *Aristotle* uses in his *Topicks*. That, saith he, which seems true to *some Wise Men*, ought to appear a little probable; what *most Wise Men* believe, is yet further probable; and what *most Men*, both *Wise* and *Unwise* do agree in, is much more probable yet; But what is received as Truth by the *general consent* of all Mankind in all Ages of the World, hath certainly the highest degree of Evidence, of this Kind, that is possible. And what hath such a Testimony, 'tis intolerable Arrogance and Folly for any Men to deny; and to set up their single Judgments and Opinion contrary to the common Suffrage of all Mankind. But they are so pufft up with Pride and Vanity, that they do not see the Weakness and Precariousness of what they advance, nor how inconsistent it is with their other Tenets. If it have but the appearance of contradicting the received Notion that we have of a God, and if it do but seem never so little to Undermine Religion, they will set it up at a venture as a Demonstration, and stick to it, let it be never so inconsistent with what at other times they deliver. Thus sometimes they will assert, that there is no Universal Idea or
Notion

Notion of a God. At other times they will grant there is *such an One*, but that it was Coined and Invented by some Cunning Politician a long while ago, before any Books or Histories were written, and by him communicated by Tradition to Posterity. But here they do not consider that this will necessarily derive all Mankind from one common Parent : which is a thing they will, at another time, by no means admit of, lest it should seem to countenance the Story of *Adam* or *Noah* : which is said to be *nothing but an old Jewish Tradition*. And that 'tis impossible to account for the Peopling of *America* and *All Islands* remote from the Continent, without supposing their Inhabitants to be *Aborigines*, and to spring out of the Earth like Mushrooms. And then, to account for the General Notion, that they cannot deny, these *Aborigines* have of a God; as before they made *One Wise Man* Invent it, now they will suppose it to be done by a *Hundred* such Cunning Politicians : who, though in different Places and Ages of the World, yet did all light by chance on the very same Notion of a God, and Abuse and Cheat Mankind just after the same manner; and though this be the most extravagant and ridiculous Assertion that ever can possibly come into the Mind of Man, as well as contradictory to the former, yet 'tis all one for that; this, or any thing else, shall be supposed rather than they will yield to the Conviction of Truth, and allow the Notion of a Deity to have a real Foundation. But 'tis no wonder to find Men that wilfully shut their Eyes against the clearest Light, to go forward and backward, and often times run against each other in the dark Mazes of Error : those
must

must needs be at a Loss who neglect His Guidance, *who is the Way, the Truth and the Light, and that Spirit which would lead them into all Truth*; and those, no doubt, may easily miss of the true Knowledge of God, who are resolved they *will not seek after Him, and all whose Thoughts are, that there is no God.*

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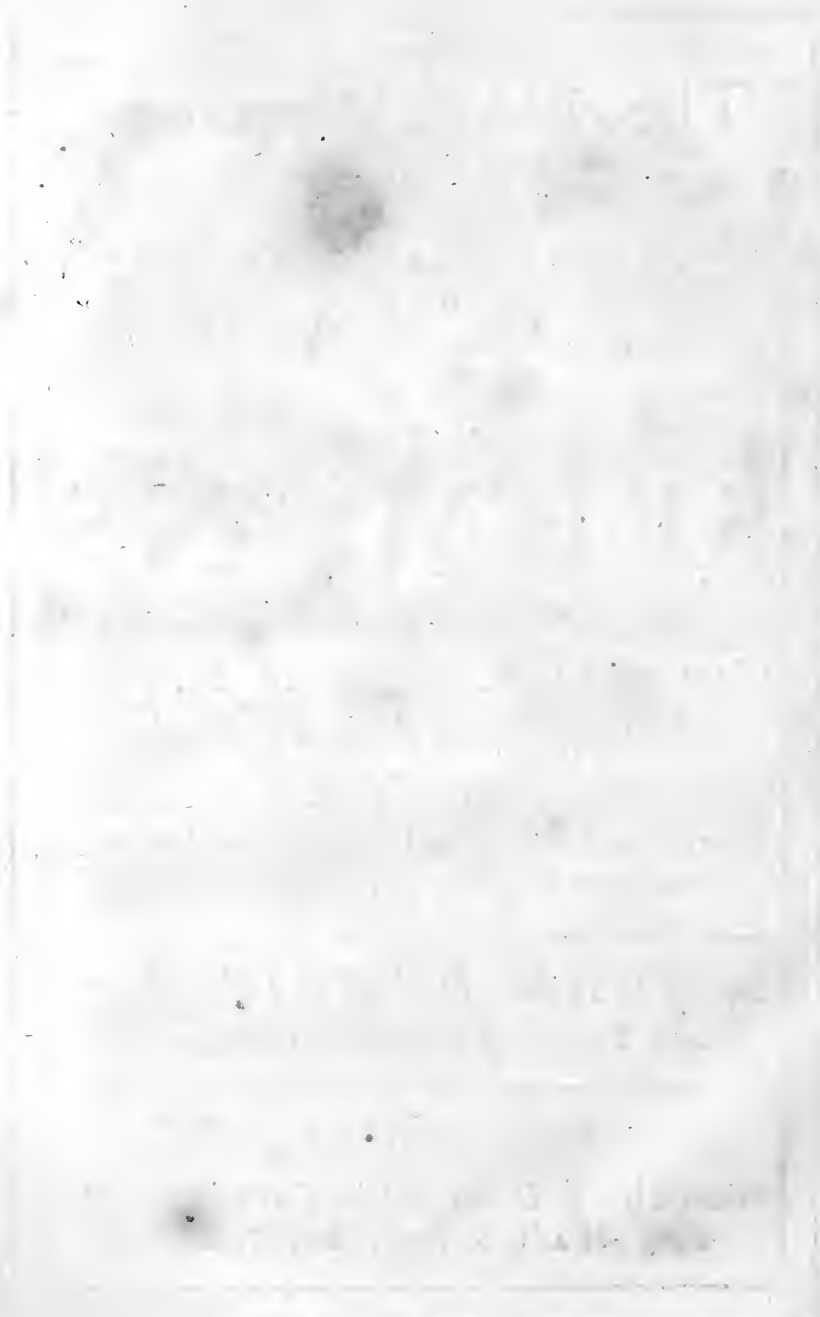
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JOHN iv. 24.

God is a Spirit ———

THE Occasion of these words was this: Our Blessed Lord, in his way into *Galilee*, passed through *Sychar*, a City of *Samaria*, near to which was the famous Well of the Patriarch *Jacob*. To this Well our Saviour went to refresh himself on his Journey; and as he always made it his business to be doing Good, took occasion from a Woman's coming to draw Water, to discourse with her about the Business of his Mission. By way of Introduction to which, He first gives her some Proofs of his being endowed with a Super-natural Knowledge. From whence she justly concluding Him to be a Prophet, or a Person enrich'd with Divine and Extraordinary Gifts and Qualifications; she ask'd Him concerning one great Point that had been long in dispute between the *Samaritans* and the *Jews*, (*i. e.*) about the true Place for Religious Worship. The *Jews* rightly asserted *Jerusalem* to be the Place where Men ought to Worship. The *Samaritans* contended, that it ought to be with them, at *Shiloh*, in *Mount Ephraim*, where the Ark and Tabernacle were placed long before the building of the Temple at *Jerusalem*, and where also the Patriarchs, before the Law, did use to sacrifice to, and worship God. They pretended also to be the true Successors of *Jacob*, and of the Ancient Patriarchs,

(a) Joseph. Antiquit. l. 11. c. 8.

and consequently, that their Place of Worship had the greatest Support from Antiquity. This Pretence was an Umbrage to that Temple that they set up in *Mount Gerizim* (in the time of *Darius*) in opposition to that at *Jerusalem*, (a) and which they supposed to give an Holiness to that Mountain, even after the Temple was destroyed. And the *Samaritan* Version of the *Pentateuch* hath plainly falsified the Text of *Moses*, in *Deut. xxvii. 4.* by substituting *Mount Gerizim* instead of *Mount Ebal*; in order to gain some Honour to this Celebrated Place. But notwithstanding all these mighty Pretensions, the *Samaritans* were perfectly in the wrong. The Ancient Pedigree that they boasted so much of, was wholly false and precarious. For they were, in reality, only the Successors of some *Assyrians*, who were planted in the Cities of *Samaria* by *Salmaneser*, when he carry'd the Tribe of *Ephraim* Captive into *Assyria*; as you may read at large, *2 King. xxvi. 24.*

This therefore being the true State of the Case between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*; our Saviour's Answer to the Woman was, That the *Jews* were in the right, because they worshipped the True God, and that too in such a manner as was agreeable to that Revelation God had given them of his Will: *We know what we worship* — But the *Samaritans* were doubly mistaken; both as to the Object, and as to the Place of their Worship. They, He tells her, *worshipped they knew not what.* In which, it seems probable, that he may allude to what is said of their Ancestors the *Assyrians* in the Place before mentioned, *2 King. xvii. 26. (viz.) That they worshipped the God of the Land.* That is, They blindly paid their

their Devotion to the God of their New Country, without having any true and real Knowledge of him : But along with him, they worshipped their own *Af-syrian* Deities too ; such as *Succoth-Benoth*, *Ashima-Nergal*, and the like. Our Saviour tells this Woman also, That a Time of Reformation was now at hand, when the Worship of God should not be confined either to *Jerusalem*, or *Mount Gerizim* ; and that a more pure and Spiritual manner of Worship should be established ; one that was not embarrass'd with so vast a number of External Rites and Ceremonies, but one more suitable to the Nature of God, and to the Improved Sentiments of Mankind : for *God*, saith he, *is a Spirit* ; and *they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth*. This seems to be the Occasion and Connexion of these words : which having briefly shewed you, I proceed now to speak to the words themselves, *God is a Spirit*.

By which Terms, *God* and *Spirit*, thus connected together, we understand an Infinite Being, most Wise and Powerful, containing in Himself all possible Perfection, without being subject to any of those Defects and Limitations which we plainly discover in Material Beings. And after this manner the Holy Scriptures do describe God Almighty to us ; they attribute such Perfections and Qualifications to Him, as we can have no possible Idea of, as belonging to Matter.

Body or *Matter* is a Sluggish, Insensible, Passive and Unintelligent Thing, not possibly able to move of it self, or to act or perform any thing by its own Power ; but all the Motion and Activity that it hath, comes to it by Communication from something that is without it, or distinct from it. But *all Power, both in Heaven and Earth,*

Earth, is the Lords: In his Hands are Power and Might: with Him is Wisdom and Strength, he hath Counsel and Understanding. He made all Things; He stretcheth forth the Heavens alone, and spreadeth abroad the Earth by himself. There is none like to Him, who created and maintaineth all things, and in whom all Things Live, and Move, and have their Being (a).

(a) 1 Chron. 29. 11, 12.
Job 12. 9, &c.
Isa. 44. 24, &c.
Acts 17. 24, 25, &c.

The *Form* and *Fashion* of all Material Things, we see, is continually flitting and changing, and there is nothing among them of any constant and lasting duration. But God is *Immutable* and *Eternal*, the same *Yesterday, to Day, and for ever; He was, and is, and is to come, and with him is no variableness, neither shadow of Turning (b).*

(b) Rev. 4. 8.
Jam. 1. 17.
Deut. 33. 27.

Material Beings are all *limited* and *imperfect* as to their *Extent*. The *Place* they are in confines and circumscribes them; Nothing else can be there with them, nor they themselves any where else. *But the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain God, which yet he more than fills with his Presence: which Presence no one can flee or hide himself from: He is the searcher even of our hearts, and knoweth the most secret thoughts of Men. There is no Creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are Naked and open before him (c).* This and such like is the Account that the Sacred Scripture gives of God, which is plainly Inconsistent with his being *Material* or *Corporeal*: and therefore it calls him in the words of my Text a *Spirit*, a *Divine*, most *Excellent* and *Perfect* Being, that discovers himself to our Reason and Understanding, but cannot possibly do so to our Senses; for *him no Eye hath seen nor can see; he is Invisible, he is a Spirit.*

(c) 2 Chron. 6. 18.
Jer. 23. 24.
Jer. 17. 10.
& 20. 12.

But

But here the Atheist thinks he hath a sufficient Ground for insuperable Objections; Here his Philosophy is called in to his Assistance; and by the Strength of that, he will undertake to maintain, that there is not, nor cannot be any such thing as a *Spirit*, (i. e.) Any *Incorporeal* or *Immaterial* Being or *Substance*. And therefore since the Sacred Scripture and Divines do describe the Deity after this absurd and impossible manner, 'tis a good Argument (say they) that there is no such Being at all: For when Men pretend to Describe God after such a manner as is Nonsensical, Unintelligible and Impossible, (and yet say, that theirs is the only right way of Speaking of him): When Men attribute such a manner of Existence to him, as we know is contradictory to the Nature of Things; we have then just Ground to disbelieve all that they advance, in defence of so ridiculous and absurd a Notion, and consequently to conclude that there is no God at all. And hence we see these Men raise another Great Objection against the Being of a God, *viz.* That his Nature is so Described as to be *Unintelligible* and *Nonsense*. Which I shall now therefore endeavour to Refute.

And in Order to shew the Groundlessness and Invalidity of this Objection, I shall in pursuance of my former Method:

- I. Give you the sense of the Modern and Ancient Atheists on this Point. And then,
- II. Endeavour to Refute what they Advance, and shew how Unreasonable it is to build Atheism and Infidelity on so weak and invalid a Foundation. And,

I. I shall give you the Modern and Ancient Atheists Sense on this Point.

Mr. *Hobbs*, that lofty Pretender to Philosophy, declares that to say there is any *Immaterial Substance*, is not so much an *Error*, as it is *Nonsense*; 'tis using an *Insignificant word*, whereby we conceive nothing but the *Sound* (a). And in his *Kingdom of Darknes*, where he undertakes to correct the University Learning, he is very Angry with *Aristotle's* *Metaphysics*, because it brought in, as he saith (tho' falsely, as I shall prove hereafter) the *Doctrine* or *Notion* of *Separated Essences*, and also of *Immateriality* and *Incorporeity*; for what is not *Corporeal*, he saith, is *Nothing*, and consequently *no where*. And this he undertakes to prove from a *Passage* which he seems to have borrowed from *Ocellus Lucanus*, tho' without naming him; and which, tho' it be a poor *Sophism*, and much worse than those he is condemning; yet he boldly lays it down as a *Demonstration*. *The Universe*, saith he, is *Corporeal*, that is to say *Body*, and hath the *Dimensions* of *Magnitude*, namely, *length*, *breadth*, and *depth*; also every *Part* of *Body* is *Body*; and consequently every *Part* of the *Universe* is *Body*, and that which is not *Body* is *no Part* of the *Universe*. And because the *Universe* is *all*, that which is *no Part* of the *Universe* is *Nothing*, and consequently *no where* (b). In another place he saith, *That no Man can conceive any thing but he must conceive it in some place, of some Determinate Magnitude, and as that which may be divided into Parts* (c). And again, p. 17. and 207. he tells us, *That an Incorporeal Substance is a Contradictory and Inconsistent Name*; 'tis all one as if a *Man* should say, an *Incorporeal Body*; which words

(a) *Leviath.*
P. 15.

(b) *Leviath.*
P. 371. 207.

(c) *Leviath.*
P. 11.

words when they are joined together, do destroy one another; and therefore Body and Substance are all one (a). (a) Leviath. P. 17. 207. Elsewhere he tells us, That the proper Signification of the word Spirit in common speech, is either a subtile, fluid and invisible Body, or else a Ghost or other Idle Phantasm of our Imagination (b), and a little after he asserts, that to Men that understand the meaning of the words Substance and Incorporeal, they imply a Contradiction; and that to say an Angel or Spirit is an Incorporeal Substance, is to say in effect there is no Angel nor Spirit (c). And this Notion he defends in his Answer to Bishop Bramhall's Book written against his Leviathan; and perseveres in asserting that God himself is a Most Pure simple and corporeal Spirit; and he defines a Spirit in General to be a thin, fluid, transparent and invisible Body (d): Thus also Spinoza, in his Opera Posthuma, p. 13. determines Extended Substance (that is Body) to be one of the Infinite Attributes of the Deity, and this he undertakes to demonstrate from hence; that there is not (as he saith) any Other Substance but God; and who consequently is a Corporeal, as well as a Cogitative Being. *Deus est res extensa* (e). This, you perceive, is the plain sense of these Writers, That there is no other Substance but Body; and consequently to talk of a Spirit or an Incorporeal Substance, is to them perfect Nonsense and Contradiction. But tho' this be their Opinion and Assertion, yet they did not Invent it, nor first find it out: they are as far from being Originals in this, as in other things; for herein they do but Copy the Sentiments of the Ancient Atheists, and tread exactly in their Steps. That there was nothing but Body in the World, was long ago the Assertion

(b) Leviath. P. 203.

(c) Leviath. P. 214.

(d) Answer to Bishop Bramhall, p. 31, 36.

(e) Ethices Pars 2. Prop. 2. P. 42.

of such unthinking Men as our Modern Atheists are. Plato tells us, *That there were some in his Time, who asserted nothing to be Substance but what they could feel, and which would resist their Touch: and these Men affirmed Body and Substance to be the same thing; and what they were not able to lay hold of, and to grasp*

(a) Διὰ χειρῶν αὐτῶν τὸ εἶναι μόνον ὃ παρέχει
πρὸς ἅπαντα, καὶ ἐπαφῶν πᾶσι, ταυτὸν σῶμα
καὶ ἕσταν δεικνύμενοι.— ἂν πᾶν ὃ μὴ δύνασθαι
ταῖς χερσὶ συμπίεσθαι εἶσιν, ὡς ἀεὶ τὸτο
ἔδειν τὸ παρεῖπαν εἶναι.— ἥψ' ἢ ἄλλαν εἴης
φησὶ μὴ σῶμα ἔχον εἶναι, καὶ ἀφρονεῖν τὸ
παρεῖπαν, καὶ ἔδειν ἐθέλοντες ἄλλο ἀκούειν.
Sophist. p. 172. Ficin.

with their Hands, they said was really nothing at all. And if any one happened to talk with them about any thing that was not Body, they would ridicule and despise him, and not hear a word more than he should say (b).

Aristotle acquaints us, That just such were the Atheistical Principles of his Contemporaries. *They affirm (saith he) Matter or Body to be the only Substance, and that all other things are only Passions and Affections of it.* And in another place, he saith, that these Men asserted *all things to be one; That there*

(b) τὸτο καὶ πρὸς ἅπαντα φύσιν εἶναι τὴν ἄπα-
σαν ἕσταν, τὰ ἢ ἄλλα πάντα πάθη τέτων.
— Ἐν τῷ πᾶν, καὶ μίαν εἶναι πᾶσι φύσιν, ὡς
ἕλιν πῆσασθαι καὶ ταυτὴν σαματικὴν καὶ
μέγιστον ἔχουσαν. Metaph. l. I. c. 7.

is but one Nature only, which is the Matter of all Things, and this is Corporeal, and hath magnitude (b). And this was long

before the Opinion also of Leucippus and Democritus.

Epicurus argues against Plato, that there can be no Incorporeal Deity; not only because no Man can frame a conception of an Incorporeal Substance, but also because whatever is Incorporeal, must needs want Sense, and Prudence and Pleasure; all which things are included in the Notion of God: And therefore an Incorporeal

(c) Dr. Cudw.
Intel. Syst.
P. 203.

Deity, saith he, is a Contradiction (c). And his Followers, as appears by Lucretius, continued in the

same

same Opinion, that there is no other Substance in Nature but Body (a); and they had no Notion of any Incorporeal thing, but their Vacuum or Empty space, which was really nothing at all.

(a) *Præterea nihil est quod possit dicere ab omni Corpore separatum, &c.*
Lib. I. v. 431.

Sextus Empiricus tells us, that all the *Epicureans*, and some of the *Stoicks*, as *Basileides* in particular, maintained *μὴδὲν εἶναι ἀσώματον*, that there was nothing Incorporeal or Immaterial (b). By these Testimonies we see plainly, that the Modern Atheists transcribe the Ancient Opinions exactly, and have been able to add very little to them. And the Notion that Mr. *Hobbs* seems so fond of, and which he would fain set up as his own Discovery, That a Spirit is nothing but a *Thin fluid and transparent Body*: seems to me to be plainly taken from the *σῶμα λεπτόμερες*, which *Aristotle* tells us, was the Definition that some then gave of a *Spirit*, or the Soul of Man.

(b) *Adv. Math.* p. 267.

And thus having truly stated the Case, and shewed you what the Sentiments of the Ancient and Modern Atheists were and are, as to the Matter before us. I shall now proceed to Examine by what Reasons and Arguments they endeavour to support their Assertion, That there is no such thing as any *Incorporeal Substance*, but that whatever really is, is *Body*. And here I find their main and chief Argument to be This; that an Immaterial Substance is an *Unconceivable Thing*: 'Tis what no Man can possibly have any notion or conception of; 'tis a perfect contradiction in Terms, and consequently Nonsense and Impossible. This is every where almost the Language of Mr. *Hobbs*, as I have before observed. He also pretends to discover the *τὸ αἴτιον ἢ ψῆδ'ες*, the true Cause of this Fiction about Immaterial Substances. The Notion,

he tells us, took its rise from the Abuse of abstracted Words, and such-like Metaphysical and Scholastical Terms, which some have fancied as real Entities separated and distinct from the Subject, or Matter, of which they are Attributes or Qualities only. Thus for Instance, *because we can consider Thinking or a Reasoning Power alone by it self, and distinct from Body; therefore some have been so foolish as to conclude that it is not the Action or Accident of that Body in which it is, but a real Substance by it self. And 'tis upon*

(a) *Leviath.*
P. 373.

(b) P. 372.

(c) *Leviath.*
P. 190. & De
Cive C. 15.
S. 14. And in
another place,
he saith, *Mens
nihil aliud est
præterquam mo-
tus in quibus-
dam partibus Orga-
nicis.*

(d) *Leviath.*
P. 207, 208.

this Account, that (a) when a Man is dead and buried, they will say, his Soul (that is, his Life) can walk separated from the Body, and is seen by Night among the Graves, whereas Life is only a Name of Nothing, (b) and the Soul or Mind of Man is in reality Nothing else but the result of Motion in the Organical Parts of his Body (c). 'Tis like the forms and qualities of Other things, depending purely on the Mechanism, Modification, and Motion of the Parts of Matter, according as it happens to be variously disposed, figured and agitated; and consequently it can be nothing at all distinct from that Body whose Form or Quality it is. And this Soul or Mind, or any other Faculty or Quality in Man, coming once to be conceived as a thing distinct from the Body, and being Invisible and Insensible, hath been called by such Names as we use to give to fine Subtile and aëreal Bodies. Such as πνεύμα, Spiritus, and the like: which do properly signify the Wind, or, which is near akin to it, the Breath of Man (d). And so Mr. Hobbs tells us, that in order to express our greater honour of God, the name of Spirit hath been given to him likewise, as better expressing to vulgar Apprehensions his fine aëreal

aereal and Subtile Nature, than the grosser word of Body. But however, *Philosophers* and *Men of sense* must take care, and not be imposed upon by insignificant words, so far as to imagine there can in reality be any such thing as an *Incorporeal Substance*: for that is, when thoroughly considered, an absolute *Contradiction and Nonsense*. 'Tis nothing *but an empty Name*, with which some poor Wretches are frightened, as the Birds are *from the Corn by an empty Doublet, a Hat and a Crooked Stick* (e); as he is pleased to express himself. (e) *Leviath.*
And this is the sum of what this mighty Philo-^{P. 373.}sopher advances against Immaterial Substances. *Spinoza* is the only Man besides, which I have met with, that aims at disproving the Existence of Incorporeal Beings: Which in his *Opera posthuma* he pretends demonstratively to do. But his chief and indeed only Argument is this (as I hinted before) that there is but *one only Substance* in the World, and That is God. *Matter* or *Body* he asserts to be one of the Attributes of this Substance, or the Mode by which God is considered as *Res extensa*; from whence he concludes, that there can be no Substance but what is corporeal, because Body is an Essential Property of his *one only Substance*, the Divine Nature. The Precariousness of which Obscure and Metaphysical way of Arguing, I shall plainly shew below.

And, Thus having given you the sum, of what these Writers advance against the Doctrine of Incorporeal Substances, I shall next proceed to Refute it, and to shew you how weak and inconclusive their Arguments and Objections are. In order to which, I say, In the First place,

1. That 'tis a very precarious and groundless way of
of

of arguing, to deny the Existence of any thing only from our particular Apprehensions and Conceptions not being able to master it. For it will not in the least follow, that there can be no such thing as an Incorporeal Substance or a Spirit; because *some few Men* pretend that they cannot conceive how any such thing can possibly be. And I have already shewed, (a) that we have very just reason to allow the truth of, and to be satisfied of the Existence of many things, whose Nature neither we, nor perhaps any one else, can fully Understand and Comprehend. These Gentlemen pretend that they cannot conceive or have any Idea of an *Incorporeal Substance*. But yet they think, I suppose, that they have a clear Idea and Conception of *Body*. Tho' should you put them to describe it, they would be very much at a loss. For as one hath well observed, (*Mr. Lock in his Essay of Humane Understanding, Book 2. c. 23.*) if we carefully examine our Idea of Substance, we shall find that it is a kind of *complex one*, consisting as it were of several Ideas coexisting together: which because we are apt to conceive as one thing, we give it the General Name of *Substance*: as imagining that word to express something, tho' in reality we know not what, which is the *support* of these Accidents or Qualities which occasion the Idea's we have in our Minds of it. Let us therefore take any corporeal Substance, as suppose Gold; and inquire in our Mind what is that *Support, Substratum* or *Substance*, in which the Accidents of *Yellowness, great Specifick Weight, and strange Ductility under the Hammer* do inhere; all which concur to give us that complex Idea which we have of Gold; Shall we not find our
selves

(a) See my
Second Ser-
mon.

selves put to it how to conceive, or to have a clear Idea of this? If we should say that the subject of these Properties are the solid extended Parts; we shall not be much the nearer Satisfaction: for our Mind will be inquisitive agen what is the Support or Subject of that *Extension* and *Impenetrability*. We may say, indeed, that 'tis the Substance it self: which is a word that we use, and implies something or other that is the Support of these Properties, but what that is, we have, I think, no clear and certain Idea. When yet we have clear and distinct Conceptions enough of these Properties which we find in this Body, and from whence we pronounce it to be Gold. So if on the other hand we take any Incorporeal Substance, as suppose the *Mind* or *Soul of Man*; and enquire what is the true Support of that *Self-moving Power*, that *Reasoning* and *Cogitative Faculty*, and that *Liberty* or Freedom of Action which we plainly perceive to be inherent in it: we shall indeed be at a loss, but yet no more than we were before in reference to Gold. For as from considering the Properties peculiar to that Body, we were satisfied that they must be inherent in *something*, tho' *how* or in *what*, we have no clear Idea; so when we consider *Life*, *Cogitation* and *Spontaneous Motion* in our Soul, we know very well that those *more real* Properties must have something also for their Support, or some Substance to inhere in: tho' what that is, and the peculiar manner of this we are wholly ignorant of. But then we have as just reason to believe that this Substance is real, as that the Substance of Gold is so. For Cogitation, Life, and Spontaneous Action, are Properties undoubtedly of as real a Nature

ture as *great Intensive Weight, Yellowness and Ductility* can possibly be. And as we cannot but conclude both these to be real Substances, so we cannot also but conceive them as Natures absolutely distinct and different from each other, and which can have no necessary dependance upon and relation to each other: for we can never imagine that Gold can be ever brought to *think, reason or move* it self *spontaneously*, any more than we can conceive a Soul or Mind to be *yellow, heavy or ductile*. That is, we have quite different Ideas of each of them, and which nothing but wilful or long habituated Ignorance can ever make us confound together. And thus it appears to me that we may have as clear an Idea of Incorporeal Substance, as we have of Body; and that the former is no more unconceivable than the latter. And therefore 'tis as absurd to argue against the Existence of a Spirit, only from our not having any clear Idea of the Substance of a Spirit; as it would be to say there is no such thing as Body, because we don't know exactly what the Substance of Body is: which I dare say no Man can affirm that he doth. 'Tis very possible that Men may be so blinded and prejudiced by false Principles, so stupified by Ignorance, Idleness or Vice, and so engaged and enslaved to a peculiar sett of Notions, which advance and support that way of acting and proceeding which they take delight in, that a great many things may appear Unconceivable and Impossible to them, which shall be far from being so to others, whose Minds are free, and more enured to thinking. Should you tell a Man, who is a Stranger to Geometry and Astronomy, of the many admirable and surprizing Truths
that

that can certainly be demonstrated from the Principles of those Noble Sciences, he would boldly pronounce them Impossible; and all your Discourse and Proof (should you attempt any such thing) would to such a Person be Nonsense, and your words meer empty and insignificant Sounds. And there are many Persons in the World, on whom the clearest and strongest Method of Reasoning that ever was, will make no manner of impression at all, because their Minds are not at all enured to a close way of Arguing and Thinking. And truly the Atheistical Writers do discover so poor a Knowledge in Philosophy, and so very little acquaintance with true Reasoning and Science; that 'tis no wonder at all that they should not be able to conceive and comprehend a great many things which others are very well satisfied with. *I know very well*, saith the Ingenious Person before cited, *that People whose Thoughts are immersed in Matter, and who have so subjected their Minds to their Senses, that they seldom reflect on any thing beyond them, are apt to say they cannot comprehend a thinking thing; which perhaps is true, &c.* And therefore such a Philosopher as Mr. *Hobbs*, that defines *Knowledge to be Sense*; and saith, that *the Mind of Man is nothing but Motion in the Organical Parts of his Body*, may easily be infatuated so far as to assert that there is *no other Substance but Body*, and that a Spirit or Incorporeal Being, is a Nonsensical, Contradictory and Impossible Notion. While Others, who can raise their Minds a little higher, and who can penetrate farther into things, will be fully satisfied that such *Philosophy is Nonsense and Impossibility*. As indeed some Persons, in all Ages of the World, of which we have any Account, have ever been. For,

Essay of Human Understanding,
P. 143.

C

2. Which

2. Which is another very good Ground, from whence to refute this absurd Opinion that there is no such thing as an Incorporeal Being: I say, there have been always many Persons in the World, that have firmly believed and embraced the Doctrine of Immaterial Substances, and who have also asserted the Deity to be of that Nature. And this will Undeniably refute the two great Points of Mr. *Hobbs* his Opinion. For, if it be proved plainly that there hath been all along a received Belief and Opinion that there are Immaterial Substances, and that God himself is such an One: it is then most clear and certain, that the Notion is neither inconceivable, contradictory, nor nonsense: and also that it did not take its Rise and Original only from the Abuse of the Philosophy of *Aristotle*. Not the *former*; for what is in its own Nature *unconceivable, nonsensical and absurd*, could never sure gain an Admittance into the Belief of so many great Men, as we shall see presently this Opinion did. Not the *latter*; for what was commonly received in the World before the time of *Aristotle*, could never be derived only from his and the Schoolmen's Philosophy, as Mr. *Hobbs* is pleased to say this Belief of Immaterial Substances was. And that there was always in the World, a Notion and Belief of another more noble Substance than Body, and that the Deity was of an *Incorporeal or Spiritual Nature*, we have the united Suffrages of all the Ancient Writers that are preserved down to our time.

(a) Lib. de
Nat. Deorum,
& Tuscul.
Quest. lib. 1.

Cicero tells us, That the Heathen Philosophers generally defined God to be *Mens pura & sincera, soluta & libera ab omni concretionem mortali* (a); and speaking

speaking of *Thales Milesius* in particular, he saith of him, *Aquam dixit esse Initium Rerum, Deum autem eum Mentem quæ ex aquâ cuncta fingeret.* Now this *Mind* they all distinguished plainly from *Matter*, and looked upon it as a much more Noble Principle than 'twas possible to conceive *Matter* to be. *Lactantius* acquaints of *Pythagoras* (a). *Quod unum deum constetur, dicens Incorporalem esse mentem, quæ per omnem Naturam diffusa & intenta, vitalem sensum cunctis Animalibus tribuat.* And *Plutarch* gives us much the same Account of him in his Books, *De Placitis Philosophorum*, viz. *That he made two Principles; one Active, which was Mind or God: The other Passive, or the Matter of the World.* And those Verses of *Empedocles*, are very remarkable; wherein speaking of the Deity, he asserts Him not to be of *Humane* shape; And also that,

Ἦ οὐκ ἔστιν πελάσασθαι ἐδ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἐρικτὸν
Ἡμετέροισι, ἢ χερσὶ λαβεῖν——

(i. e.) *That he is no way perceivable by any of our Senses*; which is as much as to say, he is *Incorporeal*. And in the next Lines he doth expressly tell us what he is:

Ἄλλ' ἀφελὼ ἰσθῆ καὶ ἀθέσφατον ἔπαλει μόνον,
Φεροντίσι κόσμον ἀπαντα κατὰίσουσα δοῦσιν.

A sacred and ineffable Mind, which by swift Thoughts moves and actuates the whole World. *Anaxagoras* also asserted, That (b) *an ordering and regulating Mind* was the first Principle of all things; and this *Mind* he made, as *Aristotle* saith of him, *μόνον τῶν ὄντων ἀπλὸν καὶ ἀμιγῆ καὶ καθαρόν.* The only, pure, simple, and un-

(a) De Ira Dei, c. 11. p. 742. Oxoni.

Lib. 1. c. 3.

(b) Plutarch de Placitis Philosoph. Lib. 1. c. 3. p. 876.

mixt thing in the World: thereby plainly distinguishing it from *Matter*, the Parts of which, he, who was as *Sextus Empericus* calls him $\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\mu\acute{\omega}\tau\alpha\iota$ knew very well to be promiscuously blended and mixed together very where. *Sextus* also tells us, That *That Mind* which *Anaxagoras* asserted to be *God*; was $\delta\epsilon\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon\iota\acute{\omega}\nu$ $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta\eta$, an *Active Principle*; in opposition to *Matter*, which is a *Passive one*, * and this is agreeable to what the Poets say of *Spiritus intus alit*; *mens agitat molem*, &c. We are told likewise by *Sextus*, That *Xenophanes* held $\epsilon\pi\iota$ $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ $\eta\zeta$, $\acute{\alpha}\sigma\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha\iota$ $\Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$, That there is but *One God*, and he *Incorporeal*. And *Plutarch* describing the Deity, hath these remarkable words, *God is Mind*; a separated Form perfectly unmixed with *Matter*; and without any thing that is passible, $\nu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ $\epsilon\nu$ δ $\Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$, $\chi\omega\epsilon\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$ $\epsilon\iota\delta$, $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota$ $\tau\acute{\omicron}$ $\acute{\alpha}\mu\iota\gamma\epsilon\varsigma$ $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta\varsigma$ $\psi\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\eta\varsigma$, $\mu\eta$ $\delta\epsilon$ $\nu\iota$ $\pi\alpha\theta\eta\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$ $\sigma\upsilon\mu\pi\epsilon\pi\lambda\epsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\nu$. And in another place he asserts, $\acute{\alpha}\delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$ $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta\eta$ $\mu\acute{\iota}\alpha\kappa\alpha$ $\psi\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\eta\eta$ $\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$ $\acute{\omicron}\nu\tau\omega\kappa$ $\epsilon\zeta$ $\eta\varsigma$ $\tau\acute{\alpha}$ $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$ $\lambda\acute{\omicron}\sigma\tau\epsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\alpha\iota$. That *'tis impossible Matter alone can*

* Sect. Empir.
adv. Mathem.
p. 309.

(a) De Placit. be the sole Principle of all things (a).

Philos. l. 1. c. 3.

Plato every where distinguisheth between corporeal, and incorporeal Substances, calling the former by the Names of $\acute{\alpha}\sigma\theta\eta\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$ Sensible, and the latter always either $\acute{\alpha}\sigma\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$ or $\nu\omicron\sigma\tau\eta\eta\kappa\alpha$, immaterial or intelligible; and he saith, *That certain intelligible and incorporeal Forms, are the true and first Substance*; and that *incorporeal Things which are the greatest and most excellent of all others, are discoverable by reason only, and nothing else* (b).

(b) Νοητὰ
ἀσφα καὶ ἀσώ-
μαστα εἶδη τῶν
ἀληθινῶν ὁρίων
εἶναι — Τὰ δὲ
ἀσώμαστα καὶ ἀ-
λιστα ὄντα καὶ
μέγιστα λόγῳ
μόνον ἀλλοῦ ὅ-
τι δένει, σαφῶς
δείκνυσθαι. In
Polit. p. 547.
Eicic.

And in another place, he saith, *That they were instructed by their forefathers, that Mind and a certain wonderful Wisdom; did at first frame, and doth now govern all things*. His words are δ . $\omega\epsilon\theta\acute{\omicron}\delta\alpha\tau\epsilon\nu$ $\eta\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$ $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon-$

ρον, νεν η̄ ζε̄θνασιν̄ τινᾱ δαυμασῑω̄ συντάτισταν̄ η̄ δ'ᾱ-
 κω̄ξεν̄αν̄ξ̄ῡμπαντᾱ. In *Phileb.* p.28. Which sufficiently
 shews the Antiquity of the Notion of an Incorporeal
 Deity, and the way also how they came by it. Of
 the same Opinion also was *Socrates*, as we are told by
Plutarch, and others. *Lib. de Placit. Philos.* 1. c. 3.
Zeno and the *Stoicks* defined the Deity to be *φύσις*
νοερά η̄ λογική, an *Intellectual and Rational Nature* ;
 or as *Plutarch* recites their Opinion, *πνεύμα νοερόν η̄*
ἐκ ἔχον μὲν μορφῶν, an *Intelligent Spirit devoid of all*
Bodily shape. *Ibid.* And *Sextus Empericus* tells us of
Aristotle, that he constantly asserted God to be *Incor-*
poreal, and the *Utmost Bounds of the Universe* (a). (a) *Adv. Mich.*

And *Aristotle* concludes his Book of *Physicks* with P. 155.

affirming (b) that 'tis impossible the first Mover (or (b) Ἀδύναστον
 God) can have any Magnitude ; but he must needs πρῶτον κινῶν ἔν
 be devoid of Parts, and Indivisible. And *Plutarch* ἔχειν π̄ μέγε-
 θος — φανερόν
 gives us this as the received and common Opinion of πόνον, ὅτι ἀ-
 the *Stoicks*, that God was πνεύμα διήκον δι' ὅλα τῆ διαίρετόν ἐστι η̄
 κόσμῳ, a Spirit that was extended, or did penetrate ἀμερές, η̄ ἐδὲ
 throughout the whole World. *De Placitis Philosoph.* ἔχον μέγεθος.
lib. 1. c. 3. p. 882. *Nar. Aufcult.*
 l. 8. c. 15.

Now by these Passages, and many others that
 might easily be produced, it appears very plain that
 the most Ancient Writers had a good clear Notion of
 God, and that they speak of him as of a *Mind* per-
 fectly distinct from Matter, or as an immaterial or
 incorporeal Being. Many of them also deliver them-
 selves very expressly as to the Soul of Man ; which,
 as *Plutarch* tells us (c), they generally asserted to be In- (c) Οἱ περὶ
 corporeal ; and that it was naturally a Self-moving and πηγμένοι ἀσω-
 Intelligible Substance. But of this, more in another μάστον ἢ ψυ-
 χῶν ὑποτιθε-
 ται φύσει, λέ-
 γουσι αὐτοκίνητου ἢ ἑστῆν νοητήν. *Lib. de Placitis Philos.* 4. c. 2. p. 858.

place.

place. And that the Ancients did believe God to be a Spirit, or a most Powerful, Intelligent, and Perfect Immaterial Substance will yet farther appear, if we consider what Notion they had of, and how they defined *Matter* or *Body*. *Plato* describes it by the words *περσβολή ἢ ἐπαρῆ*, that which thrusts against other Bodies, and resists their Touch or Impulse. Others call it *τόπος πηρωτικόν*, that which so fills up a place, as, at that time, to exclude from it any other Body. Sometimes they called it the *τὸ πάχον*, in contradistinction to the *τὸ ποῖον*, or the *τὸ ὄθεν ἢ κίνησις*. That is, they distinguished it to be of a *pure passive Nature*, and which was acted and determined only by Impulse from without it, or distinct from it; they knew very well that there was also besides it, some *Active Thing*, something that was the *Cause of Motion* and *Action* in the Universe. For, as *Plutarch* well observes, *ἔδυναται ᾗ ἡ ἄλη ἐπὶ ἐκείναια*,

(a) *De Placitis Philos. Lib. 1. c. 3.* *ἂν μὴ τὸ ποῖον ὑποκέναια.* (a) 'Tis impossible Matter alone can produce any thing, unless there be besides it some Active Cause. *Sextus Empiricus* also gives this

Definition of Matter or Body (b). *That it is that which resists other things which are brought against it; for Resistance*, saith he, or Impenetrability, is the true Property of Body. By these Accounts that they have given us of Matter or Body, 'tis very easie to understand their Notion or Idea of it; which, indeed, was the Just and True one. They thought Matter or Body to be a purely Passive Thing, incapable of moving or acting by it self; but wholly determined either by some Internal and Self-moving Mind, or by the Motions and Impulses of other Bodies without it: That it was *διασατὸν ἀντίτυπον*, that is, as we now

adays speak, *Impenetrably extended*, and did so fill up space or place, as to exclude any other Body from being in the same Place with it at the same Time: If to this you add what *Aristotle*, and some others, said of it, that it was also capable of all Forms, Figures and Modifications, you have then the whole that ever they thought Matter could do or be. Now from hence 'tis exceeding clear that they could not, as indeed we find actually they did not, think Matter or Body the only Substance in the World; and that the Deity was Material or Corporeal. For they always described the Divine Nature by Attributes and Properties that were the very Reverses of what they appropriated to Matter or Body. God, they have told us, is an Intelligent Mind, pervading and encompassing all things; an Active Energetical Principle; the Cause of all Motion and Operation whatever; Intangible, indivisible, invisible, and no ways the Object of our Bodily Senses; But yet whose Essence is plainly discoverable by our reasoning and Understanding Faculty. This was, as we have seen, the Notion or Idea that many of the Ancient Philosophers had of the Deity; and this plainly shews us, that they look'd upon him to be what *St. John* here defines him, an Incorporeal Being, or a Spirit. There were indeed some even then, as I have before shewed, who being wholly immersed in Matter themselves, did assert that there was nothing else but Body in the World. Such were *Leucippus* and *Democritus*; and afterwards *Epicurus* and his Sect, who perverted the Ancient Atomical and true Philosophy to an Atheistical Sense, and made use of it for the banishing the Notion and Belief of a God out of their own and
others.

(a) τῶν δὲ πρώ-
των φιλοσοφη-
σάντων οἱ πλεί-
στοι τὰς ἐν ἡλ-
εῖδει μόνον φή-
σαν ἀρχὰς
εἶναι πάντα.
Arist. Metaph.
l. i. c. 3. p. 842.
Paris.
(b) Dr. Cudw.
in his Intelle-
tual Syst. of the
Universe.

others Minds : as, indeed, some others long before them had attempted to do (a). But in this, 'tis very plain (as (b) an Excellent Person of our Nation hath observed) that these Men did not understand the Philosophy they pretended to : For it doth most clearly follow from the Principles of the True Atomical or Corpuscular Philosophy, that there must be some other Substance, distinct from, and more Noble than Matter ; and which is of an Immaterial, Incorporeal or Spiritual Nature. And this, I hope, it will not be judged impertinent briefly to prove at this Time ; because some, who seem not so thoroughly to understand it, have of late reckoned the Mechanical Philosophy among the Causes of the growth of Atheism and Infidelity. It is very much to the Purpose, that the Ancient Atomists before *Democritus* and *Leucippus*, did plainly assert and maintain the Doctrine of Incorporeal Substances, and that the Deity was also of that Nature himself, as I think I have sufficiently proved in this Discourse ; and therefore those confident Modern Writers, who say that the *Ancients never had any Notion of an Immaterial Being*, betray equally their Ignorance with their Assurance : for the Doctrine of Immaterial Substances was as well the *Concomitant*, as indeed it is the *Necessary result* of this kind of Philosophy. The Embracers of it, found plainly that they had a clear and distinct Idea of two Things, *viz. Passive Matter*, and *Active Power* ; and these they found were perfectly distinct from each other, and no way dependent at all upon each other. To the *former* of these, they only attributed extension and impenetrability, and a Power of being variously figured, modified, disposed and

and moved. To the *latter*, they ascribed Cogitation, Life, Sensation, and the Power of Motion, which they plainly saw did belong to *this*, and could not do so to the *other*. And *these Two*, they made the Two Great Principles or General Heads of Being in the Universe, and called them by two vastly different Names, as I have before shewed, *viz.* the τὸ πασχόν, and the τὸ ποίον. The one *Passive Matter* or *Bulk*, and the other *Self-Activity*, or *Life*. In the former of these, *viz.* *Passive Matter*; they found that there was nothing Real, besides its Bulk, or impenetrably extended Parts: and that consequently all *Forms* and *Qualities* in Bodies were no real Entities distinct from the Body in which they inhered, but only the Parts of the Body differently modified, disposed and agitated, and therefore they held, that when any Body received a new Form or Quality differing from what it had before, there was no new Entity produced, any more than an old one destroyed; for that they look't upon to be perfectly Impossible: And this was the true Ground of that Fundamental Axiom of theirs, *That Nothing could be made or produced out of Nothing*; which they did not (as the Modern Atheists do) advance at all in Opposition to a Creative and Almighty Power's producing all things at first from Nothing; but purely against the producibleness of real Entities out of Nothing, in an Usual and Natural way: which those that assert *Forms* and *Qualities* to be Substantial and Real Beings, must needs grant to be daily done. But it was this, and this only, that that Axiom was levelled against. And hence it was that they asserted the Deity and the Souls of Men to be

real Entities distinct from Matter, and not to be producible out of the Power of Matter; as all Qualities which are nothing but Modes of it, they maintained, were: and this made them perhaps have recourse to the *περὺπαρῆξις* and *μετενασμάτωσις*, the *Præ-existence* and *Transmigration* of Souls; for they could never believe their Souls were, as one expresses it, *younger than their Bodies*, and that they perished, when the Bodies died. And therefore nothing can be plainer, than that the very Principles of this Philosophy did lead Men to the Acknowledgment of Incorporeal Substances, and forced them to believe Life, Motion, and Cogitation to be things that could not be Modifications of Matter, nor perishable and producible, as the common Qualities and Forms of Body or extended Bulk are. And thus when it is rightly considered and thoroughly understood, the Atomical or Mechanical Philosophy is so far from being any way instrumental to the leading Men into Atheism, that there is none other that doth so truly distinguish between Matter and Incorporeal Beings; none that renders the Operations and Qualities of Bodies so Intelligible, and none that prepares so clear, natural, and easie a way for the Demonstration of Immaterial Substances, as this kind of Philosophy doth. Indeed, as almost all things are, so *This* is capable of, and hath been made use of to ill Purposes by its Atheistical Votaries; who did anciently, as they do now, assert that Cogitation, Life, Sensation, and Active Power, were all producible out of bare Matter without a Deity. But as this was what the True Atomists never could think possible; so it is really involved with the most monstrous Absurdities that ever any Opinion

nion was : and which therefore ought not to be charged on the Philosophy it self, but only on that Dark, Unintelligible and Inconsistent System of it, which the Ignorant Atheists have Compiled ; and that only to render it subservient to their wicked Designs of excluding the Idea's of God and of Incorporeal Substances out of the World. Tho' (God be thanked) they do in this Point so far fail of Success, that nothing can be clearer than that 'tis utterly impossible to account for any first Cause of things, for Cogitation, Life, Sensation, or Motion, according to their Principle, that there is no other Substance but Body : And this necessarily leads me to another very good Argument, for the Necessity of allowing Incorporeal Substances, and to prove that God himself is of that Nature, or a Spirit, *viz. The strange Absurdities of the contrary Opinion.*

But these being very many, and it being of great moment truly to clear up this Point, in an Age wherein Men are so fond of Corporealism. I shall deferr this till my next Discourse : wherein I shall finish this and my remaining Arguments to *Prove God to be a Spirit*, and that there are Beings of an Immaterial and Incorporeal Nature.

The End of the Fourth Sermon.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the nature and scope of the problem. It is shown that the problem is not merely one of the interpretation of the text, but one of the interpretation of the text in relation to the whole of the text. The second part of the paper is devoted to a detailed analysis of the text. It is shown that the text is not merely a collection of words, but a collection of words which are arranged in a certain order and which are connected by certain relations. The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the method of interpretation. It is shown that the method of interpretation is not merely a matter of applying certain rules, but a matter of applying certain principles. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the results of the interpretation. It is shown that the results of the interpretation are not merely a collection of facts, but a collection of facts which are arranged in a certain order and which are connected by certain relations.

The End of the Faculty of Education

T H E
Fifth Sermon.

J O H N IV. 24.

God is a Spirit. ———

I Have already shewn the Meaning and Import of these Words, and what we understand by *God's being a Spirit*. I have shewn you also the Atheist's Objections against the Immaterial Nature of God, and the Existence of Incorporeal Substances; and have endeavoured to Refute them, from Two Arguments. I have proved,

1. That 'tis a precarious and unfair way of Arguing against the Existence of any thing, only because our particular Apprehensions and Conceptions cannot master it: And that it will not follow, That there is no such thing as an Incorporeal Substance, on the Account only of some Mens declaring that they cannot conceive how any such thing can be. Where likewise I shewed, That the Notion of a Spirit, or an Immaterial Substance, is as Intelligible as that of Body; and that we have as much reason to believe the Existence of the former; as of the latter.

2. I have plainly proved, That the Notion of Incorporeal Substances hath all along been believed and received by many Knowing and Judicious Men amongst the most Ancient Writers and Philosophers ; and consequently that it can neither be Nonsense and Impossible, nor of so late an Original as the perverted Philosophy of *Aristotle* : both which the Atheists are pleased to assert.

3. I proceed now to speak to a *Third* Argument, To prove the Deity to be of a Spiritual or Immaterial Nature, and that there are Incorporeal Substances : And this I shall draw from the many and strange Absurdities of the contrary Opinion, *That there is nothing but Matter in the World.* And if these can fully be made to appear, I hope the Doctrine involved with them will also appear false and precarious ; and that the contrary Opinion, of the Real Existence of Incorporeal Beings, will find an easie admittance into our Faith. But here I must premise, as taken for granted, That we are all agreed on the Definition of, or know what we mean by Matter or Body, *viz.* That it is *Substance Impenetrably extended* ; whereby we distinguish it from Spirit, which is a Thinking Substance without Corporeal Extension, or without having *Partes extra Partes.* For if this be not the Notion which our Adversaries have of it, as well as we ; 'Tis in vain to dispute about it at all. If therefore they have any other Idea of it that is different from this, let them produce it, and make it as clear and Intelligible as this is ; for without doing so, they do nothing to the purpose. And if they have not a clear and distinct Idea of Matter or Body, how come they so boldly to say that Matter and Substance

stance are all one ? how can they distinguish the Idea's of Body and Spirit so plainly, as to be sure there can be no such thing as an Incorporeal Substance, but that it implies a Contradiction ? Unless they fully know what Matter or Body is, there may be Millions of Varieties and Degrees of Immaterial Substances ; or there may be no such thing as Body at all, for any thing they can prove to the contrary. The Atheist must then do one of these two things ; he must either establish a new Notion of Matter, that shall be so intelligible and plain, that all Mankind shall as readily acquiesce in it, as they do in the *old* and *common* one, or else he must resolve to keep to *That*. The former of these he hath not yet done, nor I believe is very ready to do ; but when he doth it, 'twill be time enough to consider it. In the mean while, I will readily join Issue with him, on the common and received Notion of Body : And from thence undertake to maintain, That nothing is more absurd and unaccountable than their Assertion, *That there is no other Substance but Matter or Body in the World.* For,

First, Had there been nothing else but Matter in the World from Eternity (and if there be nothing else now, there never was any thing else) I cannot possibly see how these Gentlemen can account for Motion, (a) or shew us how Matter came first to be moved. And Matter without Motion sure could never be God, never be the Cause of any thing, nor could it ever produce, act, or do any thing whatever. Before Motion began, Matter could have been nothing but an heavy, lifeless Lump of vast extended Bulk ; which must have lain also for ever in the same dead

(a) Νῆς μὲν ἀρχῆν κινήσεως, saith Anaxagoras. Vid. Diog. Laert.

dead and unactive Position, if nothing had been superinduced to put it into Motion and Action. And no one sure can be so stupid as to call this a Deity! This is as Mr. *Blount* rudely and irreverently expresseth himself, worse than to suppose (a) a *Hum-Drum-Deity, chewing of his own Nature; a Droning God, that sits boarding up of his Providence from his Creatures.* And this even he can't but acknowledge, *is an Atheism no less Irrational, than to deny the very Essence of a Divine Being.* I hope therefore they will grant, that Matter without Motion cannot be suppos'd to be a Deity. And if so, then the Divine Nature (whatever it be) must be *something distinct from, and more Noble than Matter,* and more akin to Motion, than to Matter or Body in general, or to it *quatenus Matter,* as the Schools speak. And indeed, Motion taken in this sense; not for a translation of Body from one place to another, but for the Active Cause of Motion, may be very well said to be Incorporeal, or the Deity it self. But how came this Motion into Matter at first? and which way did Matter attain this *Divine Activity, or God-like Energy?* Here they must assert one of these three things, either, 1. That Motion came into Matter from something without it, and distinct from it. Or, 2. That Motion is Essential to Matter, and Co-eternal with it. Or, 3. That it came into it afterwards by Chance, or without any Cause at all. The First of these they will not say, I doubt, because it's Truth: but however, if they do, our Controversie is at an end; for we believe that 'twas a Divine and powerful Mind, perfectly distinct from, and more Noble than Matter, who first made it, and moved it, and doth still continue

tinue to modify and dispose it according to his Infinite Wisdom and Providence.

And one would think no Man can be so senseless as to maintain the last, *viz.* That *Motion came into Matter without any Cause at all*, and that it was *Chance* only that first produced it; for *Chance* here signifies nothing in reality: And truly, Men that will be so ridiculously absurd as to assert, that a *Body*, or *Particle of Matter*, that is once at rest, may move by *Chance* only, or may *Chance to move of it self*, though there be nothing to cause its Motion, deserve no serious Refutation, but ought to be treated only as we do Fools and Madmen, with silent Pity and Compassion. And yet so very fond are some Persons of any thing that opposes Truth, that they will run into the greatest Absurdities to maintain it. For a late Corporealist is pleas'd to say, (a) *That Matter can move of it self*: and to shew his deep Skill in Philosophy, he tells us, that *Wind, Fire, and very fine-sifted small Dust, are Matter, and yet Self-movers*. And of *Wind and Fire*, he profoundly asserts, *That they cannot lose their Motion, or cease Moving, so long as they continue to be Wind and Fire*. That is, As long as *Wind and Fire* are in Motion, they cannot cease to move. This, indeed, is a very deep and important Discovery! But yet 'tis what hardly any Man would have publish'd in Print, but one that concludes a *Body* must needs move of it self, only because he can't see with his Eyes the Cause or Origin of its Motion. And yet even this he may often see in the case of *Fire*, if he will but vouchsafe to observe how 'tis usually kindled. A little Consideration would have satisfied him also, that *Winds* may be produced in the Atmosphere, by

(a) *Observ. on Dr. Bentley's Sermon. p. 6, 7.*

the Air's being moved some way, by Heat, Compression, or some other Accidental Cause, as well as in an Eolipile, or a Pair of Bellows. And as for his *fine Dust's rising up in a Cloud of it self*; had he understood that the Agitation of any Fluid will keep the small Particles of any heavier Matter mixed with it from descending to the bottom of it, nay, and raise them up from thence too; and had he not forgotten that this was the case here, (the Air being so agitated by the Motion of Sifting) he would not, sure, have been so silly as to have brought these as Instances of Spontaneous Motion in Matter. But however, he is not the first that hath been guilty of this Absurdity. For *Aristotle* upbraids some, in his time, (a) *with introducing Motion into Matter, without any Cause, or without supposing any Principle whence it should proceed.*

(a) *Metaph.*
l. 1. c. 3.

The Second Point therefore, is, I suppose, that which our Corporealists will adhere to, *viz. That Motion is Essential to, and Co-eternal with Matter*; and that either all Matter and Motion taken together, or else some Fine and Subtile Parts of it are the Deity. But this, if it be thoroughly considered, will appear almost as absurd and unaccountable as that Matter should be moved without any Cause at all. For, in the first place, 'tis plain, That Motion is *not Essentially included in the Idea of Matter*. I can conceive Matter to the full as well, if not better, when it is at rest, as when it is in Motion. When I look on any Body, or consider any determinate quantity of Matter, I can conceive that 'tis a Substance that is impenetrably extended, divisible, and moveable; that it fills up such a space, and that it excludes any Body from being there with it at the same time, without conceiving it to be
in

in Motion at all; much less being forced to acknowledge that it *must be*, and was *always* in Motion. Whereas certainly, if *Motion* were as *Essential* to Matter, as *Impenetrability* and *Extension*, 'twere as impossible for me to conceive it at rest, as it is to conceive it without those Qualifications or Properties: But no doubt I have as true an Idea of a Stone or a Bullet, or of any other Body or Part of Matter, when it lies still on the Ground, as I have of it when 'tis projected from a Sling or a Gun. Now if Motion be not *Essentially* included in the Idea or Notion that we have of Matter, how can any one suppose it as *Essential* to, and *Co-eternal* with it? This is a Conclusion beyond the power of our Reason to make; no one can come to it naturally, and in the ordinary way of Apprehending and Reasoning; and 'tis much more Unintelligible and *Mysterious* than a great many other things which they pretend they cannot believe purely on this account.

But supposing that *Motion be Essential to Matter*; it must then be so to every Particle of it, and that Uniformly alike, or in the same Proportion. And if so, then every Atom of Matter must always retain its Original Degree of Motion or Velocity, and can never possibly be deprived of it: For no Accidental Cause can any way either encrease or diminish, promote or hinder the *Essential* Properties of a Being. Thus, for Instance, take a Particle of Matter, or any Body whatever, and move it as fast or as slow as you please, place it where or how you please, separate it from other Particles or Bodies, or combine it with them; still 'twill retain its *Essential* Properties of *Extension* and *Impenetrability*, and they will receive

no *Intension* and *Remission* all this while. But now 'tis quite otherwise in the case of Motion; we find the same Body may be brought to move sometimes faster, sometimes slower, and sometimes (to all appearance) be reduced to absolute rest; which could never be, if Motion were Essential to each Particle of Matter, in such a Determinate Degree of Velocity, and there were (as is now supposed) Nothing else *without* or *distinct* from Matter to put it into Motion. For then nothing could ever accelerate or retard its Motion: no one Body could ever move faster or slower than another. But a *Snail* or the *Pigritia* would keep pace with the seemingly Instantaneous irradiations of Light.

And thus we may see plainly, that without supposing some Principle of Motion distinct from Matter, Motion could never have come into it, nor have been co-eternal with it.

But allowing them that Motion should get into Matter neither they nor we know how, or that it is Eternal and Essential to it: If there be nothing else but Matter and Motion in the Universe, which way will they account for the Deity? they dare not say Matter alone without Motion can be God; and I think there can be nothing more clear, than that Bare Motion in Matter can never make a Deity. For if Motion came into Matter any time after its Existence, the Deity must then be produced, and consequently receive a Beginning; and so the First Cause of all things must be caused himself after all things, which is contradictory to the Notion of a Deity.

If they say that Motion is Co-eternal with, and Essential to Matter, and the Deity be Matter thus Eternally

nally moved; then either every Particle of Matter must be essentially God, or else he must be the result of the whole, or of some Parts of Matter combined together. If the former be asserted, there must of necessity be as many Gods as there are Atoms or Physical Monads: for each of them are Individually distinct from each other, and have their separate and peculiar Properties of Impenetrability, Extension and Motion; which in this fine Hypothesis, are the only Perfections of the Divine Nature. But no doubt they will say, that 'tis not any one Particle of Matter that is a God alone, and therefore they cannot be all Deities singly; But 'tis *all of them*, or at least a *good convenient Number* of these luckily combined together, out of whom the Deity is composed. Though which of these to stick to, our Corporealists are very much at a loss; *Spinoza* asserting the former, and *Mr. Hobbs* the latter. But I think 'tis no great matter which they adhere to; for both are alike unaccountable and absurd: For if there be not a Divine Nature, and its Perfections, in each single Atom of Matter; will barely combining some, or all of them, together make a Deity of them? Can it ever enter into the Heart of Man to conceive that barely collecting together a parcel of roving Particles of Matter, such as agitated Dust, or Motes moving up and down in the Sun, will ever unite them into a God? give the Combination Almighty Power, Wisdom, and Goodness? when there was nothing like this before in any of the Atoms themselves? Certainly, Men that can assert such monstrous Opinions as these, do not think as other People do; or, indeed, rather do not think at all. These certainly labour under the Disease mentioned

(a) Arrian.
Lib. 1. c. 5.

tioned by *Epicetus*, of ἀπολίθωσις or ἀπονέκρωσις τῆ νοητικῆς, (a) a stony Insensibility or Deadness of Understanding, by which they are besotted and stupified in their Intellectuals; so that they can believe and assert any thing, if it be subservient to their designs, tho' never so contradictory to the clearest light of Reason and Truth.

But to go on : Granting to the Corporealists that Matter either hath been *always* in Motion, or for what time they please; allowing its Particles to be *small* or *great*, to *move* *swiftly* or *slowly*, and to be *combined* together, or *disjoined* from each other as they think fit. I enquire what all this will signify towards producing of *Cogitation*, *Wisdom*, and *Understanding*? or to the production of *Life*, *Self Activity*, or *Spontaneous Power*? And yet These are the most Great and Noble Things in the World; these are the highest Perfections of the Divine Nature, and in these we place the Essence of the Deity.

(b) Lib. 1.
Metaph. c. 3.

Now here Matter and Motion is more than ever at a loss; and I think it demonstratively certain that it cannot account for these things. *Aristotle* did very truly find fault with the Corporealists of his Time, that they did not, as ours cannot now, assign τὸ εἶναι καὶ καλῶς αἰτίαν, (b) any Cause of well and fit; any Origin of, or Reason for that *Wisdom* and *Regularity*, that *harmonious Relation* and Aptitude of one part of the Creation to another, which is so very conspicuous in all things; supposing that there is nothing in Nature but Matter and Motion. And it is most certainly true, that the Idea which we have of Body doth not necessarily include Cogitation in it, nor our Notion of Cogitation include Body: but they are two

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two as distinct Idea's as any we have. So far are they from being the same thing, that we cannot possibly conceive Cogitation with Extension. No Man ever conceived a Thought to be so many Inches or Yards *long*; to be *deep, thick* or *broad*, to be divisible into two or more Parts, or to have any Kind of Figure or determinate Position or Extension; whereas if whatsoever be unextended, or not Body, be absolutely Nothing, as these Gentlemen assert: Cogitation, Wisdom, Understanding, and Spontaneous Power must be *nothing*: or else they must be *figurate Bodies*; than which nothing can be more absurd. And if we farther examine our own Mind, and consult our own Reason, we shall find that we cannot possibly conceive how thinking, Wisdom, Consciousness, and Spontaneous Power can possibly be the result of Bare Motion of the Parts of Matter. Was there ever any one that seriously believed a Particle of Matter was any Wiser or had any more Understanding for being moved than it was before when it lay still? for let it be never so briskly agitated, is it not still Body? there is no other Idea arising from hence, but only that it changeth its place, and is united successively to several parts of space, that it will move such other Particles of Matter as 'tis capable of, and be retarded in its Motion by hitting or striking against them; these, and such like, are all the Ideas that we can have of a Body in Motion; but what is this to *Thought* and *Consciousness*? Did ever any one but a stupid Corporealist imagine that a Particle of Matter by being moved, was made Intelligent? and that its travelling from place to place, made it understand all things in its way? and did any

any one ever think that the Knowledge of such a rambling Atom encreased in Proportion to the velocity of its Motion? Yes, doubtless! and thus a Bullet discharged from the Mouth of a Cannon, ought to be look'd upon as one of the most Ingenious Beings in Nature. And hence it will follow, that the more hast any one makes to tumble over Books, or to ramble over Countries; and the more precipitantly he makes a judgment of Notions or Opinions, the Better Account he can give of Authors and Places; and the more solid and substantial will be his Learning. This, indeed, is the best Account that can be given of the fineness and quickness of Thought, that *some Men* so much pretend to; for this way *they* may come by a vast share of Penetration, and be volatilized far above the dull studious and considerate Vulgar: and the Event shews that *they* frequently make use of the Experiment.

But again; As we cannot possibly conceive that the *Motion of one Particle* of Matter *alone*, can give it Knowledge and Understanding; so neither can we suppose that a *Body composed of many of them*, can acquire any such thing barely on the Account of the Motion or Agitation of its Parts, for Motion only will do no more to the whole, than it did to each one singly; and 'tis not conceivable that Three, or Three Millions of Bullets will be any wiser for being discharged together, than if they were all shot singly in pursuit of Understanding. Nor can any happy *Combination* or *Constitution of Parts* avail any thing in this Case, any more than Motion; nor can *that* be effectual to super-induce *Wisdom* and *Understanding* into Matter. The *σῶμα λεπτόμεγες* will be no more
a God,

a God, than *Jupiter's Log was among the Frogs*, nor than the most *dense* and *gross* body in Nature. For after all the various Positions, Configurations, and Combinations of Matter, is it not Matter still? will rarefying or subtilizing of Matter change its Nature and Essential Properties? A Rare Body is nothing but a contexture of fine and subtile Particles, which being separated farther asunder than is usual, are also perhaps more briskly agitated and moved. And pray what is here new? what will this do towards Divinity? will bare *Figure* and *Position* of Parts change the Nature of those Parts, and give them Cogitation and Knowledge when they had no such thing singly and before? will adding, subtracting, multiplying or dividing of Numbers, make them any thing else more Noble than what they were before? will not the *Summs*, *Remainders*, *Products*, or *Quotients* be still Figures and Numbers like the first Digits, out of which these do by Combination or various Positions arise? and is it not just so with Matter? will a Particle of it be made any more Wise and Intelligent, for being render'd smaller than it was before? and hath a little Particle more Sense than a larger? will Three or Four, or Four Millions of these be more ingenious than a Body or Lump that is as big as them all? and will moving a few Atoms a good distance from each other, *Separate* them into Knowledge, and *Disjoin* them into an Understanding Power which none of them had before? If Men can swallow such things as these, and think at this Extravagant and Unaccountable Rate; I fear all good Arguments and sound Reason will be lost upon them, and they ought to be neglected as downright Stupid or Distracted.

And yet these, and such like Absurdities, must be the Natural Consequences of supposing Matter and Motion alone capable of *thinking*, that Matter can be *rarified* into a Deity, and that Divine and Almighty *Wisdom, Knowledge, Goodness and Power*, are the result of *Body luckily disposed and moved*; which yet was the Opinion of *Hobbs*, and is still of many of his Admirers and Followers. For notwithstanding those Excellent Demonstrations that many Learned Men (a) amongst us have established, that Matter and Motion cannot possibly produce Cogitation, Consciousness, Understanding and Liberty of Will: There is lately an Ignorant Corporealist who asserts, *That the Inflamed and glowing Particles of the Blood, called Spirits, tho' they are not in themselves Sentient and Intelligent, are yet the active Principle of Life and Motion, of Sense and Understanding in Man and Beast; and do act the Understanding or Brain to apprehend, judge and remember.* Now by this 'tis plain that he supposes Cogitation, Understanding, Consciousness and Liberty, and all the Faculties of the Soul of Man to be nothing but the result of some peculiar Motions in a Fitly organized Body. The Animal Spirits he thinks are like the *Elastick Particles* in the Spring of a Watch, tho' they cannot tell what a Clock it is themselves, yet they can by means of the Spring which they actuate, do that and many other things that the Movement shall be fitted for: Or to make use of a Comparison of his own; The Animal Spirits may do as the Wind doth in the Chest of an Organ, tho' it can make no Musick of it self, yet by being communicated so as to inspire the several Pipes, it may actuate them into a very fine Harmony. It

(a) Dr. Cudworth, Dr. Bentley, and others.

(b) Observations on Dr. Bentley's Sermon, p. 10.

It is not my Business nor Design to discourse *here* of the Soul of Man : but yet I would fain beg these Corporealists clearly to explain, how *Self-Consciousness*, *Reflection*, and *Liberty of Action* can possibly be accounted for by this Hypothesis. For this necessarily makes Men meer Machines at long run. An Engine is never the more *free* and *conscious* to its self of its own Operations for being fine and curiously contrived : And the wonderful Clock at *Strasburgh* knows no more what it doth, nor is it any more the *Spontaneous Cause* of its so many and curious Motions, than the Ancient *Clepsydra*, or a modern *Hour-glass* knoweth what it is about, when it rudely measurcth the Duration of any Part of Time. For whatever is performed by meer Matter and Motion must needs be necessary in every step and degree of its course, be the way of acting in the Engine never so curious, and never so remote from the cognisance of our Senses. They know well enough, as I shall shew below, that there is no possible room for freedom of Action, Consciousness of any Operation, nor for a Cogitative and Reasoning Power, according to this way of explicating the Operations of the Humane Soul. For in the Animal Spirits they grant there is no such thing ; they are only a fiery and briskly agitated Fluid, which serves to actuate any Part of the Rational Machine *pro re natâ* : And these several Parts or Organs of the Machine can no more produce any such thing without the Animal Spirits, than the Hand or Dial-Plate of a Watch can, or any other Part of a curious Instrument. If therefore you enquire of them, wherein they place this Cogitation, Self-Consciousness and Liberty ; they will tell you *'tis in the*

Man, 'tis in the whole; 'tis neither his Soul alone, nor his Body alone; 'tis no Spiritual Substance distinct from Matter, but 'tis the whole Man that thinks, reasons, and acts freely by the form of the whole: But this is very unaccountable, and is what neither they nor any one else, I believe, can ever apprehend or conceive; that Liberty should be the result of Necessarily moved Matter; that Cogitation should arise from Senseless and Unthinking Atoms, and that Knowledge and Consciousness of its own Operations should come into any Engine by its being finely and curiously contrived, and be nothing but the necessary result of bare local Motion, and rightly Organized Matter.

These Absurdities some other Corporealists clearly perceiving, and being fully convinced that 'tis impossible to account for Cogitation, Consciousness, and the like, from bare Matter and Motion; and to educe the Perfections of the Deity out of the Power of Matter only. These, I say, had recourse to another way of maintaining their beloved Assertion, *that there is no other Substance but Body.* They assert, *that Cogitation is Essential to Matter: or, as Spinoza words it, All Substance is essentially Cogitative and Extended; so that as there is no Substance but what is Material, so there is none but what is Cogitative too.* Indeed, as I shewed you before, he asserts that there is but *One only Substance, which is God, or in other words, Universal Matter; and Cogitation and Extension (he saith) are the two Infinite Attributes, or else the Affections of the Attributes of the Deity (a).* And this, with a great deal of Assurance (as the way of these Writers is) he pretends to demonstrate Mathematically, by a Pompous, tho' a very Obscure, *Apparatus of Definitions, Axioms, Postulates*

(a) Op. Post-
hum. p. 12. & 14.

stulates and *Propositions*. But it is not *calling* a thing a Demonstration, that will make it to *be so*; nor concluding with *Quod erat Demonstrandum*, that will make every body acquiesce in a Proposition, when it is either perfectly unintelligible or false. And yet such are those that *Spinoza* brings to prove and support this strange Opinion. The Monstrous Absurdities of which, I shall now consider.

And First, 'Tis plain, That if Cogitation be as Essential to Matter as Extension; Then all and every Particle of it must needs be a *Thinking Substance or Body* by it self, *Distinct* from all Other Particles of Matter in the World. There is no one doubts but 'tis so, in reference to the proper and allowed Affections of Body, *Impenetrability* and *Extension*. Every least Particle or Atom of Matter hath *these* Properties as compleat within it self, as they are in the whole Bulk of the Universe, or in any larger Body whatsoever: These are also individually distinct in each Particle; so that its Properties, though of the same kind, are not the very same with those of other Parts of Matter. Now if to each such Particle of Matter Cogitation be also added; then every Atom in the Universe will be a Thinking, Intelligent and Reasoning Being, distinct from all the rest, and have its own proper and peculiar Faculties and Operations; 'twill be a *different Person* from all Others; and every Individual Particle of Matter will be *so* from it, and from every one else in the World. Every Atom also will be equal to any of the rest, in respect of this *Cogitative Power*; will have it in the very same Proportion, and not be wiser or more foolish, duller or more ingenious than its neighbours. And if this be
so

so (as it must necessarily be, if all Matter be Essentially Cogitative) then there must either be no God at all, or else every Particle of Matter must be a distinct God by it self; and so the most ridiculous Polytheism that ever was imagin'd, must be introduced and allowed of. For if there be any such things as *Perfect Knowledge, Power, Wisdom and Goodness*, every one of these Particles must have it: For 'tis impossible *Infinite* or *Perfect Power, Wisdom, Knowledge and Goodness*, can be produced out of *finite*; the lesser can never produce the greater, nor any thing make or give that which it hath not within it self: And therefore it plainly follows, that either there is no Deity at all, or else that every Particle of Matter must be a God by it self, according to this Hypothesis. For finite or imperfect Cogitation can no more be the Cause of Infinite, than Cogitation can arise from incogitative Matter. And this *Spinoza* saw very well; and therefore he asserts *all Cogitation*, as well as *all Substance*, to be *Infinite* (a). Indeed, to avoid this abominable Absurdity of *each Particle of Matter's being God by it self*; he saith, that there is *but one only Substance in Nature, and that this is God* (b.) But this will not help him out, nor do him much service in defending him from the horrid Absurdities of this Notion. For if by *Substance*, he mean only *Substance* in general, or the Idea that we have of some *Substratum, Support or Subject of Inhesion* in which we conceive the Properties and Accidents of Real Beings to inhere; as by his Definition of *Substance* he seems to imply; 'Tis plain, this is only a *Metaphysical* Notion, only a general *Word or Term* that serves to denote our conception of something in a Being that doth not

depend

(a) *Op. Post.*
p. 21. 6. 4, 5.

(b) *Ib. p. 12.*

depend upon the Properties of it, nor inhere in them, but they upon and in it. But we can have no Notion of Substance existing without any Properties, any more than of Properties without it. If therefore he mean that God is such a Substance as this, that God is the Term or Idea of Substance in general, he makes the Deity nothing at all but a meer Name, a meer Ens Rationis, or Creature of the Brain only; than which nothing can be more ridiculous and foolish. For 'tis the Attributes or Properties of the Deity that we chiefly contend for, and which we are chiefly obliged to Acknowledge and Reverence; and 'tis These that we assert must be inherent in an Infinite and Immaterial Substance, or Spirit. But if by there being but one only Substance, which he saith is God, Spinoza means, that the Deity is the whole Mass of Beings or of Matter in the Universe, as by what he delivers in many places, I do really believe that he did; for he asserts, that all Corporeal Substance is Infinite and One (c); and that Extension and Cogitation (c) lb. p. 14. are the Attributes, or the Affections of the Attributes of God, as I hinted before. I say, if this be his Opinion, there cannot possibly be a more unaccountable, absurd and impossible Notion of God advanced. And 'tis also absolutely inconsistent and contradictory with what he doth at other times assert. For if Substance, Matter, and God, signifie all the same thing, and all Matter be Essentially Cogitative, as such; Then 'tis plain, as I have shewed already, that God cannot be the whole Matter of the Universe, but each Particle of Matter will be a God by it self. For if there be any such thing as Infinite Perfection, it must be Essentially in every Particle of Matter; otherwife Infinite Perfection may

may arise out of what is only Finite, which is impossible. And if every Particle of Matter have this Infinite Perfection, the whole Mass of these, Collectively considered, will be by no means *One God*, or *One Being*, *Ininitely Perfect*, but a Swarm of Innumerable Deities, every one of which will be Personally distinct from each other, and yet contain all possible Perfection in it self. But allowing him all the Collective Mass of Beings, or the Universe to be God; What a strange kind of a Deity would this make? The Divine Nature must then necessarily be *Divisible*, *part of it here, and part there*; part of it in *Motion*, and part of it at *Rest*; part of it *Hot*, and part *Cold*; part *Fire*, and part *Water*; and, in a word, subject to all manner of *Imperfections*, *Vicissitudes*, *Changes*, *Contrarieties* and *Alterations* that can be imagined. But this the common Sense of all Mankind will abhor and detest to be spoken of the Deity: and besides, 'tis contrary to what *Spinoza* asserts in other places,

(d) *Ib. p. 11.* where he saith Substance is *Indivisible (d)*. But how there can be *but One Only Substance*, and *that* the Matter of the Universe; and how this Substance can be *Indivisible*, when yet each Particle of Matter must be a distinct Substance by it self, and is *divisible*, and divided from all others, as our Reason and our Senses do every day inform us, is a flight of *Metaphysicks* above my Understanding, and can, I believe, never be conceived by any one that understands the meaning of the Words or Terms such an Opinion shall be delivered in. But he indeed that doth not, and that will admire lofty and insignificant Sounds, without Sense, or he that hath some wicked and base Design to cover under such Cant, may conceive any thing, or at least say that he doth so. The

The Operations and Actions also of a Corporeal Deity (were it possible there should be such an one) must be all absolutely Necessary, and determined by pure Physical and Mechanical Fatality. For he would be really and truly *Natura Naturata*, only the bare Result of Motion in Matter, as 'tis variously formed, figured, moved and disposed so as to produce any Natural Effect. And this, I doubt not but some of these Corporealists very well understand; and that is the reason that makes them so very fond of the Notion of a Corporeal Deity, and of asserting, That there is nothing in the World but Body: For then they know very well, that there can be nothing but *ὄλκιμὴ ἀνάγκη* in Nature, such a Physical Necessity as will perfectly exclude all Freedom and Liberty of Will amongst Men, and consequently destroy all Notions of, and Distinctions between Good and Evil. They don't care to say plainly there is no God, that looks a little too bare-faced: for *Atheism* is a Name they don't love to take. But they will readily and studiously endeavour to advance such an Account and Notion of a Deity as shall do as well; such an one as they know is in effect the same as to say there is no God at all. And this the representing him as *Corporeal*, will effectually do; for this subjects Him to a Physical Necessity, makes Him nothing at all but Nature, and deprives both Him and us of the Noble Principle of *Freedom of Will*: and then they know that there can be no such things as Rewards and Punishments proportionate to Mens Actions; but that all things are alike, without any distinction of Good and Evil, and consequently that they may do any thing that they have a mind to. And this appears to be the Issue that

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they

they would willingly bring all things to; For if this were not the case, what Reason can be given why Men should be such zealous Sticklers for a *Corporeal Deity*? Why should they still, in spite of Sense, Reason and Philosophy, maintain, That there can be no such thing as an Incorporeal or *Immaterial Substance*? Is it purely out of a devout and holy Desire to understand the Divine Nature more clearly, in order to speak of him more properly, to adore him more religiously, and obey him more heartily? I fear, not: For if Matter and Motion can Think, and (as they say) the Properties or Attributes of God can be accountable that way, and there be really and truly a Wise, Powerful, Just and Good God, though Corporeal; why should not these Gentlemen look upon themselves obliged to obey such a God, as well as a Spiritual one? Why do they quarrel with, and cast off his Holy Word, and reject and despise his Revealed Will? Is not a Corporeal Deity (according to their Notion) truly a Being endowed with all possible Perfections. Is not He the First Cause, Maker and Preserver of all Things? and consequently is not He as fit and worthy to be worshipped as well as a Spiritual One? and cannot such a Deity acquaint his Creatures how he will be worshipped and served? cannot He Reward them for so doing, and Punish them for offending against Him, equally as if He were Incorporeal? If he cannot, indeed, then there is something more than bare Speculation in the case, and there must be some substantial Reason why *Deists* and *Antiscripturists* are always Corporealists. And this is the truth of the Matter; the God of the Corporealists is not the True Deity, whatever they

they may pretend, but a blind, stupid, senseless Idol, that hath nothing but the Name of God wickedly applied to it. 'Tis only *Nature* or a *Plastick Power* in Nature, the whole mass of, or some fine, subtile and active Parts of Matter in rapid Motion, without any *Understanding*, (a) *Wisdom*, or *Design*, without *liberty of Will* or *freedom of Action*; but Physically and Mechanically Necessary in all its Operations. Their God is δὲλα ἀνάγκης, and ἀδυνατὸν ἔστι τὸ πεπερωμένῳ ἀπορῦγῆναι ἢ τῷ Θεῷ, as Herodotus speaks, he is the *Servant of Necessity*, and cannot possibly himself avoid the destined fate. And to be sure, if God be not a free Agent, Nothing else can: for all things flowing from him by an inevitable Necessity (b), or being *Parts of Him*, as Spinoza asserts, they must be under the same Necessity with the Deity, and he saith plainly, That every thing that is determined to Operate, is so determined necessarily by God, and could not act at all if God did not thus necessarily determine it (c). That the Will of Man cannot be called free, but is only a necessary Cause (d). And in another place (e) he tells us plainly, that there are no such things as *final Causes* in Nature, they being only the *Ignorant Fgments of Mankind*; but that all things are Governed by *Absolute Necessity*. A while after this, (f) he asserts Man to be a meer Machine, and saith, that 'tis only those who are Ignorant of Causes that say he was thus finely formed by any Art or Design; or who attribute his Composition to any *Supernatural Wisdom*. And then at last he comes to the great Point on which all this Philosophy turns; which is, *That Good and Evil*

(a) Quando attribuiamus Deo sensus, Scientiam & Intellectum, quæ in nobis nihil aliud sunt quam suscitatus à rebus externis organa prementibus animi Tumulus, non est putandum aliquid tale accidere Deo. Hobbs de Civ. c. xv. §. 14. p. 271. The same thing he saith also, Leviath. c. 31. P. 190.

(b) Omnia Inevitabili necessitate ex Dei Natura sequi statuo. Op. Post. P. 453. Vid. etiam, p. 24. 18. 25, &c.

(c) Op. Post. p. 24.

(d) P. 28.

(e) P. 36.

(f) P. 37.

are not by Nature; but that the Notions of them came only from Mens mistaken Opinion, that all things were made for them; and who therefore call that Good which is agreeable to their Fancy, and that Evil which is contrary to it. By which short Connexion of their Opinions, 'tis clear enough why *Spinoza* was a Corporealist, as also why *Mr. Hobbs* advanced the same Notions. And I doubt those that Espouse the same Opinions now adays, know too well the Consequences of them.

But of the Precariousness of these Notions, I must say no more now; designing particularly to confute them hereafter, as they are made Objections against the Truth, and Obligation of Religion in general.

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IN A
SERMON

Preach'd at the
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BEING
The Sixth of the LECTURE for that Year,
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THE STATE OF NEW YORK

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1880

REPORT

OF THE

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ALBANY

1880

J E R E M. ix. 24.

Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

PRide and Vain-Glory, are Things which Human Nature is strangely subject to; there being scarce any one so mean, but who judges that he hath something or other that he may justly be Proud of, and value himself for. But as Pride is Folly in the general, so it apparently discovers itself in this respect, That those Men are usually most Vain, who have the least Reason to be so, and that too in Things that are the least valuable in themselves. Thus, as the Prophet intimates in the Verse before the Text, Men frequently glory in Bodily Strength, in Beauty, and Agility, and in the Affluence of external Possessions: Things which are the meanest Appurtenances to our Natures, and which are neither in our Power to get nor keep. Wisdom indeed, and Judgment, Learning and Parts, Wit and Penetration, and all the Nobler Endowments of our Minds, are things of the greatest intrinsic Worth and Value, and we have much more reason to esteem our selves for them, than for all the Goods of Fortune, or any Bodily Excellencies. But yet, *Let not the wise man Glory in his Wisdom and Knowledge neither;*

tho' as the Targum on the place hints, it were as great as that of *Solomon* himself; for we have in reality no just ground to value our selves for even *this*, when we consider that the best of us have it but in a very slender Proportion; and that our highest Knowledge is very imperfect and defective. Hence it comes to pass, or at least ought to do so, that the Modesty and Humility of truly knowing Men encreases with their Learning and Experience: Their being raised something above the common level, instead of lessening and shortening in their Eyes the Statures of other Men, encreases their Prospect of a Boundless Field of Knowledge all around them; the more of which they discover, the more they find yet undiscover'd. But he that knows but little, vainly thinks he knows every thing, and judges all is empty and void that is without the Bounds of his scanty Horizon.

Another great Vanity there is also in Pride, which is, That Men are frequently conceited and Proud of those things, which they have the least share of, and are fond of such Actions as do plainly discover their Defects. For usually those Men are most forward to talk of Learning, who are least acquainted with Books; and those make the greatest Noise about, and Pretensions to Philosophy, who have the least insight into Nature. Those who talk most of Certainty and Demonstration have usually the most confused Ideas, and the most Superficial Notions of things, and are the farthest of all Men from true Science. This is apparently seen in the Pretenders to Scepticism and Infidelity, and in all the Atheistical Writers. No Men express themselves with such an insupportable Insolence

Intolence as these *New Lights, these Reformers of our Philosophy and our Politicks*; who yet after all are *Proud knowing nothing*, as *St. Paul* speaks, *Rom. I. 21.* *But are vain in their imaginations; their foolish heart is darkened, and professing themselves to be wise, they become fools. And therefore it is that the wisdom of God appears as foolishness to them, because the carnal mind savoureth not the things that are of God.*

Tho' would Men but studiously apply themselves to consider of, would they carefully and impartially examine into, and would they but seriously make use of those Means that God hath graciously given Mankind, in order to attain a sufficient Knowledge of his Nature and Perfections; They would then find so much Beauty, Wisdom, Harmony, and Excellency in this inexhaustible Fund of Knowledge, as would sufficiently Reward their Pains and Endeavours. And this we may glory in; this Knowledge will be the most noble and honourable that our Capacities can attain unto; and in comparison of which, there is no other Qualification and Excellence in our Natures at all valuable. For here we have an Object the greatest and most perfect that can be, the more we know of which, the more we shall exalt and perfect our selves. Here are no empty Speculations; no *difficiles Nugæ*, no false Lights, nor Phantastical Appearances; but 'tis a real and substantial, an useful and practical Knowledge; a Knowledge that doth not only delight us for the present, but which brings constant and lasting Satisfaction here, and eternal Happiness hereafter. *Let him therefore that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth God, that He is the Lord, who exerciseth loving kindness,*
judgment

judgment and righteousness in the earth, for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord. In which words, there are these two Things chiefly considerable:

- I. A Supposition that God is capable of being known to us by his Attributes.
- II. An Account of some of those Attributes which he exerciteth in the Earth, and in which he delights.

Under which Two Heads, I shall, in pursuance of my general Design, endeavour to Answer those Objections that Atheistical Men have brought against the Attributes and Perfections of the Divine Nature.

i. Here is a Supposition that God is capable of being known to us by his Attributes. *He that gloryeth, let him glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth God, that he is the Lord, who exerciseth loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth.*

'Tis plainly supposed here, That this Knowledge which we are directed to acquire, is a possible Knowledge. God would not command us to understand him by his Attributes of Goodness, Mercy and Justice, which he continually *exerciseth in the Earth*, if it were impossible for us to attain to it: *He would not delight to do such Works in the World, if nothing of them could be known, nor himself by them.* But the Psalmist tells us, *the Lord is known by his Works: And that the Heavens declare his Glory, and the Firmament sheweth his handy-work: And St. Paul is express, That the Invisible Things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.*

And

And indeed, These Attributes of God are what is most and best known to us, and from the certain Knowledge that we have of these, we may be effectually assured of the Existence of some first Cause, some Supream Being in whom all these Attributes and Perfections must inhere. The Infinite Nature, indeed, of This Divine Being is Incomprehensible to our shallow and scanty Understandings, and we cannot by *searching find it out*, nor *discover the Almighty unto Perfection*. But notwithstanding we have as certain a Knowledge, and as clear Idea's of his Attributes as we have of any thing in the World. And *Grotius's* Gloss on this place is very just and proper: God doth not bid Men know him according to his Nature, which exceeds Humane Capacity to do, but according to those Attributes or Properties of his which relate to Mankind, which the Hebrews call *Middôth*, i.e. those Measures or Dimensions of Him which are proportionable to our Understandings and Capacities. And such his Attributes are, for we see them visibly exerted in the Works of the Creation, and we find them necessarily included in the Notion that we have of the Supream Being, or the First Cause of all things; as I have already shewed in another Discourse.

But this, some are pleased to deny; and say, That nothing at all can be known of God, but only, that he is: for his Nature is perfectly Incomprehensible; that we do but dishonour God, by pretending to Understand and to talk about his Attributes; about which we can say nothing but only what serves to express our Astonishment, Ignorance, and Rusticity; and therefore the Civil Magistrate ought to determine what

what Attributes shall be given to the Deity. This seems to be the Sense of *Vaninus*, and is plainly of *Mr. Hobbs*; and was before them of *Sextus Empiricus*. Which take in their own words:

- Non Deum melius Intelligimus quam per ea quæ negamus nos Intelligere*, saith *Vaninus* (a). Again, *Deum nullis tam plenè indicatum intelligimus Vocibus, quàm iis quæ Ignorantiam nostram prætendunt*. We can have, saith *Mr. Hobbs*, no Conception of the Deity, and consequently all his Attributes signifie only our Inability and Defect of Power to conceive any thing concerning Him, except only this, that there is a God (b). And in another place, saith he, God's Attributes cannot signifie what he is, but ought to signifie our desire to honour him; but they that venture to reason of his Nature from these Attributes of honour, losing their Understanding in the very first Attempt, fall from one Inconvenience to another without End and Number, and do only discover their Astonishment and Rusticity (c). Again, When Men (saith he) out of Principles of Natural Reason dispute about the Attributes of God, they do but dishonour him; for in the Attributes we give to God, we are not to consider Philosophical Truth (d). And therefore he concludes, That those Attributes which the Sovereign Power shall ordain in the Worship of God, as signs of Honour, ought to be taken and used for such by Private Men in their Publick Worship (e). In which he agrees as he useth to do, exactly with *Sextus Empiricus*; who tells us that the Sceptick is in the right for asserting Gods according to the Laws and Custom of his Country; and in paying them that veneration and worship which on the same account becomes due to them,
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(a) *Amphitheatr. Provid. Ætern.* p. 9.

(b) *Humane Nature*, p. 69.

(c) *Leviath.* p. 374.

(d) *Leviath.* p. 191.

(e) *Leviath.* p. 192.

will not venture to determine any thing Philosophically about them (a).

Now from these Passages, I think it appears plain enough, that tho' these Men did in words pretend to own and acknowledge a God, yet in Fact they were Atheists, and had no true Belief of any such Being. For a Deity without the Attributes of *Understanding* and *Wisdom*, without *Ends* or *Design*; none of which Mr. Hobbs asserts expressly, *can be in God* (b), is a Ridiculous stupid Being, an Idol that every rational Agent must needs despise, and which can never be the Object of any one's Adoration, Love, or Obedience. To assert therefore that the Attributes of God are not discoverable by Reason, nor agreeable to Philosophical Truth, but may be declared to be any thing which the Sovereign Power pleases to make them; this is designedly to expose the Belief and Notion of a Deity, and to render it so Precarious, that it can be the Object of no Rational Man's Faith. And this last named Writer Treats the Deity after the same manner in most other Places of his Works; He saith, we must not say of Him that he is *Finite*, that he hath *figure Parts* or *Totality*, that he is *here* or *there*, that he *moveth* or *resteth*, or that we can *conceive* or *know* any thing of him; for all this is to *dishonour* him: And yet to say that he is an *Immaterial Substance*, that he is an *Infinite* and *Eternal Spirit*, is, he saith, *Nonsense*, and what *destroys* and *contradicts* it self. However he is willing to allow the word *Immaterial* or *Spirit* to be used towards God, as a *Mark of Honour* and *Respect*.

That is, we may attribute to God what we know to be Nonsense and Contradiction, and this is the *Way*

(a) Καὶ μὲν τὰ πάτρια ἔδει καὶ τὸ νόμος λεγόντων θεός· καὶ πᾶν τὸ εἰς τὸ τούτου εἰρησκήσαν ὃ εὐσεβείαν συνήενδον ποίων. τὸ δ' ὅσον ὅτι τῆ φιλοσοφῶν ζήσσει μὴδὲν περπετάδουεν G.
Aav. Math.
p. 317.

(b) Leviath.
p. 190.

to Honour him; and to speak of him any other way, is to Dishonour Him! Who doth not perceive that it was plainly the Design of this Writer to treat of the Deity after such a manner, as should deprive Him of all Knowledge and Care of Humane Affairs, and consequently, effectually Banish out of Mens Minds a just Veneration for Him, and Adoration of Him? Such Men are the most Dangerous and Mischievous of all others; Profess'd Atheists can do no great Harm; for all Persons are aware of them, and will justly abhor the Writings and Conversation of Men that say boldly there is no God. But there are but few such; they have found a way to pass undiscovered under a fairer Dress and a softer Name: They pretend to be true Deists and sincere Cultivators of Natural Religion; and to have a most Profound Respect for the Supreme and Almighty Being: But when this Profound Respect comes to be thoroughly examined and duly understood, it will appear to be the most abominable Abuse that can be, and a most wicked and Blasphemous Idea of the Deity. For they make him either nothing but the Soul of the World, Universal Matter, or Natura Naturata, a God that is an absolutely necessary Agent, without any Rectitude in his Will; without any Knowledge, Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, Mercy, or Providence over his Works. But let such Persons take what Names they please upon themselves, a little consideration will soon discover what they are in reality; and, I hope, give Men a just abhorrence of such Notions, tho' never so speciously put forth.

But let us now proceed to examine what Ground there is from the Nature of the Thing, for Men to advance

advance such wicked Opinions, and to shew the weakness and precariousness of them. And here it must be premised and taken for granted, *that there is a God.* This is what the Persons I am now concerned with, pretend to own, and to acknowledge. Which being supposed: It appears very plain that we may have if we will, and some Persons, as I have shew'd (a), have always had, a very clear Notion or Idea of the Attributes and Perfections of such a Being; as also that they are *fixed and immutable Properties* in the Divine Nature. For by professing to believe a God, they must mean, if they mean any thing, *The first Cause and Author of all Things, and the Governour and Disposer of them; A Divine Being, containing in himself all possible Perfections; without being subject to any manner of Defect.* This I have already hinted at in another place (b), and shall now more largely prove.

(a) Sermon 4th. and 5th.

(b) In my Second Sermon.

So far is it from being true, *that we cannot reason of the Nature of God from his Attributes, nor Discourse of those Attributes from our Reason*; That this seems to be the only proper Way of enquiring into the wonderful Depth of the Divine Perfections. I mean, the only Way we have without Revelation, for I am not now considering what God hath farther discovered of Himself to us by his Word. For tho' the Deity doth abound with Infinite Excellencies and Perfections; yet by the Light of Nature we can discover those only, of which he hath given us some Impression on our own Natures; and these are the Scales and Proportions by which our Reason must measure the Divine Attributes and Perfections. For in order to gain good and true Notions of *these*, we ought

to take our Rise from those Perfections and Excellencies which we find in the Creatures, and especially in our selves.

There can be but two Ways of coming to the Knowledge of any thing; by its *Cause*, and by its *Effects*. 'Tis impossible for us to make use of the former of these, in Reference to the Deity: For He being himself without Cause, and the First Cause and Original of all Things cannot be known to us this Way. But by the second Way, he very properly may be the Object of our Knowledge, and we ought to apply our selves to this Method, in order to understand the Attributes of God. For whatever Excellency or Perfection we can any way discover in the *Effects* of God in the World, *i. e.* in the Works of the whole Creation; the same we cannot but suppose must be in Him, in the highest and most noble Proportion and Degree; since they are all owing to, and derived from Him.

And if we take a serious and considerate View of the Excellencies and Perfections that are to be found in the Creatures, or the Works of God in the World; we shall find that they may be reducible to these Four general Heads; *Being or Substance, Life, Sensibility, and Reason*. All which we find to be in our selves, and therefore they are at hand, and ready to assist our Meditations; and these will, if duly considered, lead us into a good Way of discovering the *Attributes* and *Perfections* of the Divine Nature. And I doubt not but a great Reason why Men have had and advanced wrong Notions of God, hath been because they have had such of themselves, and of those Perfections that are in our own Natures. Men that do not understand that the true

Per-

Perfection of Humane Nature consists in Moral Goodness, or in an Univerſal agreeableneſs of our Will to the Eternal Laws of Right Reaſon, cannot conceive aright of the Attributes and Perfections of God: For they will be for making *him like themſelves*, guided by vehement Self-love, and inordinate Will, or whatever predominant Paſſions poſſeſs them.

'Twere eaſie to Trace this in the Epicurean Notion of a God diſſolved in Eaſe and Sloth, and who neglects the Government of the World, to enjoy his own private Pleaſures; and in the *Hobbian* one of a Deity not guided by any Eſſential Rectitude of Will, but only by Arbitrary, Lawleſs, and irriſiſtible Power; for both theſe Opinions are exactly agreeable to the Genius and humours of their Authors and Propagators.

But to proceed with our Deduction of the Divine Attributes from the Excellencies and Perfections which we find in our ſelves. 1. If in the firſt place we conſider *Being*, and the high Perfections that do belong to it; we ſhall find that they muſt needs be in the Deity, who is the Firſt and Supream Being, and the Cauſe and Author of all others in the World, in the utmoſt Perfection. Now the higheſt Perfections belonging unto Being, we find to be theſe two: 1. That it ſhall have an underivable and neceſſary **Exiſtence**, *always be*, and never *ceafe, die, terminate* or be *extinct*; and, 2. That it be *Great and Ample* as to its *Extent*, in oppoſition to *Littleneſs* or *Scantyneſs*, and to being *Limited, Circumſcribed, Bounded* or *Reſtrained* by any Other Thing.

And if we attribute theſe two Perfections to God, thence will plainly Arife his *Eternity*, and his *Immenſity* or *Omnipreſence*. For what cannot poſſibly ceafe

cease to be, but hath necessary Existence included in its Nature, is *Eternal*. And what cannot be any way *Limited, Circumscribed* or *Restrained*, must needs be *Boundless* and *Immense*, and *present* every where: And I dare say, that these Notions of God's *Eternity* and *Immensity*, do find an easie admittance into, and are firmly rooted in all considerate and unprejudiced Minds; and who are not debauched by Sceptical and Atheistical Metaphysicks. For 'tis impossible for any one that thinks at all, to have a Notion of a Deity that can *die*, or *cease to be*; or that is so *confined* and *imprisoned* in any one part of *Space*, that he can extend himself no farther: No! it must be an Epicurean Stupefaction of *Soul*, indeed, that can induce a Man to fancy a *Mortal* or a *Topical God*; one that may be *slain*, or *die of old Age*, or be *shackled* and *confined* to any one part of the Universe, exclusive of the rest. And tho' a Man cannot find perhaps that he hath an adequate Idea of Eternity; yet that God must be without Beginning or End; he will readily allow, as soon as he considers the Thing; for he will perceive that the First Cause of all Things could not be caused by any thing else, but must be Self-existent, and without Beginning: and if nothing could cause his Being, nothing can take it away neither, and consequently he must be Everlasting or Eternal. And of this Attribute the Heathens had a clear Idea and Belief, giving God the Title of ἄθρνα, and Swearing usually by the *Immortal Gods*. Tully saith, *Deum nisi Sempiternum Intelligere quæ possumus?* How can we conceive the Deity any otherwise than to be an Eternal Being. And *Aristotle* in many places makes Eternity Essential to the Idea of God; and particularly, *Lib. 2. de Cælo.* And

And so as to *Immensity* or *Omnipresence*, tho' he, indeed, cannot tell the manner how a *Spirit* or *Immaterial Substance* permeates Matter, or is present to every part of it; yet he will conclude that the Deity must some how or other actually *fill* and *be present with all* things; since 'tis impossible he should be *excluded* any where, or be in any respect *bounded* or *limited*; as 'tis also that he should act or operate where he is not. Nor would, I believe, any free and unprejudiced Mind have recourse either to the Notion of God's being *Universal Matter* or *Infinite Space*, in order to solve His *Immensity* or *Omnipresence*. For the *former*, he would see, necessarily makes the Deity materially divisible, into Parts actually separated from each other; and to be part of him here, and part there; which he could not but think monstrously absurd and impossible: and the *latter* renders God nothing at all, but *Imaginary Room, Vacuity* or *Space*, in which Bodies are capable of *Moving* up and down, or to and fro, without hindrance or impediment from any *Medium*. Which how it should, any more than the former account for the Energetical Power, Wisdom, Justice and Goodness of the Divine Nature, (the noblest Perfections he can have any Idea of) 'twould be as impossible for him to conceive, as it is for the Assertors of it to prove. The ancient Heathens allowed this Attribute of Immensity to the Deity, by common consent. *Tully* tells us, That *Pythagoras* asserted, *Deum esse animum per Naturam Rerum omnium intentum & comeantem*, *De Nat. Deorum*. And he cites it as the Opinion of *Thales Milesius*; *Deorum omnia esse Plena*, *De Legib. lib. 2.* which *Virgil* also affirms expressly,--- *Jovis omnia plena*. And again,
Deum

(a) Ep. 95.

(b) De Benef.
lib. 4.

*Deum namq; ire per omnes Terras tractusq; maris, cœ-
lumq; profundum*, Georg. lib. 4. And Seneca tells us,
That God is *ubiq;* & *omnibus præsto* (a). And in ano-
ther place (b), *Quocunq; te flexeris, ibi Deum videbis*
Occurrentem tibi, nihil ab illo vacat, Opus suum ipse
Implet.

2. If we consider *Life*; Another Perfection which we find in our selves, we must needs conclude that this is in the Deity too, who is the great Author and Fountain of Life, in the highest Degree and Proportion imaginable. Now the Perfection of Life seems to consist in *Activity*, or an *Energetical Power to Act*, or *Operate*; in opposition to *Impotence, Weakness, or Inability*. And this Perfection, no one sure can possibly doubt to be in the Deity. For besides that 'tis impossible for us to conceive that Life and Activity in our selves can proceed from a Dead and Unactive Principle; our Reason must needs reject the Notion of an *Inanimate, and Impotent Deity*, or of one that is any way defective in Power, as soon as it can be proposed to it. Can we imagine that a Being from whom all Life, Power and Energy is derived, can be without it himself? and that he who hath, as *Simplicius* calls it, *ἑλν δύναμις*, a whole entire or perfect Power, that hath all the Power of Nature at His Command, can be unable to perform whatever is possible to be done? that is, whatever is agreeable to, and consistent with, the other Attributes of the Divine Nature? And if so, must not then such a Being be own'd to be *Almighty or Omnipotent*? From whence we see another great Attribute doth plainly arise. And of this Attribute of the Deity, there was a plain and clear Notion all along among the Heathen
Writers

Writers; as appears from *Homer* in many places, who speaking of God, says, δὴναται γὰρ ἄπαντα. The same thing also we have in the Fragments of *Linus*, long before Him. And in *Callimachus* also, in express words. As also in *Agatho*, an Ancient Greek Poet cited by *Aristotle* in his *Ethicks*. So in *Virgil* and *Ovid*, you have frequently the Title of *Pater Omnipotens* given to the Deity. And this Attribute of Infinite Power in God, *Epicurus* set himself with all his might to confute; denying there was any such thing as Infinite Power at all; that thereby (says *Lucretius*, lib. 1.) he might take away Religion too.

And from hence also his Eternity might be naturally deduced. For we cannot conceive this Life or Activity, this Almighty Power that is in God, can ever cease, decay or determine, any more than it can have had a beginning, and consequently such a Being must necessarily Exist, be Eternal, or Endure and Live for Ever.

3. If we proceed a little higher, and consider *Sensibility* which is another great Perfection that we find in our selves, and some other Creatures, we must needs Attribute This also, and that in the highest degree, to the Divine Nature. I take this now in the general, for that Power or Faculty whereby any Being is capable of taking Pleasure or feeling Pain. And such a *Sensibility*, or something Analogous to it, we cannot but think God must have in the most exquisite Perfection, since our Own, as well as that of all other Creatures, must be derived from Him. And tho', indeed, we ought to think that the Infinite Perfection of his Nature secures him from all Possibility of feeling Pain, (since nothing can contradict his Will, run

counter to his Desires, or frustrate his Expectations) yet we have no reason to suppose the Deity insensible of Pleasure; but may justly conclude from hence, that he is always most perfectly happy. For he contains in Himself all Possible Good and Infinite Excellencies and Perfection, and of this He is most exquisitely sensible, and consequently must eternally be Pleased and delighted with himself in the Enjoyment of his own Infinite Fulness: And this Notion many of the Heathens had of God, that he was a most Happy Being; styling Him frequently, Ζῶν μακάριον; and πάντων ἔχον μακαρίβητα μετ' ἀρδασίας.

4. But the Highest Perfection which we can discover in our selves, and in any created Beings whatever, is Reason. And this, no doubt, we ought also to attribute to God in the highest Degree and Perfection. Now the Perfection of Reason seems to consist in these two Things:

1. In *Knowledge* and *Wisdom* in the Understanding Faculty. And,

2. In *Rectitude* or *Righteousness* in the Will:

All which we cannot but suppose the Divine Nature to be perfectly endowed with. And first as to *Knowledge* and *Wisdom*; The former of which, implies an Understanding of things as they are in themselves, according to their true Natures and Properties: And the latter, a considering of them as to their Relations to, and Dependances upon one another; or in other words, according as they are fit or qualified to be *Ends* or *Means*.

And these must certainly be in God, for the same reason that we have found in Him the other Perfections above-mentioned. To the Deity therefore, from

from this Consideration, we ought to Attribute *Omniscience*, and *Infinite*, or *most perfect Wisdom*; for no doubt we ought to conclude, That the Deity both *knows every thing according to its Nature*, and also *understands its Usefulness and Subservingness to any End, Design or Purpose* whatsoever. And therefore it was as stupidly or impiously said by Mr. *Hobbs*, That there can be *no such thing as Knowledge in God*, and *that he can have no Ends*. For I cannot imagine there can one so grossly Ignorant and Foolish be found among Mankind, who doth really believe there can be an *ignorant* or a *foolish God*; and who would not abhor such a Position as monstrously absurd and impossible. A Man must be a long while conversant with *Atheistical and Sceptical Philosophy*, before he can grow so dull as not to perceive the force and Power of the Psalmists Logick and reasoning in *Psal. 94. v. 8, 9, &c.* and he must be very *Studiously brutish* and *Learnedly foolish*, before he can think *that he that planted the Ear, should not be able to hear himself; and that he that formed the Eye should not see; and that he that gave and taught all Knowledge to Men should have none himself.*

The mighty Reason that Mr. *Hobbs* is pleased to give, *Why there can be no Understanding in God is, because that Faculty being in us nothing but a Tumult of Mind, raised by External Things that press the Organical Parts of our Bodies* (a), there can be *no such* (a) *Leviath. P. 190.* *thing in God.* And in other places, he sagaciously determines, *that 'tis impossible to hear without Ears, to see without Eyes, and to Understand without Brains, none of which God hath; and therefore must be Ignorant and Stupid.* But, methinks, 'tis very hardly

done of Him, to determine the Deity to be *Corporeal*, and yet to assign Him none of these Material Organs in order to make him an *Intelligent Being*. Why should not the same Matter which is able to form the Mechanick Understanding of so great a Philosopher, be capable of being modified as Intelligently in the Divine Nature? Must the Deity have the worst and most stupid Body of All others? Into what abominable Absurdities will such Principles as these lead a Man! or rather into what abominable Impieties and Blasphemies will Vice and Pride hurry him! He doth not only think wickedly that the Deity is such an one as himself, but infinitely worse; a *Corporeal Being that hath less and fewer Perfections than a Corporeal Man!* But I must not dwell on shewing the Design of this Writer, having sufficiently done it already. I shall only now add, that I think I have already proved that Matter alone cannot think, know, nor understand; and therefore it is not *Mens Brains*, but their *Soul* that hath this Intelligent Power; and no doubt an *Infinite and Immaterial Mind*, needs not any *Material Organs* to convey Knowledge to him, in whom all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge do Inhabit, and from whom they are all derived and do proceed.

And there was, Anciently amongst the Heathens, a clear belief of the Infinite Knowledge and Wisdom of God. *Tully* tells us, that *Thales* used commonly to say, *Deos omnia cernere*, the Gods behold or know all things. And *Seneca* saith, *Deo nihil Clausum est; interest Animis nostris, & mediis cogitationibus intervenit*. And as to the Wisdom of God, *Tully* deduces it after the same manner as we now have done, by attributing

attributing the Excellencies of the Creature to the Deity in the Highest Perfection. *Sapiens est Homo*, saith he, & *propterea Deus*; Man hath Wisdom, and therefore God, from whom the Wisdom in Man is derived, must needs have it himself. But again, As we must attribute to God Infinite Knowledge and Wisdom; so we must *Rectitude of Will* or *Perfect Righteousness* too. And since the Rectitude of the Will consists in an exact Conformity of it and all its Affections to the Impartial Rule of Right Reason; we cannot but suppose also, that the Will of God is in a most exquisite Conformity to the Dictates of his Unerring Reason; and that the Deity doth in every respect act exactly agreeable thereunto. And by this means we shall find that God must be Just and Righteous in all his Proceedings, *and that he always executeth Justice and Righteousness in the Earth, and delights in these things*. Our Adversaries, indeed, do assert, That there is no such thing *as any distinction between Good and Evil, Just and Unjust, that can be taken from any common Rule, or from the Objects themselves; but only with Relation to the Person that useth them; who calls that Good which he loves, and that Evil which he hates* (a). That God doth every thing *by his Irresistible Power; and that in that is founded our Obedience to Him, and not in any Principle of Gratitude to him* (b) for Benefits which we have received from him. That *Justice is founded in Power, and that whatever is Enacted by a Sovereign Power can't be Unjust*. The Groundlessnes of which Impious and Dangerous Notions, I shall fully shew in a subsequent Discourse; and therefore shall only now observe, that this Way of depriving the Deity of these most excellent

(a) *Leviath.*
P. 24, 63, 64.
Spinoza Oper.
Posth. p. 37.
(q) *Leviath.*
P. 187.

cellent and lovely Attributes of Justice and Goodness, and making Him to Act only according to the Arbitrary Dictates of Irresistible Power, gives us the Notion of a Devil instead of a Deity, of an absolute Tyrant, instead of a righteous Governour of the World;

* *Plato* calls the Deity Ἰδέα τῆ ἀγαθῆ, the very Idea or Essence of Good. And herein he seems to have followed the *Pythagoreans* and *Timaeus Locrus* in particular: Who asserts of *Mind*, according to him the first Principle of the Universe, that it is, τῆ ἀγαθῆ φύσις, of the Nature of Good: And saith further, Θεοῦ τὴν νομομαίνεσθαι ἀρχαίηε καὶ ἀείψων, that they call it God, and the Principle of the best things.

Aristotle also reckons *Moral Goodness* among the Perfections of the Divine Nature: And *Plutarch* saith, 'tis one of the chiefest Excellencies in the Deity; and that on this account it is that Men love and honour Him.

Hierocles in Carm. Pythagor. asserts the Deity to be *Essentially Good*, and not by *Accidental* or *External Motives*.

and is directly contrary to the Sober and Considerate Sentiments of all Mankind*, in whose Minds a plain Distinction between *Good* and *Evil* is founded, and who can never be brought without doing great violence to themselves, to assert that the Deity is not guided in all things by the Eternal Rules of Truth and Justice, and that the Judge of all the Earth should not do right. They see the comeliness and loveliness

that there is in good and just Actions among Men; and therefore cannot suppose that an Infinite and Almighty Being can do any thing contrary to them; they are sensible that Deviations from those Rules proceed only from the Defects and Imperfections that are in our Natures; but that God, who is Ἰκανότατον ἀπείρων καὶ ἀνταρξήσιον, who possesseth and sustaineth all things, cannot make use of any indirect Means to procure himself Happiness, or to stave off Misery; since the Perfection of his Nature gives him all the one, and secures him from all the other. And they which certainly never believe that God will do any Action, that they do not think suitable to be done

done by a good and just Man; But will on just Grounds conclude, That whatever Excellence or Perfections they can any way discover to be in a *Good Man*, must needs be in the highest Proportion in God, and consequently that the Deity must be most *Righteous, Just and Good, and most Kind, Merciful and Gracious in all his Dealings with his Creatures.*

And thus we see how by considering the Excellencies and Perfections which we find in our selves, and attributing them in the Highest Proportion to that Supream Being the Deity, from whence they must all be derived; we may attain to a good and clear Knowledge of the Properties and Attributes of the Divine Nature: We may find them to be such as are agreeable to the plainest Reason and to Philosophical Truth: and consequently conclude, that they can have no such weak and precarious Foundation as the *Order of the Civil Power*, and the *Will of the Supream Magistrate.*

And were it now my Business, 'twere very easie from hence to shew also the *True Foundation of Religious Worship*; that it doth depend on the Right Apprehensions and Notions that we have of the Attributes of God; and that our Obedience to Him, is founded in our Gratitude to him for the Benefits which we receive from Him, and consequently is *our Reasonable Service.* But the Proof of this will be more proper in another Place.

F I N I S.

Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is arranged in several paragraphs, but the characters are too light and blurry to be transcribed accurately.

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A
REFUTATION of the *Objections*
Against
MORAL GOOD and EVIL.

IN A
SERMON

Preach'd at the
CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of *St. Paul,*
October the Third, 1698.

BEING
The Seventh of the LECTURE for that Year,
Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle, Esq;*

By *JOHN HARRIS, M. A.*
and Fellow of the ROYAL-SOCIETY.

L O N D O N,
Printed by *J. L.* for *Richard Wilkin,* at the
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J E R E M. ix. 24.

Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth: for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord.

IN these Words, as I have already shewed, there are these two Things considerable:

- I. A Supposition that God is capable of being known to us by his Attributes.
- II. An Account of some of those Attributes which he exerciseth in the Earth, and in which he delights.

On the former of these, I did, in my last Discourse endeavour to remove the Objections against the Attributes of God in general, and to shew that they are plainly discoverable by Reason, and agreeable to Philosophical Truth. As to the Second,

The Attributes of God mentioned here by the Prophet, and which he is said to delight to exercise in the Earth.

I think it not necessary to discourse particularly of them, having in my last Sermon shewn how They, as well as all other Excellencies and Perfections which we can discover in the Creatures, must of necessity be in the Divine Nature in the greatest Perfection;

because they are all derived from Him. But that which I judge will be more proper to be done now, as being agreeable to my Design of Answering the Atheistical Objections in their Natural Order, will be from hence to Remove two Great Barrs to the true Knowledge of God and of his Attributes, which Sceptical and Unbelieving Men have here placed in the Way. For indeed, till this be done, no true Notion of God or of his Perfections can be established in Mens Minds; nor any Ground fixt whereon to build a Rational Belief of Natural or Revealed Religion, or any kind of Worship of the Supream and Almighty Being. And these Two great Objections of our Adversaries are,

1. That there is in reality no such thing as Moral Good and Evil; but that all Actions are in their own Nature indifferent.

2. That all things are determined by Absolute Fatality: And that God himself, and all Creatures whatsoever, are Necessary Agents, without having any Power of Choice, or any real Liberty in their Nature at all.

These are two of the strongest Holds of Atheism and Infidelity, which 'tis therefore absolutely necessary to batter down and demolish: And these do in some sense communicate with and run into one another; and indeed the former plainly follows from the latter. But however, they being very frequently made use of distinctly by the Opposers of Religion, and the former being maintained by some Persons whom I cannot find do hold the latter; I shall endeavour to Refute them severally. Beginning with that which I have first proposed; *viz.*

That

That there is in reality no such things as Moral Good and Evil, but that all Actions are in their own Nature purely Indifferent.

And this Position our Adversaries are very express in maintaining, as will sufficiently appear by their own Words.

The Virtues that Men extoll so highly, saith Mr. Blount (a), are not of equal weight and value in the Balance of Nature; but that it may fare with them, as with Coin made of Copper or Leather: which tho' it may go at a high Rate in one Country by Proclamation; yet will it not do so in another, for want of Intrinsic Value. 'Tis

(a) *Anima Mund. in Or. of Reason, p. 117.*

plain enough what he means by this; but how this Assertion will agree with his allowing some things to be *ἄσπετα δίκαια* (b), Good and Just in their own Nature, as he doth in his Account of the Deists Religion, let the Admirers of *those Contradictory Oracles of Reason*, consider. But, indeed, 'tis no new or uncommon thing with these kind of Men to make Contradictory Propositions subservient to their Purposes:

(b) *Oracles of Reason, p. 89.*

as they often do in this very Case. For when you upbraid them with a Disbelief of Revelation, they will say, that 'tis enough for any Man to live up to the Principles of Natural Religion, and to adhere *inviolably to all things, ἄσπετα δίκαια*; for those are things that are Obligatory on all Mankind, and not like Revealed Truths, mere Political and Topical Institutions. Whereas at another time, if you tell them of some gross Immoralities that they are Guilty of, and which are plainly contrary to Reason, and to the clearest Light of Nature; Then they will answer you, That Good and Evil are only *Thetical things*; which receive their very Essence from Human Laws or Customs

stoms only, but that by Nature nothing is either Good or Bad; and that all Actions are alike and Indifferent; so hard is it, as an Excellent Person observes (a), to contradict Truth and Nature, without contradicting ones self. But to go on,

(a) A. Bish.
Tillotf. Serm.
Vol. 4. P. 315.

Spinoza takes care to deliver himself very plainly, as to this Matter. *Bonum & Malum nihil Positivum in Rebus sc. in se consideratis indicant (b)*. And in another Place, he tells us, *Postquam homines sibi persuaserunt, omnia quæ fiunt, propter ipsos fieri, id in unaquaq; re præcipuum judicare debuerunt, quod ipsis, utilissimum; & illa omnia præstantissima æstimare, à quibus optimè afficiebantur. Unde has formare debuerunt Notiones, quibus Rerum naturas explicarunt, sc. Bonum & Malum, Ordinem & Confusionem, &c. (c)*. And the same thing also he asserts in many other places.

(b) Op Post-
hum, P. 164.

(c) Ibid p. 37.
Vid. etiam,
p. 171, 185,
360, &c.

Mr. Hobbs also expressly maintains, That there is nothing simply nor absolutely Good or Evil, nor any common Rule about them to be taken from the Objects themselves, but only from the Person; who calleth that Good which he likes or desires, and that Evil which he hates, &c. (d) Nothing, saith he, is in its own Nature Just or Unjust, because naturally there is no Pro-

(d) Leviath.
P. 24.

(e) Ibid. p. 63,
64.

(f) P. 73.

perty, but every one hath a Right to every thing (e); And therefore he defines Justice to be only keeping of a Covenant (f). And in another place he tells us, That Good and Evil are only Names that signifie our Appetites and Aversions; which in different Tempers,

(g) Ibid p. 79.

Customs and Doctrines of Men are different (g). The same thing he asserteth also in many other places of

(h) Vid. Hum.
Nature, p. 38.
Element. de
Cive c. 1. §. 2.

his Writings (h). And this Doctrine the Translator of *Philostratus* is so fond of, that, tho' he be sometimes very desirous of being thought an Original,

yet

yet he Transcribes this entirely from Mr. *Hobbs* (a); as indeed Mr. *Hobbs*, according to his usual way, had before, in a great measure done from *Sextus Empiricus*; who in very many places declares that it was the Opinion of the Scepticks, *that there was nothing Good or Evil in it self* (b). And he endeavours to prove this Point, by the very same Arguments which the Modern Assertors of this Opinion, do make use of (c).

(a) *Blount's*
Life of *Apollonius*, p. 151.

(b) ἡμῶν ἀγαθῶν πῆ κακῶν ἔστι λεγόντων ἔστι δὲν — Πιπτη. *Hypot.* p. 46.
And again, p. 147. ἐκ ἀεὶ ἐστὶ φύσει ἀγαθόν.

(c) *Vid. Sext. Emp. Adv. Math.* p. 450, 451, &c. 462, 463, &c.

And tho' Mr. *Hobbs* boast much of his Notions about these things to be new, and originally his own; yet 'tis plain, that it was the Old Atheistick Doctrine long before *Plato's* Time. For he tells us, *Lib. 2. De Rep.* p. 358. That there were a sort of Men who maintained, That by Nature Men have a boundless Liberty to act as they please, and that in such a state, to do that to another which is now called an *Injury*, or a piece of *Injustice*, would be *Good*; tho' to receive it from another would be *Evil*: And that Men did live a good while at this rate, but in Time finding the Inconveniencies of it; they did agree upon *Laws*, in order to live peaceably and quietly with one another. And then that which was enacted by these *Laws*, was called *Just*, and *Lawful*. Ὀνομάσται τὸ ἅπὸ τῆ νόμου ἐπιταγῆμα νόμιμον τε καὶ δίκαιον.

This is the Principle we see of those Atheistical Men: which tho' some of them do now and then take Care to conceal, or to express a little cautiously, yet they understand one another well enough: and so indeed may any one do them, that thinks it worth his while to consider seriously of, and to search into the Bottom of the Matter. And this is truly one of the Great Depths of Atheism and Infidelity: 'Tis a Principle that when once thoroughly understood and imbibed,

imbibed, confirms a Man in the Disbelief of all manner of Religious Obligation. For he that hath once swallowed down this abominable Tenet, will, as some of the lately mentioned Writers discover themselves to do, believe nothing of the Deity, but that he is *Almighty and Arbitrary Power*, or a *Blind fatal and Necessary Agent*: Either a Being that makes his Will his Law, and who is not guided in his Actions or Dispensations, by the Dictates of Reason nor by any Rules of Justice and Goodness: or else one that properly speaking, hath *no Ends nor Designs* at all (a); but is *without any Understanding* (b), *Freedom of Will, Choice or Wisdom*; one who cannot possibly help doing as he doth, but is impelled in every thing by absolute Necessity. So that there being (as according to these Principles there cannot be) no Goodness in the Deity, there can be none any where: But all Actions, antecedent to Human Laws, will be Indifferent. And the Obligation that Men are under to Human Laws being only, as *Hobbs* saith, from Fear of Punishment; no doubt a Man of this wicked Perswasion will stick at the Perpetration of no Villany nor Immorality, that will any way advantage himself, and which he can commit secretly and securely; but will pursue his own Private Benefit and Interest (the only Good he understands, and thinks himself obliged to mind) by all possible Means and Endeavours.

This therefore being the Case before us, it will very much concern us to Return a fair Answer to, and fully to Refute this Dangerous Objection against all Religion, and indeed against the Good and Welfare of all Governments, and all Civil Societies: and which I wish we had not so much reason to believe, is fixt in the Minds of too many amongst us. And

(a) *Spinoz. Op. Posthum. p. 36.*
 (b) *Ostendam ad Dei naturam neq; Intellectum neq; Voluntatem pertinere. Ibid. p. 12. Vid. Etiam, p. 27.*

And in order to do this the more clearly and effectually, it will be necessary first truly to state the Point, and to dis-engage it from some Difficulties and Perplexities which our Adversaries have designedly clouded it withall. Say they whatever is the Object of any Man's Desires that he calls Good; as also whatsoever is in any respect Beneficial and Advantageous to him. And on the other hand, that which is hurtful and prejudicial to him, and is the Object of his Hatred and Aversion, that he calls Evil, and so doubtless it is to him. Now, say they further, Since that which may be *Good* to one Man, or *desired* by him *now*, may be *Evil* to another, or may by the very same Person, be hated and shunned at *another Time*; it plainly follows, that the Nature of *Good and Evil*, is perfectly precarious, and will be as various and changeable as the different Humours and Inclinations of Mankind can make it. And thus Mens Actions will be denominated accordingly. Every one accounting that a *Good one* which he likes, which promotes his Interest, and is conducive to his Advantage: And calling that an *Evil one*, which he disapproves of, and which is contrary to his Interest and Inclination.

To all which, I say, that these Men run their Argument a great way too far, and conclude much more from it than the Nature of the thing will bear. For allowing as a first Principle *that all Men desire Good*, and that they cannot do otherwise; Allowing also that Apparent or seeming Good hath the same Effect as real Good, while it is the Object of any particular Man's Desires: Nay, allowing also this *Apparent Good* to be a very precarious Thing, and to depend very much on the different Humours, Tempers and Inclinations

nations of Mankind; which is the whole Basis on which these Writers found their Argument. I say, Granting all this, it doth not come up to the Question between us, nor form any Real Objection against the natural difference between Good and Evil, and the Eternal Obligation of Morality; for the Point in dispute is not whether such an Essential and Immutable Difference as this now spoken of, be discernible in *all* the Actions of Mankind; for 'tis readily allowed that there are a great many *Indifferent*, and which are neither *good* nor *bad* in their own Natures, but may be *either*, as Circumstances determine. This, I say, is not the Case; but whether there be not *some* such Actions, as do plainly discover themselves to the Unprejudiced Judgment of any Rational Man, to be *Good and Evil* in their own Natures, antecedent to the Obligation of any Human Laws. Or in other Words, whether there be not some Actions which do carry along with them such a clear and unalterable Reasonableness and Excellency, as that they do approve themselves to be Good and Lovely to any Unprejudiced Mind, and consequently Mankind must be under an Universal and Eternal Obligation to perform them, and to avoid and shun their Contraries. As also, whether we have not all the reason in the World to believe that those Actions, which the Mind of Man can thus discover to be Morally and Essentially Good, are agreeable to the Will of God, and directed by it: And to conclude, that the Deity also acts and proceeds in all Respects according to the same Universal and Eternal Dictates of Reason, and is Just and Good, Equitable and Righteous in all his Dealings with his Creatures; and *that he exerciseth*

ciſeth theſe things in the Earth. This I take to be the true ſtate of the Caſe; and this is what we Aſſert, and our Adverſaries Deny; and what I ſhall now endeavour to prove.

In order to which, it muſt be allowed in the

1. Place, That Man is a thinking Being, and hath the Power of Reaſoning and Inference. It muſt be allowed alſo, that we are capable of Knowing this, and do moſt evidently diſcover ſuch a Power in our ſelves. And ſince all Intelligent Creatures do naturally deſire to be happy, we muſt do ſo too, and conſequently endeavour to obtain that Kind of Happineſs which is agreeable to our Natures and Faculties; *i. e.* a Happineſs that ſhall relate to our *whole Natures*, and not to the Body only: Now the Happineſs of any Being conſiſting in the free and vigorous Exerciſe of its Powers and Faculties, or in the Perfection of its Nature; and the Nature of Man being Reaſon, the Happineſs of Mankind muſt conſiſt chiefly in the free and vigorous Exerciſe of his Reaſoning Faculty; or being in ſuch a Condition as that we can do all things that are agreeable to, and avoid all ſuch things as are diſagreeable to it. Now all this ſuppoſed and granted, as I think none of it can be denied, it will plainly follow, that all ſuch Actions as do Univerſally approve themſelves to the Reaſon of Mankind, and ſuch as when duly examined and conſidered, do conſtantly and uniformly tend towards, and promote the Happineſs of Man, conſidered as to his whole Nature, and chiefly as to that part of him in which his Nature doth more properly conſiſt, which is his Rational and Underſtanding Faculty: Such Actions, I ſay, muſt neceſſarily be ſaid to be in their own Na-

ture *Good*; and their Contraries must be denominated *Evil*, after the same manner; for whatsoever is universally *Approved*, is universally *Good*: to call a thing *Good* being nothing else but to declare its conducibility to that end it was designed for. Now according to our Adversary's Assertion, Men call that *Good* which promotes their own Advantage and Happiness, and so no doubt it ought to be esteemed; all that they mistake in, being, that they don't understand wherein their true Happiness consists. And therefore if a Thing doth in its own Nature approve itself to the impartial Reason of Mankind, and can on due Examination manifestly appear to conduce to the Interest, Advantage and Happiness of Human Nature; such a thing must by all Rational and thinking Men be pronounced *naturally and morally Good*; and its Reverse, *Evil* in the same manner. And that this is the case in Reference to that which is commonly called *Moral Good and Evil*, will appear plain and evident when we shew,

2. That there are some Things and Actions which the Free and Unprejudiced Reason of all Mankind, cannot but acknowledge to be *Comely, Lovely, and Good* in their own Natures as soon as ever it considers them, and makes any Judgment about them. And this is what is apparent to the Observation of all Men to have been *ipso facto* done; and the Truth of it cannot be denied: For have not all Nations in the World agreed in paying some kind of Worship and Veneration to the Deity? Was there ever any Place where, or Time when, *Obedience to Parents, Gratitude for Benefits received, Acts of Justice, Mercy, Kindness, and Good Nature*, were not accounted reasonable, good

good and decent things? I know some Persons have boldly told the World that 'tis quite otherwise, and that there are some whole Nations so Savage and Barbarous as to have no Notion of any Deity, who have no manner of Religious Worship at all, and who have no Notion or Idea of *Moral Good and Evil*: But when we consider that these Accounts come originally only from a few Navigators, who probably did not stay long enough at those Places to acquaint themselves with the Language of the Natives, and who consequently could not have much Knowledge of their Notions, Opinions, and Customs; it will be too hardy a Conclusion to infer positively that Men pay no Worship to, nor have any Idea of a God, only because they did not see them at their Devotions: And moreover, when we have had later and more accurate Accounts of some of those Places, which do plainly disprove the former Assertions, we have good reason, I think, to suspend our assent to them. And then as to their Notions of Good and Evil, it will not follow that they account Stealth and Murder as good and comely things as Justice and Mercy, only because these Relators had some of those Acts committed on them. For commonly they themselves shew them the way, by wickedly Robbing, Imprisoning and Murdering them; and therefore why the Poor *Indians* may not return some such Actions upon their Enemies and Invaders, without being supposed to be quite Ignorant of the Difference between Good and Evil, I confess, I do not see. And by what too often appears from their own Relations and Books of Travels, the *Indians* have not more reason to be thought Savage and Barbarous, than those that give

give us such an Account of them; for by their Actions they discover as poor Notions of Morality, as 'tis possible for any Men to have.

But after all, suppose the Fact true, as I do really believe it is not, That there is any Nation of Men so Stupid as to be quite devoid of any Notion of a God, or of the Difference between Good and Evil: All that can be concluded from hence is, that some Men may for want of Commerce with other Parts of the World, and for want of Thinking, and cultivating and exercising their Rational Faculties, degenerate into meer brute Beasts; and indeed, as such the Relators describe them; according to whose Account of them, many Species of the Brute Creation discover more Understanding, and Act, if I may so speak, more rationally; but it cannot be fairly argued from hence, that they *never have had* any Notion or Belief of these things; or that their Reasons will not assent to the Truth of them *hereafter*, when their unhappy Prejudices may be removed, and they may become civilized by Commerce. Much less sure will this Prove, that there is no Notion of a Deity, nor of Moral Good and Evil in all the other Parts of the World, and amongst Men that can think, and do exercise their Reason and Understanding. Will not a General Rule stand its Ground tho' there be a few Exceptions against it? Will Men take their Measures to judge of Human Nature only from the Monstrosities of it, from the worst and most stupid Parts of Mankind? Men may as well argue that all Mankind are devoid of Arms or Hands, or are Universally Defective in any other Part of the Body, because some few are daily born so, or rather have them cut off. We see there are often
Natural

Natural Defects in Mens Minds as well as their Bodies, and that some are born Fools and Idiots, as well as others Blind and Lame ; and a great many we see make themselves so by their own Fault ; But sure no one will conclude from hence, that all Mankind are Fools and Idiots, unless he be a degree worse than one himself. And yet Men may even as justly make any of these absurd Inferences, as to say, there is in the Minds of Men no Power to distinguish a Natural Difference between Good and Evil, only because there are some Stupid and Barbarous People, among whom no such thing can be discovered. For my part, I do most heartily believe, that 'tis impossible for a Rational and Thinking Mind, acting as such, to be insensible of the Difference between Moral Good and Evil : I cannot Imagine that such a Person can think it a thing indifferent in its own Nature, whether he should Venerate, Love and Worship the God that made him, and from whom he derives all the Good he can possibly enjoy ; or whether he should Slight, Despise, Blaspheme or Affront him. It seems utterly impossible to me, that any thinking and considerate Man, should judge it an indifferent thing in its own Nature, whether he should honour and reverence his Father, or abuse him and cut his Throat : or that he can esteem it to be as good and decent a thing to be Ungrateful or Unjust, as it is to acknowledge and to return a Kindness, to render every one their Due, and to behave our selves towards others, as we would have them do towards us.

I do not think that the Instances produced by a late Ingenious Writer, of some wild People's exposing their Sick and Aged Parents to die by the Severities
of

of Wind and Weather, nor of others who eat their own Children, are of force to prove that there is really and naturally no difference between Good and Evil, any more than I will believe that he cited those Passages with a design to make the World think so; for I think, allowing the truth of all these Relations, no such Inference can be thence deduced. A Practical Principle, of the Truth and Power of which a Man may be demonstratively assured, may yet be over-born in some Respects by other Opinions which Ignorance and Superstition may have set up in a Man's Mind. This Gentleman saith, p. 25. *Of Human Understanding, That a Doctrine having no better Original than the Superstition of a Nurse, or the Authority of an Old Woman, may by length of time grow up to the dignity of a Principle in Religion or Morality.* Now should a precarious and wicked Opinion over-rule a Man in one or two particular Cases, and carry him against the Rules of Morality, will it follow from thence that a Man doth believe those Rules of no Natural Force, and that it is an Indifferent thing whether he observe them or not? Ought I to conclude, that because I have read of a King that Sacrificed his Son to *Moloch*, that therefore he believed it as good and reasonable a thing to burn his Children alive, as to preserve, take care of them, and give them a good Education? Certainly, 'twould be a fairer and more reasonable Inference, to conclude that his Reason and Natural Affection was over-power'd by his Idolatrous and Superstitious Opinion; and that the reason why he did such a Wicked and unnatural Action was because he expected some very great Benefit for it from the Idol, or that he would inflict some very great Judgment upon him,
if

if he did not do it. And so in the Cases above-mentioned, one may well enough believe that those Barbarous and Inhumane Wretches that Starved their Parents and Eat their Children; did not nor could not believe it was as good and reasonable so to do, as it would be to preserve them; but only that they were under the Power of some Wicked Superstition, or Abominable Custom that had unhappily crept in among them; which they thought it a greater Evil to break (if they thought at all) than they did to Act against their Judgment, Natural Reason, and Affection. For *this way (as he observes) 'tis easie to imagine how Men, may come to worship the Idols of their own Minds, grow fond of Notions they have been long acquainted with there, and stamp the Characters of Divinity upon Absurdities and Errors, &c.* p. 26. So that I cannot see any Consequence at all, in asserting the Non-existence of Moral Good and Evil, from a few Barbarous and Ignorant Wretches doing some Actions that bear hard on the Rules of Morality: For notwithstanding that they may be lost in a great measure in some places; yet these things, and many others that might be instanced in, do certainly carry such Self-evidence along with them; that a free and unprejudiced Mind must needs perceive which way to determine, as soon as ever they can be proposed to it, and considered of by it. For any one in the World that doth but understand the meaning of the Terms in any of the lately mentioned Moral Propositions, will be demonstratively assured of the Truth of them: And he will see as

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clearly

clearly that *God is to be worshipped*, that *Parents are to be honoured*, and in a word, that *we ought to do to others as we would be done unto*, as he assents to the Truth of such Axioms as these: That a *Thing cannot be and not be, at the same Time*; That *Nothing hath no Properties*; And that *the whole is greater than any one, and equal to all its Parts taken together*: For the Reason why all Mankind allow these as *first Principles*, is because their Truth is so very Apparent and Evident, that they approve themselves to our Reason at first sight. And so, I think, do all these Great Principles in Morality; they certainly affect impartial and considerate Minds, with as full a Conviction as any of the former can possibly do. And would no more have been denied or disputed than the others are, had they not been *Rules of Practice*, and did they not require something to be *done*, as well as to be *believed*. For he that rightly understands what is meant by the words *God*, and *Worship*; will see the Necessary connexion between those Terms, or the Truth of this Proposition, *God is to be worshipped*, as evidently as he that knows what a *Whole* and a *Part* is, will see that the *Whole must be greater than a Part*. And no Proposition in Geometry can be more demonstratively clear, than these Moral ones are, to Men that are not wilfully Blind and wickedly Prejudiced against such Practical Truths. For as one hath well observed (a), *Morality may be reckoned among those Sciences that are capable of Demonstration*. And that these *Moral Truths have a stronger connexion one with another*,

(a) Essay of Human Understanding, p. 274, 275.

ther, and a more necessary Consequence from our Idea's, and come nearer to a perfect Demonstration than is commonly imagined; infomuch, that as he saith in another place, *They are capable of real Certainty as well as Mathematicks* (b). Now if the case (b) Pag. 284. be so, as most certainly it is; it will plainly follow, that Those things that do thus demonstratively approve themselves to the unprejudiced Reason of all Mankind, must be *good* and *lovely* in their own Natures, or Morally so, antecedent to the Obligation of Human Laws, Customs or Fashions of particular Countries.

And in this plain Distinction between Good and Evil, which our Reason, when duly used, Impowers us thus at first sight to make, is founded that which we call Conscience: which is a kind of an Internal Sensation of *Moral Good and Evil*. And *this Candle of the Lord, set up by himself in mens Minds, and which 'tis impossible for the Breath or Power of man wholly to extinguish* (a); is as Natural to a Rational Mind, as the Sense of Pain and Pleasure is to the Body; for as that is given us by the Author of our Natures to preserve us from bodily Evils, and to capacitate us to enjoy such a Kind of Happiness; so Conscience is our Guard against the Invasions of Moral or Spiritual Evils; and will, if rightly followed, give us always so much Peace, Joy, and Satisfaction of Soul, as cannot possibly be had any other way. But again;

(a) Essay of Hum. Understand. p. 276.

2. It is most plain also, That there are some things which do Universally and Naturally tend to promote the Happiness and Welfare of Mankind, and

others that do equally contribute to its Misery : And consequently on this Account we must esteem the former to be really and naturally *Good* things, and the latter, *Evil*. Now one would think, that one need not spend Time to prove that the Practice of Moral Virtue, doth Uniformly and Naturally promote the Happiness of Mankind, and that Vice and Immorality do as naturally and necessarily tend to its Misery. For doth not any one plainly perceive, that there is no Virtue, or Part of Morality, but what hath some particular Good and Advantage to Human Nature, connected with it, as all Vice and Wickedness hath the contrary? Doth not a sincere Veneration for that Supream and Almighty Being, from whom all our Powers and Faculties are derived, and a consciousness to our selves that we are obedient to his Will, and consequently under his Protection; doth not this, I say, bring constant Peace, Comfort and Satisfaction along with it? and prove our greatest Support under any Troubles and Afflictions? And on the other hand, hath not generally speaking he that is guilty of Impiety, Profaneness and Irreligion, dismal Doubts and dire Suspicions in his Mind of impending Punishments, and Misery? Is not such a Mans whole course of Action, a continual state of War in his own Breast, and a constant Contradiction of his Reason and his Conscience? What hath such a Person to support him, or to give him any comfort on a Sick or a Death-Bed, when the hurry and amusements of sensual Pleasure are over; and when all the treacherous Enjoyments of this World begin to fail him, and discover themselves

to be counterfeit and fictitious? But again, is it not plain to every one, that Truth, Justice and Benevolence, do Naturally and Essentially conduce to the well being and Happiness of Mankind, to the mutual support of Society and Commerce, and to the Ease, Peace and Quiet of all Governments and Communities? and doth it not as clearly appear on the contrary that breach of Trusts and Compacts, lying and falsifying of Mens Words, Injustice, Oppression, and Cruelty, do inevitably render that Place or Society miserable where they abound? What an unexpressible wretchedness would Mankind be in, if *Hobbs* his *State of Nature* were in Being amongst us? *i. e.* a State wherein no Man would have any Notion of Moral Virtue, but where every one should think himself to have a *right to all things*, and consequently be still endeavouring to obtain them; and making it his daily business to vex, rob, ruin and destroy all who opposed his Will, and they also be doing continually the same things against Him, and against one another. A Man must be stupidly and wilfully blind before he can assert such a *State* as this, to be as happy and advantageous to Mankind, as where all Moral Virtues are observed and exercised: And therefore Mr. *Hobbs* himself is forced to allow that rational Agents would have recourse to the Enacting of Laws for the due Government and Regulation of Society. But how these Laws should ever come into Peoples Heads, that are supposed to have no manner of Notion of any distinction between *Good* or *Evil*, *Just* or *Unjust*; and when there is in reality no such thing, is what I cannot

not possibly conceive. On the contrary, I think that the Constant and Universal Support, that these Moral Virtues have always had from Human Laws, is a most demonstrative Argument that Men have always thought them Substantially and Morally Good and Excellent in themselves; and that they do Naturally and Eternally conduce to the good of all Societies. Indeed, some things may be, and often are Enacted or Prohibited by Human Laws, that have no real nor Intrinsic Goodness, nor Natural Evil in them; but are only *Good* and *Evil*, according to some particular Circumstances and Exigencies of Affairs. And thus God himself was pleased to appoint the *Jews* many Rites and Observances that had not any real or Intrinsic goodness in them, but only were necessary for the present Circumstances and Condition of that Nation. But then these are every where in Holy Writ, Post-poned to Moral Virtue (*a*), declared by God himself to be of much lesser Value; and whenever there was a Competition between them, *these* were to give place to *those*; which were properly speaking good in their own Natures, and of Universal and Eternal Obligation; whereas the others were only good *pro hic & nunc*. Therefore they are said by the Apostle, *to be not Good*, i. e. in themselves or in their own Natures; but only by Institution. But this is not the Case as to such Actions as we have been mentioning, which are called Morally *Good* or *Evil*; for these have been constantly and universally distinguished by Humane Laws, and have never been confounded or changed. For can any Man

(a) Mich. 6. 8.
Deut. 10. 12.
1 Sam. 15. 22.
Psal. 50. 8.

Man produce a Law that ever obtained universally against paying Adoration and Worship to the Deity? against Mens honouring their Parents, or against their being Just, Good, Merciful, and Righteous in their Dealings with one another? *Against such things*, as St. Paul tells us, *there is no Law*. Nor is it possible for our Adversaries to shew us, that the contrary Immoralities were ever universally thought good and lawful; or allowed and established by any General Authority whatsoever; and should the Reverses to Moral Virtue be enjoined as Laws, and every one commanded to be Unjust, Oppressive, and Cruel, as now he is enjoined the contrary, any one may imagine what would be the dismal Consequences of it.

3. But again, Another Argument for the Natural distinction between Good and Evil, may be drawn from the Consideration of our Passions and Affections: For these are so framed and contrived by our Wise Creator, as to guide and direct us to Good, and to guard and preserve us from Evil by a kind of Natural Instinct, which we find in our selves frequently previous to all Reasoning and Consideration. Thus, we perceive a strange Horror, and very ungrateful Sensations seize upon us immediately, on the sight of a Scene of Misery, or a Spectacle of Cruelty; and as soon as ever our Ears are entertained with the doleful Relation of such Actions; so also an Instance of great Injustice or very base Ingratitude, raises a just Indignation in us against the offending Person; and we cannot avoid being uneasily moved and affected in such Cases.

Cases. While on the contrary, a very pleasing Satisfaction of Soul arises in us, when we see, or hear of an Instance of great Kindness, Justice, Generosity, and Compassion. Now this Sympathizing of our Natural Affections with our Reason; and their approving and disapproving the very same things that it doth, is a very convincing Argument that there is an Essential difference between Actions as to their being *Good or Evil*, and that we have a plain Knowledge of such a distinction. For no doubt God implanted these Passions and Affections in our Natures, and gave them this *Turn* which we plainly perceive they have, in order to prepare the way for our Reasons more thoroughly assuring us of the Natural Goodness and Excellence of Moral Virtue, when it comes to be Ripe, and sufficient for that End; and in the mean time, to keep Children and Young Persons, in whom we perceive these Natural Efforts to be very strong, by a kind of Anticipation or Natural Instinct from doing such things as their Reason, freely exercised, will afterwards condemn them for.

And now upon the whole, there being thus plainly proved an Essential and Natural Difference between Moral Good and Evil; and that the Reason of all Mankind freely and impartially exercised doth agree in this Point, that Morality conduces to the Happiness, and Immorality to the Misery of Human Nature: We may very justly conclude from hence, that all other Rational Agents must judge of *Good* and *Evil* after the same manner,

manner, and plainly distinguish *one* from the *other*. And they also must know and understand that their Perfection and Happiness (though they may differ in some Circumstances from us) doth consist in Acting according to the Eternal Rules of Right Reason and Moral Virtue. For if the Case be not so, several Rational Natures all derived from the same Deity, may come to make contradictory Judgments, even when they Act according to the Great and Common Rule of their Nature. But the Principle of Right Reason, at this Rate, would be the most precarious thing imaginable, and Men could never possibly be assured that they were in the Right in any Point, or knew any thing at all. Assuredly therefore this Great Rule of Right Reason that God hath given his Creatures to govern and direct themselves by, is no such uncertain thing, is in no respect Contradictory to it self; but must be Uniformly and Constantly the same in all Beings, that are endowed with it, when it is rightly and perfectly followed.

And from hence also we cannot but conclude, that the same Eternal, Constant and Uniform Law of Right Reason and Morality that God hath given as an Universal Guide to all Rational Beings, must also be in Him in the greatest and most exquisite Perfection. And that, not only because all Perfections and Excellencies in the Creatures must necessarily be in that First Being from whom they are derived, as I have already proved; But also, that if it were not so, God must be sup-

posed to have given us a Rule of Action that is contrary to his own Nature, or at least vastly different from it. And that he hath contrived our Powers and Faculties so, as to deceive us in the most Material and Essential Points, and indeed hath left us no possible way of knowing the Truth of any thing whatsoever.

For, If when, as I have shewn above, God hath not only fixed in our Natures, a Desire of Happiness; but also disposed them so, that every Power Faculty and Capacity of them convinces us that the Exercise of Moral Virtue is the Way, and indeed, the only Way to make us entirely happy. If I say after all this, there be no such things as Moral Virtue and Goodness, but that all Things and Actions, both in us and the Deity, are purely and in their own Natures Indifferent; 'tis plain, *Reason* is the most ridiculous thing in the World, a Guide that serves to no manner of Purpose but to bewilder us in the Infinite Mazes of Errour, and to expose us to Roam and Float about in the boundless Ocean of Scepticism, where we can never find our Way certainly to any Place, nor direct our Course to the Discovery of any Truth whatsoever. But this not being to be supposed of the Deity, who contains in himself all Possible Excellence and Perfection; it must needs be that our Reason will direct us to conclude the Deity also guided and directed in all his Proceedings by the Eternal Rules of Right Reason and Truth: and consequently that He will and doth always *exercise loving Kindness,*

ness, Judgment and Righteousness in the Earth ; as the Prophet here speaks.

And indeed, the *Hobbian* Notion of a Deity guided only by Arbitrary Will Omnipotent, without any regard to Reason, Goodness, Justice, and Wisdom, is so far from attributing any Perfection to God, or as they pretend, being the Liberty and Sovereignty of the Deity ; that it really introduces the greatest Weakness and Folly, and the most Brutish Madness that can be ! for what else can be supposed to be the Result of Irresistible and Extravagant Will, pursuing the most fortuitous Caprichios of Humour, without any Wisdom, Ends, or Designs to Regulate its Motions by ?

And of this the Ancient Heathens were so sensible, that they always connected *Goodness* with the Idea that they had of an *Omnipotent Mind's* being Supreme Lord over all things in the Universe ; for *Mind* not guided and directed by *Goodness* was, according to them, not *v̄s* but *ἄνοια*, mere Folly and Madness, and consequently no true Deity. There is a Remarkable Passage of *Celsus's* to this purpose, which though introduced upon another Design, yet very clearly shews the Idea that the Heathens had of the Goodness and Wisdom of the Deity. *God*, saith he, *can't do evil things, nor will any thing contrary to Nature (or Reason) — for God is not the President or Governour of Irregular or Inordinate Desires ; nor of erroneous Disorder and Confusion, but of a Nature truly Just and Righteous. — ἀλλ' ἔτι γε τὰ αἰσχρὰ ὁ Θεὸς δύναται, ἐδὲ τὰ ἄσχη' εὖσω βέλεια.*

---- ε γδ ὁ πλῆμελῆς ὑπέξεως, ἐδὲ ὁ πεπλανημένης ἀκοσμίας, ἀλλὰ ὁ ὀρθῆς καὶ δικαίας φύσεως Θεός ὅστιν ἀρχηγέτης. *Orig. contr. Cels. lib. 5. p. 240. Cantabr.*

Excellently to the same Purpose, is that Saying of *Plotinus*, The Deity doth always act according to his Nature or Essence, and that Nature or Essence discovereth Goodness and Justice in all its Operations : for indeed, if these things should not be there (i. e. in God) where can they else be found? Ποιῶ τὸ Θεῶν ὡς πέφυκε, πέφυκε ἢ κατὰ τὴν αὐτῆς ἔσιν, ἢ τὸ καλὸν ἐν τοῖς ἐνεργείαις αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ δίκαιον συνεκφέρει, εἰ γδ μὴ ἔχει ταῦτα, πᾶς ἂν ἔτι ; p. 265. *Ficin.*

And 'tis plain that the Heathens had a true Notion, that the Deity must be a Good, Just and Righteous Being ; because several of the old Atheists, as *Protagoras*, &c. argued against the Existence of a Deity, from the Worlds being *so ill Made and Ordered as it is*, and from there being so much Evil and Misery among Mankind, as they pretended to find in the World ; but now there had been no manner of force in this Argument, and it had been ridiculous to bring it, if, both the Atheistical Proposers of it, and their Antagonists, had not had a clear Notion that Goodness, Justice and Righteousness are naturally included in the Idea of a God. Accordingly *Vaninus* tells us, That *Protagoras* used to say, *Si Deus non est unde igitur Bona ? si autem est, unde Mala*, *Amph. Ætern. Provid. p. 90.* And the same thing *Tully* tells us also (*Lib. De Nat. Deorum*) that *Diagoras* used to object against a Deity. All which sufficiently proves that they were all Agreed that there was some
common

common Standard of Good and Evil; and that the Notion of a Deity had always these Attributes of Goodness and Justice connected with it.

And if this be so, as undoubtedly it is, we shall gain one more good Argument for this Natural and Eternal Distinction between Good and Evil, and a yet much Nobler Foundation for Morality. For we cannot but think, that a God who hath Perfect Goodness, Justice and Mercy, Essential to his Nature, and who hath Created several Orders of Being in the World, to make them Happy, and in order to display his own Glory, by his Just, Kind and Gracious Dealing with them: we cannot but think, I say, that God will give to those of his Creatures, whom he hath endowed with Reason, and a Power of Liberty and Choice, such a Method of knowing his Will, (the Way that leads to their own Happiness) as that they shall never be Mistaken about it, but by their own gross Fault and Neglect. And also that he will make the difference between Good and Evil, and between Virtue and Vice so plain and conspicuous, that no one can miss of the Knowledge of his Duty, but by a wilful Violation of those Powers and Faculties God hath graciously implanted in his Nature. And all this we see God hath Actually done: and indeed much more; having over and above connected very great Rewards with the Practice of Virtue and Morality. And hath either naturally planted in the Minds of Men a Notion of some future State, or else hath given our Nature such a Power, as that we may attain to
such

such a Notion : for we find a very plain Belief and Expectation of such a State, among many of the Ancient and Modern Heathens.

And over and above all this, he hath also given us a clear Revelation of his Will in the Holy Scripture, *that sure Word of Prophecy and Instruction*, whereby we may, if we will, gain a yet plainer Knowledge of our Duty, be more perfectly Instructed in the Method of Eternal Salvation, and find also much higher Encouragements, and much greater Helps and Assistances than we had before in the State of Nature. And all this is vouchsafed us to enforce the more effectually the Practice of Moral Virtue, and to enable us more perfectly to perform those Things, which the Universal Reason of Mankind approves as Good, Lovely and Advantageous to Human Nature.

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A
Refutation of the *Atheistical Notion*
OF
Fate, or Absolute Necessity.

IN A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the
CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of *St. Paul,*
November the Seventh, 1698.

BEING
The Eighth of the LECTURE for that Year,
Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle, Esq;*

By *JOHN HARRIS, M.A.*
and Fellow of the ROYAL-SOCIETY.

L O N D O N,
Printed by *J. L.* for *Richard Wilkin,* at the
King's-Head in *St. Paul's Church-Yard,* 1698.

THE
SOCIETY OF
MUSICIANS

MEMBERS

THE SOCIETY OF
MUSICIANS

BEING
THE LIST OF THE MEMBERS FOR THE YEAR

BY JOHN HARRIS, M.A.
AND CLERK OF THE SOCIETY

LONDON
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J E R E M. ix. 24.

Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth: for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord.

I Did, in my last Discourse, begin to Speak to the Second Particular considerable in these Words, *viz.*

An Account of some of those Attributes which God is here said to Exercise in the Earth, and in which he Delights.

On which I did not think it necessary to Discourse particularly; but from thence took an Occasion to Remove two Great Bars to the true Knowledge of God and of his Attributes, which Sceptical and Unbelieving Men had raised in the Way. Which were These:

- I. That there is in reality no such Thing as Moral Good or Evil: But that all Actions are in their own Nature indifferent.
- II. That all things are determined by absolute Fatality: And that God himself, and all Creatures whatsoever, are Necessary Agents, without having any Power of Choice, or any real Liberty in their Natures at all.

The former of These I did then dispatch, plainly proving the Existence of Moral Good and Evil, and answering the Objections against it.

I proceed now to speak to the latter; which is an Objection that our Adversaries are very fond of, and do all of them, upon Occasion, have recourse to. And it is indeed a great Point gain'd if they could make it out, and will effectually destroy all manner of Religious Obligation, and all dread of Punishment for doing amiss. For as one observes on these Three things all Religion is founded: 1. That there is a God who made, presides over, and governeth all things. 2. That there are some things *εὐσεὶ καλὰ ἔστιν*, in their own Natures good and just. 3. That there is also something *ἐπ' ἡμῶν*, something in our own Power to do, whereby we are Accountable for our Actions, and become guilty when we do amiss. But there can certainly be neither Good nor Evil in any Man's Actions, and no Rewards or Punishments can be the Consequents of them, if nothing at all be in our own Power, if whatever we act or commit, it is absolutely impossible for us to avoid acting or committing. Which yet must be the case, if, as they assert, *Things are determined by absolute Fatality; and that God himself and all Creatures whatsoever are necessary Agents, without having any Power of Choice, or any real Liberty in their Natures at all.*

I shall therefore at this Time, 1. Shew you that this is plainly their Assertion, from their own words.

2. I shall endeavour to shew the Groundlessness of those Reasons on which they build their Hypothesis.

And 3. from some Arguments, Establish the contrary Position of the Freedom and Liberty of Human Nature.

1. And

I. And that this is the Assertion of the Two great Atheistical Writer, is very plain, Mr. *Hobbs* declares himself to be of the Opinion, (a) *That no Man can be free from Necessitation. That Nothing taketh beginning from it self, but from the Action of some other Immediate Agent without it self. And that therefore, when first a Man hath an Appetite or Will to something, to which immediately before he had no Appetite nor Will, the Cause of his Will is not the Will it self, but something else not in his own disposing. So that whereas it is out of Controversie that of Voluntary Actions the Will is the Necessary Cause, and by this which is said, the Will is also caused by other things whereof it disposeth not, it followeth, that Voluntary Actions have all of them Necessary Causes, and therefore are necessitated.* (a) *Hobbs Trilogos, p. 297.*

(b) *This (saith he also) is a certain Truth; that there are Certain and Necessary Causes which make every Man to will what he willeth,* lb. p. 306. And then as to the Deity, I have already more than once taken notice, That *Hobbs* denies Him any *Understanding, Sense, or Knowledge;* (c) and asserts him to be *without any Ends or Designs in his Actions and Operations.* (c) *Vid. Sermon V. p. 51. Sermon VI. p. 9.* Which plainly makes Him an Agent absolutely and physically Necessary; as, indeed, follows also from the Notion of his Being Corporeal; which the same Writer every where maintains (d).

Spinoza also is very Express in this Matter, as I have already shewn (e) in some Measure. *In mente* (e) *Serm. V. (saith he) nulla est absoluta sive libera voluntas; sed Mens ad Hoc vel illud Volendum determinatur à Causâ, quæ etiam ab aliâ, & hæc iterum ab aliâ & sic in Infinitum (f).* And in another place, *Voluntas non potest vocari Causa libera, sed Tantum necessaria.* (g) And (g) *Spinoza Op. Posthum. p. 85. p. 28.*

yet

yet on another Occasion, and in another Book, he hath these words, *Clarè & distinctè Intelligimus, si ad Nostram naturam attendamus, nos in nostris actionibus esse liberos, & de multis deliberare propter id solum, quod volumus* (a). Which is as plain and palpable a Contradiction to what he, with the same air of Assurance, delivers in other places, as can possibly be.

(a) Princeps.
Philos. Cartes.
Demonstrat.
p. 103.

Mr. *Hobbs* also cannot be acquitted from expressly contradicting himself as to this Point of Liberty and Necessity; for he tells us in his Reasons for his Opin-

(b) *Hobbs* Tri-
pos, p. 314.

nion) (b) *That he that reflecteth on himself cannot but be satisfied. That a Free Agent is he that can do if he will, and forbear if he will.* And such an Agent he allows Man to be, and saith he hath proved it too. But how he will reconcile this with his Assertion that *no Man can be free from Necessitation*, and that all our Actions have *necessary Causes*, and therefore are *necessitated*, I cannot imagine. As to *Spinoza's* Account of the Deity, in Reference to this Point, I have given a hint or two of it already. He makes God to be the same with *Nature*, or the *Universe*, to be *Corporeal* and an absolutely necessary Agent; one who cannot possibly help doing as he doth; one who hath *no Power of Creation*, nor doth *act* according

(c) p. 29. Op.
Posthum. and
p. 33. 18.

to *free Will* (c). But is Limited and Restrained to one constant Method of Acting by the Absolute Necessity of his Nature, or by his Infinite Power. And lest any one should misunderstand him so far, as to imagine that he means by this, that God is by the Excellency and Perfection of his Nature, in all his Operations exactly conformable to the Rules of *Justice*, *Goodness* and *Right Reason*; He plainly excludes that Notion in these words; *Qui dicunt Deum omnia*

sub

sub Ratione Boni agere, Hi aliquid extra Deum videntur ponere, quod à Deo non dependet, ad quod Deus tanquam ad Exemplar in Operando attendit, vel ad quod, tanquam ad certum scopum collimat: Quod profectò nihil aliud est quam Deum Fato subijcere (a).

(a) Op. Posth.

P. 32.

Now, I think nothing can more shew the wicked Perverseness of this Writer's Mind, than this Passage; For he could not but know very well that when Divines assert the Deity to be *Essentially* and *necessarily Good*, they do not mean that Goodness is any thing *Extrinsic*al to the Divine Nature, much less that it is something which hath *no dependance* upon it: but only that the Excellency and Perfection of his Nature is such, as that it is in every thing exactly conformable to Right Reason; and therefore this was certainly a wilful Perversion of their Sense, set up on purpose to overthrow the Notion of Moral Goodness in the Deity. But how vain is it for him to tell us, that for the Deity to Act *sub Ratione Boni*, is for Him to be Subject to Fate, when at the same time he Himself Asserts, that God is in every respect a Necessary Agent, without any *free Will*, nay, without any *Knowledge* or *Understanding* in his Nature at all? This is to plain a Demonstration, that it was his chief and Primary Design to banish out of Mens Minds the Notion of Moral Goodness, that nothing can be more: and therefore tho' he was resolved to Introduce absolute Necessity into all Actions both Divine and Human; yet it should be such an one as should leave no Umbrage for any distinction between Good and Evil; or any Foundation for Rewards and Punishments. And in this Notion of Necessity, these Writers follow *Democritus*, *Heraclitus*, *Leucippus*, and that Atheistical

istical Sect; who maintain'd that there was Nothing in all Nature but *Matter* and *Motion*. And therefore when these Modern Writers assert that *there is nothing in the Universe but Body*, as they do, they run *Fate* farther than most of the Old Heathen Patrons of Necessity did. For there was none but the *Democritick Sect*, that supposed Fate to have a Power over the Will of Man; and in this particular, even *they* were deserted by *Epicurus*; as I observe below. The *Pythagoreans*, *Platonists*, and *Stoicks* agreed that the *Mind of Man was free*. And 'tis well known that the *Stoicks* did in this *Free Power* of the Will of Man, found that arrogant Assertion of theirs, That a *Wise Man* was in one respect more excellent than the Gods; for they were Good by the Necessity of their Nature and could not help it, whereas Man had a Power of being otherwise, and therefore was the more commendable for being so. There was, indeed, some of the Poets, and some few of the Philosophers too, who did subject the Gods themselves to Fate or Necessity. Thus *Seneca* in one place saith, *Necessitas est Deos alligat; Irrevocabilis Divina pariter ac Humana Cursus vehit. Ille ipse omnium Conditor ac Rector scripsit quidem Fata, sed sequitur, semper paret, semel jussit*. Which Opinion is effectually refuted and exposed by *Lucian*, in that Dialogue of his called *Zeus ἐλεγχόμενος*. As also by *Lactantius* in his First Book *De falsa Religione*, Chap. 11. But this, as I doubt not but *Seneca* and some others understood in a softer sense than at first sight it appears to have, so was it the Doctrine of but a few; for generally the Heathens did fully believe that Prayers and Sacrifices would alter a Man's Fortune and Circumstances for the

the better ; that they would appease the Anger, and gain the Favour and Blessing of the Gods, and that Their Nature was not so absolutely Fatal and Necessary, but that they could freely deal with their Creatures according as they deserved at their hands. For we find *Balbus* the Stoick mentioned by *Cicero*, telling us, That the Nature of God would not be most Powerful and Excellent, if it were Subject to the same Necessity or Nature, *Quâ Cælum, maria, terræq; reguntur : Nihil Enim est præstantius Deo, Nulli igitur est Naturæ Obediens & Subjectus.* So that these Writers tread in the Steps of the worst, and most Atheistical of the Heathen Philosophers, and maintain a more rigid Fate, and a more irresistible Necessity than most of them did. But,

2. I come next to shew the Groundlesness of those Reasons and Arguments on which these Men build their Hypothesis of Absolute Necessity.

And first as to the Reasons of Mr. *Hobbs*. The Chief that he brings against the freedom of Human Actions are these, saith Mr. *Hobbs*, *In all Deliberations and alternate Successions of Contrary Appetites, 'tis the last only which we call Will ; this is immediately before the doing of any Action, or next before the doing of it become Impossible.* Also, Nothing, saith he, can take beginning from it self, but must do it from the Action of some other immediate Agent without it ; if therefore a Man hath a Will to something, which he had not before : the Cause of his Willing is not the Will it self, but something else not in his own disposing. So that whereas 'tis out of Controversie, that of Voluntary Actions the Will is the Necessary Cause ; and by this which is now said, the Will is also Caused by Other

things whereof it disposeth not, it follows that Voluntary Actions have all of them Necessary Causes, and therefore are necessitated. Agen also, Every sufficient Cause, saith he, is a Necessary one, for if it did not produce its Effect necessarily, 'twas because something was wanting to its Production, and then it was not sufficient. Now from hence it follows that whatsoever is produced, is produced Necessarily, and consequently all Voluntary Actions are Necessitated. And to define a Free Agent to be that, which when all things are present which are necessary to produce the Effect, can nevertheless not produce it, is Contradiction and Nonsense; for 'tis all one as to say the Cause may be sufficient (i. e.) Necessary, and yet the Effect shall not follow. This is the Substance of all Mr. Hobbs his Proof against Free Will; in which, there are almost as many Mistakes as there are Sentences; and from hence it plainly will appear, that either he had no clear Idea's of what he wrote about; or else did designedly endeavour to perplex, darken and confound the Cause: For in the first place, He confounds the Power or Faculty of Willing in Man with the last act of Willing, or Determination after Deliberating. And consequently doth not distinguish between what the Schools would call Hypothetical and Absolute Necessity: which yet ought to be carefully done in the Point between us; for an Agent may be free, and no doubt every Man is free to deliberate on, and to compare the Objects offered to his Choice, and yet not be so after he hath chosen. Then, indeed, Necessity comes in; 'tis impossible for any one to choose and not to choose, or to determine and not to determine; and after the Election is made, no one ever supposed that a Man

is free not to make it. And therefore if by the *Will* Mr. *Hobbs* means that *last Act of Willing* or Electing, which immediately precedes Acting, or which is next before the doing of a thing become impossible, as he expresseth himself; he fights with his own shadow, and opposes that which no body ever denied: for no Man ever supposed *Freedom* and *Determination* to be the same thing; but only that Man before he determined was free, whether he would determine so and so, or not. And accordingly he himself defines a voluntary Agent, to be him that hath not made an end of *Deliberating* (a).

(a) *Tripos*,
p. 311.

Agen, 2. 'Tis hard to know what he means here, by *Nothing taking its beginning from it self*: he is talking about *Voluntary Actions*, and about the freedom of Human Nature, and therefore should refer this to the *Will* of Man: but the Instances he afterwards produces, are of *Contingent Things* (b), which are nothing at all to his purpose. But if this be spoken of the *Will*, what will it signifie? I grant Nothing can take its beginning from itself; the *Will* of Man took its beginning from God, and *Voluntary Actions* (we say) take their beginning from the Faculty or Power of *Willing* placed in our Souls: But what then? doth it follow from thence, that those Actions we call *Voluntary* are *Necessitated*, because that they take their Original from that free Power of Election God hath placed in our Natures, and not from themselves? I dare say, no one can see the consequence of this part of the Argument. And it will not in the least follow from hence, that the Cause of a Man's *Willing*, is not the *Will* it self; but something else not in his own disposing: Which yet he boldly asserts.

(b) *Ibid.* 315.

(a) Mr. Lock,
in his *Essay of
Humane Under-
standing.*

It is the *Power of Willing*, or that *Faculty* which we find in our selves, of *being free* (in many Cases) to Act or not Act, or to Act after such a particular manner, which is generally called the *Will*; and this is commonly said to be *free*. Tho' I think (as one hath observed) (a) it is not so proper a way of Speaking, as to say, the *Man is free*. For besides that 'tis not usual, nor indeed proper, to predicate one Faculty of another; 'tis hardly good sense to say the *Will is free*, in the manner now explain'd; for that would be the same thing as to say, that a free Power is free; whereas it is not the Power, but the Man that hath the Power, that is *free*. But however the Other way of Expression hath prevailed and doth do so, and I don't think any one is misled by it into Error; for that which every body understands and means by saying the *Will of Man is free*, is, that Man hath in his Nature such a *free Power*, as is called his *Will*. Now from hence it will not follow that a Man is free whether he will *Will*, or *not*; for he *must Will* someway, either to Act, or not to Act; or to Act after such a particular manner. But it will follow, that when a Man hath made any particular *Volition*, or hath determined the Point whether he shall Act, or forbear to Act, he is then no longer at Liberty, as to this particular Case and Instant; for the Determination is then actually made, and the Man no longer free not to make it. But this proves nothing at all against the Liberty or Freedom of the Mind of Man.

Again, what doth Mr. *Hobbs* mean by the *Will's being the Necessary Cause of Voluntary Actions*? Doth he mean that the Will of Man must of Necessity
act

act freely, and produce Actions voluntarily; if he doth, we are agreed; but if he means that the Will is previously necessitated in every Act of Volition to Will just as it doth, and could not possibly have willed otherwise; this is to beg the Question, and to take for granted the great thing in Dispute; 'tis to call that *out of Controversie*, which is the only thing *in Controversie*; which indeed, when a Man contradicts the Common Sense and Reason of Mankind, without Proof, is the best way of Proceeding.

But that which looks most like an Argument for the Necessity of all Humane Actions, is this which he brings in the last place. *That Cause* (saith he) *is a sufficient Cause which wanteth nothing requisite to produce its Effect, but such a Cause must also be a Necessary one; for had it not necessarily produced its Effect, it must have been because something was wanting in it for that Purpose, and then it could not have been sufficient: So that whatever is produced, is produced necessarily; for it could not have been at all without a sufficient (or necessary) Cause; and therefore also, all Voluntary Actions are necessitated.*

Now all this proves to his Purpose (I think) just nothing at all: He proceeds on in his former Error of confounding the *Act of Willing* with the *Power of Willing*; and of making *Hypothetical* the same with *absolute Necessity*; for, not now to dispute what he saith of *every sufficient Cause's being a Necessary one*; allowing that when ever any Volition or Determination is made, or when ever any Voluntary Action is done, that the Will of Man was a sufficient Cause to produce that Effect; nay, that it did at last necessarily produce it; he can inferr nothing from hence.

more.

more than this; That when the Will hath determined or willed, 'tis no longer free to Will, or Nill that particular thing at that particular Instant; which I don't believe any Body will ever, or ever did deny. But this will not prove at all that the Will was necessitated to make that Determination *à Priori*, and that it could have made no other; which yet is what he means, and ought to have clearly made out. For the same Power or Faculty of Liberty, which enabled it to make that Determination, would have been a sufficient Cause for it to have made another contrary to it, or differing from it: and then when that had been made, it would have been as necessary as the former. And therefore that Definition of a *Free Agent's being that, which when all things are present which are needful to produce the Effect, can nevertheless not produce it*, (tho' I don't think it the best) doth not, when rightly understood, *imply any Contradiction, nor is it Nonsense* at all. For the meaning of it is, That he is properly Free, who hath the Power of Determination in himself; and when all Requisites are ready, so that nothing shall extrinsically either hinder him from, or compel him to Act, can yet choose whether he will Act or not.

Thus, if a Man hath Pen, Ink and Paper, and a place to write upon, his Hand well and at Liberty, and understands how to write; he hath all *things present that are needful to produce the Effect of Writing*; yet he can nevertheless not produce that Effect; because he can choose after all, whether he will write or no.

Mr. *Hobbs* defines a Free Agent to be *him that can do if he will, and forbear if he will, and that Liberty*

Liberty is the absence of all external Impediments (a); (a) Triplos, which if he intended any thing by it, but to palliate a bad Cause, and to amuse the Person he wrote to, is as much Nonsense and Contradiction to what he himself advances about Necessity as is possible. For how a Man can be said to Act necessarily, that hath no *external Impediments* to hinder him, or Causes to compel him, but is free to *Act if he will* or *forbear if he will*, is what I believe no Man can possibly conceive. P. 314.

Thus we see plainly, that this great Patron of Necessity hath very little to say for his Darling Notion, and that he plainly contradicts and is Inconsistent with himself. Had he indeed dared speak out, and thought it time to declare his Opinion freely, he would, no doubt, have proceeded on other Grounds in this Point, and made use of Arguments more agreeable to his *Set of Principles*: which being allowed him, would have demonstrated an absolute Necessity of all things whatsoever. For he was a thorough Corporealist, and maintained that there was nothing more in Nature, but *Matter* and *Motion*; which if it were true, it is most certain, that all Things and Actions must be inevitably Fatal and Necessary; for (as Mr. *Lock* well observes) nothing but *Thought* or *Willing*, in a *Spirit*, can begin *Motion*. The *Necessity* therefore in such an Hypothesis would be the true Ancient Democritick Fate; the ἰλικὴ ἀνάγκη, or, as *Epicurus* calls it, τῆς φυσικῆν ἐμαρτυμένη, a through *Material necessity Mechanically* producing all Things: or the *Fate of the Naturalists*, who held nothing besides *Matter* and *Motion*. But this Notion, for some Reasons best known to himself, he did not think fit to insist on, when he wrote this Tract against the

the Liberty of Human Nature. Tho' his Successor *Spinoza*, with a little Variation did; whose Arguments we must next consider.

Spinoza, as I have formerly shewed, was an Absolute Corporealist as well as Mr. *Hobbs*; but finding that Cogitation could never be accounted for from *Matter* and *Motion* only, he supposes Cogitation Essential to *Matter*; and as he makes but one only Substance in the World, which is the Matter of All Things, or God; so he supposes Cogitation to be one of the Essential Attributes of this Deity, as Extension is the other. And from hence he concludes, *That all things, according to the Infinite variety of their several Natures, must necessarily flow from God or the whole, and must be just what they are, and cannot be, nor could not possibly have been, any otherwise* (a). He doth indeed stile the Deity *Causa Libera*, and say *he is only so* (b). But the reason he assigns for it, is only because *nothing can compel him to, or hinder him from doing any Thing*; but he expressly denies him to have either *Understanding* or *Free Will* (c). And he declares ostentimes, *That all things flow from the Deity by as Absolute a Necessity, as that the Three Angles of a Triangle are equal to Two right ones*. And then as to *the Mind of Man*, he gives this Reason why it cannot have any free Will; *Quia mens ad hoc, vel illud Volendum determinatur à Causâ, quæ etiam ab alia, & hæc iterum ab aliâ & sic in Infinitum* (d). The same thing also he asserts in another Place (e), and from thence undertakes to prove also, that God cannot have any *Free Will*; and withal saith, *That Understanding and Will, as they are called, belong to the Nature of God, just as Motion and Rest,*
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(a) *Ex necessitate Divinae naturæ, Infinitis modis sequi debent.*
Op. Posthum.
p. 16. 18.
(b) p. 17.
(c) p. 18.
Tract. Theol. Polit. c. 4. p. 63.

(d) *Op. Posthum.*
p. 85.
(e) p. 28.

and other Natural Things do, which are absolutely determined to Operate just as they do, and cannot do otherwise (a). This is the Argument of *Spinoza*, to prove that there is no such thing as freedom in the Nature of Man, but that he is determined in every thing by Absolute and Inevitable Necessity. And this Necessity also 'tis plain according to him, is purely *Physical* and *Mechanical*. (a) p. 29.

As to the Refutation of which, I think, I have already effectually removed the foundation on which it is all built, by proving that there are such *Beings as Immaterial Substances*, and that *God himself* is such an *One*, or a *Spirit* (b). For all the Necessity *Spinoza* contends for, depends purely on his *Notion* of the Deity; as appears sufficiently from what I have produced of his words. If therefore it be true, that God be an *Immaterial Substance*, a Being *Distinct* from Nature, or the Universe; and the Creator and Producer of all things, (as I think I have very clearly proved) 'tis most certain that the whole Chain of *Spinoza's* Argument for Necessity is broken to pieces. For the Reason he assigns for the necessary Operations of the Deity, are not the Perfections of his Nature determining him to *Good* and *Just*, *Lovely* and *Reasonable* things; but that the Deity being *Universal Nature*, All things and Operations are *Parts of him*, and their several Ways and Manners of Acting and existing according to the necessary Laws of Motion and Mechanism, are his *Understanding and Will*: which Ignorant People, he saith, may perhaps take in a literal Sense, and think that God can properly *Know* or *Will* any thing; but that in reality there is no such thing as Understanding or Free Will in God, since
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all things flow from Him by Inevitable Necessity. And if there be not any freedom in the Deity, that is in the *whole*, there can be none in *Men*, or in any other Beings, who are but *Parts* of him.

If this indeed be true, that there is no other God but Nature; then 'tis easie to see that all things must be governed by *absolute Fatality*, and be in every respect *Physically necessary*; there can then be no such thing as Contingency, or any Voluntary Actions; and if we were sure of this, 'tis indeed the greatest Ignorance and Folly in the World, to pretend to talk any thing about it. But on the other hand, if there be a Deity who is an *Infinitely perfect Being, distinct from Nature*: who *Created* all things by the *Word of his Power*, and for *whose sole Pleasure they are and were Created*, then none of those Consequences will follow; but it will appear very reasonable to believe, that God hath still a *Care and Providence* over that World which he made at first: and that *he delights to exercise loving Kindness, Judgment and Righteousness in the Earth*; as the Prophet here speaks: That he hath made some Creatures capable of *Knowing and Understanding* this, and who consequently have a free Power, as in other things, so of giving Praise and Glory to so Great and Wonderful a Being, nay, and of *Glorying* themselves in being capacitated to attain so Excellent a Knowledge. And that Man hath such a Power or Freedom of Will, in his Nature, is what I shall now proceed in the last place plainly to prove.

I. And the first Argument I shall make use of to demonstrate this, shall be the *Experience of all Mankind*. And this, one would think, should be of great Weight,
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and turn the Scale against all the Atheistical Metaphysicks in the World ; and so, no doubt it would, were it not wicked Mens *Interest* to advance the contrary Notion. Now that we have a free Power of deliberating, in many Cases, which way 'tis best for us to proceed ; that we can act this way or that way , according as we like best ; and that we can often forbear whether we will Act at all, or not, is a Truth so clear and manifest, that we are (I think) almost as certain of it as we are of our own being and Existence ; and 'tis an unimaginable thing how any Man can be persuaded that he hath no such Power (a). Indeed, one may by *Sophistical words, Metaphysical Terms*, and abstruse Unintelligible Banter, be perhaps a little amused and confounded for the present. But that any one should by such a *Jargon* be persuaded out of his Senses, his Reason, and his Experience, and continue in that Opinion, is what I do believe never yet befel any Rational and Thinking Man. When *Zeno* brought his silly *Sophistical Argument* to prove there was no such thing as Motion ; his Antagonist thought it to no purpose to return an Answer to what plainly was contradictory to the common Sense of Mankind ; and therefore convinc'd him only, *by getting up and Walking*. And the very same Return will baffle and expose all the Pretended Arguments for Necessity. For 'tis plain, He had a Power

(a) Had it not been a thing Undeniable that the Will of Man is free, and had not *Epicurus*, and his Follower *Lucretius*, very well known that it was a thing which every one could not but experience in Himself, he had certainly, as a very Learned Person observes (*Dr. Lucas Enquiry after Happiness*, Vol. I. p. 156, 157.) followed his Old Master *Democritus*, and asserted the Mind of Man to be as necessarily and fatally moved by the strokes of his Atoms, as Natural and Irrational Bodies are. But this Opinion he was forced to desert, and to assert the Liberty of the Soul of Man ; and 'twas to make this out according to his Senseless Hypothesis, that he invented that Unaccountable Oblique Motion of his Atoms ; which *Lucretius* calls *Exiguum Clinamen Principiorum*. Lib. 2.

first whether he would have walked or not, he could have walked Five Turns, or Fifty; he could have gone across the Room, or length-wise; round it, or from Angle to Angle. And I dare say, no Sophistry or Metaphysics whatever would have convinced him that none of these were in his Power, when he plainly found them all to be so; any more than he was convinced a Body could not move out of its place, when he had seen and tried a Thousand times that it would. 'Tis the same thing in reference to the Thoughts of our Minds, as it is in the Motions of our Bodies. We plainly find we have a Power in abundance of Cases, to prefer one thought before another, and to remove our Contemplation from one Notion or Idea to another: We can, in our Minds, compare and revolve over the several Objects of our Choice; and we can oftentimes choose whether we will do this, or not; and this Internal Freedom in Reference to our Thoughts and Idea's, we do as *plainly perceive*, and are as *sure* of, as we are that we can voluntarily move our Body or any part of it from place to place. And as I have plainly shewed you above, our Adversaries do grant and allow this when it is for their Turn.

But they will say, tho' we seem *to be free, and do think and perceive our selves to be so, yet in reality we are not; and it is only our Ignorance of Things and Causes, which induces us to be of this mistaken Opinion (a); and the Idea of Liberty which Men have is*

(a) Fallantur homines quod se liberos esse putant, quæ opinio in hoc solo consistit, quod suarum Actionum sint conscii, & Ignari Causarum à quibus determinantur. Hæc ergo est eorum libertatis Idea quod suarum Actionum nullam cognoscunt Causam. Nam quod aiunt humanas Actiones à Voluntate pendere verba sunt quorum nullam habent Mean. Bapr. Spinoz. Op Posthum. p. 73. Vid. etiam, p. 37.

they

they depend on the Will, is to talk about what they do not understand, and to use words of which they have no Ideas at all. To which, I say, that I cannot but be of the Opinion that it is a good Rational way enough of Proceeding, to pronounce of things according as we do experience them to be, and to declare them to be that which we have all the Reason in the World to think and believe that they really are. And I think we may well enough own and be contented with the Charge of Ignorance here laid upon us. For the Case is thus: We think our selves free, because we plainly find and experiment our selves to be so in a Thousand Instances; and this also these Penetrating Gentlemen sometimes, as I have shewed, do kindly allow; and we are indeed wholly Ignorant of any Causes that do absolutely determine us to Action; or which do necessitate us in what we do, previous to that free Power which we find in our selves; so that plainly perceiving our selves to have this free Power, and being Ignorant of any true Reason why we should believe we are mistaken in what we perceive and know, we do, indeed, (such is our Ignorance and Weakness) embrace the Opinion that there is a Liberty of Action in Human Nature. And this free Power or Liberty which we find in us, we not being deep Metaphysicians, call the Will; by which we understand, as I have shewed before, not any Particular Act of Volition, but the Power or Faculty of Willing. And since we plainly perceive that in many cases we are not determined to Action by any thing without us, but do choose or refuse, act or not act, according as we please; and being withal grossly Ignorant of any Cause these Actions have, but what we find and perceive

ceive them to have, we call our *free Will the Cause of these Actions*, and say they depend on it: and yet after all, do we not find out, that we talk about what we do not understand, and use words that we have no Idea of. But our Adversaries, it seems, have a quite different relish of things, they soar in a higher and more subtle Region, they will not condescend to speak *common sense* in this Matter; Tho' they plainly understand, (as they tell us) that they are really free as to many Actions, and can deliberate whether they will do them or not, purely because they have a free Power so to do (a); tho' they are satisfied that they can act if they will, or forbear if they will (b); yet they say this is in reality a Mistake, and that there is no such thing as freedom after all, but that all Actions are absolutely necessitated. And as for the *Power or Faculty* which is vulgarly called the *Will*; that sometimes is one thing sometimes another, according as they think fit to name it. Sometimes 'tis an *Act of Volition* that follows the *Ultimum dictamen Intellectus*, and sometimes 'tis the *Understanding itself* (c). Now 'tis nothing but an *Idea* (d), and by and by a meer *Ens Rationis* (d), or an Imaginary Cause of Action, which *Ignorant Men* have fancied that they have in themselves (e). So hard is it for Men that fly so high, to have a distinct view of any thing below. But I proceed,

(a) Spinoza
Princip. Philos.
Cartes Demonstr.
p. 103.

(b) Hobbs Tri-
pos, P. 314.

(c) Spin. Op.
Posth. p. 87, 88.

(d) Ibid. p. 399.

(e) P. 73.

2. To another Argument, for the freedom of Humane Nature; and that is, *the monstrous Absurdities and Consequences* of the contrary Opinion. For the Assertion that all our Actions are necessitated, it perfectly destroys the Notions of Good and Evil, Rewards and Punishments, and of all manner of Obligation

gation both to Divine and Human Laws : and consequently is the most Destructive Principle, that can be advanced, to the Good of Society. I have already proved that there is a Natural Distinction between Actions as to Good and Evil, that this is plainly discoverable by the Light of Reason, and that all Nations in all Ages of the World have been sensible of it ; and if this be proved, (as I think it hath been) we ought not to desert it, only because we can't readily solve all the Difficulties about the Freedom of the Will of Man, which a Sceptical Man may raise against it ; much less ought we to embrace an Opinion that *perfectly Contradicts it* ; as this of absolute Necessity certainly doth. For if all things and Actions whatever are absolutely Necessary , and cannot possibly be otherwise than they are ; there can be no such thing as *Good or Evil, Right or Wrong, Honourable or Base, &c.* And why should any Creatures trouble themselves about paying any Veneration to the Deity, if that he could not help making them just such as they are ? and if he hath absolutely necessitated them to do just as they do ? God hath, according to these Horrid Principles, no Natural Right to any Obedience from us , as a free Agent would, who had out of his own gracious Goodness bestowed so many Gifts and Mercies upon us. This Mr. *Hobbs* well knew, and therefore he tells us, That *there is no Obedience due to God out of Gratitude to him for Creating or Preserving us, &c. (a) but what we pay him, is founded only in his Irresistible Power.*

(a) *Leviath.*
P. 187.

And so likewise, as to Human Laws and the Good of the Government or Commonwealth where we are placed. No Man, according to these Abominable
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Tenets, hath any Obligation upon him to obey Rulers, to be just and honest in his Dealings, to be loving and merciful, helpful and beneficial to his Neighbours; but he may Rebel, Murder, Rob, and Oppress, without being Subject to any guilt at all; and if he can but escape Punishment from the Magistrate he is safe enough, and hath no reason to be disturbed in his own Mind; for he can't help any of all this, he is under an absolute necessity of doing what he doth, and no one ought to blame him for it. Indeed, *Spinoza* says, That the Government may, if they think fit, put such a Man to Death; but not because *he is Guilty and deserves it*, but because he is *Mischievous* and *Dangerous* to them, and therefore is to be feared. And when one wrote to him on this Point, alledging, that if the *Will were not free, All Vice would be excusable*; he Answers, *Quid inde (a)? Nam homines mali non minus timendi sunt, nec minus perniciosi, quando necessariò mali sunt.*

(a) *Spinoz. Op. Posthum. p. 486*

By which he plainly allows that all Wickedness is *excusable*, tho' it be not always *tolerable*, as it is not when it becomes *formidable*. *Fear* is that which according to these Men doth every thing in the World, in this Case. A Subject pays Obedience to the Laws, not because he thinks himself bound in Conscience so to do, or because it is just and reasonable; but because he is *afraid* of Punishment if he do not do it. And the Magistrates Punish an Offender, not because they think he hath committed any Fault, or is Guilty of any Crime properly speaking; but because *They* are *afraid* of *Him*, and under an apprehension that he is likely to do them a Mischief. And thus a Man that is guilty of all manner of Immorality, an Assasin

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of Princes, a Firer of Cities, a Betrayer of his Country, a Poisoner, Coiner, a Common Robber, or the most flagitious Villain that can be imagined, is as Innocent as a Saint from any guilt of Sin he hath upon him; for he is *necessitated* to do what he doth, he can't help it, any more than another Man can, that acts virtuously, as 'tis called: and therefore he may and ought to have as much Peace and Satisfaction in his own Mind, and as much Respect and Honour paid him from others too, provided they are not *afraid* of him, as ever any Man had.

But will not such a Principle as this be the most mischievous and dangerous to Mankind that can possibly be? Doth it not open a Door to all the Wickedness that can possibly enter into the Heart of Man to commit? And consequently ought not all Governments to *be afraid*, as they themselves would express it, of Men that vent such Notions as these, so plainly contradictory to, and inconsistent with the Good of Human Society?

And as this is a most *pernicious*, so 'tis the most *Impudent* and *Daring* Opinion that ever was advanced: for it charges all Mankind in all Ages of the World, with the most gross and palpable Folly that can be: For, besides that it gives the Lye to the Experience and certain Knowledge of every Body, as I shewed before; it renders all Laws, and Rules of Action, and all the Sanctions of them, ridiculous: it makes all *Advice* and *Exhortation* useles, and to no purpose; all *Censure*, *Punishment* and *Reproof* is *Unjust* and *Unreasonable*; All *Honours* and *Rewards* it renders *Unmerited*; And all *Knowledge*, *Wisdom*, *Care* and *Circumspection*, become by this means, the most foo-

lish and unaccountable things in the World ; for if all things are governed by Absolute Fatality, any one may see that all these things signifie Nothing at all, but 'tis plain, the Wisest Part of the World as they have been justly esteemed, are in reality the greatest Fools and most stupid Idiots that can be : for they encourage Men to act well, and discourage them from doing amiss, by Elaborate and Studied Methods, when after all, 'tis impossible according to this Notion, that any one can possibly avoid doing just as he doth.

Nor can I see how these wonderful *Discoverers* themselves, that have thus luckily found out that all Mankind are mistaken in thinking themselves Free, when they are not so ; I can't see, I say, how according to their own Notions *they* can be acquitted from being as *Ignorant* and *Mistaken*, and as arrant Fools as the rest of Mankind. For why do they write Books, and spin out such Elaborate Treatises as they fanise they do ? and why should they set themselves up above others, and expect Praise and Glory for their *fine Thoughts* and *elevated Notions* ? they can't sure be so *Ignorant* as to expect to convince any Body, or to Profelyte any one over to their Opinion ? Can any Man help being of that Opinion he embraces ? if he can, he hath free Will, and is not necessitated to hold what he doth hold ; which destroys all they are so studiously advancing. But if he cannot alter his Opinion freely, but is absolutely necessitated to believe what he doth believe ; how ridiculous is it to pretend to Dispute or Argue in such a Case ? They will say, no doubt, that they are necessitated to write, and can't help it : But if the Government should Plead the same thing, for Punishing them for so doing ;
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they would, we know, make a large out-cry against *Persecution*, and the *Infringement of that Native Liberty*, that every Man hath to enjoy his own Opinion. For these Gentlemen make use of Liberty and Necessity, according as it best serves their purpose. When they commit Immoralities and Wicked Actions; they then ought not to be punished either by God or Man, because they are *necessitated to do it, and can't help it*. But if a Government, judging such Notions destructive to the Good of Human Society, and contrary to the express Word of God, thinks fit to Prohibit the Propagation of them, and to Punish the Authors of them: How do these Men then Cry up the *Liberty* of Human Nature? then every Man's Opinion ought to be free, no Compulsion must be used, every Man's Conscience is to be his Guide, and the like. But how ridiculously Vain is all this, according to these Principles? Is not the Magistrate as much necessitated to Punish as they are to Offend? and the Government to *make Laws* as they are to *break them*? Oh by no means! They would *be free* to Sin and to commit Wickedness, and then *necessitated* not to be Punished. They would have Men think them *necessitated* in all their Actions, so as to *excuse* them from blame, and they would have the Magistrate *free* to forbear Punishing them, tho' he think them never so guilty. That is, in short, they would do what they please, and no one should call them to an Account for it; they would act like *Fools*, and yet be thought *Wise Men*; they would proceed contrary to Reason, and yet have the Reputation of having Principles, and pursuing the Dictates of Reason and Truth: And they would build themselves a Reputation in the

the World by advancing Paradoxes contrary to the common Sense and Reason of Mankind: by pretending to a higher pitch of Knowledge than their Neighbours, and by calling all the rest of the World Fools and Ignorant. In a word they would say, with those in the Psalmist, *We are they that ought to speak, who is Lord over us.* This, I am fully perswaded, is what they aim at in all their Arguments and Objections against Religion, and particularly in the bustle that they make about this Point, of the *Absolute Necessity of All Events and Actions.* Which how weakly they Prove, and how contradictorily they Maintain, against the Common Sense and Experience of all Mankind, I think I have sufficiently shewn.

F I N I S.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

Remarks upon some late Papers relating to the Universal Deluge, and to the Natural History of the Earth. By *John Harris*, M. A. and Fellow of the Royal-Society. In *Octavo.*



