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R E M A R K S

O N

Mr. DAVID HUME's Essay

O N T H E

Natural History of Religion:

A D D R E S S E D T O

T H E R E V. D R. W A R B U R T O N.

“ To wash away a few slight stains be mine ;
“ Charge him with Heaven's artillery, bold DIVINE.

A N E W E D I T I O N.

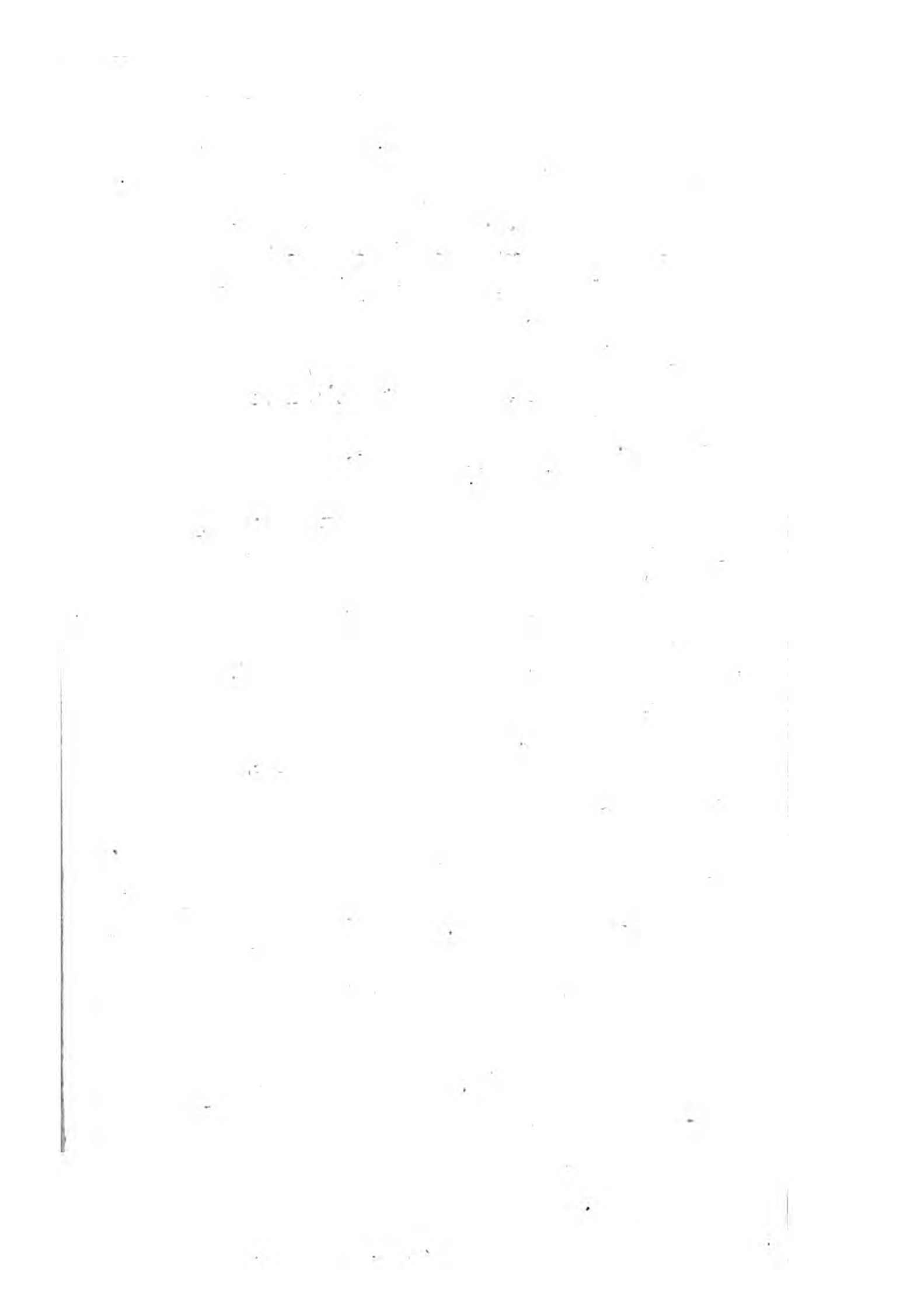
L O N D O N :

P R I N T E D F O R T. C A D E L L I N T H E S T R A N D.

^D
M C C L X X V I I.

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(4)



THE
BOOKSELLER
TO THE
READER.

THE following is supposed to be the Pamphlet referred to by the late Mr. David Hume, in Page 21, of his Life, *as being written by Dr. HURD*. Upon my applying to the Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry for his permission to republish it, he very readily gave me his consent. His Lordship only added, he was sorry he could not take to himself the WHOLE infamy of the charge brought against him; but that he should hereafter, if he thought it worth his while, explain himself more particularly on that subject.

STRAND,
March, 1777.

T. CADELL.



TO THE

Reverend Dr. **WARBURTON.**

REV. SIR,

I Take leave to address myself to you as to the supposed Author of the **FOUR LETTERS on Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy.** Under this character, if indeed it belongs to you, you seem to have a right to the following Remarks; which are, in truth, little more than your own Remarks, only transferred from your Patrician, to this Plebeian Naturalist.

Permit me to say, that you have unmasked and for ever discredited the philosophical lucubrations of that unhappy Nobleman; who, in times that demanded the mere Politician to assist in impressing

the belief of a moral Governor on the minds of men, was so forsaken of every patriot principle as to labour with all his might to exclude the Creator from his Works, and by the doctrine of an impious fatalism to emancipate an abandoned people from the FEAR OF GOD.

It became the eminence of your character to go forth against this bold invader of Heaven. Your conquest was complete. And what could one expect as the fruit of it, but that, this chieftain of Impiety being subdued, the rabble of the enemy would disperse and fly before you; at least that they would not rally again, till in future times some other Champion of their cause, as illustrious by his name and quality, should arise to reconduct them to the charge.

But, alas! the irreligious Spirit, though it may be disgraced, is not so easily suppressed. Ere the Public had time to celebrate your triumphs, behold a puny Dialectician from the North (for as Erasmus long since observed, *Scoti DIALECTICIS ARGUTIS sibi blandiuntur*), all
 over

over armed with doubts and disputation, steps forth into his place ; and, with the same beggarly troop of routed sophisms, comes again to the attack.

But now, as the enemy is so contemptible, and the danger so little pressing, you may well enjoy your repose, and leave it to some inferior hand to chastise his insolence. And the very weakest may be equal to this attempt. For nothing remains but to employ against him the weapons which you have furnished ; in a word, to draw again that sword of the spirit, which you had borrowed from the Sanctuary, and whose resistless splendour flashes, if not conviction, yet confusion in every face.

To this office I presume to devote myself. I have a portion at least of your zeal to animate my endeavours. And if my talents should be found as mean as those of my Adversary, this circumstance would not discourage me. The contest would only be more equal ; and in such a quarrel the serious advocate for Religion would be sorry to owe his success

to any thing but the goodness of his cause.

This, Sir, is all I had thought to say of myself. But being got on so seducing a subject, the importance, which every author is of to himself, makes me imagine that perhaps you may be tempted to push your inquiries concerning me somewhat farther. And if, haply, any such curiosity should be raised, though I have my reasons for being a little on the reserve with you, something at least I could be content to hazard for your satisfaction.

Of my *Person*, indeed, I must have leave to make no discovery. And to tell you the truth, I have taken such effectual precautions as to that particular, that I venture to say you will never know more of me than you do at present. You may believe, if you please, that my vanity has suffered something in resolving on this concealment.

But then in quality of *Author* of these Remarks, I have not the same scruples. It may be fitting, you should know something more of the WRITER'S intention
and

and character. And in this respect he is very ready to gratify you.

THE AUTHOR then of these Remarks on Mr. Hume's Essay is ONE who, as you would otherwise conclude from the Remarks themselves, hath made a diligent study of your works; is familiar and, in a manner, conscious to your turn of thinking upon all subjects; and interests himself, more particularly, in all your views and projects for the support and advancement of religious truth.

But notwithstanding this intimacy with you, which might be justly suspected of creating a bias in most minds, he arrogates to himself the merit of judging of you more freely, nay to be plain with you, more severely, than perhaps your enemies themselves. He is extremely apprehensive of being misled or imposed upon in matters of this high concern: he considers the difficulty of the subjects; the fascination of favourite principles; the errors to which the best and most watchful writers are liable: And is the last man in the world who, out of a fondness for your notions,

notions, would neglect or betray any useful truth. He is One therefore that weighs your arguments without considering your authority, or even the disgrace you might be thought to incur from the confutation of them. Reading and criticizing you with this spirit, you are not to wonder that he hath sometimes seen cause to censure, where others admire. He hath even considered your volumes with a diligence which might have profited your adversaries; for he hath detected, not inaccuracies only, but *weaknesses* in your writings, which the most malignant of them have overlooked. To make you amends for this mortification, he does you the justice to profess that those Adversaries, as far as he is acquainted with them, have universally done you wrong.

With all this suspicious and unrelenting criticism about him, he is ready to believe however that your views are honest: he acknowledges that the main of your System is strong and impregnable: he sees no reason for you to desert the great design you have undertaken; and admits
that

that your talents for the execution of it, though not in his eyes what your fond admirers represent them, yet are such as may not unusefully, and, considering the times in which we live, may even creditably enough be employed by you in such a cause.

In a word, the AUTHOR of these Remarks is One who approves your Principles; or he would not have made use of them, even in this service. He thinks there is force and conviction in your Reasonings; or he would not have tried the strength of them upon others; and least of all upon so captious, versatile, and evasive a writer as Him, with whom he is here concerned. But what he takes upon himself to say he is most confident of, is your *zeal for the interests of truth and virtue*; without which, whatever merit there might be in your writings, he could have no complacency in the writer.

In consequence of this last judgment, which he forms of you, he hath not scrupled to adopt your *manner* of composition, as well as Arguments. He knows

what the gentle reader thinks of it. But he is not one of those cool opposers of Infidelity, who can reason without earnestness, and confute without warmth. He leaves it to others, to the soft Divine and courtly Controversialist, to combat the most flagitious tenets with serenity; or maintain the most awful of religious truths in a way, that misleads the unwary reader into an opinion of their making but little impression on the writer's own heart. For himself, he freely owns he is apt to *kindle* as he writes; and would even blush to repel an insult on sense and virtue with less vigour than every honest man is expected to shew in his own case.

At the same time he is not so blinded by his zeal, as to overlook a difference on OCCASIONS. He would not incur the ridicule of misapplying his strength; and is therefore content to soften his polemics a little, not in complaisance to such judges, but in conformity to his subject. Yet to put matters at the lowest, he remembers what the character of his piece should be, as delivered by a great Master.—

MULTÆ,

MULTÆ, ET CUM GRAVITATE, FACETIÆ:
QUODQUE DIFFICILE EST, IDEM ET PER-
ORNATUS ET BREVIS. And if he should
 not be thought to have catched the spirit
 of it so fully, as you have done on certain
 occasions, he pretends at least to have had
 this character in view, and to have copi-
 ed it, as he was able; though at the
 hazard, he foresees, of passing with the
 too delicate critic, for a **SERVILE IMI-**
TATOR.

This, Sir, is the whole of what he
 thinks fit to declare of himself. For the
REMARKS themselves, which are here
 offered you, he pretends only, that they
 are such as occurred to him on a single
 reading of the Essay; that they were
 entered hastily on the margin, as he went
 along; and that he now transcribes them
 with little or no variation, for the public use.
 Nor let that Public take it amiss from the
 writer, that he treats them with this ap-
 pearance of neglect. The various topics,
 he knows, which are touched upon in
 the Essay, might afford room for much
 useful and curious speculation. He knows
 too,

too, what his Duty to the Public requires from him on a proper occasion. But he never designed the following animadversions for an elaborate piece of instruction or entertainment to the learned reader. He would only employ a vacant hour in exposing to the laughter of every man, that can read, the futility, licence, and vanity of Mr. DAVID HUME.

REMARK I.

The writer, I have to do with, is a Veteran in the dark and deadly trade of Irreligion. But my concern at present is only with a volume of his, just now given to the public and entitled, FOUR DISSERTATIONS. And of these *Four*, I confine myself to the FIRST, which bears the portentous name of an Essay, *On the natural history of Religion*.

The purpose of it is to establish NATURALISM on the ruins of RELIGION; of which, whether under Paganism and Polytheism, or under Revelation and the doctrine

doctrine of the Unity, he professes to give the NATURAL HISTORY.

And here let me observe it to his honour, that, though he be not yet got to THEISM, he is however on the advance and approaching to the borders of it; having been in the dregs of Atheism when he wrote his Epicurean arguments against the being of a God. Sometime or other he may come to his senses. A few animadversions on the *Essay* before us may help him forwards. The thing is full of curiosities: And the very *title-page*, as I observed, demands our attention. It is called,

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF RELIGION.

You ask, why he chuses to give it this title. Would not the *Moral history of Meteors* be full as sensible as the *Natural History of Religion*? Without doubt. Indeed had he given the history of what he himself would pass upon us for the only true Religion, namely, NATURALISM, or the belief of a God, the Creator and Physical Preserver, but not moral Governor of the world, the title of *Natural* would

would have fitted it well, because all *Morality* is excluded from the Idea.

But this great Philosopher is never without his Reasons. It is to insinuate, that what the world calls Religion, of which he undertakes to give the history, is not founded in the JUDGMENT, but in the PASSIONS only. However the expression labours miserably, as it does through all his profound Lucubrations. And where is the wonder that he who disdains to think in the mode of common sense, should be unable to express himself in the proprieties of common language?

As every Inquiry which regards Religion (says that respectable Personage) is of the utmost importance, there are two questions in particular which challenge our principal attention, to wit, that concerning its foundation in reason, and that concerning its ORIGIN IN HUMAN NATURE.*

Here we see, he aims at a distinction. And what he aims at is not hard to find.

* P. 1. *Nat. Hist. of Religion.*

Religion of Philosophers like himself, and which he endeavours in this Essay to establish.

But do not believe, I intend to meddle with this *Religion of Philosophers* any further than to expose it to the public contempt, as it deserves. Even I should be finely employed, not to say you, to enter into a formal confutation of Mr. David Hume's *Naturalism*. However I think it incumbent on me to prove, that this is indeed the Religion which this honest man means to recommend in his *Natural History*. For so heavy a charge ought never to be made without good evidence to support it.

In his third Section, at the 16th page, he makes UNKNOWN CAUSES the origin of what men call *Religion*, that Religion which his History pretends to investigate. " These UNKNOWN CAUSES, says He, be-
 " come the constant object of our hope
 " and fear; and while the passions are
 " kept in perpetual alarm by an anxious
 " expectation of the events, the imagi-
 " nation is equally employed in forming
 " ideas

" ideas of those powers, on which we
 " have so entire a dependance." He then
 goes on to acquaint us with the original
 of these UNKNOWN CAUSES. " Could
 " men anatomize Nature, according to
 " the most probable, at least the most
 " intelligible philosophy, they would find,
 " that these *Causes* are nothing but the
 " particular fabric and structure of the
 " MINUTE PARTS OF THEIR OWN BODIES
 " AND OF EXTERNAL OBJECTS; and that,
 " by a regular and constant machinery,
 " all the events are produced, about
 " which they are so much concerned.
 " But this Philosophy exceeds the com-
 " prehension of the ignorant multitude*."

Here we see, the original of these *un-
 known Causes* is nothing but the result
 of MATTER and MOTION. And again,
 " The Vulgar, that is, indeed, ALL MAN-
 " KIND, a few excepted, being ignorant
 " and uninstructed, never elevate their
 " contemplation to the Heavens, or pe-
 " netrate by their disquisitions into the

* Page 17.

“ SECRET STRUCTURE OF VEGETABLE OR
 “ ANIMAL BODIES; so as to discover a
 “ supreme mind or original providence,
 “ which bestowed order on every part of
 “ Nature. They consider these admirable
 “ works in a more confined and selfish
 “ view; and finding their own happiness
 “ and misery to depend on the secret in-
 “ fluence and unforeseen concurrence of
 “ external objects, they regard with per-
 “ petual attention, the UNKNOWN CAUSES,
 “ which govern all these natural events,
 “ and distribute pleasure and pain, good
 “ and ill, by their powerful, but silent
 “ operation. The UNKNOWN CAUSES are
 “ still appealed to, at every emergence;
 “ and in this general appearance or con-
 “ fused image, are the perpetual objects
 “ of human hopes and fears, wishes and
 “ apprehensions. By degrees, the active
 “ imagination of men, uneasy in this
 “ abstract conception of objects, about
 “ which it is incessantly employed, begins
 “ to render them more particular, and to
 “ clothe them in shapes more suitable to
 “ its natural comprehension. It represents
 “ them

“ them to be sensible, intelligent beings,
 “ like mankind; actuated by love and
 “ hatred, and flexible by gifts and en-
 “ treaties, by prayers and sacrifices.
 “ HENCE THE ORIGIN OF RELIGION:
 “ *And hence the origin of idolatry or Po-*
 “ *lytheism*.*”

The few excepted out of the whole race
 of mankind are, we see, our Philosopher
 and his gang, with their Pedler's ware of
matter and motion, who penetrate by their
disquisitions into the secret structure of vege-
table and animal bodies, to extract, like the
 Naturalist in Gulliver, *Sunbeams out of*
Cucumbers; just as wise a Project as this
 of raising Religion out of the intrigues of
matter and motion.

All this shews how desirous our Essayist
 was of not being misunderstood: as mean-
 ing any thing else than Naturalism (or the
 belief of a Creator and Physical Pre-
 server, but not Moral Governor) by the
 Religion he would recommend in the
 place of that Phantom, whose physical,
 or rather metaphysical, history he is writ-

* Page 54—5.

ing. For this Phantom of a Religion, which acknowledges a *moral Governor*, arises, he tells us, from our ignorance of the result of *matter* and *motion*, caballing in the minute parts of *vegetable* and *animal bodies*.

The sum then of all he teaches is this; That that Religion, of which he professes himself a follower, and which has its foundation in Reason, is NATURALISM: and, That that Religion which *all mankind* follow, *a few excepted*, and of which he undertakes to give a *natural history*, is nothing but *Superstition* and *Fanaticism*, having its origin in *human Nature*; that is, in the imagination and the passions only.

REMARK II.

This fully justifies the censure, which has been passed upon him for his *History of Great Britain*; namely, that he owned no RELIGION but what might be resolved into SUPERSTITION or FANATICISM; having represented the established Episcopal Church,

Church, and the tolerated Presbyterian Form under the Names and the Ideas of Superstition and Fanaticism. Indeed, (to do him justice,) though with much offence, yet without much malignity and contrary to his intention. For he ingenuously enough confessed, that he gave his History that attic seasoning for no other end than to fit it to the palate of a very polite people; whose virtues, having only reached him at a distance, had, as is usual, been much exaggerated. To make amends, however, for this false step, he thought proper to give an ample apology for his conduct towards the close of the second Volume of his History. And this containing something more than an insinuation that he believed, what his *Natural History of Religion* shews he does not believe, namely, the truth of Christianity, I shall take leave, without any suspicion of being thought to go out of my way, to consider it paragraph by paragraph.

This Sophism, says he, of arguing from the abuse of any thing, against the use of

it, is one of the grossest, and at the same time the most common to which men are subject. The history of all ages, and none more than that of the Period which is our subject, offers us examples of the abuse of Religion: And we have not been sparing in this volume, more than in the former, to remark them. But whoever would from thence draw an inference to the disadvantage of Religion in general, would argue very rashly and erroneously.*

Thus he begins his Apology: And would not every Reader of him naturally believe that he was quoting the words of an animadverter upon him, in reproof of this very Sophistry; which he was going to answer? For who was it, that had been *drawing this inference to the disadvantage of Religion*, but our wise Historian himself; who had acknowledged no Religion but one or other of these specieses, *Superstition* or *Fanaticism*; and had done his best to shew of what infinite mischief both of them were to Society? The Reader may

* *Hist. of Great Britain*, V. II. P. 449—50.

believe

believe what he pleases (and if he be a Reader of Mr. Hume, he will find exercise enough for his faith); but, this sage observation is our Historian's own. And the pleasantry of it, is, you are obliquely requested to consider it as a reproof, not of his own malice, but of the folly of his readers, who understood their Historian to be in *earnest* when he gave this picture of the religion of his country; whereas they had read him to little purpose, if they did not see him to be in the number of those who throw about them firebrands and death, and then say, am I not in *jest*? However, to be fair, I am ready to excuse *his readers* in this (perhaps they can be excused in little else), for it is not to be disguised that their master does indeed make *the abuses of Religion* and *Religion itself* to be one and the same thing. All things considered therefore, I cannot but take this introduction to his apology, to be the pleading guilty with the insolent air of an Accuser, and under the circumstances of a convict, talking the language of his judge.

However,

However, though in his first Volume of History he neither spoke of, nor supposed any other Religion than what might be comprised either under superstition or fanaticism, yet here, in the second, he does indeed bring us acquainted with another, and defines it thus: *The proper office of Religion is to reform men's lives, to purify their hearts, to inforce all moral duties, and to secure obedience to the laws of the civil Magistrate.* Now, was Mr. David Hume only playing the Philosopher, I should take this to be no more than the definition of a mere *moral mode*, known by the name of a *divine philosophy in the mind*; something fluctuating in the *brain* of these Virtuosi, and ennobled with the title of *Natural Religion*: But as he is writing History, and the History of Great Britain, where the *Religion of Jesus*, as he has since learnt, is yet professed, I can hardly persuade myself that he can mean any other, than a Religion whose abode is in the *heart*, and which expatiates into virtuous practice; and is therefore indeed capable of performing all these
good

good things he speaks of. But why then, when he had heard so much of those bugbear Counterfeits, *Superstition* and *Fanaticism*, was there not one word slipped in, in recommendation of this *reforming Religion*? One word, in mere charity, for the honour of his dear country? That Strangers at least (for he writes at large and for all mankind) might not suspect, if ever indeed there was a true Religion amongst us, that these Impostors and Counterfeits had driven her quite away. Well; be not too hasty. To this he has an admirable Answer; and you shall have it in his own words—*While it* [i. e. the true species of Religion, which he had just defined] *pursues these salutary purposes, its operations, though infinitely valuable, are secret and silent, and seldom come under the cognizance of history. The adulterate species of it alone, which inflames Faction, animates Sedition, and prompts Rebellion, distinguishes itself on the open theatre of the world, and is the great source of Revolutions and public Convulsions. The Historian therefore has scarce any occasion to mention any other kind of*

of Religion, and he may maintain the highest regard for true piety, even while he exposes all the abuses of the false.

So it seems, that what reforms men's lives, purifies their hearts, inforces moral duties, and secures obedience to the laws of the civil magistrate, is not worth a wise Historian's Notice. If it were, he gives a very cogent reason why he should bring it to the Notice of his readers likewise, for he tells us that the effects of this are SECRET and SILENT. Should not the Historian therefore lend a tongue to this powerful but modest directress of human life, and bring her in all her lustre into our acquaintance? But *she seldom comes under the cognizance of History.* More shame for these false masters of the Ceremonies who so scandalously abuse their office.

Then it is, the Historian shines when he celebrates that *adulterate species of Religion, which inflames faction, animates sedition, and prompts rebellion:* For then it is that to these public Mischiefs he may add his own, and under the cover of the
adulterate

adulterate species inculcate to the people that all Religion is either *superstition* or *fanaticism*.

If this was not his purpose, and he had no other design than to write sober history, how could it ever enter into his head, that it was not at least equally his business to explain to us what that thing is which makes society happy, as what that is which makes it wretched and miserable? But from the honest man let us turn to the able writer, for in that light too he seems to have failed. It appears to me a matter of much greater importance that we should be brought acquainted with true religion and its blessings, than with the false and all its mischiefs: Because how shall we be able to avoid the latter, under our ignorance of the former, without running into the opposite extreme, and professing no religion at all? Now, though this perhaps is what our historian would be at, yet he has found by experience, his Readers are not so ready to follow as he is to lead.

Had

Had our Historian only consulted the Dignity of his Subject, in this too he would have found a great difference; or if he could not, a great example at least was before his eyes, to have pointed out that difference; Lord BACON, in his history of Henry VII. This, which in many respects is a model for this kind of writing, is much larger and more precise in the account of those Laws by which Henry laid the foundation of a flourishing and happy Kingdom, than of the Insurrections and Rebellions which disturbed his own reign. Had he taken our Author's route, and incurred the censure so justly due to it, I apprehend he had made a very foolish figure both amongst his contemporaries and posterity, by an apology of this kind. *The proper office of LAWS is to reform men lives, to enforce all moral duties and to secure obedience to the civil Magistrate; but while they pursue their salutary purposes, their operations, though infinitely valuable, are secret and silent, and seldom come under the cognizance of History.* LAWLESS RAGE alone, which
inflames

inflames Faction, animates Seditious, and prompts Rebellion, is what distinguishes itself on the open theatre of the world, and is the proper province of the Historian. Suppose this great Historian, and He too was a *Philosopher*, had executed what he once projected, the history of his illustrious Mistress, are we to believe that because Walsingham's *salutary operations* were done in *secrecy* and in *silence*, that there he would let them have lain, as *not coming under the cognizance of history*, and *only* buried himself in a circumstantial detail of the rogueries and turbulencies of the sons of Loyola? Would he not have gained more honour to himself, and procured more benefit to his reader by revealing and explaining all the wheels and movements of that political machine, from which, as from the urn of a Demi-God, flowed abundance and felicity on his country, than by unravelling the intrigues of the Jesuits which spread sedition, rebellion and murders all around them?

But to see how differently men's heads are framed even amongst great Historians.

TACITUS

TACITUS laments bitterly that his fortune had thrown him in an age, when there was nothing to write of but these horrors, *faction, seditions, public convulsions and Revolutions*. “Opus aggredior opimum ca-
 “ sibus, atrox præliis, discors seditionibus,
 “ ipsa etiam pace sævum : quatuor prin-
 “ cipes ferro interempti : tria bella civilia,
 “ plura externa, ac plerumque permixta.”
 Our Christian Historian riots in these calamities ; and thinks that *what inflames faction, animates sedition, prompts rebellion, and distinguishes itself on the open theatre of the world, is the only thing becoming the dignity of History*.

In a word, the offence he gave was for calling the Christian Religion, *Superstition* and *Fanaticism*. He says, it was *false Religion*, not the *true*, which he thus qualifies. He is asked then, how he came to say so much of the *false*, and nothing of the *true* ? His answer is, That the true does every thing in *secrecy and silence*. The greater occasion therefore was there for him to reveal this noble Mystery ; for he tells us that both its aims and operations

are *infinitely valuable*. If therefore he be for keeping it hid, like a court-secret, or if, in his own words, *it comes not under his cognizance*, we must conclude, that either he knows little of the matter, or that he believes less.

In conclusion, his own Apology has reduced him to this Dilemma. If he says, he intends the definition of Religion here given, for the definition of the *Christian*, how came he to comprise all Religion, as he does in the first volume of his History, under the names of *Superstition* and *Fanaticism*? He there mentions no other species; and so great a Philosopher could not be guilty of an imperfect enumeration. If he says, he means *Natural Religion* by his definition; he only fixes the charge against him the more strongly, namely, Irreverence and contempt of Revelation.

Either way, you see, our Apologist comes off but lamely. But what then?

————— To be of no Religion

Argues a *subtle moral Understanding*

AND IT IS OFTEN CHERISH'D. ———

C

Thus

Thus it has been said ; and I observe it for our virtuous Author's consolation, notwithstanding the ill success of his History.

R E M A R K III.

But from his *Civil* let us return to his *Natural History* ; and see how he supports his Thesis. He does it by something between history and argument. He calls it both : And You perhaps will think it neither.

The belief of one God, the physical preserver but not moral Governor of the Universe is, what we have shewn our Philosopher dignifies with the title of *the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion*. Now, if the belief of one God, a moral Governor, was prior in time to Polytheism, it will follow, that NATURALISM or the belief of one God, a Physical preserver only, is not *genuine Theism and Religion*. Because in his endeavour to prove Polytheism the first in time, he has shewn the inability of mere uninstruct-
ed

ed man to rise up to this knowledge, on the first Essay of his Reason; the consequence of which is, that if the infant world had this knowledge, it must have been taught them by Revelation, and whatsoever is so taught, must be *true*.

But it is become the general opinion (which, though it has been a long while a growing, our philosopher hopes very speedily to eradicate) that a belief of one God, the moral Governor, was the first Religion; induced thereto by the express assertion of an antient book confessedly of as good authority as any other record of very remote antiquity.

Our Philosopher's business therefore is to disprove the Fact. And how do you think he sets about it? You see there are but two ways. Either to prove *à priori*, and from the nature of things that Polytheism must be before Theism; and then indeed he may reject history and record: Or else *à posteriori*, and from antient testimony; in which case, it will be incumbent on him to refute and set aside that

celebrated record which expressly tells us, Theism was the first. Our honest Philosopher does neither. He insists chiefly on ancient testimony, but is as silent concerning the Bible as if no such book had ever been written.

Lord Bolingbroke, you know, before him had employed this very medium of the priority of Polytheism to Theism, to enforce the same conclusion, namely, NATURALISM: but knowing better how to reason, and being perhaps at that moment less disposed to insult common sense in so profligate a manner, he labours all he can to depreciate the authority of the Bible. But our North British Philosopher despises his reader too much to stand upon Punctilios with him; he roundly affirms that all antiquity is on his side; and, as if Moses had no human authority because he allows him no divine, he will not condescend so much as to do him the honour, he has done Sanconiathon, of quoting him, though it was in order to confute him. But you shall hear his own words,

words, because his egregious dishonesty has led him into as ridiculous an absurdity.

“ As far as writing or history reaches,
 “ mankind, in antient times, appear uni-
 “ versally to have been Polytheists. Shall
 “ we assert, that, in more antient times,
 “ before the knowledge of letters, or
 “ the discovery of any art or science,
 “ men entertained the principles of pure
 “ Theism ? That is, while they were ig-
 “ norant and barbarous, they discovered
 “ truth : But fell into error, as soon as
 “ they acquired learning and polite-
 “ nefs *.”

Shall we assert, says he. Why, no body ever asserted that Theism was before Polytheism but those who gave credit to their Bible. And those who did so can easily evade his difficulty, *that it is not natural to think that before the knowledge of letters, or the discovery of any art or science, men entertained the principles of pure Theism ;* because this Bible tells us, that the first

* Page 4.

man did not gain the principles of pure Theism by a *knowledge of letters or the discovery of any art or science*, but by REVELATION. But this man, who had run into unlucky mistakes before concerning the state of Religion in South Britain, believed in good earnest that we had burnt our Bibles, and that therefore it would be less generous to insult its ashes, than to bury them in silence. This, I think, can only account for that virtuous assurance where he says, that AS FAR AS WRITING OR HISTORY REACHES, MANKIND IN ANTIEN T TIMES APPEAR UNIVERSALLY TO HAVE BEEN POLYTHEISTS. And what system do you think it is, of the *origin of mankind*, which he espouses, instead of the Mosaic, to prove that Polytheism was the first Religion? No other, I will assure you, than the old Egyptian nonsense, which attempts to teach that men first started up like Mushrooms. In a word, the men, on whose principles this wonderful Logician argues, never questioned the truth of his Thesis. To them therefore all this bustle of a discovery is ridiculous

†

and

and impertinent. And those who dispute the fact with him, the Religionists, he leaves in possession of all their arguments. So they laugh at it as an idle dream, raised on the absurdest of the Atheistic principles, the Epicurean.

To this ridicule the reader sees, our Philosopher exposes himself, even if we believe him to be here speaking of *pure Theism*, in the proper sense of the words; that is of the belief of a God, the *moral Governor of the World*. But *Ridicule* may not be all which this mighty *Theist* deserves. For what, if our Philosopher should mean by his *pure and genuine Theism*, to which he denies a priority of being, his favourite NATURALISM? I should not be surprised, if he did: It is but running his *usual* philosophic course, from knavery to nonsense.

The reader, as he goes along, will see abundant reason for this charge. An Essay, then, so devoid of all manly sense, and even plausibility of reasoning, can afford a Remarker no other opportunity of entertaining the Public with him, than

that of drawing the picture of some of his characteristic features, some of the predominant qualities, of which he is made up. An admired Antient, I remember, has given us his opinion of this Godless Wisdom, which sets Heaven and Earth at defiance. It is according to him, ἈΜΑΘΙΑ ΤΙΣ ΜΑΛΑ ΧΑΛΕΠΗ, ΔΟΚΟΥΣΑ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΜΕΓΙΣΤΗ ΦΡΟΝΗΣΙΣ. The Charge is severe; yet you have made it out, but too clearly, against this author's noble precursor in the waste spaces of Nature. I would now do as much by the disciple and follower; and to that end shall keep your example in view while I present the Public with a few specimens of his philosophical virtues, his Reasoning, his Consistency, his Candour, and his Modesty; and all these promiscuously, as they rise in the natural disorder of his *Essay*.

REMARK IV.

“ Convulsions in Nature, says he, dis-
 “ orders, prodigies, MIRACLES, though
 “ the

“ the most opposite to the plan of a wise
 “ superintendent, impress mankind with
 “ the strongest sentiments of religion ;
 “ the causes of events seeming then the
 “ most unknown and unaccountable *.”

Our philosopher forgets himself. He owns and admits *the plan of a wise superintendent* : this *plan* is essential to his NATURALISM. He owns and admits the actual existence of *convulsions in Nature, disorders, and prodigies* : for these conform to his great principle of EXPERIENCE, his only rule of credit, and which therefore should be his rule of right. Yet these *convulsions, disorders, prodigies are*, he tells us, *most opposite to the plan of a wise superintendent*. Which in plain English is neither more nor less than, “ That a wise
 “ superintendent crosses and defeats his
 “ own Plan.”

You ask, how he fell into this absurdity ? Very naturally. He was betrayed into it by his childish prejudice to MI-

MIRACLES: which happening to cross a hurt imagination, while he was in the neighbourhood of *Prodigies*, as Mountains and Giants always met together in the rencounters of Don Quixote, he would not let them pass without carrying with them some mark of his resentment. And having shewn, in a book written for that good purpose, that **MIRACLES** were *most opposite to the plan of a wise superintendent*, he was not content to brand *miracles* alone with this infamy, but (so dangerous it is to be found in ill company) he charges the same villany, on *Convulsions in nature, disorders, and prodigies*, things in themselves very innocent, and by old experience known to have existed.

Thus a laudable zeal against his capital Enemy, **MIRACLES**, happening to be ill placed, this great philosophic detection of one of the prime master-wheels of superstition labours with immoveable nonsense.

R E M A R K

REMARK V.

But now I have mentioned our Author's aversion to miracles, it may not be improper just to take notice, in passing, of that capital argument, which he and Lord Bolingbroke have borrowed from Spinoza against them. "It is, that they are incredible, because contrary to all experience, and to the established course of Nature."

But is not this an admirable argument? A circumstance is urged against the reality of miracles, which must necessarily attend miracles, if there ever were any: their *essence* consisting in their being effects produced contrary to the common course of Nature; and their *end* in their being effects contrary to experience. For could they be esteemed the immediate work of the Lord of Nature, if they did not control Nature? Or, could they be esteemed the extraordinary declaration of his will, if not contrary to our experience of the common course of Nature?

"But

“ But hold a little, he will say. It is
 “ indeed of the *essence* of a miracle, that
 “ it be contrary to common experience.
 “ But for this very reason I affirm, that
 “ no miracles at all can ever be proper
 “ objects of *Belief*. For why believe an
 “ event *against* all experience, upon a
 “ testimony the credibility of which is
 “ founded *in Experience* ?”

Short and round, it must be owned.
 But, Good Sir, since you put the matter
 so home, one word in your ear about this
 same experience. To what *experience* is
 it that miracles are contrary? If you
 mean honestly and would answer to pur-
 pose, you must say, “ To Experience in
 “ all SUCH CASES as those in which the
 “ existence of miracles is alledged.” But
 what experience then do miracles contra-
 dict? Where do you find your *such cases*,
 in order to draw your argument from ex-
 perience? In the moon, or in any other
 of the worlds which philosophers have
 found or fancied in the heavens? For in
 the world which we *men* inhabit I know
 not what *like cases* can be pretended.

What

What then becomes of your *experience*?
Or, rather, how unhappy is your appeal to
it, when *all* the experience, we have had,
lies on the other side?

But this is only a brief hint to the wise.
And our philosopher, in particular, is left
to make his best of it. The reader sees,
this is no time or place to pursue a confi-
deration of such importance any further.

R E M A R K VI.

There is a strange perversity in the ar-
rangement of our Author's philosophical
ideas, occasioned by the vain affectation of
singularity.

Nothing hath been more uncontrovert-
ed, either in antient or modern times,
than that the notion of the Unity, amongst
the Pagans, arose from their *Philosophers*.
No, says this penetrating Sage, it came
from the *People*: and that by the most
natural progress in the world. " Men's
" exaggerated praises and compliments
" still swell their ideas upon them; and
" elevating

“ elevating their Deities to the utmost
 “ bounds of perfection, at last beget the
 “ attributes of UNITY and Infinity, Sim-
 “ plicity and Spirituality *.”

“ THE PEOPLE sure, the people are the
 “ fight.”

Turn this people to the South, and you see them fall down before Dogs and Cats and Monkeys. Place them to the North, and they worship stocks and stones. But give them once an Eastern aspect, and they shoot out into *praise* and *panegyric*, which presently produces a *first Cause*. It is pity but we could leave them here in quiet possession of their glory. It is not my fault that we cannot. Our Philosopher seems to be oppressed with his own discovery. Though the people might, in this manner, find out the *first Cause*, yet he is sensible they knew not what to do with it, when they had it. They *would* not leave their false Gods for the true; they *could* not bring both to a good understanding; they had neither skill nor

addresses to associate them together; and the true God was neither to be *praised* or *panegyrised* into an alliance with the false. What was to be done? Some philosophic fetch, much above the people, was, as he rightly observes, necessary to complete the system of paganism. This the Philosophers performed, and finished all with a master-stroke.

“ Such refined ideas, being somewhat
 “ disproportioned to VULGAR COMPRE-
 “ HENSION, remain not long in their ori-
 “ ginal purity; but require to be sup-
 “ ported by the notion of inferior medi-
 “ ators or subordinate agents, which in-
 “ terpose between mankind and their
 “ supreme deity. These demi-gods or
 “ middle beings, partaking more of hu-
 “ man nature, and being more familiar
 “ to us, become the chief objects of de-
 “ votion, and gradually recal that idolatry,
 “ which has been formerly banished by
 “ the ardent prayers and panegyrics of
 “ timorous indigent mortals *.”

* Page 55—56.

Thus

Thus the *vulgar*, you see, in their high flights of *praise and panegyric*, rose up to the discovery of a *first Cause*; while a set of *wiser men* are called in to restore the mob of middle deities to their pristine honours: And this, to suit the objects of worship to *vulgar comprehension*.

Now shallow men, like You or me, would say, why all this bustle and the bandying about of an unjointed System? Why did not one set of workmen undertake the whole? Or, if there were need of Coadjutors, how came the parties to act in so preposterous a manner, that the people assumed to themselves what belonged to the Philosophers, the *discovery of the first Cause*; and the Philosophers undertook what belonged to the people, the *discovery of demi-gods and middle beings*? Or, will he say, that the *People* did both? discovered the Unity in their blind, *timorous and indigent* state, and, when they were so well informed, struck out, in a lucky moment, their gross system of Polytheism?

He

He may say what he will ; but nobody shall persuade me but that an Author, who makes so great a figure himself in the various walks of Philosophy, would have given the honour of the whole to his own Profession ; could it have been done without dimming and impairing, in so capital a manner, the illustrious character of an original thinker.

R E M A R K VII.

“ The Getes (says our Historian) affirmed Zamolxis their Deity to be the only true God ; and asserted the worship of all other nations to be addressed to fictions and chimæras*.”

This assertion contradicts all Antiquity, as well as the very nature and genius of Paganism itself. But what of that ? It served an honest purpose : the purpose to which all his patriot endeavours tend, the discredit of Revelation. And on such

* Page 53.

an occasion a gratuitous assertion costs him nothing.

Now it hath been deemed one characteristic mark of favourable distinction in behalf of Revelation, that *the Jews affirmed the God of Israel to be the only true God; and asserted the worship of all other nations to be addressed to mere fictions and chimeras.* So far was well. But then he should have taken care not to contradict himself so very soon afterwards; where speaking of the universal genius of Paganism, he tells us, “Idolatry is attended
 “with this evident advantage, that by
 “limiting the powers and functions of its
 “deities, it naturally admits the Gods
 “of other sects and nations to a share of
 “divinity, and renders all the various
 “deities, as well as rites, ceremonies
 “or traditions, compatible with each
 “other*.”

But as this observation was not his own, being stolen from a late writer on the his-

* Page 58.

tory of Paganism, it is no wonder he should so easily forget it.

REMARK VIII.

But the Paragraph (from which the last quotation is borrowed) will afford us further matter of speculation. It contains a detailed comparison between the advantages and disadvantages of IDOLATRY and THEISM; and thus the account is stated.

“ POLYTHEISM or idolatrous worship,
 “ being founded entirely in vulgar tra-
 “ ditions, is liable to this great incon-
 “ venience, that any practice or opinion,
 “ however barbarous or corrupted, may
 “ be authorized by it; and full scope is
 “ left for knavery to impose on credu-
 “ lity, till morals and humanity be ex-
 “ pelled from the religious systems of
 “ mankind. At the same time, idolatry
 “ is attended with this evident ADVAN-
 “ TAGE, that, by limiting the powers
 “ and functions of its deities, it naturally
 “ admits the gods of other sects and na-
 “ tions

“ tions to a share of divinity, and ren-
 “ ders all the various deities, as well as
 “ rites, ceremonies, or traditions, com-
 “ patible with each other. Theism is
 “ opposite both in its advantages and
 “ DISADVANTAGES*.”

The advantages and disadvantages of *Polytheism* are, we see, such as arise from the *nature and essence* of Idolatry. Would you not expect, that the advantages and disadvantages of *theism* should have the same relation to their subject? Good logic seems to require it. But what of that, if his cause requires other management? He scruples not therefore to tell us in the same page, that the *disadvantages* here mentioned as arising from Theism, come not from the *nature* but the abuse of it. “ *They arise, says he, from the vices and prejudices of mankind.*”

R E M A R K IX.

Still we are detained on the same spot ;
 which is so fruitful of curiosities, that
 there

* Page 58—59.

there is no stirring from it. He is speaking of the absurdities or mischiefs, I cannot well say which, that arise from Revelation. And one, or perhaps both of these he intends to infer from the following observation.

“ While one sole object of Devotion is
 “ acknowledged, the worship of other
 “ deities is regarded as absurd and IMPI-
 “ ous. Nay, this *unity of object seems na-*
 “ *turally to require the UNITY OF FAITH*
 “ AND CEREMONIES, and furnishes de-
 “ signing men with a pretext for repre-
 “ senting their adversaries as prophane,
 “ and the subjects of divine, as well as
 “ human vengeance *.”

The calumnious insinuation, in this passage, about the origin of Persecution (the abuse, and not the reasonable consequence of a true principle) is below any body's notice. What I quote it for is a curious observation, though made, but on the by—that *the unity of object seems naturally to require the UNITY OF FAITH AND CEREMONIES.*

* Page 59.

Unity of object, says he, *seems to require unity of faith*. I am apt to think it does. For if the object of belief be single, the belief can scarce be double: unless by a drunkenness of the understanding, like that which doubles the objects of sense. But then, *that unity of object as naturally requires unity of ceremony*, is not so clear. *Unity of faith* is necessary, because *truth*, which is the general object of faith, is but *one*. But who ever affirmed, before our author, that *unity of ceremony* was necessary? *Ceremony* is only an expression of duty: And duty may be expressed a thousand different ways. *Unity of civil obedience* under the same government is necessary. But is *unity of civil obeisance* to the same Governor, equally necessary?

But in the brain of this paradoxical Philosopher, *Faith* and *Ceremonies* seem to have changed places. We see here how he has exalted *ceremonies*. You shall see next how he degrades *faith*.

He assures us, that "the *Egyptian*
 " *Religion, though so absurd, yet bore so*
 " *great*

“ great a resemblance to the Jewish, that
 “ the ancient Writers, even of the greatest
 “ genius, were not able to observe any differ-
 “ ence between them*,” in proof of which
 he quotes Tacitus and Suetonius: And
 then adds, “ These wise Heathens, observ-
 “ ing something in the GENERAL AIR and
 “ GENIUS and SPIRIT of the two Reli-
 “ gions to be the same, ESTEEMED THE
 “ DIFFERENCES OF THEIR DOGMAS TOO
 “ FRIVOLOUS TO DESERVE ANY ATTEN-
 “ TION †.”

These *wise Heathens* were shrewd ob-
 servers. But what then becomes of the
 wisdom of a much greater man, our Phi-
 losopher himself? who hath assured us,
 that *the general air and genius and spirit*
of the two Religions were so far from be-
 ing the *same*, that they were totally dif-
 ferent. For speaking of Revelation and
 Paganism, or of Theism and Polytheism,
 he found this remarkable difference in *the*
air and genius and spirit of the two Reli-
 gions, that “ Idolatry has this evident

* Page 76.

† Page 77.

“ ADVANTAGE over Theism, that by li-
 “ miting the powers and functions of its
 “ deities, it naturally admits the Gods of
 “ other sects and nations to a share of di-
 “ vinity, and renders all the various dei-
 “ ties, as well as rites, ceremonies or tra-
 “ ditions compatible with each other.”—
 Whereas in Theism, “ While one sole
 “ object of devotion is acknowledged, the
 “ worship of other deities is regarded as
 “ absurd and impious.” Nay he tells us
 in the same place, “ That Theism is op-
 “ posite to Polytheism, both *in its ad-
 “ vantages and disadvantages* *.”

In short, in that Section nothing is alike:
 in the Section before us every thing is the
 same. So various in wisdom is antient and
 modern Infidelity! However a difference
 between the Jewish and Egyptian Reli-
 gion, he owns, there was. But it was a
 difference only in DOGMAS TOO FRIVO-
 LOUS TO DESERVE ATTENTION; being
 indeed nothing more than this, whether
 mankind should fall down before a dog,

* Page 58—59.

a cat,

a cat, or a monkey, or whether he should worship the God of the Universe. From this curious specimen of our Author's ideas concerning FAITH and CEREMONIES, we cannot but conclude, that he has set up for a writer against Religion, before he had learned his Catechism.

R E M A R K X.

“ MACHIAVEL observes, says our great
 “ Philosopher and Divine, that the doc-
 “ trines of the Christian Religion [mean-
 “ ing the CATHOLIC, for he knew no
 “ other), which recommended only pas-
 “ sive courage and suffering, had sub-
 “ dued the spirit of mankind, and fitted
 “ them for slavery and subjection. And
 “ this observation would certainly be
 “ just, were there not many other cir-
 “ cumstances in human society, which
 “ control the genius and character of a
 “ Religion *.”

• Page 66—67.

Machiavel, says he, meant the Catholic Religion. That is, he meant the Roman Catholic, in contradistinction to the Gospel. Machiavel meant no such thing. If he had, the *super-subtile Italian* had wrote like this rambling North-Briton. For it is not the Catholic Religion, so distinguished, but the Gospel itself, which gave libertine men the pretence of saying, that it *subdued the spirit of mankind, and fitted them for slavery and subjection*. But here a sudden-qualm comes over our Philosopher. He was ashamed of saying this of the Gospel. And well he might. For, though he says, *the observation is certainly just*, there never was a ranker calumny. The Gospel recommends no such thing as *passive courage and suffering*, either with regard to the domestic invaders of our civil rights, or to the foreign enemies of our country: And there are but one or two illiterate and fanatic sects, of very small extent, in the whole Christian world, who have so understood and abused the Gospel. The only *passive courage and suffering it recommends* is to particulars,

ticulars, whose consciences civil society hath iniquitously violated. Now, if instead of this *passive courage and suffering* the Gospel had recommended to its private followers to fly to arms and repel the force of the civil magistrate, when he abused his authority, in suppressing truth and the rights of conscience, what tragical exclamations would these very men have raised against the factious spirit of Christianity? Indeed, to our Author's shame be it spoken, the very contrary of all this is the truth. The effects of the Gospel are most salutary to *human Society*: for by encouraging inquiry and by inspiring a spirit of liberty in religious matters, it naturally inclines its followers to carry the same dispositions into civil.

R E M A R K XI.

But this honest man can allow himself, on all occasions, to calumniate the Religion of his country: sometimes openly and grossly; but oftner, as in the following

‡ ing

ing instance, in the oblique way of Insinuation only.

“ Were there a Religion (*and we may suspect Mahometanism of this inconsistency*) which sometimes painted the deity in the most sublime colours, as the creator of heaven and earth; sometimes degraded him nearly to a level *with human creatures in his powers and faculties*; while at the same time it ascribed to him *suitable infirmities, passions and partialities of the moral kind*: That Religion, *after it was extinct*, would also be cited as an instance of those contradictions, which arise from the gross, vulgar, natural conceptions of mankind, opposed to their continual propensity towards flattery and exaggeration. Nothing indeed would prove more strongly the divine origin of any Religion, than to find (*and happily this is the case with Christianity*) that it is free from a contradiction so incident to human nature *.”

* Page 49—50.

We

We see what the man would be at, through all his disguises. And, no doubt, he would be much mortified, if we did not; though the discovery, we make, is only this, That, of all the slanders against Revelation, this before us is the tritest, the dirtiest and most worn in the drudgery of Free-thinking. Not but it may pass with his friends. And they have my free leave to make their best of it. What I quote it for, is only to shew the rancour of heart which possesses this unhappy man, and which could induce him to employ an insinuation against the Jewish and Christian Religions; not only of no weight in itself, but of none, I will venture to say, even in his own opinion.

R E M A R K XII.

“ The learned, philosophical Varro
 “ (says our no less learned and philosophi-
 “ cal Naturalist) discoursing of Religion,
 “ pretends not to deliver any thing be-
 “ yond probabilities and appearances:
 “ Such

“ Such was his good sense and modera-
 “ tion! But the passionate, the zealous
 “ Augustin insults the noble Roman on
 “ his scepticism and reserve, and professes
 “ the most thorough belief and assurance.
 “ A Heathen poet, however, contempo-
 “ rary with the Saint, ABSURDLY esteems
 “ the religious system of the latter, so
 “ false, that even the credulity of child-
 “ ren, he says, could not engage them to
 “ believe it *.”

From the fact, as here delivered, we
 learn, that the Pagans insulted the Chris-
 tians, and the Christians the Pagans, for
 the supposed absurdity of each other's
 system. Agreed. And what then? Were
 their several systems equally absurd? This
 is what he would insinuate, or his ob-
 servation is impertinent. Yet does not
 Mr. David Hume insult the *Religionists*,
 as absurd; They, him, as ten times
 more absurd? Will he say, that He and
 they have equal reason? But what, in
 the mean time, becomes of *Naturalism*?

* Page 80—81.

We must conclude then, that it is possible, one party may be in the right and the other in the wrong. The consequence is, that his approbation of Varro, and his censure of Augustin, is temerarious and unjust. For what hinders but that Augustin's *thorough belief and assurance* might be full as reasonable when he defended Christianity, as Varro's not venturing *beyond probabilities and appearances*, when he apologized for Paganism? Had our modern Philosopher, who has a much worse cause than Varro's to defend, but imitated Varro's *moderation*, which he commends, instead of Augustin's *thorough assurance*, which he condemns, his reader perhaps would have thought better both of his sense and honesty.—Oh, but for his honesty and impartial indifference between Christianity and Paganism, he has given us such a convincing proof in this very instance, that he ought ever hereafter to go scot-free. We have observed, that he has praised Varro and condemned Augustin: but to shew—*Tros Rutulusve fuat*—he tells us honestly—*that a Heathen poet,*

poet, however, contemporary with the Saint, ABSURDLY esteems the religious system of the latter [i. e. Christianity] *so false, that even the credulity of children, he says, could not engage them to believe it.* Now here, where he has been at the expence of so much fair dealing, he ought to be indulged in rewarding himself for it, which he has done in this modest insinuation, that Christianity was so false and nauseous that even children could not be brought to swallow it.

He may talk what he pleases of the *absurdity* of poets. But while one Philosopher lives, I defy all the poets of antient or modern date to equal him either in absurdity or fiction. The poet, he here abuses, is CLAUDIUS RUTILIUS NUMATI-ANUS. He tells You, how this poet reviles Christianity: and quotes the Poem, the book, and the page. Would you suspect all this to be a sham, and not one word of truth, from beginning to end? Yet so it is. Rutilius is speaking of a JEW, by name and title; and the Rites of *Judaism*, as they distinguish that Religion

gion from all other, are the subject of his Satire. The whole passage is as follows.

- “ Namque loci querulus curam JUDÆ-
us agebat ;
“ *Humanis animal diffociale cibus.*
“ Vexatos frutices, pulsatas imputat algas,
“ Damnaque libatæ grandia clamat
“ aquæ.
“ Reddimus obscænæ convicia debita
“ genti,
“ *Quæ genitale caput propudiosa metit :*
“ Radix stultitiæ, cui frigida *sabbata* cor-
di ;
“ Sed cor frigidius religione suâ est.
“ *Septima* quæque dies turpi damnata ve-
terno,
“ Tanquam lassati mollis imago Dei.
“ Cetera mendacis deliramenta catastæ,
“ Nec pueros omnes credere posse
reor *.”

The Pagan writers indeed frequently confound the two sects of Judaism and

* Iter. L. i. v. 383.

Christianity, with one another. But here, there is not the least room for that poor subterfuge. Rutilius speaks of Judaism by name: and to shew us that he understood his subject, he reviles it for those very rites, which are peculiar to Judaism; namely, the distinction between *clean and unclean meats, circumcision, and the Sabbath*. Yet, if You will believe this honest man, Rutilius represents CHRISTIANITY as so false, that even the *credulity of children could not engage them to believe it*. And why should You not believe him? He is a Philosopher, a follower of truth, and a virtuous man: One (as he says of himself) *whose errors should be excused, ON ACCOUNT OF THE CANDOUR AND SINCERITY WHICH ACCOMPANIES THEM* †.

R E M A R K XIII.

“ If ever there was a nation or a time
 “ (says our Philosopher) in which the
 “ public religion lost all authority over

† Dedicat. p. iii.

“ mankind,

“ mankind, we might expect, that infi-
 “ delity in *Rome*, during the *Ciceronian*
 “ age, would openly have erected it’s
 “ throne, and that Cicero himself, in
 “ every speech and action, would have
 “ been its most declared abettor. But,
 “ it appears, that, whatever sceptical li-
 “ berties that great man might use, in
 “ his writings or in philosophical conver-
 “ sation; he yet avoided, in the com-
 “ mon conduct of life, the imputation of
 “ DEISM and PROFANENESS. Even in
 “ his own family, and to his wife, *Te-*
 “ *rentia*, whom he highly trusted, he was
 “ willing to appear a devout religionist;
 “ and there remains a letter, address’d to
 “ her, in which he seriously desires her
 “ to offer a sacrifice to *Apollo* and *Æscu-*
 “ *lapius*, in gratitude for the recovery of
 “ his health †.”

Here he seems to commend Cicero (for
 his vanity, perverseness, and love of pa-
 radox make him always think at large,
 and write at random) on a topic which
 exposes his own wicked practice, namely,

* Page 81—82.

Cicero's care, *in the common conduct of life*, to set the people an example of reverence for the established Religion. But whether this was said in praise or dispraise of that noble Roman, it matters not, since presently after he contradicts his own account, and assures us, that the same Cicero was so far from *avoiding, in the common conduct of life, the imputation of DEISM and PROFANENESS*, that *He made no scruple in a public court of Judicature, of teaching the doctrine of a future state, as a MOST RIDICULOUS FABLE, to which nobody would give any attention* †. And this without the least care of reconciling Cicero, to himself; or his own contradictory observations, to his reader.

R E M A R K XIV.

But he treats whole Bodies of men no better than Particulars. “ We may observe (says he) that, notwithstanding the dogmatical, imperious style of all

† Page 91.

“ super-

“superstition, the conviction of the Re-
 “ligionists, in all ages, is more affected
 “than real, and scarce ever approaches,
 “in any degree, to that solid belief and
 “persuasion, which governs us in the
 “common affairs of life. Men dare not
 “avow, even to their own hearts, the
 “doubts, which they entertain on such
 “subjects: they make a merit of impli-
 “cit faith; and disguise to themselves
 “their REAL INFIDELITY, by the strong-
 “est asseverations and most positive bi-
 “gotry. But nature is too hard for all
 “their endeavours, and suffers not the
 “obscure, glimmering light, afforded in
 “those shadowy regions, to equal the
 “strong impressions, made by common
 “sense and by experience. The usual
 “course of men’s conduct belies their
 “words, and shews, that the assent in
 “these matters is some unaccountable
 “operation of the mind betwixt disbelief
 “and conviction, but approaching much
 “nearer the former than the latter *.”

* Page 83.

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This

This is superlatively modest. When the Religionist says that an infidel writer, (like this man) in order to screen himself from the resentment of the Law, says one thing and thinks another, there is no end of the clamours raised against uncharitable Churchmen. But Mr. David Hume may say all this and more of Religionists, and yet preserve his character of a philosopher and a friend of Truth. But infidelity owed him a shame, and he presently unsays it all; and confesses that Religionists are so far from being tossed about in *doubt* and *unbelief*, that nothing is more constant than the course of even the wisest and most experienced of them, invariably steady to the point of faith. For after having said a great deal to shew that Socrates and Xenophon did in reality give credit to Augurs and Omens, he concludes thus, "It is for the same reason, " I MAINTAIN, that Newton, Locke, " Clarke, &c. being Arians or Socinians, " were VERY SINCERE, in the creed they " professed: and I ALWAYS OPPOSE THIS " ARGUMENT to some Libertines, who
" will

“ will needs have it, that it was impossi-
 “ ble but that these great Philosophers
 “ must have been HYPOCRITES *.”

Our modest Philosopher had employ-
 ed the 83d page of this wonderful essay
 to prove, that notwithstanding *the dog-
 matical imperious style of all superstition*, yet
 Religionists are HYPOCRITES, *their con-
 viction in all ages being more AFFECTED
 than REAL*: and a great deal more trash
 to the same purpose. Yet here in the
 91st page he MAINTAINS *against Libertines*,
 that these Religionists are VERY SINCERE,
 and no Hypocrites. Nay, in spite, as
 it were, to his 83d page, he affirms that
 he ALWAYS *opposes this argument to liber-
 tines*.

But are you to think, he talks thus
 wantonly, for no other end than to shew
 his contempt of the reader? By no means.
 For though this be, sometimes, motive
 sufficient for our paradoxical Gentleman
 to *contradict*, yet we must needs think
 there was some important occasion which

* Page 91.

induced him thus *to give the lye to himself*. He had it in his choice (for what hindered him, when unrestrained by the considerations of truth or falshood) to represent the Religionists as either KNAVES or FOOLS. But this did not content his noble passion for mischief. He would have them BOTH. Unluckily this could not be done without a contradiction. To make them *Knaves*, he was to shew they professed one thing and believed another: To make them *Fools*, they were to be represented as *steadily* and *sincerely* believing all things. The contradiction, we see, was unavoidable: but how he came so needlessly to saddle himself with the *lye*—*I ALWAYS*, says he, *oppose this argument to libertines*—*I confess surpasses my comprehension*.

Well, having flounded so shamefully, he is for recovering himself; and therefore steps into the gap, between these two extremes, a moderating tenet; and so leaves all Religionists, both antient and modern, in a kind of MIDDLE STATE, between *Knaves* and *Fools*. His conciliating tenet, is this—“In the mean time it
“ is

“ is obvious, that the empire of all reli-
 “ gious faith over the understanding is
 “ wavering and uncertain; subject to all
 “ varieties of humour, and dependent on
 “ the present incidents, which strike the
 “ imagination. The difference is only in the
 “ degrees. An ancient will place a stroke
 “ of impiety and one of superstition al-
 “ ternately through a whole discourse:
 “ A modern often thinks in the same
 “ way, though he may be more guarded
 “ in his expressions *.”

I am so tired with his contradictions
 that I shall let this passage go, unexamined
 upon that head, notwithstanding it
 looks so askint both to the right and left,
 and agrees neither with the thorough *Hypocri-
 sy*, nor the *sincere belief* of the two
 passages, it is brought to reconcile. But,
 as it stands alone, I may be allowed to
 ask, Why is the *modern Christian more
 guarded in his expressions*, than the *ancient
 Pagan*? Does not human nature always
 operate alike in the like circumstances?

* Page 86—87.

If therefore, in this *modern superstition*, called *Christianity*, men are more consistent in the profession of their belief, than in that *antient superstition*, called Paganism, does not this shew that the circumstances were not alike? And what other difference in circumstances could there be, if not this, that Christianity having a rational foundation, its professors stood steady and unmoved; and Paganism only fluctuating in the fancy and unsupported by the understanding, communicated the same inconstancy and variableness to its followers?

Oh, but says our Philosopher, I will not allow that steadiness to be more than pretended, *A modern often thinks in the same way*, [i. e. inconstantly,] *though he may be more guarded in his expressions*. How prejudiced! what pretence has he to suppose it an *inconstancy*, only *guarded in the expression*, when the very uniformity of the profession excludes all data whereon to ground his suspicion that the belief is only pretended?

He

He must take it then for granted (as without doubt he does) that Christianity has no more reasonable foundation than Paganism. No need, will he say, of that at present. The *fashion*, the fashion, does all. An unsteadiness in Religion is discreditable in these *modern* times: hence the *guarded expression*.

Well, admit it to be so. What, I pray you, made unsteadiness in Religion now discreditable, which was creditable in former times, but this, that Christianity has now the support of, at least, plausible arguments, which Paganism never had?

REMARK XV.

In comparing the two Religions, Paganism and Christianity, our Philosopher finds that the former is to be preferred to the latter, both in its REASONABLENESS and in its BENEVOLENT SPIRIT.

“ Upon the whole, the greatest and
 “ most observable differences betwixt a
 “ *traditional, mythological* religion, and a
 “ *systema-*

“ *systematical, scholastic* one, are two: The
 “ former is often more REASONABLE, as
 “ consisting only of a multitude of stories,
 “ which, however groundless, imply no
 “ express absurdity and demonstrative con-
 “ tradiction; and sits also so easy and
 “ light on men’s minds, that though it
 “ may be as universally received, it makes
 “ no such deep impression on the affec-
 “ tions and understanding *.”

The *reasonableness*, we see, is resolv-
 ed into this, that You cannot reduce
 the Professors of Paganism to *an express*
contradiction, and that the Profession *sits*
mighty light and easy on men’s minds. As
 to the first property of paganism, its in-
 capacity of being reduced to a contra-
 diction, this it has in common with NON-
 SENSE, which is likewise incapable of suf-
 fering the same disgrace. And this will
 account too for its second property, the
sitting so light and easy on the minds of men.
 For nothing takes less hold of the mind
 than NONSENSE, or so little disturbs its

* Page 92—93.

tranquillity,

tranquillity, while we have the discretion to take it for what it is. To this he will tell you, you mistake his aim, if you think it was to credit paganism: the comparison was made only to discredit Christianity? by insinuating that its DOGMAS are *contradictory*, and its SANCTIONS *oppressive*.

As to the superior BENEVOLENCE in the spirit of Paganism, this is made out as follows.

“ Lucian observes, that a young man,
 “ who reads the history of the Gods in
 “ *Homer* or *Hesiod*, and finds their fac-
 “ tions, wars, injustice, incest, adultery,
 “ and other immoralities so highly cele-
 “ brated, is much surprized afterwards,
 “ when he comes into the world, to
 “ observe, that punishments are by Law
 “ inflicted on the same actions, which he
 “ had been taught to ascribe to superior
 “ beings. The contradiction is still per-
 “ haps STRONGER betwixt the represent-
 “ ations given us by some latter Reli-
 “ gions and our natural ideas of genero-
 “ sity, lenity, impartiality, and justice ;

‡

“ and

“ and in proportion to the multiplied ter-
 “ rors of these religions, the barbarous
 “ conceptions of the divinity are multi-
 “ plied upon us *.”

You, Sir, who took your idea of the *DII MAJORUM GENTIUM* from ancient story, seem not to have characterised them amiss where you call them, “ *a rabble of Tyrants, Patbics, and Adulterers, Whores, Vagabonds, Thieves, and Murderers †.*” Yet, gracious Heaven! a Philosopher of North Britain, in the Reign of George the Second, has dared to tell us, with very little disguise, that *the barbarous conceptions of the Divinity, multiplied upon us by Christianity, are still more contradictory to our natural ideas of generosity, lenity, impartiality, and justice.*

But here his *modesty* seemed to labour a little; and he is for casting part of the odium of this diabolical insinuation from himself upon another. “ But in order, “ says he, to shew more evidently, that “ it is possible for *a Religion* to represent “ the Divinity in a still more immoral,

* Page 98—99.

* D. L. iv. B. 4, 5.

“ unamiable

“ unamiable light than the antient, we
 “ shall cite a long passage from an author
 “ of TASTE and IMAGINATION, who was
 “ surely no enemy of Christianity *.” You
 will suspect him to be just on the point of
 playing you a trick when you hear him
 talk of his authority, as an author of *taste*
and imagination, when the subject requires
 that the voucher for it should have a
 clear judgment and strong understanding.
 After all, there was no occasion for this
 slight of hand. The trick, I speak of,
 is to be played, as you will find, not by
 this *man of taste*, but by our Philosopher
 himself. His voucher, the Chevalier
 Ramsley, is perfectly innocent of all our
 Philosopher brings him to attest.

The words just quoted plainly imply,
 that in the opinion of this *man of taste*,
 Revelation, or the Jewish and Christian
 Religion, as delivered in the Bible, *re-*
presents the Divinity in a still more immoral
and unamiable light than the antient.—It
is possible, says he, for a RELIGION—

* Page 90.

†

which,

which, I think, implies the Religion itself, and not the superstitious followers, much less the professed enemies of it. Turn now to the *long passage*, which this *man of truth* has quoted in his 100th page, and you will find that this *immoral and unchangeable light in which the Divinity is represented*, is not the representation of the Religion itself, but of its false friends and open enemies. “ What strange ideas “ (says the Chevalier Ramsay) would an “ Indian or a Chinese Philosopher have of “ our holy Religion, if they judged by “ the schemes given of it by OUR MODERN “ FREE - THINKERS and PHARISAICAL “ DOCTORS OF ALL SECTS? According “ to the odious and too vulgar system of “ these INCREDULOUS SCOFFERS and CRE- “ DULOUS SCRIBBLERS, the God of the “ Jews is a most cruel, unjust, partial, and “ fantastic Being — To accomplish the “ partial, barbarous decree of predesti- “ nation and reprobation, God abandoned “ all nations to darkness, idolatry, and “ superstition, &c.”

This

This turns out ridiculous enough. The Chevalier Ramsay is brought to prove, that the Bible *represents the Divinity in a more immoral and unamiable light than Paganism*: and the Chevalier Ramsay turns the tables on him, and proves that they are only such as our Philosopher himself and his crew, who so represent the Divinity.

Well, but say you, the Chevalier Ramsay is made by our Philosopher to consider the *representation* as the representation of Revelation, whoever made it. The *man of Truth's* words are these—*To shew more evidently that it is possible for a Religion to represent, &c. we shall cite a long passage from an author, who was surely no enemy to Christianity.* Why were these last words added but to insinuate that the representation, however disadvantageous, was yet owned to be a true one; unwillingly perhaps, as he was a friend of Christianity, but from the mere force of evidence. Whereas turn but your eyes upon the *long passage* and you will find

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that

that the representers, the *free-thinkers* and *Pharisaical Doctōrs*, are heartily censured by the Chevalier for thus *disfiguring* and *dishonouring* Revelation. His concluding words are, “ Thus the *incredulous free-thinkers*, the *Judaizing Christians*, and “ the *fatalistic Doctōrs*, have disfigured and “ dishonoured the sublime mysteries of “ our holy faith ; thus they have con- “ founded the nature of good and evil ; “ transformed the most monstrous passions “ into divine attributes, and SURPASSED “ THE PAGANS IN BLASPHEMY, by as- “ cribing to the eternal nature as perfec- “ tions, what makes the horridest crimes “ among men.”

The sum is this. The *man of truth* calls upon the *man of taste* to prove that the Jewish and Christian religions, as they lie in the Bible, *represents the Divinity in a more immoral and unamiable light than Paganism*. And the *man of taste* bears evidence, that it is not the Bible but the *man of truth* and his crew, who give this representation of the Divinity: a representation

sentation which SURPASSES indeed the very PAGANS IN BLASPHEMY.

R E M A R K XVI.

We now come to his account of the origin of that Religion, of which, meaning *Superstition*, he pretends to give a natural History.

“ The primary religion of mankind
 “ arises chiefly from an anxious fear of
 “ future events; and what ideas will na-
 “ turally be entertained of invisible un-
 “ known powers, while men lie under
 “ dismal apprehensions of any kind, may
 “ easily be conceived. Every image of
 “ vengeance, severity, cruelty, and ma-
 “ lice must occur and augment the ghastr-
 “ liness and horror, which oppresses the
 “ amazed religionist. A panic having
 “ once seized the mind, the active fancy
 “ still farther multiplies the objects of
 “ terror; while that profound darkness,
 “ or, what is worse, that glimmering
 F 2 “ light,

“ light, with which we are environed, re-
 “ presents the spectres of divinity under
 “ the most dreadful appearances imagi-
 “ nable. And no idea of perverse wick-
 “ edness can be framed, which those ter-
 “ rified devotees do not readily, without
 “ scruple, apply to their deity.

“ This appears the natural state of reli-
 “ gion, when surveyed in one light. But
 “ if we consider, on the other hand, that
 “ spirit of praise and eulogy, which ne-
 “ cessarily has place in all religions, and
 “ which is the consequence of these very
 “ terrors, we must expect a quite con-
 “ trary system of theology to prevail.
 “ Every virtue, every excellence must be
 “ ascribed to the divinity, and no exag-
 “ geration be esteemed sufficient to reach
 “ those perfections, with which he is en-
 “ dowed. Whatever strains of panegyric
 “ can be invented, are immediately em-
 “ braced, without consulting any argu-
 “ ments or phænomena. And it is ef-
 “ teemed a sufficient confirmation of them,
 “ that they give us more magnificent
 “ ideas

“ ideas of the divine object of our wor-
 “ ship and adoration.

“ **HERE** therefore is a kind of contra-
 “ diction betwixt the different principles
 “ of human nature, which enter into Re-
 “ ligion. Our natural terrors present the
 “ notion of a devilish and malicious deity :
 “ Our propensity to praise leads us to ac-
 “ knowledge an excellent and divine. And
 “ the influence of these opposite princi-
 “ ples are various, according to the dif-
 “ ferent situation of the human under-
 “ standing *.”

Thus has this wretched man misrep-
 sented and calumniated those two simple
 principles, which under the guidance of
 natural light, led the people to a deity,
 and kept him always in sight, namely
FEAR, and **LOVE**. A man less malici-
 ously disposed to abuse and slander hu-
 man nature, would have fairly told us,
 that **FEAR** kept the Religionist from evil,
 as a thing offensive to the deity; and that

* Page 94—95.

LOVE inclined him to virtuous practice, as most acceptable to the divine nature. No, says this accuser of his Kind, FEAR presented the Religionist *with the notion of a devilish and malicious deity* : and LOVE exaggerated the perfections of the deity, without consulting any arguments or phænomena : i. e. arguments or phænomena, which might have convinced him that they were *exaggerations*. Whereas the truth of the case is merely this ; whenever simple nature did not work by *fear* and *love*, to avoid evil and to follow good, but instead of that to invent a *fantastic*, or a *diabolic* deity, the impediment was accidental, occasioned by the intervention of some unhappy circumstance foreign to the natural workings of the human mind.

R E M A R K XVII.

“ It is remarked by Xenophon (says our Philosopher) in praise of Socrates,
“ that

“ that that philosopher assented not to
 “ the VULGAR opinion, which supposed
 “ the Gods to know some things, and be
 “ ignorant of others: He maintained that
 “ they knew every thing, which was done,
 “ said, or even thought. But this was a
 “ strain of philosophy much above the con-
 “ ception of his countrymen *.”

This is pleasant. It is but in the fore-
 going page he assures us, that not only the
Vulgar of Greece, but the *Vulgar* of all
 the world knew that their Gods *were ig-
 norant of nothing*. His words are these.
*If we consider that spirit of praise and
 eulogy, WHICH NECESSARILY HAS PLACE
 IN ALL RELIGIONS, we shall find that every
 virtue, every excellence must be ascribed to
 the divinity, and NO EXAGGERATIONS BE
 ESTEEMED SUFFICIENT TO REACH THOSE
 PERFECTIONS, with which he is endowed.*
 Now is not OMNISCIENCE a PERFECTION?
 And was not the spirit of exaggeration,
 which never thought it said enough, able

* Page 96.

to reach the idea of *knowing all things*? How happened it then that this exaggerating mob of Religionists wanted a Socrates to tell them, that *the Gods not only knew some things, but all things*? But the man has got his readers, and he uses them as they deserve.

R E M A R K XVIII.

But now for a discovery indeed. “ As
 “ men further EXALT the idea of their
 “ divinity ; it is often their NOTION OF
 “ HIS POWER AND KNOWLEDGE ONLY,
 “ NOT OF HIS GOODNESS, which is im-
 “ proved. On the contrary, in propor-
 “ tion to the supposed extent of his science
 “ and authority, their terrors naturally
 “ augment *.”

This is hard. Common sense seems to tell us so much of our common nature, that the *spirit of love*, which is ever for

* Page 97.

exalting further and further the idea of its object, is chiefly delighted in dwelling on the GOODNESS of that object: as fear is most conversant in the divine attributes of power and knowledge. But this sublime Philosopher has discovered, that both we and nature are mistaken; and that, *as men further exalt the idea of their divinity, it is often their notion of power and knowledge, not of his goodness, that is improved.* And his kind reader might be disposed perhaps to take his word, but that he sees it contradicts, in express terms, what he had said but two or three pages before: Where he as magisterially assures us, that *a spirit of praise and eulogy makes men ascribe every virtue, every excellence to the Deity, and to EXAGGERATE THEM ALL:* Therefore, I should suppose, GOODNESS, along with the rest.

REMARK XIX.

After all these feats, he will now account how it happens that Religionists are
so

so generally disposed to prefer rites and positive institutions, to morality and natural duties. And the secret is revealed in this manner.

“ Perhaps, the following account may
 “ be received as a true solution of the
 “ difficulty. The duties, which a man
 “ performs as a friend or parent, seem
 “ merely owing to his benefactor or child-
 “ ren, nor can he be wanting to these
 “ duties, without breaking through all
 “ the ties of nature and morality. A
 “ strong inclination may prompt him to
 “ the performance: A sentiment of order
 “ and moral beauty joins its force to these
 “ natural ties: And the whole man, if
 “ truly virtuous, is drawn to his duty,
 “ without any effort or endeavour. Even
 “ with regard to the virtues, which are
 “ more austere, and more founded on
 “ reflection, such as public spirit, filial
 “ duty, temperance, or integrity; the
 “ moral obligation, in our apprehension,
 “ removes all pretence to religious merit;
 “ and the virtuous conduct is esteemed
 “ no

“ no more than what we owe to society
 “ and to ourselves. In all this, a super-
 “ stitious man finds nothing, which he
 “ has properly performed for the sake of
 “ his deity, or which can peculiarly re-
 “ commend him to the divine favour and
 “ protection. He considers not, that the
 “ most genuine method of serving the di-
 “ vinity is by promoting the happiness of
 “ his creatures. He still looks out for
 “ some more immediate service of the
 “ Supreme Being, in order to allay those
 “ terrors, with which he is haunted *.”

It is to be lamented that but just before
 he had proved all this fine reasoning not
 worth a rush, where he confesses *that there
 are popular Religions, in which it is expressly
 declared that nothing but morality can gain
 the divine favour* †. For, if those who
 prefer rights to moral duties, are yet
 taught by their Religion that *nothing but
 morality can gain the divine favour*, it is
 plain, his solution can have no place,

* Page 106—107.

† Page 104.

which

which is that superstitious men give that unjust preference, *because they can find nothing in morality which can peculiarly recommend them to the divine favour.* Had he not therefore done better, as in the former instance of *the genius of Paganism*, to have stolen his solution? He has not boggled at greater matters. And a Philosopher, who deserves no quarter from him, might have saved his credit, and been pillaged with advantage.

“ Next to the knowledge of one God,
 “ says this excellent man, a clear know-
 “ ledge of their duty was wanting to man-
 “ kind. This part of knowledge, though
 “ cultivated with some care by some of
 “ the Heathen philosophers, yet got little
 “ footing amongst the people. The
 “ priests made it not their business to
 “ teach men virtue. If they were dili-
 “ gent in their observations and ceremo-
 “ nies; punctual in their feasts and solem-
 “ nities, and the tricks of religion, the
 “ holy tribe assured them, the Gods were
 “ pleased, and they looked no farther.

Few

“ Few went to the schools of the Philo-
 “ sopher to be instructed in their duties,
 “ and to know what was good and evil in
 “ their actions. *The Priests sold the better*
 “ *penny-worths, and therefore had all their*
 “ *custom. Lustrations and processions were*
 “ *much easier than a clean conscience, and a*
 “ *steady course of virtue; and an expiatory*
 “ *sacrifice, that atoned for the want of it,*
 “ *was much more convenient than a steady*
 “ *course of virtue*.”*

This is the solution of a philosopher indeed; clear, simple, manly, rational, and striking conviction in every word; unlike the refined and fantastic nonsense of a writer of Paradoxes.

But then don't imagine that our author was not aware of this solution. No, he despised it because it was so reasonable. For he thinks to obviate it by saying,
 “ *That it is not satisfactory to alledge that the*
 “ *practice of morality is more difficult than*
 “ *that of superstition; and is therefore re-*

* Locke's works, vol. ii. p. 575.

“ *jeeted.*”

“*jected* †.” But how does he make out this point? Why, by giving us to understand *that the four Lents of the Muscovites, and the austerities of some Roman Catholics, appear more disagreeable than* MEEKNESS AND BENEVOLENCE. Let him say, as Mr. Locke does, honestly—than a STEADY COURSE OF VIRTUE. And we shall better judge whether *these austerities* be indeed more difficult than *such* a morality.

REMARK XX.

Well, but he makes ample amends for the slight here shewn of STEADY VIRTUE. For, as a supplement to his account of this mysterious phænomenon, “ We may
 “ add, says he, that even after the com-
 “ mission of crimes, there arise remorse
 “ and secret horrors, which give no rest
 “ to the mind, but make it have recourse
 “ to religious rites and ceremonies, as

† Page 105.

“ expiations

“ expiations of its offences. Whatever
 “ weakens or disorders the internal frame
 “ promotes the interests of superstition :
 “ AND NOTHING IS MORE DESTRUCTIVE
 “ TO THEM THAN A MANLY STEADY VIR-
 “ TUE, which either preserves us from
 “ disastrous melancholy accidents, or
 “ teaches us to bear them *.”

We may add, says he, That he may say
 safely whatever he pleases; who has a
 public to deal with so easily bubbled into
 the opinion of his being a philosopher.
 Which makes me the more wonder at the
 trouble his friends gave him, of refining
 his *natural history* from the grosser fæces
 of Atheism, before it was presented to
 the world. But this public, it seems,
 was become a little squeamish, having
 been so lately overdosed by the quackery
 of Bolingbroke.

NOTHING, says our philosopher, IS
 MORE DESTRUCTIVE TO THE INTEREST OF
 SUPERSTITION, THAN A MANLY STEADY

* Page 109—110.

VIRTUE: Which in plainer English is,
 “None will be so free from Superstition
 “as the most hardened Rogue.” For
 the fact, from which he deduces this pro-
 position, is this, *That after the commission
 of crimes, there arise remorse and secret hor-
 rors, which make men have recourse to ex-
 piatory rites. These remorse, BY WEAK-
 ENING AND DISORDERING THE INTERNAL
 FRAME, promote superstition.* Now the
 contrary state of this *internal frame* can
 be no other than such as enables us to
 bear the retrospect of our rogueries with-
 out *remorse and horror*: this he calls a
manly steady Virtue. Do I wrong him?
 Let his friends judge. Had he meant,
 by *manly steady Virtue* what common mo-
 ralists so call, he must have told us, that
 this *Virtue* produced in the offender, re-
 paration of injuries and amendment of
 life; things, in reality, *most destructive to
 the interests of superstition*. Whereas the
manly steady Virtue of our Philosopher does
 no more, by his own confession, than *ei-
 ther preserve us from disastrous melancholy
 accidents*

accidents [i. e. keep us from hanging ourselves] *or teaches us to bear them* [i. e. to recall to memory our past crimes without remorse]. And this, hardened roguery, and nothing but hardened roguery, is capable of atchieving. Or, will he, to save himself from this atrocious charge, say, that by a *manly steady Virtue* he meant such a *Virtue* as *prevents* the commission of crimes? This had been to the purpose. But let him then shew us how this meaning is to be gathered from his *expression*. To say the least, if, in excess of candour, one must suppose him to have *meant well*, no well-meaning philosopher ever expressed himself so wretchedly.

R E M A R K XXI.

You have here, Sir, what I promised You; a specimen of his philosophic virtues, his reasoning, his consistency, his knowledge, his truth, his candour and

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his

his modesty, as they promiscuously appear in the NATURAL HISTORY OF RELIGION. I have hunted him from track to track. And now what thick cover, do You suppose, has he chosen to screen himself from the public contempt? He takes shelter in the dark umbrage of SCEPTICISM. These are his concluding words.

“ The whole is a riddle, an ænigma,
 “ an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, un-
 “ certainty, suspense of judgment appear
 “ the only result of our most accurate
 “ scrutiny, concerning this subject. But
 “ such is the frailty of human reason,
 “ and such the irresistible contagion of
 “ opinion, that even this deliberate doubt
 “ could scarce be upheld; did we not
 “ enlarge our view, and opposing one
 “ species of superstition to another, set
 “ them a quarrelling; while we ourselves,
 “ during their fury and contention, hap-
 “ pily make our escape, into THE CALM,
 “ THOUGH OBSCURE, REGIONS OF PHILO-
 “ SOPHY.”

Thus,

Thus, we see, his last effort is to defend his *dogmatical* nonsense with *scepticism* still more nonsensical. Nor to this, neither, dares he trust himself; but presently meditates an *escape*, as he calls it, by setting the *Religionists a quarrelling*: without which, he frankly owns, that *deliberate doubt could scarce be upheld*. For the sake of this beloved object, DELIBERATE DOUBT, there is no mischief he is not ready to commit, even to the unhinging the national Religion, and unloosing all the hold it has on the minds of the people. And all this for the selfish and unnatural lust of *escaping* from right reason and common sense, *into the calm, though obscure regions of philosophy*. But here we have earthed him; rolled up in the Scoria of a *dogmatist* and *Sceptic*, run down together. He has been long taken for a Philosopher: and so perhaps he may be found—like Aristotle's statue in the block.

“ Then take him to devellop, if you can,
 “ And hew the block off, and get out the
 “ Man.”

CONCLUSION.

I have now done with my Philosopher ; and, whatever his admirers may think, You, Sir, I persuade myself, will be of opinion that I have treated him but as he deserves. If indeed my purpose had been only to disgrace the *man*, the very recital of his impieties had been sufficient. But finding, that he had somehow usurped to himself the name of *Philosopher*, I thought it not amiss, as occasion offered, to expose his bad logic ; and above all to point out to the reader his numerous *inconsistencies and contradictions*. I can readily believe, however, he will be the first to divert himself with this part of my pains. He, who thinks at large, is enslaved to no principles, nor acknowledges any, what should hinder him from writing with as little regard to *truth*, as to Religion ? He leaves it, no doubt, to the Religionists to shackle themselves in CONSISTENCY ? What is it to him, a free-thinker and a sceptic, whether what he says in one page
be

be of a piece with what he delivers in another.

Well, but this is the feature, of all others, in his philosophical countenance, which I was most ambitious of catching, and presenting to the view of the Public. For that Public, I would hope, is even yet not so thoroughly abandoned, as to contemplate this profligacy of mind, indifferent to truth and falsehood, and which is ready, on all occasions, to neglect common honesty and insult common Sense, without horror. And what so likely way of discrediting such a writer with the people, as to let them see what a conductor they have taken to themselves in philosophy and religion?

In the mean time how miserable is the condition of depraved humanity! Heaven sends us into life with the seeds and principles, at least, of integrity and honesty. The vulgar of all denominations presently lose these virtues, in the commerce of the **WORLD**. And the men of science, in the **SCHOOLS**: The consequence is, A *practice*,
void

void of MORALITY; and a *speculation*, unawed by TRUTH. In this scene of things the good man applies himself to reform the one, and instruct the other: Both, I am afraid, as the Patriarch believed, *against hope*. Yet this does not lessen the merit of his intended services. My concern is only, how they may become effectual. And if there be a way left, it is surely that which you have hitherto taken, “of disgracing every licentious shallow scribbler; that dishonours the name of letters, by writing the abused Public into an opinion of his being a philosopher.”

Hence it is, that CHUBB, MORGAN, COLLINS, MANDEVILLE and BOLINGBROKE are names, which nobody hears, without laughing. It is not for me, perhaps, to predict the fate of Mr. DAVID HUME. But if You, Sir, had taken upon You to read his destiny, the Public had, now, seen this Adorer of *Nature*, this *last* hope of his declining family, gathered to the *dull of ancient days*;

“ Safe,

“ Safe, where no critics, no divines
“ molest,
“ Where wretched TOLAND, TINDAL,
“ TILLARD rest.”

I am, with due respect, &c.

F I N I S.

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